

# PETER DRAPER

INDEPENDENT MEMBER FOR TAMWORTH

## MEDIA RELEASE

### **Walcha waits for State Forests restructure fall out**

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The number of jobs lost from the softwood timber industry in Walcha due to a State Forests' restructure will not be known until the end of the month, Member for Tamworth Peter Draper said today.

Mr Draper said expressions of interest for voluntary redundancies closed on Monday with State Forests' management expected to take at least two weeks to assess how the restructure of the softwood division's administration will affect jobs on the ground.

"I've been informed a decision on the number of jobs, if any, to be cut will be made once the Department is clear about how many people are interested in voluntarily taking a redundancy package," he said.

Mr Draper is hopeful there will be enough voluntary redundancies taken across the state to negate the Department's need to trim jobs in places such as Walcha.

He met recently with a senior advisor of the Department of Primary Industries Minister, Ian Macdonald, after fears were raised that seven administration and three forest jobs would be lost in Walcha.

"I stressed to the Minister's advisor the importance of retaining a strong industry presence in Walcha due to Walcha Shire Council's commitment and significant investment in the future of softwood plantation development in the district," Mr Draper said.

"I will continue to impress upon the Minister the need to recognise that commitment and to safeguard positions against restructures," he said.

**End Release**

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