

BRADDON CANDIDATES SCORECARD						
	New plantations	Certainty for native forestry	Incentives for bioenergy	R&D	Skills and training	Infrastructure
Joshua Boag* (Liberal Democrats)						
Jarrold Edwards (Greens)	★	✗	?	?	?	?
Craig Garland* (Independent)						
Donna Gibbons (Independent)	★	★	★	★	★	★
Justine Keay (Labor)	★	★	★	★	★	★
Brett Neal* (Shooters, Fishers and Farmers)						
Bruno Strangio* (Australian Peoples Party)						
Brett Whiteley (Liberal)	★	★	★	★	★	★

* These candidates did not respond to the survey.

Labor Responses to Braddon Candidates Survey

Labor thanks the Australian Forestry and Products Association (AFPA) for the opportunity to provide information about Labor future forestry policies.

Before answering the specific survey questions, Labor acknowledges that the current Government is to deliver a forestry plan on 12 September 2018. Whilst it is disappointing that the Abbott/Turnbull Governments have been slow to provide a comprehensive future forestry plan after five years of Government, Labor will seek to provide a bi-partisan approach to forestry policy and will consider the plan in detail once it released.

A future Labor Government will restore proper Commonwealth and State relationships by re-establishing the COAG process. Sadly, one of the first acts of the former Agriculture Minister was to abolish the Standing Council on Primary Industries. Labor will prioritise the development of a robust productivity agenda and ensure that is progressed in a partnership between Commonwealth and State bodies.

A future Labor Government will ensure that forestry sector policies are development via a whole-of-government and whole-of-government's approach to ensure it reaches its full potential. Many of the AFPA asks demonstrate that forestry policies cut across a number of portfolios and jurisdictions.

Labor has been working closely with the forestry sector to understand the barriers preventing it reaching its full potential. We agree with the statement from the AFPA Chair, Mr Greg McCormack that "With the right policy settings our Forest Industries can have an even brighter future"¹

A key ask from the forestry sector is a review of both the Carbon Farming Initiative (CFI) Regulation the removal of the 600mm rainfall restriction for new plantations. Another is a review the existing

ERF farm forestry method to encourage aggregation, reduce audit and transaction costs, and remove the rainfall restriction, which limits farm forestry to 100ha where rainfall is of 400mm or more.

A future Labor Government will review the water rule restrictions in both the plantations and farm forestry Carbon Farming Initiative methodologies to ensure the forestry sector can compete on a level playing field and to play a bigger role in a lower carbon future.

Labor recognises the role of bio-energy and bio-mass in Australia's renewable mix and will work with the forestry industry to ensure bioenergy plays its rightful and responsible role in Australia's future renewable energy economy.

1 Towards a National Forest Industries Plan, Key Industry Asks; 2018 pg2

Labor recognises industry is seeking to grow new plantation levels by an additional 400,000ha; removing barriers to forestry's participation in the carbon market will stimulate greater investment in the sector and grow future forestry jobs.

However, new plantation establishment will be a means to an ends and not an ends in itself under a Labor government.

A more strategic policy approach than exhibited in the past will result in the encouragement and stimulation of the planting of more of the right trees (from a species perspective), in the right places and locales, under the right management regimes necessary in order to maximise the benefits to local communities.

Labor supports the social, economic and environmental benefits that flow from the sustainable management of our native forests and supports the Regional Forest Agreement (RFA). The Tasmanian RFA extension was formalised on 18 August 2017

Labor has announced a number of policies to support increase in; investment, manufacturing innovation, skills and training and infrastructure projects, these policies will benefit the forestry industry

TAFE and Vocational Education

- Scrapping upfront fees for TAFE students: Labor will scrap upfront fees for 100,000 TAFE students who choose to learn the skills that Australia needs, making it easier for Australians to gain the skills they need to get a quality job and for businesses to fill skills shortages.
- Reversing TAFE/Training cuts: Labor will reverse the government's \$600 million TAFE/Training cuts.
- Building TAFE for the Future Fund: Labor will commit \$100 million towards a new Building TAFE for the Future Fund, to reverse the decline in TAFE facilities, and revitalise TAFE campuses across Australia.
- TAFE Funding: Labor will ensure two thirds of Commonwealth funding for vocational education goes to TAFE, securing the future of TAFE across the country.
- Australian Skills Authority: Labor will establish an independent Australian Skills Authority to advise on skills shortages and we will prioritise training investment in skills shortage areas identified by the Authority.

