

Media Release



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Forestry industry says 'Luke Foley's Koala Plan makes forestry workers the endangered species'

The new NSW Opposition Leader Luke Foley has announced that, if elected, Labor will implement a new national park in northern NSW, allegedly to protect Koala populations.

This announcement has been provided to the *Sydney Morning Herald*. There has been absolutely no consultation with the national or state forest industry associations.

The General Manager of Timber NSW, Ms Maree McCaskill, said 'If NSW Labor had spoken with us we could have saved them from making such grave mistakes with this thought bubble policy. There are thousands of blue collar jobs which could be lost.

Should industry have to be compensated it would cost tens of millions of dollars and koala protection is already provided in state forests via the strict koala management plans in place. The idea that this is cost-neutral is a complete furphy - switching from state forests to a national park will mean the loss of timber revenues and forestry expertise that is critical for things like bushfire management and the control of pests and diseases'.

Mr Ross Hampton, Chief Executive of the Australian Forest Products Association, said 'This is the sort of unilateral policy announcement at a state level which should fill federal opposition leader Bill Shorten with despair. At a time when federal Labor is rebuilding its stocks with industry - seriously damaged during the time of the federal Labor Green minority Government - such a move undermines that process.

There are 120 000 people directly employed in forestry and forest product industries in electorates all over Australia - especially in rural and regional areas - which amounts to over 300 000 direct and indirect jobs nationally.

This type of irrational thinking makes them all potentially endangered. These Australians will be waiting for Bill Shorten's response'.

AFPA represents forest growers, harvesters, and manufacturers of timber and paper products.

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