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## National Forest Industries Plan will underpin ongoing industry growth

Australia's sustainable forest product industries had a record log harvest in 2016-17, increasing in both value and volume, according to statistics and forecasts published today by the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences (ABARES).

The ABARES report for the March and June quarters 2017 shows growth in demand for Australia's sustainably managed wood products resulted in an estimated record harvest of logs of up to 33 million m<sup>3</sup>, worth \$2.5 billion. The report does highlight challenges for industry including a softening demand for new house construction and reliance on a few key domestic and international markets.

Australian Forest Products Association (AFPA) Chair, Mr Greg McCormack, welcomed the news that again highlights our industry's significant contribution to the environment, regional jobs, communities and economies in Australia.

"ABARES' latest figures underscore the pressing need to progress the National Forest Industries Plan (Plan), recently announced by Assistant Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources Anne Ruston. A well-designed Plan will detail the necessary government and industry policies to incentivise and support investment in new plantations and associated forest product industries," Mr McCormack said.

"Demand for wood-fibre and innovative wood products in the Asia-Pacific region continues to expand, creating huge potential for our sustainable forest industries. Australia is well placed to meet this demand, if opportunities and innovations are capitalised on, and our industries are supported."

"The Plan needs bipartisan support across all levels of government to provide a sustainable pathway for forest industries to follow in the future. The good news is that if governments act now, it is not too late to support the establishment of new plantations, provide investment certainty to industry, underpin innovation, and support regional jobs and investment," Mr McCormack said.

"AFPA also continues to work closely with the Federal Government on new policy initiatives to support Australia's renewable forest industries, such as the National Institute for Forest Products Innovation, inclusion of the forestry sector in energy/climate change policy (e.g. in the Emissions Reduction Fund), and recognition of the role renewable bioenergy can play in emissions reduction."

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

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