

# Media Release

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Tuesday 20 March 2018

## Batman result shows inner-Melbourne voters care most about core issues

Polling commissioned by forest industries ahead of the weekend's Batman by-election showed core issues such as health and education, rather than another national park, was the deciding factor for the majority of voters.

Of Labor voters surveyed, most cared far more about the traditional anchor issues of health and education services than the proposal for a national park in Victoria's Central Highlands - which would destroy the native timber industry and cost thousands of jobs across the state.

The Reachtel poll conducted late last week (Thursday 15 March) accurately predicted a Labor victory over the Greens in Batman, with a two-party preferred result 55% to 45%. The poll of 866 residents also revealed that only a tiny 2.8% of respondents rated another national park as the most important issue in deciding who they would vote for in the by-election.

CEO of the Australian Forest Products Association (AFPA), Ross Hampton, and CEO of the Victorian Association of Forest Industries (VAFI), Tim Johnston, said today that the results sent a strong message to the major parties ahead of the November state election about what the voters of Melbourne really care about.

"The poll results show that the voters of Batman – particularly Labor voters – value strong health and education policies above all else, with more than 60% of Labor voters rating health or education as the most important issue in determining their vote," Mr Hampton said.

"Furthermore, the poll found a significant majority of voters in Batman – 66.4%, including 81% of Labor voters – believe Australia should have its own native timber industry, which would be decimated if another national park goes ahead," Mr Hampton concluded.

"What this poll demonstrates is that the major parties need to focus on core issues like jobs and industry, rather than on a vocal minority who want to destroy jobs across Victoria, particularly in regional communities," Mr Johnston said.

"This poll provides some serious food for thought for not only Labor, but all political parties in Victoria ahead of the November election. Victoria can't afford to lose thousands of jobs and hundreds of millions of dollars in economic value from our native timber industry.

"The people in Batman got it right over the weekend. It's time for our political parties to follow," Mr Johnston concluded.

\*To request polling – please contact Joe Prevedello below.

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AFPA represents forest growers, harvesters, and manufacturers of timber and paper products.

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