

FOREST POLICY, JOB LOSSES AND ASSISTANCE PACKAGE

**673. Mr OMODEI to the Premier:**

I refer the Premier to his remark in this place last week that Labor has been absolutely and utterly honest with the thousands of people in Western Australia's south west communities who will lose their jobs because of Labor's forest policy.

- (1) Will the Premier now be absolutely and utterly honest enough to admit that Labor's forest policy will cost around 4 000 direct and indirect jobs and not merely the 1 000 jobs he has revealed so far?
- (2) Will the Premier advise the House what portion of the Government's \$123 million assistance package has been allocated from state sources for industry assistance and redundancies in this year's budget and from which departments this allocation has been made?

**Dr GALLOP replied:**

- (1)-(2) The member for Warren-Blackwood continues to create the impression that somehow the Labor Government has concealed from people in the south west of this State the implications of its forest policy. I repeat: a very important public meeting was held at this Parliament when I was Leader of the Opposition. I addressed the workers at that meeting and indicated that we needed to change our policy and that there would be implications resulting from that change. I said that we would manage that by looking after their interests. I and the present Minister for the Environment and Heritage did all the homework on that. We visited New South Wales and found out what it meant to have a worker assistance package. We brought that issue into the Parliament, when the coalition Government had done nothing for the workers.

Mr Omodei interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, member for Warren-Blackwood!

Dr GALLOP: We made it clear during the election campaign that we would have to allocate funds to deal with the approximately 1 000 workers who would be affected. It was all up-front, detailed in our policy and clear for everyone to see. Earlier this year when we announced the policy, we once again said that 1 000 workers would be affected by that policy. There is a difference between our side of politics and the other side: we have the view that as a result of our policy and the initiatives that will be taken through the expenditure that will be made, new jobs will be created that will be sustainable in the future. The Government does not agree with the comments of Mr Pearce from the WA Forest Industries Federation. We do not agree with the member for Warren-Blackwood, because the initiatives we are taking are creating new jobs in that area.

Mr Barnett: How many and where?

Dr GALLOP: I went through this before in the Parliament. We have made real commitments to infrastructure in the south west that will create jobs. We are making a real commitment to further value-adding industries in the south west that will create sustainable jobs in the timber industry. We have developed a strategy for new tourism-related jobs in the area that will link in with the massive investment that has gone into the south west in new industries, like the wine and tourism industries. For example, the Cabinet visited Mt Romance, which is an interesting case study. As a result of that initiative to create new products, a tourism industry has been created around those new products that is generating as much revenue for that company as the sale of its products.

I urge the member for Warren-Blackwood to take a broader view of the future of Western Australia. We have crossed the threshold. There will be no more old-growth logging in Western Australia. That is the basis for creating new and sustainable jobs for the future of our State. We will look after the people who are affected by the transition to that policy. The one thing that the member for Warren-Blackwood does not tell his electors is how many jobs in that area would have been lost under his Government's policy. Of course, we know that there was a completely inadequate allocation of funds to deal with the transition that would have been required under his Government's policy, and he knows it. The comparison is between his Government's policy and the resources it was putting into the south west and this Government's policy, which is stopping the logging of old-growth forests and has a comprehensive package of measures to create new jobs in the area.