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Greens Pass on Simple Maths, But Fail on Budget Logic

NSW greens MP David Shoebridge should stick to law and leave financial analysis to someone who has a broader view of the Government budget position.

Perpetual scaremonger Shoebridge claims that NSW taxpayers are subsidising the Forestry Corporation of NSW (FCNSW) \$495 for each hectare harvested in 2013-14. Like many green statements, at the micro level the calculation is correct, but in the broader budget level it leads to erroneous and budget damaging conclusions.

<http://davidshoebridge.org.au/2015/03/03/native-forest-logging-loses-495-a-hectare-lets-protect-our-forests-for-the-future/>

This financial analysis assumes that the 2 million hectares not harvested in any year does not carry any management cost. If the \$12 million loss is averaged across all the hectares managed by FCNSW, the cost to NSW taxpayers is closer to \$6 per hectare.

Why is this calculation important? With the cost of national park management at about \$53 per hectare each year, transfer of the remaining state forests to national parks management would require an extra \$94 million a year to pay the forest management costs, instead of freeing up \$12 million.

Rather than Mr Shoebridge finding \$80 million over 4 years to fund the closedown of the native forest industry and \$40 million to fund tourism, the failed mathematician would have to find a total of \$496 million dollars.

With the new Bega district hospital expected to cost \$187 million, the greens closedown of the native forest industry would cost regional NSW at least 2 new regional hospitals over 4 years. David Shoebridge claims that justice is the single thing that defines his political life

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OHRdwUIU2LI>

Where is the social justice in the Greens forest policy, for people working in the forest industry and in remote and regional communities? The usual catchcry for jobs to replace those lost in the forest industries is to turn to tourism.

In 2008, 140,000 hectares of state forest on the Victorian side of the Murray River became national park. In 2010, in his last few hours as premier, Nathan Rees, dictated the transfer of 117,000 hectares of state forest to national park on the NSW side of the river. Tourism jobs were the panacea to the loss of forestry jobs.



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This political claim has failed small communities from the Victorian to the Queensland border for 2 decades, as Bob Carr and his successors have implemented Wilderness Society policy, while harvesting votes in inner city Sydney.

The “boom” in tourism in Mathoura, in the heart of the river red gum forests, has actually seen total visitation levels fall from 32,000 in 2010, to 23,000 in 2014. A 28 percent fall, resulting in the closure of a supermarket, bakery and bed and breakfast. These businesses should thrive under a tourism economy.

Yet the greens still have the gall to stand on the high moral ground of social justice while condemning remote rural communities to a slow death as a result of their one dimensional forest policy.

And one final question needs to be asked. When is a green not actually a green? Is it when they show their true colour?



Photo: John Kaye, David Shoebridge and Jamie Parker

