

Call for “two strikes” law to protect timber industry

The timber industry is in urgent need of laws to protect it from ‘extremist’ anti-logging protesters, according to a candidate contesting this month’s state election.

The call follows recent events when protesters chained themselves to a logging truck in Melbourne and to a conveyor belt in Geelong.

Andrew Jones, who is contesting the upper house region that takes in Gippsland timber areas for Country Alliance, says he will push for a ‘two strikes’ law specific to the timber industry which will see protesters arrested for a second or subsequent time being fined \$10,000 and automatically liable for the economic loss of their actions.

He said the new laws would see protesters who fail to pay fines and for economic loss, being dealt with in the same way as other fine defaulters which can include spending time behind bars.

“We are not removing the right to protest. What we are proposing is specific to the problem being faced by the timber industry and will only apply to protesters who abuse their right to protest and are arrested by police” he said.

Mr Jones said that the law were needed because Victoria was becoming a ‘basket case’ in the way our timber industry is being held to ransom by an unrepresentative but vocal and well resourced minority.

“We will fight to protect the right to protest and the timber industry at the same time. It’s just that there is clear evidence that the timber industry needs urgent protection from people who don’t appear to care about the consequences of their actions and an inability to stop them.

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