



PICTURE: CRAIG ABRAHAM

# Union split on support for Greens

**Paul Robinson**  
Workplace Editor

Thousands of timber, paper and pulp workers have suspended ties with the Trades Hall Council over their simmering war with the Greens and supporters of the environmental party.

The workers, members of the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union's timber and paper divisions, will meet next week to consider permanent disaffiliation, which could cost the council tens of thousands of dollars in annual income.

Forestry division national assistant secretary Michael O'Connor made a blistering attack on THC officials for allowing the Greens to launch their industrial relations policy yesterday in the Trades Hall ballroom.

Mr O'Connor said the THC had not sought the views of the CFMEU — a key affiliate. "We find this disturbing that THC secretary Leigh Hubbard has not got in touch with us over this," he said. "It is not in keeping with the responsibilities of his office."

Mr O'Connor said it was no coincidence that THC president Dean Mighell was also a member of the Greens and a co-author of the party's industrial policy. Mr Mighell resigned in dramatic fashion from the ALP in March saying the party had lost its way with workers.

Mr O'Connor said: "We wonder whether Mr Hubbard and other key office-bearers of the THC, such as Dean Mighell, who happens to be a member of the Greens, are more concerned about being sycophants of the Greens than respecting Victorian workers. We think this confirms that the THC has completely lost

its way. It can't make up its mind whether it wants to represent workers or become some splinter political group that is more concerned about issues that affect the cafes of Lygon Street than the factories and sawmills of Victoria."

The timber union has been at odds with the government since Premier Steve Bracks revealed during the election campaign that it would reduce logging in the Otway Ranges and in the Goolengook Forest in Gippsland.

Mr O'Connor, a key figure in the ALP's Pledge faction, has resigned from the party's powerful administrative committee over the "sop to the Greens". The CFMEU's forestry state secretary, Jane Calvert, has also resigned from the ALP recently in protest, and a rank-and-file member, Brad Platschinda, is standing as an independent candidate for Morwell against the ALP.

Mr Hubbard said he understood the anger and frustration of Mr O'Connor and his members but the THC had a policy of promoting the use of the council's meeting rooms for progressive groups.

"We want the Bracks Government re-elected and the Greens are going to help in doing that."

Michael wants us to stop the Greens from meeting at the Trades Hall. But how do we stand doing that when the Greens are progressive and have an industrial policy that we can support. After all, it was written by Dean Mighell."

Mr Mighell said the Greens' industrial policy backed workers where Labor fell short. He dismissed Mr O'Connor's remarks, saying they were misguided.

## nt drive

Ms Davies, who won the seat of Gippsland West in 1997, is facing a challenge from Mr Smith after a redistribution of boundaries merged Pakenham into the rural electorate.

Ms Nesbit said: "The only thing I can offer (the electorate) is honesty and integrity and if they need something done I'll get out there and do it. I'm like a dog with a bone. You tell me I can't do something and I'll show you I can bloody well do it as good as anybody else."

Ms Nesbit, a vocal campaigner on issues of law and order, said Victoria needed a person who would stand up for the rights of the victim because Labor had become too concerned about the civil rights of the criminal.

**HOCKING STUART**

**Human Resource Management**