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New dawn for mid-rise timber buildings begins May 1

This Sunday brings a new dawn for mid-rise timber building construction in Australia.

From May 1, builders will be allowed to use timber construction solutions in buildings up to 25 metres in height – or around 8 storeys.

Chief Executive Officer of the Australian Forest Products Association Mr Ross Hampton said, "This represents a great breakthrough in modern design thinking for Australia and brings us more into line with other developed economies."

"I predict a surge in timber construction solutions including the use of mass timber construction in inner urban areas as timber panels are light and easy to use. They offer immense opportunity for developers especially in our capital cities where small mobile cranes and speed of construction is a high priority."

Such construction systems are widely used, for example, in British Columbia (Canada), where 6 storey timber framed construction is regarded as the norm.

Mr Hampton said, "Timber is of course the oldest of building materials and has been shown to last hundreds of years. In a carbon constrained economy, with a premium on environmental values, timber is now well positioned to carve out a significant share of the market."

The new arrangements follow rigorous assessment by fire and other authorities, and amendments to the National Construction Code (NCC), which sets the minimum requirements for the design, construction and performance of buildings throughout Australia.

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

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