

28 October 2015

Forest Industries welcome Senator Ruston as voice for Forestry

The Australian Forest Products Association (AFPA) has welcomed the announcement that South Australian Senator Anne Ruston will have carriage of forestry and forest industry issues in her role as Assistant Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources.

Chief Executive Officer of AFPA Mr Ross Hampton said, “Senator Ruston’s background and experience in regional Australia, and her dedication to the South Australian economy, means she will be a strong advocate for an industry that not only contributes around 7000 direct and 15,000 indirect jobs in her home state of South Australia, but provides 120,000 direct jobs Australia-wide down the full value chain. Forest industries are a cornerstone of the South Australian state economy and have been for almost 100 years. Because of its heritage, the State is well positioned to be at the forefront of the emerging global, green bio-economy utilising the residues of other forestry operations and Senator Ruston will be able to play a key role in advancing those opportunities.”

“AFPA looks forward to working with Senator Ruston on the major priorities for the industry, and showcasing the importance and potential of our renewable and sustainable industries” said Mr Hampton.

Major priorities for the forest products industry, which were identified in AFPA’s industry wide submission to the Forest Industry Advisory Council (FIAC) Strategic Directions Issues Paper, include:

- *Plantation expansion* – providing new drivers for commercial plantation expansion to deliver the resource needed to secure the future of existing and new wood processing facilities;
- *Regional approaches*- greater emphasis on building upon the strengths of key industry regions through long-term infrastructure and investment incentives for plantation and wood processing expansion
- *New forest, wood and paper products*- positioning the industry to take advantage of opportunities to diversify production and increase value adding in new products such as in engineered wood products, biomaterials, biochemicals and bioenergy
- *Research and Development initiatives*- addressing the dramatic decline in forest industry R&D through greater incentives to build a critical mass of researchers and co-fund priority R&D activities.

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

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