

MEDIA RELEASE

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Opposition leader Rebecca White visits Bell Bay mill with Shadow Ministers

On Monday the 16th of September Timberlink welcomed the Tasmanian Opposition Leader Rebecca White MP to its Bell Bay mill to see firsthand how high-tech investment is creating and securing the jobs of the future in the Tasmanian manufacturing sector.

Ms White toured the facility with her Labor team including Deputy Leader and Shadow Minister for Economic Development Michelle O’Byrne, Shadow Treasurer David O’Byrne, Shadow Minister for Resources Dr Shane Broad and Shadow Minister for Manufacturing Anita Dow.

Timberlink’s EGM of Sales, Marketing & Corporate Affairs David Oliver was able to show the MPs how ongoing investment and expansion has increased efficiency and created new jobs. “It is vital that manufacturing continues in this state and it is wonderful to see such a high level of investment in the future, it is clear Timberlink is here for the long-term,” said Ms White.

Over \$10m is currently being invested in the Bell Bay mill, leading to 90 jobs being created in the construction phase and crucially 6 new permanent full-time jobs. This is in addition to \$15m of investments already made in the mill since the company’s takeover in 2013. “This is real investment in the latest technology, it’s a world class facility here in Northern Tasmania and Timberlink is looking to constantly improve to stay ahead in this global marketplace,” said Ms White.

David Oliver was able to show the MPs the new Lucidyne scanner that is being installed. It will use AI technology to measure for strength, quality and defects in every piece of timber in real time. The software learns with every piece it scans and can scan up to two boards per second. This will ensure that every piece meets the high Australian standards of engineered timber whilst removing the need for manual intervention, creating a safer workplace. “I was very pleased to see the high level of focus on safety at the mill and the investment to back it up”, Ms Dow said.

The MPs were also particularly impressed with the new continuous flow drying kilns (CFKs). These kilns dry timber more efficiently and at a lower temperature, saving on energy whilst drying more timber than traditional batch kilns. Dr Broad commented that “this is a fantastic example of Australian manufacturing in the 21st century, using new technology to save energy and stay competitive in a global marketplace.”

Site infrastructure has also been improved, including a new internal road system designed to improve safety outcomes and support the increase in site activity. The current stage of expansion is expected to be completed within weeks and will result in increased production from the mill, securing long-term jobs and certainty of supply to Timberlink’s customers.

Ms White went on to state that the sizeable investment was “great news for Northern Tasmania”, securing the 650 jobs that directly and indirectly rely on the mill.

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About Timberlink Australia | New Zealand

Timberlink (timberlinkaustralia.com.au, timberlinknz.co.nz) is a leading Australasian timber products manufacturing business. The business has three sawmills at Bell Bay (Tasmania), Blenheim (New Zealand) and Tarpeena (South Australia) that manufacture plantation structural pine products. Timberlink has sales and distribution teams based in Perth, Adelaide, Sydney and Melbourne and sales teams based at the Bell Bay and Blenheim sawmills. Aligning the Timberlink business with forest resources enables the company to have a long-term committed approach to its business and customers. Timber manufacturing is a carbon negative industry. For every cubic metre of dry finished timber produced, 631 kg of carbon dioxide is drawn from atmosphere and retained in the timber over its entire lifetime.

Timberlink is owned by investment funds managed by New Forests, a sustainable real assets investment manager headquartered in Sydney. Founded in 2005, New Forests manages approximately AUD 5 billion in assets under management across 940,000 hectares of forests and land in Australia, New Zealand, Southeast Asia, and the United States. Learn more at www.newforests.com.au