Innovation, Industry, Science and Research Advanced Manufacturing Future Fund: Labor will establish a \$1 billion advanced manufacturing future fund to provide concessional loans to manufacturers seeking to innovate, expand or diversify. The Fund will be available to manufacturers along the forestry supply chain.

Treasury Australian Investment Guarantee: Labor's Australian Investment Guarantee will allow all businesses in Australia to immediately deduct 20 per cent of any new eligible asset worth more than \$20,000, with the balance depreciated in line with normal depreciation schedules from the first year.

Infrastructure North West Coast Pathway (Tas): Labor will invest in Tasmanian tourism and jobs, providing \$8.8 million in funding towards the completion of the 110km North West Coastal Pathway. Bridgewater Bridge (Tas): Labor will restore the \$100 million cut by the Turnbull Liberal Government from the Midland Highway upgrade, and use the funding as a down-payment to build a replacement to the outdated Bridgewater Bridge. Bass Highway upgrade between Wynyard and Marrawah (Tas): Labor will partner with the Tasmanian Government to spend \$100m (\$60m commonwealth, \$40m state) on fixing the Bass Highway.

Liberal responses to candidate survey

AFPA Key Asks – Braddon

Introductory Comments

The government is committed to a profitable and sustainable forestry industry. There is no greater supporter of the forest industry than the Coalition.

In contrast, every time Labor has gotten into Government they have teamed up the Greens and reduced the amount of resource available to the industry.

We are committed to ensure resource security and certainty for the industry

- Extending the Tasmanian Regional Forest Agreement (RFA) in 2017 provided industry with ongoing secure resource access and investment certainty. This drives innovation and jobs growth in rural and regional communities.
- We are also protecting Australian producers from unfair competition and encouraging more sustainable use of the world's forests through our illegal logging legislation.

We support innovation in the industry to ensure it is able to meeting future market needs

- The National Institute for Forest Products Innovation(Institute) has been established in Tasmania in with funding of \$2 million (matched by the state) to encourage innovation in timber processing, value adding, advanced manufacturing and the bio-economy. This is expected to grow the forests sector.
- We want the Institute to come up with the next big idea that will help take the forestry and wood products sector to new levels of growth and prepare for the future of the industry.
- The research undertaken by the Institute will support the forest products industry to become a smarter, higher value industry that will boost opportunities for jobs and regional growth in all states, including Tasmania.
- This is on top of the ongoing government funding of approximately \$6 million a year for forestry research through the industry owned Forest and Wood Products Australia.

The forest sector producing a renewable resource has a long term future

- The government will shortly finalise a new national forestry plan for Australia's renewable timber and wood-fibre industry, we will
 - o identify opportunities and gaps in key regional forestry production and processing hubs
 - o drive further innovation, research and development of new products and value adding in the forestry industry
 - o identify opportunities for supplying timber to Australia's forestry sector through farm forestry, and
 - o enable forest resources on privately and Indigenous owned and managed land to be identified, improved and made more readily available for timber processing;
- o The recent budget provided \$20 million for a number of initiatives to support the plan. More details will be available when the plan is completed in September.

We believe the forests sector can contribute to addressing climate change

- Industry called upon the government for a method to provide plantation forest managers with new opportunities to earn Australian Carbon Credit Units. We delivered this. Already a number of plantation managers have been successful in accessing the Emissions Reduction Fund.

We are protecting the health of our forests.

- The government has worked with industry to develop *National Forest Biosecurity Surveillance Strategy* and provided nearly \$1 million towards improving surveillance capability in the forest industry.

AFPA Key Asks:

1. Drive the planting of up to 14,000 hectares of new plantations in North West Tasmania, creating up to 150 new direct and 300 indirect jobs

- **Remove the existing Carbon Farming Initiative (CFI) water restrictions, in both the**

Plantation Forestry and Farm Forestry methodologies, so that our Forest Industries can fully participate in the CFI, store more carbon and invest in new plantations.

Response – Industry called for a method to provide plantation forest managers with new opportunities to earn Australian Carbon Credit Units, and we delivered this. Already a number of plantation managers have been successful in accessing the Emissions Reduction Fund as a result of this. There are also exemptions available to the water restrictions in the CFI where extensive plantations won't impact water availability in the area. We are committed to removing demonstrated material impediments to the growth of the industry and its aspirations under its recently announced 18 by 30 plan and if elected this is an issue I will strongly pursue.

