

Media Release



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New forestry research shows need for more trees in Tumut-Tumbarumba area

A new report highlights the urgent need for new investment in forest plantations in the Tumut-Tumbarumba area, with both sides of federal politics now committed to major plans for Australia's forest industries, Chair of the Softwood Working Group (SWG), Mr Peter Crowe, and Chief Executive Officer of the Australian Forest Products Association (AFPA), Mr Ross Hampton said today.

"The Socio-economic Impacts of the softwood plantation industry: South West Slopes and Central Tablelands regions, NSW report, funded by Forest and Wood Products Australia (FWPA) and the NSW Government highlights the economic importance of the softwood plantation industry for the communities of the South West Slopes and Central Tablelands," Mr Crowe said.

"The report suggests that in key regional hubs like Tumut, Tumbarumba, Oberon and Bombala, the industry generates a large proportion of all employment, including a high proportion of full time jobs and higher than average income. It also concludes that people living in these areas perceive the forest industry to be a positive contributor to local employment. Furthermore, it suggests 52 per cent of jobs in the Snowy Valleys LGA are either directly or indirectly associated with the timber industry," Mr Crowe concluded.

"Once again, we have another indicator in this report, which points to the need for governments to focus on increasing investment in Australia's plantation estate. The latest figures have total national forest plantation area going backwards and with the Turnbull Government's commitment to a National Forestry Industry Plan and now Federal Labor's commitment for a 'comprehensive' plan for the sector, there is a great opportunity to get plantings back on track," Mr Hampton said.

"AFPA has called for 300,000 new hectares of new forest plantations and 100,000 new hectares of targeted farm forestry plantings across Australia. It would make sense that areas such as Tumut with its established plantations, should be prime candidates for further plantation expansion. Plantations currently only use about 0.5 per cent of rural land. Even after increasing their overall size by 400,000 the amount would be just 0.6 per cent.

"This latest report shows just how much key rural and regional communities across the country rely on forest industries. We need substantial policies to increase investment in new forest plantations in these regions to avert a timber and jobs crisis, which will occur if nothing is done," Mr Hampton concluded.

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

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