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East Gippsland RFA extension welcomed, but long-term certainty needed

The Australian Forest Products Association (AFPA) welcomes the joint Federal and Victorian Governments' extension of the East Gippsland Regional Forest Agreement (RFA).

AFPA's Chief Executive Officer, Mr Ross Hampton, said today's joint announcement recognised the importance of the national RFA framework, which strikes the right balance between economic, environmental and social considerations for the sustainable management of Australia's forests.

"Nationally the forest products industry directly employs around 120,000 people along the industry value chain – most of which are in regional communities - with a further 180,000 jobs supported through flow-on economic activity," Mr Hampton said.

"The RFA framework ensures best practice environmental standards flourish, while providing a level of certainty of resource supply to industry that underpins investment, supports innovation and creates jobs."

AFPA expects that the 13-month extension to the East Gippsland RFA is a one-off delay in the RFA framework renewal process, with all 10 RFAs around Australia expiring within the next three years.

Mr Hampton said industry will continue to work with the Federal and State Governments to ensure that the RFA framework continues to deliver on all its objectives.

"While the short-term extension is welcome, it is vital that we see a 20-year extension across all RFAs without further delays to provide the certainty of resource supply necessary for industry to remain competitive, encourage investment and innovation, and underpin jobs."

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

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