- **Commit \$2 million to a Timber Plantation Development Project between government, landowners and industry to identify plantation investment opportunities in North-West Tasmania.**

Response – Through the government's new national forestry plan, we have funding for a number of regional forestry hubs to identify the needs and the opportunities for growth of the forestry industry in that region. We have also contributed resources to a research project 'Next Generation Forest Plantation Investment' that is being led by Melbourne University which is looking at investment and business models for plantation development.

2. Provide certainty for our native forestry sector

- **Secure the future of our sustainable native Forest Industries by delivering on the renewed 20-year Tasmanian Regional Forest Agreement, and work with State and Federal Government to ensure there are no more forest lock-ups and no loss in net timber supply.**

Response – There will no more lock-ups under the Coalition. The 20-year rolling extension of the Tasmanian RFA was formalised on 18 August 2017. The RFA gives industry certainty of access to timber from Tasmania's sustainably managed forests. These forests produce high quality timber and the Agreement ensures this is done sustainably and in recognition of other social and conservation needs.

- **Ninety five percent of the Tarkine is already unavailable for forestry activities. The other 5 per cent is sustainably managed for timber production for saw and veneer mills in the Braddon electorate, as agreed to by Tasmanian environmental groups including The Wilderness Society. Will you and your party rule out listing the area as a National Park and for it to be inscribed on the World Heritage Register, which would mean shutting down the timber industry and other industries that rely on this sustainably managed forest?**

Response – There will be no more lock-ups under the Coalition, and there will be no Tarkine National Park. Full stop, end of story.

3. Incentivise bioenergy from wood residues

- **Commit to recognising and incentivising new bioenergy and renewable heat energy projects in the National Energy Guarantee (NEG) or any such energy policy mechanism.**

Response – Wood waste for energy already receives incentives through the RET. The Government through the National Energy Guarantee is committed to cheaper energy for all Australians, increasing energy reliability for all Australians, whilst keeping emission reduction targets. Importantly we will maintain a technology neutral approach for these outcomes. The Government has brought down power prices and we will continue to do so through our National Energy Guarantee.

- **Commit \$2 million to a Bioenergy Commercialisation node in Braddon to help industry prove the feasibility of bioenergy-based projects.**

Response – The current Tasmanian node of the National Institute for Forest Products Innovation has just commenced and received 19 project proposals for its first call. Once the Institute has proven that it is the right model to deliver successful project outcomes that are useful for the Tasmanian industry for adoption – we will consider its extension.

4. Invest in manufacturing innovation

- **Commit to working with industry on programs that incentivise innovation and value-adding in timber and wood processing in North-West Tasmania to boost capacity, lower energy costs and create more local manufacturing jobs.**

Response – The National Institute for Forest Products Innovation, based in Tasmania aims to achieve this very thing – and decisions about project priorities and what will be funded is being determined by the Tasmanian industry. It aims to grow the forest and forest products industry by exploring and facilitating innovation in the forest products sector in areas including timber processing, value adding, advanced manufacturing and the bio-economy.

- **Commit \$4 million over 4 years to extend the operation of the Tasmanian node of the National Institute for Forest Products Innovation, with a balanced focus on R&D projects that benefit North-West Tasmania (seek matching Tasmanian Government funding)**

Response – The current Tasmanian node of the National Institute for Forest Products Innovation has just commenced and received 19 project proposals for its first call. Once the Institute has proven that it is the right model to deliver successful project outcomes that are useful for the Tasmanian industry for adoption – we will consider its extension.

5. Support skills and training

- **Work with industry and the Tasmanian Government to develop a Forest Industries Skills & Training Plan to ensure we have the skilled local workforce to support growth in our sector.**
- **Commit \$1 million to support the implementation of the Plan.**

Response – A skilled workforce is vital for the forestry industry. With advances in technology and new product development, job in the industry will continue to change. Organisations like ForestWorks are offering skills development services for industry through their [Training Skills and Development Service \(Tasmania\)](#). The Government has a plan for a strong economy and has delivered than 1million jobs since the Liberal National government was elected.

6. Upgrade local road infrastructure

- **Commit to working with industry and the Tasmanian Government to identify and prioritise key infrastructure projects such as roads, bridges, Burnie Port access and upgrades to enhance forest industry safety and improve productivity.**
- **Commit \$1 million for a scoping study to identify priority infrastructure projects for timber industries that will enhance safety and increase productivity.**

Response – Through the government's new national forestry plan, we have funding for a number of regional forestry hubs to identify the needs and the opportunities for growth of the forestry industry in that region. In addition in this campaign I have secured funding for both the Murchison Highway (\$10 million) and Bass Highway west of Wynyard (\$60 million), both important pieces of infrastructure for the forestry industry.