

## Media Release

07 February 2022

### **Mount Gambier and Stuart electorates to be decided on support for forest industries: poll**

Polling of voters in the seats of Mount Gambier and Stuart has found that almost 2 in every 3 voters say they will vote for the Party and candidate that best supports South Australia's forest industries, almost 10 out of 10 voters in Mount Gambier recognised the sector's importance to the local economy and almost 6 out of 10 voters in Stuart agree or strongly agree that the Government has a responsibility to ensure we have enough timber to meet the State's housing needs.

South Australian Forest Products Association CEO, Mr Nathan Paine, said the SAFPA-commissioned poll clearly shows that the major parties and candidates contesting the electorates of Mount Gambier and Stuart must support growth in the State's forest industries.

"Forest Industries contribute over \$3 billion annually to the SA economy and directly and indirectly employs more than 18,000 South Australians, most of them in the south east followed by the mid north – the home of the Australian plantation forestry industry, so it is not surprising that the voters in these regions recognise the significance of the sector to their local communities," Mr Paine said.

"The community's message to the candidates and major parties is loud and clear: support our forest products industries if you want our vote. And, as the poll shows, the question of who will be SA's next Premier could well be decided by these electorates.

The UComms polls of more than 800 people conducted last week across the two electorates also found, in the seat of Mount Gambier, that over half (53.5 per cent) believe Liberal Premier Leader Steven Marshall will make a better Premier whilst 51.6 per cent of respondents in the seat of Stuart who believe Opposition Leader Peter Malinauskas will make a better Premier.

In both seats, the polling suggests that both sitting members would be returned if the election had been held last Saturday with Troy Bell in Mount Gambier and the Deputy Premier in Stuart.

In Mount Gambier:

- 73.1 per cent of the 402 people polled responded "more likely" when asked, "*Would you be more or less likely to vote for a candidate or political party with policies that support the electorates forest industries?*" against only 6.1 per cent who responded less "likely".
- 99.1 per cent believe forest industries such as timber production and processing are somewhat important or very important to the economy.

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In Stuart:

- 62.2 per cent of the 406 people polled responded “more likely” when asked, “*Would you be more or less likely to vote for a candidate or political party with policies that support the electorate’s forest and agricultural industries?*” against only 14.7 per cent who responded less “likely”.
- 57.4 per cent agree or strongly agree that the State Government has a responsibility to ensure South Australia has enough timber to meet the State’s housing needs (against 16.3 per cent who disagree or strongly disagree).

The poll follows the launch of SAFPA’s election policy platform, which is headlined by a call on the Parties and candidates to commit to planting 50 million trees over the next four years to supercharge the economic value of timber manufacturing in South Australia, drive innovation and create thousands more regional jobs in our forest industries across the state.

**ENDS.**

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