

31 May 2016

## **AFPA wins Coalition backing for a National Institute for Forest Products Innovation**

The Turnbull Government has responded to three years of campaigning, by today announcing \$4 million in funding to establish a National Institute for Forest Products Innovation (Institute) in two key nodes of Launceston, Tasmania and Mt Gambier, South Australia.

If the Federal Government funding is matched by both state government and industry funding, it would provide the Institute ultimately \$12 million.

The Chief Executive Officer of the Australian Forest Products Association (AFPA), Mr Ross Hampton said, "This is an announcement which we have fought for as an industry for more than three years. It represents a turning back to our industries after years of decline. Most importantly it signals that the Government understands that the forest and forest product industries are not industries of the past but of the future. This announcement is recognition of the fact that in a carbon constrained global economy, in which renewable resources are at a premium, and when the plastics and fuels we currently derive from oil can be also made from wood fibre, we truly are one of the best bets of the twenty first century. The member for Bass, which encompasses Launceston, Mr Andrew Nikolic and the Member for Barker in which Mt Gambier is located Mr Tony Pasin, must be acknowledged for their determined and resolute advocacy for the Institute and our industries."

Mr Hampton said, "It makes great sense to announce the Institute will operate equally from two initial nodes, one in Launceston and one in Mt Gambier. This will provide the Institute with the broad coverage of both the natural forest and plantation sectors. There are areas of overlap and areas which are different. Ultimately I believe the Institute should also encompass at least a third hub to gather in tropical forestry R&D and the potential of Northern Australia."

"Our national forest and forest products industries have experienced a decade of decline in R&D with too many decision makers not realising the massive potential we offer for economic growth and prosperity. One decade ago there were over 730 researchers working in our industries and \$100 million a year was being spent. That has now plummeted to about 250 researchers and \$30 million. Although this announcement will not establish an Institute of the scale of those in Canada and New Zealand, which is the ultimate goal, it is a big step back in the right direction," said Mr Hampton.

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

**Media Contact:** Yelena Ramli  
AFPA Communications and New Media Officer  
(m) 0409 962 250 (e) [yelena.ramli@ausfpa.com.au](mailto:yelena.ramli@ausfpa.com.au)