

3 November 2015

Minister Joyce congratulated on export fees independent review

The Australian Forest Products Association (AFPA) has congratulated the Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources, Barnaby Joyce, on listening to industry concerns regarding the way export fees and charges were being assessed under the revised export certification program.

Minister Joyce has announced that there will be independent reviews to examine the export certification and inspection costs associated with plant and meat exports.

Chief Executive Officer of AFPA, Mr Ross Hampton said, "It is vital to Australia's forest product industries and the national economy more broadly, that our exporters thrive and new market opportunities are pursued. The forest, wood and paper products industry adds more than \$21 billion to the economy and directly employs, through the full value chain, some 120,000 people. We export some \$2.5 billion in forest products every year. Forest product industries have had real concerns that the revised export fees and charges were not equitable, efficient or transparent."

"We greatly appreciate Minister Joyce's commitment to an independent review and applaud his statement that:

"While it's reasonable that industry pays for the services they receive, it's also reasonable for industry to expect that the costs being recovered are legitimate costs for industry to bear—and not costs reasonably borne by government.

"That's why I'm ensuring independent reviews of the plant and meat export programmes will take a closer look at the department's costs and the methodology used to determine the fees and charges.

"This will give exporters more confidence in the way the government recovers the cost of export, and better visibility of how costs are calculated and passed on.

"We want to drive profits back through the farmgate, so we have to make sure fees and charges are fair, equitable, transparent and relative to the services being provided."

Minister Barnaby Joyce Media Release 2 Nov, 2015

"The forest product industries also share the Minister's sense of urgency and look forward to the independent review being completed as promised by February 2016," said Mr Hampton.

AFPA represents forest growers, harvesters, and manufacturers of timber and paper products.

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