



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **FOREST INDUSTRY TASKFORCE WELCOMED**

The Construction Forestry Mining & Energy Union (CFMEU), the Victorian Association of Forest Industries (VAFI) and the Wilderness Society (TWS) have today welcomed the establishment of the Forest Industry Taskforce by the Andrews Government, in line with its 2014 election commitment.

The Taskforce provides a forum and process for dialogue and leadership amongst major stakeholders in the forest, fibre and wood products industries, unions and forest conservation groups.

Over the last 6 months, representatives have had a series of face to face meetings to develop a proposed Terms of Reference, which the government has today adopted.

The Taskforce will seek broad community support to address key challenges facing workers, forest, wood and fibre industries, and Victoria's environment.

"Premier Andrews has delivered on his election commitment to establish a taskforce to address future issues facing the industry, job protection, economic activity, protection of our unique native flora and fauna and threatened species, such as the Leadbeater's possum," said Tim Johnston, CEO of VAFI.

"We commend the Government for providing a forum for stakeholders to find agreed solutions. It's a fresh approach and whilst we recognise the huge challenge of reaching consensus about the future, the CFMEU has committed to this process for the sake of our members' jobs", said Jane Calvert, National President of the CFMEU Forestry and Furnishing Products Division.

"This is a unique opportunity for stakeholders to work together to recommend solutions that benefit all Victorians, conserve high-value ecological assets, and deliver new investment and employment opportunities, especially in regional communities," said Amelia Young, Victorian Campaigns Manager with the Wilderness Society.

Taskforce outcomes will be reached by consensus, and involve robust dialogue and considered negotiation. The process will rely on expert evidence, analysis and facilitation, and the engagement of other relevant affected groups and interests, and the broader Victorian community.

Tim Johnston said the Taskforce is a different way of approaching discussions about Victoria's forests and the future of their management in a changing economic environment.

“I look forward to working with my colleagues from the CFMEU and the Wilderness Society, and with other stakeholders, to reach outcomes that are durable, and provide confidence for investment in and support for a vibrant Victorian fibre and wood products industry,” he said.

Amelia Young said the Taskforce will recommend a plan for the good stewardship of Victoria’s forests that can be embraced by the Victorian community.

“The spirit of co-operation shown between all nature conservation, worker and industry representatives to get us to this point is highly encouraging.

“We look forward to formally commencing the Taskforce and ultimately providing recommendations that will give current and future generations of Victorians confidence that our forests, air, water and wildlife are protected, the Leadbeater's Possum saved, and that our regional industries have strong futures,” said Amelia Young.

The Taskforce comprises representatives from the CFMEU, VAFI, the Wilderness Society, plus representatives of Australian Sustainable Hardwoods, Australian Paper, harvest and haulage contractors, MyEnvironment, Victorian National Parks Association and the Australian Conservation Foundation.

The Terms of Reference for the Taskforce are available at <http://www.dpc.vic.gov.au/index.php/news-publications/our-environment-our-future>

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