



STUART GRIMLEY MP

Member for Western Victoria
State Leader of Derryn Hinch's Justice Party

MEDIA RELEASE



Grimley Supports Local Timber Industry

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State leader of Derryn Hinch's Justice Party, Stuart Grimley MP has opposed legislation that will likely see a wipe-out of the native timber industry in Victoria.

Currently there is no adequate transition model to ensure towns, jobs and the industry can survive post native timer logging. Mr Grimley also didn't think it was fair – or logical – to support the bill which passed the chamber yesterday, that deals with the timber logging industry before its new Code of Practice is handed down, which is due before the end of the year.

During a time when a global timber shortage is being felt in Victoria, resulting in prices skyrocketing in the local market, the industry needs more support not more restrictions. Derryn Hinch's Justice Party supports sustainable logging practices, that both provides the timber resources we need to progress our country and ensures our native trees are replenished and protected.

Stuart Grimley MP and Tania Maxwell MP represent communities that rely heavily on the local native timber industry as well as plantation timber supplies. The proposed *Forests Legislation Amendment (Compliance and Enforcement) Bill* will pull the rug out from under these towns and punish a whole industry for a small number of companies' compliance issues. Local communities are still trying to come to terms with the proposed phase out of their major source of income.

According to Timber Towns Victoria, there are more than 2,500 people directly employed in the native timber industry. Not to mention the thousands of indirect jobs, and the almost \$300 million of value the industry adds to regional communities. The proposed \$120 million package to help phase out the industry will barely touch the sides.

Derryn Hinch's Justice Party did not support this new Bill. There has not been enough community consultation, the proposed penalties are far too harsh and the Bill should not be put forward until the Code of Practice has been finalised and released.

Quotes Attributable to Stuart Grimley MP:

"The native timber industry is incredibly important to communities in Western Victoria. The discontinuation of the industry already has locals worried. The last thing they need is more heavy-handed laws, unknown regulations and greater fines.

This Bill is clearly an attempt to appease inner-city voters, who receive no immediate repercussions from these decisions. But these decisions have wide-ranging impact, not least for regional communities but also with the availability of timber for residential and commercial projects.

The new minimum penalty for individual timber workers will increase \$21,000, while protesters who go onto worksites will be fined a little over \$3,600. There are so many issues with this Bill, which is why we didn't support it.

It feels that regional Victorians always receive the short straw when it comes to decisions made by this government. We get less funding, less community consultation on major projects, yet more regulation and not enough support when we need it."

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