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## Forestry responsibility still in limbo

The Australian Forest Products Association (AFPA) has called on the Government to urgently resolve responsibilities for the carriage of the different sectors contained within the Government's Agriculture and Water Resources portfolio.

AFPA Chief Executive Officer Mr Ross Hampton said, "It is now four weeks since the Ministerial reshuffle, which saw Senator Richard Colbeck promoted from Parliamentary Secretary with responsibilities for fisheries and forestry to a new Tourism and International Education portfolio. South Australian Liberal Senator Anne Ruston was promoted to fill Senator Colbeck's position as Assistant Minister to the Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources, Barnaby Joyce."

"Despite much attention being paid to the responsibility for water policy, there has been complete silence from the Government when it comes to the vital policy interests of forestry."

The forest, wood and paper products industry in this country employs some 120,000 people across the full value chain, and contributes more than \$20 billion to GDP. It is one of Australia's big growth sectors, with 10,000 new jobs added in just the past 12 months. As one of the few renewable and recyclable products, timber and fibre will play an increasingly large role in a carbon constrained global economy.

"Many in the industry are scratching their heads at the Government's failure to announce whether Minister Joyce or Assistant Minister Ruston will be given primary responsibility for promoting and supporting forestry and forest product industries."

"The situation must be urgently clarified," said Mr Hampton.

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

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