

MEDIA RELEASE

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Shame on Labor and Liberal Parties for failing to reveal they knew Gunns was broke

Following the liquidation of logging company Gunns Limited, which was confirmed by administrators PPB Advisory during a creditors' meeting held in Launceston last week, community group Friends of the Tamar Valley questions why so many Tasmanian businesses failed to be notified about the extent of the company's financial difficulties, despite both the Labor and Liberal Parties being well aware of them.

"Many of the hundreds of farmers, contractors and small business operators who believed what can only be described as deceptive assurances from Labor and Liberal politicians, now face an uncertain future themselves. This financial uncertainty must inevitably infect the whole region's economy," said FTV spokesperson Anne Layton-Bennett.

"Such a careless disregard for the livelihoods of so many people and their families could, and should, have been avoided, if Gunns' political cheer squad had been honest with the Tasmanian community," Ms Layton-Bennett said.

Both Liberal opposition leader Will Hodgman, and premier Lara Giddings have continued to publicly spruik the economic and employment benefits of the pulp mill - in Ms Giddings case as recently as February's speech at the National Press Club (The Mercury 23/02/2013) - despite knowing for several months that Gunns' financial situation was dire, and the company was very likely trading while insolvent.

"I remain hopeful that the pulp mill will be built, creating much-needed jobs and opportunities for Tasmanians," [Ms Giddings] (The Examiner: 13/02/2013)

In the Liberals' '13-Point Forestry Plan' Mr Hodgman also makes it clear the Liberal Party regards the pulp mill as necessary for Tasmania's economic future.

10. We can have a pulp mill and native forest harvesting too - Tasmania can have a pulp mill and native forest harvesting. We don't need to and shouldn't exchange our existing forestry jobs and their communities for a plantation feed pulp mill, which will add value and local jobs to our lowest value, commodity (woodchip) resource.

<http://www.willhodgman.com.au/policy-statements/13-point-forestry-plan>

"Instead of creating jobs, the stubborn pursuit of this toxic pulp mill by both the major parties has now resulted in the collapse of a once respected company, and cost hundreds of jobs. It's caused years of unnecessary anxiety and uncertainty for the community, and wasted millions of taxpayers' dollars at the expense of our health and education systems, money which should have been used to invest in projects more appropriate to our size, population, and natural resources - such as agriculture, clean energy alternatives, and tourism," Ms Layton-Bennett concluded

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