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Prime Minister Turnbull announces National Forest Industries Plan

Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull has announced the development of a comprehensive plan to support the growth and sustainability of the Australian timber industry over the coming decades.

In presenting the keynote address to a gathering of some 500 forest industry leaders at the AFPA Gala Dinner at Parliament House last night, Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull committed to a National Forest Industries Plan.

“Tonight I am pleased to announce I am requesting Anne Ruston to help us develop a new Government Plan that will underpin growth in the renewable timber and wood-fibre industry and work with a new government plan to give you the vision and certainty you need. We are committed to developing this industry as a growth engine for regional Australia.” Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull, AFPA Gala Dinner, Parliament House, Canberra. September 12, 2017.

Assistant Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources Anne Ruston said the Australian Government saw a bright future ahead for forest industries.

“The Australian forest industry directly provides tens of thousands of jobs, many of which support rural and regional communities. The Turnbull Government reaffirms its strong support for the sector and is committed to further collaboration to achieve certainty into the future,” Minister Ruston said.

AFPA Chairman Greg McCormack has enthusiastically welcomed the development of a National Forest Industries Plan.

“The guiding policy documents used by Government to frame responses to our industries were both delivered last century: the 1992 National Forest Policy Statement and the 1997 Plantations Vision 2020 plan. Our industries have changed dramatically since then and I am delighted the Prime Minister has recognised that it is vital that Government and Departments also update their approach,” Mr McCormack said.

“The new Government *National Forest Industries Plan* will, we trust, outline actions to support the industry to establish new plantations, increase investment and grasp opportunities in the emerging bio-economy to turbo-charge regional job creation and economic development.”

Last night’s Gala Dinner was also an opportunity to celebrate the industry’s best and brightest, with the announcement of the winners of the inaugural 2017 Forest Industry Innovation Awards.

“AFPA congratulates our three award winners – OneSafeGroup for Innovation in Safety, Timber Communities Australia for Innovation in Training, and AKD Softwoods for Innovation in Business. The winners in each category were presented with a \$1000 cash prize and a beautiful timber trophy,” Mr McCormack said.

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

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