

Financial mismanagement by the South Australian Government

It seems to me that the South Australian Government has totally got it wrong by wanting to sell off the forests in the South East. Since I was a youngster I was always taught that "I should never live beyond my means". Our government has failed to live within its means, by desiring to achieve more than it can afford to pay for. They have taken on, and are taking on more than the state can afford to support. Their answer to this is to sell off the forests for the next 100 years to help pay for this irresponsible behavior.

All of the people that I know within the business community would never react in this way. The government has a prospective buyer for our timber, but why sell it at the expense of an entire community. In a normal business a responsible owner would enlarge the business to support that new customers needs and not sell its own assets just for quick financial gain. This means planting more forestry to supply timber for the overseas markets would create more revenue for the state instead of giving up the yearly input from our forests.

The real way to get back South Australia's AAA Credit Rating is not to sell off what we have but to advance and expand forestry because of the demand from overseas for our timber supplies. In this way local timber communities will not be destroyed and the government coffers will be added to substantially.

The impact in the South East of South Australia from the sale of the forests will be devastating, property values will plummet and people will lose what little equity they have in their homes. Unemployment will be extreme within the area as the timber industry has been the backbone of the South East for many, many years. The people here rely on it. Businesses will be closed due to the downturn in sales, these owners don't deserve to have their futures taken away from them by a State Government in this way. Jobs within the local business community will be lost as sales decline. To deny that this will happen after the forward sale of the forest is both dishonest and irresponsible.

The government may decide to take on an impact study but everyone in the Mount Gambier community knows what a devastating effect this forward selling will bring. A study on the impact of this decision is easy to whitewash to the community and cover up the true effects that are to come but the truth is still that a Government should NEVER behave in this way. State profits should be acquired by the growth of assets and not selling our futures out from under us for short term financial gain. Once the funds from that short term windfall are gone, the government is back in the same position again WITHOUT the revenue from that industry supporting it any more. This will make it even more difficult to maintain a AAA credit rating.

Not only that revenue is gone but the burden of the community being forced onto welfare will be a yearly burden to the state also. Mt Gambier is an area rich in Tourism and culture and should not be treated in this way. They have supported the State of South Australia over the years through the forestry work providing funds both for the state and for the local community. To decimate this is a serious decision that should not be taken, and Mike Rann should be held accountable for his irresponsible and reckless ideas regarding this issue.

Yours Sincerely

Des Taylor