

MEDIA RELEASE

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Agriculture, Food and Fisheries

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Govt shutting forestry gate after horse has bolted

State Forestry Minister Caica's promise to meet with Forestry industry stakeholders to discuss the latest job losses in the South East is typical of this government's inept management style says opposition forestry spokesman Adrian Pederick.

'This government has succeeded in getting offside with just about every sector of South Australian industry and services with its 'after the event' consultation approach.

'It is crisis management at its worst. Wait until calamity strikes then promise to do something.'

Mr Pederick was responding to news that 130 jobs will be lost in the forestry industry at Nangwarry, which follows 90 job losses from the same plant last year.

'As I see it, these job cuts are attributable to state government policy, which is to cash in state assets to conceal their own financial mismanagement.

'As well as bearing increasing costs, the industry's secondary processors are being squeezed by declining timber quality as a result of the government pressing for shorter timber growth rotations.

'Couple that with their proposal to privatise the asset, which has even the industry on edge, and you can see how desperate they are.

'They have no clear plan for forestry – except sell, sell, sell. The only way they know to value an industry is to cash it in. They don't have the vision to realise that its value to the state is more than just dollars in the bank.

'The Liberal party has been calling since 2006 for the redefining of ForestrySA's charter to acknowledge the industry's importance to the state's broader economy. The Labor government is all about quick cash at the expense of regions and jobs.

'Forestry industry sources say 500 jobs have gone in the past two years alone. 'Voters around the city and state should realise this will happen to them too – wherever they are and whatever their local industry.

'As for the displaced timber workers, we demand the government provide the same sort of support and assistance they have previously given retrenched Mitsubishi workers.

'This arrogant and ignorant government is out of touch and has to go.'

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