

Candidate rejects Labor's plan for new national park

A candidate contesting the election in the Upper House has rejected Labor's announcement of new national park.

On Friday, Premier Steve Bracks said Labor would lock up 33,000 hectares of forest in the Goolengook block in east Gippsland.

Andrew Jones who is contesting the seat of Eastern Victoria Region, which takes in the Gippsland timber areas for Country Alliance, said that the creation of new national parks will not protect the timber industry or environment in the long term.

"We appreciate the fact that Labor is having its arm twisted in the lead up to the election by extreme green elements, but we have been long opposed to the creation of new national parks and believe very strongly that more needs to be done to protect the timber industry," he said.

"The pledge provided is that it is job neutral but it is not so neutral for those employed in eastern Gippsland. The future of those workers, families and towns need to be given greater thought.

Mr Jones said that if elected he will do what he can to protect the timber industry, including push for a 'two strikes' law which will see repeat offenders who protest against the timber industry illegally being locked up.

"My concern is that the timber industry and the people it employs are targets for people who don't understand the renewable aspects of timber. I also don't believe they understand the economic and environmental damage that is done by simply locking land up."

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