

# Continuing uncertainty over Ling Siding proposal

THE Chairman of Dorset Renewable Industries (DRI), David Hamilton has revealed that the group still intends to purchase the former Gunn's site at Ling Siding in order to establish an Integrated Timber Processing hub at the site.

"We have reached substantial agreement with RNG Property Developments to purchase most of the industrial land at Ling Siding from them," Mr Hamilton said.

However the sale is still subject to Dorset Renewable Industries receiving the promised grant from the Federal government under the Tasmanian Jobs and Growth Plan.

"The news with respect to the grant is more mixed. Although the incoming Federal government have confirmed that the grant is available, it has made it conditional upon a 'value for money' test.

"The paperwork we need to complete for that test reads very much as if we are actually applying for the grant from scratch.

"The guidelines for the value for money test are still being finalised, and until we see them, we have no feel for how closely our plans match the kind of projects the new Government has in mind."

Mr Hamilton said that Dorset Renewable Industries originally applied for the grant to help diversify the timber industry in the North-East.

"Our plan is to encourage existing and new industries to consolidate their operations at Ling Siding, so they can share resources and pass materials to each other," he said.

"What is waste for one operation could be

valuable raw material for another. Putting such an integrated mix of operations together will necessarily take time, particularly if, as we hope, some are innovative, new industries.

"If the 'value for money' test includes a requirement for everything to be ready to go now, Dorset Renewable Industries and the industry in the North-East will be at a disadvantage.

"Support from the new Federal Liberal Member for Bass, Andrew Nikolic, will be very important in our bid to get this grant, and we will be talking to him as soon as possible."

Mr Hamilton said Robin Gerke, principal of RNG Property, had been very positive during the discussions about the purchase of the Ling Siding site.

"No reasonable person could expect him to wait forever while the status of our funding continues to be uncertain," Mr Hamilton said.

"There will, therefore, be a date after which our agreement may cease to exist and our opportunity to buy Ling Siding to re-establish timber processing operations there may evaporate.

"Dorset Renewable Industries will work very hard to do our very best to make this project happen. We hope the community understands that much is still at stake, and will support our on-going efforts," Mr Hamilton said.

"Support from the new Federal Liberal Member for Bass, Andrew Nikolic, will be very important..."



• Robin Gerke and David Hamilton at the Ling Siding site