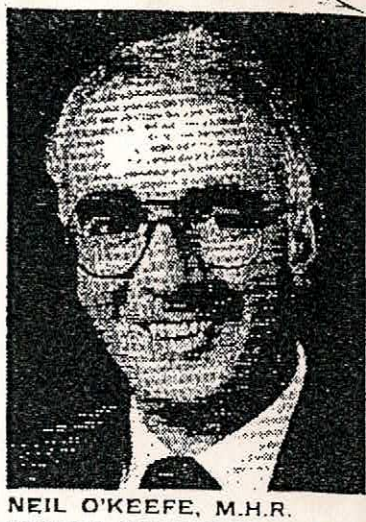
PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



NEIL O'KEEFE, M.H.R.
FEDERAL MEMBER FOR BURKE

O'KEEFE CONTINUES FIGHT FOR WOMBAT

Federal Member for Burke, Mr. Neil O'Keefe today he was determined to continue to fight for the proper management of the Wombat Forest.

Mr. O'Keefe said that although Federal Resource Minister Beddall had announced his decision to renew the woodchipping licences in the Wombat Forest, he understood that stricter controls would now be attached to theses licences.

"In discussions with both Resources Minister Beddall and Environment Minster Faulkner" Mr O'Keefe said, "I have been assured that the Federal Government will be closely monitoring logging operations in the Wombat Forest and will no longer rely on advice from the State Government's Conservation and National Resources Department."

Mr O'Keefe stated that Minister Beddall has also agreed to implement a much needed Environmental Impact Study (EIS) on the Wombat Forest. This EIS will be undertaken by Environment Minister Faulkner's department.

"I have also been advised that, as a direct result of the evidence brought forward by the Wombat Forest Society. the Federal Government is satisfied that there is a need to put in place a national monitoring system to guarantee the integrity of operations which export wood chip licences are involved. This monitoring system will be funded by a royalty on timber taken for export wood chipping."

Mr. O'Keefe said that during the next few months he would be dealing closely with Minister Faulkner's people in regard to the EIS. I am determined to ensure that the Wombat Forest remains a viable resource not just for the timber industry but for the local residents, tourist and of course for the many species of native animals that depend on the forest.

On the broader policy issue of woodchipping Mr. O'Keefe stated he will be strongly supporting moves in Canberra to wind back export wood chipping and bring about the early implementation of the ALP national conference resolution.

21/12/94

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