

# Media Release

**Ms Mary-Anne Thomas MP**  
Minister for Regional Development  
Minister for Agriculture



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## SAFER WORKPLACES FOR THE TIMBER INDUSTRY

The Andrews Labor Government is ensuring all Victorians are safe at work, with protestors engaging in dangerous activity to face stronger penalties when putting the safety and wellbeing of forestry workers at risk.

Introduced to Parliament today, the *Sustainable Forests Timber Amendment (Timber Harvesting Safety Zones) Bill 2022* will modernise enforcement measures to better deter dangerous protest activities within Timber Harvesting Safety Zones. These zones are small and restricted areas where forestry activities are being undertaken.

Protestors who illegally enter these zones and dangerously interfere with workers or their machinery, will be subject to stronger penalties including maximum fines of more than \$21,000 or 12-months imprisonment.

PVC and metal pipes, which can be used in dangerous protest activities, will be added to the prohibited items list meaning they potentially attract extra fines if used to hinder or obstruct timber harvesting operations.

To prevent repeated safety risks across multiple Timber Harvesting Safety Zones, Authorised Officers will be able to issue Banning Notices. The notices will aim to stop individuals from repeatedly engaging in dangerous activities in Timber Harvesting Safety Zones and other forestry coupe areas.

Authorised Officers will be given additional powers to search containers, bags and vehicles for prohibited items.

This Bill will bring the *Sustainable Forests (Timber) Act 2004* in line with other similar pieces of legislation such as the *Wildlife Act 1975*. For more information visit [vic.gov.au/forestry](http://vic.gov.au/forestry).

### Quotes attributable to Minister for Agriculture Mary-Anne Thomas

*“Every Victorian has the right to be safe at work. Protests are becoming increasingly dangerous - particularly for workers - which is why this legislation will support them to get on with their job and minimise disruption to the industry.”*

*“We respect the right to protest safely but want to make sure workers go home to their families each day.”*

### Quote attributable to Minister for Workplace Safety Ingrid Stitt

*“The agriculture industry is already a dangerous environment and is sadly overrepresented in serious incidents and fatalities. Every Victorian deserves to be safe at work, and these laws will strengthen protections for forestry workers.”*