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MEDIA RELEASE

WHERE WILL THE NEW JOBS COME FROM?

The NSW Government's decision for a huge Great Koala National Park will mean 300 people lose their jobs. But more than 750 jobs will be directly affected through the area and the government does not have a credible plan for new employment options.

CEO of the Australian Forest Contractors Association Tim Lester said World Bank data shows that every dollar generated by forestry multiplies 2.5 times through the economy. The economic analysis commissioned by the government showed the average worker in forestry has 2.5 times the earnings of hospitality.

"Forestry workers are integral in their communities. The money they earn is spent in local businesses, their kids go to the local schools, they volunteer for community groups. Like a supermarket in a shopping mall, a forestry workforce pulls in and facilitates a broader economic and community life in rural and regional areas" Tim Lester said.

"The decision to create a park is not just affecting 300 workers and families, it multiplies and changes the dynamics of whole towns across the region. This decision immediately wipes out 40% of the timber supply from the north coast, an industry that employs 5,700 people and generates \$1.8 billion. You can't strip back that volume and not expect any impact on other businesses and jobs.

"Where are all the new tourists going to come from? And why will they behave differently to every other National Park visitor by supporting small town services such as mechanics, solicitors and accountants? The promise of an economic boon for locals and businesses is a mirage but the loss of \$730 million will be keenly felt.

"State forests are managed for forest health and a balance of uses between conservation, recreation and sustainable timber production. It has been a successful model for more than a century.

"The new park will not protect koalas from any actual threats and risks doing the opposite. But the impacts on workers, families and affected communities are very real and well known.

"We are extremely disappointed that the NSW Government has chosen to ignore the considered input of its own expert panel which could have secured a win-win outcome. Our towns and communities will pay the price," Tim Lester concluded.

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