

Media Release



1 June 2016

The Great Forest Industries Election Debate

The Australian Forest Products Association (AFPA) will host the sold-out Great Debate at the National Press Club tonight with more than 180 attending.

On stage will be Senator the Hon Anne Ruston, Assistant Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources; the Hon Joel Fitzgibbon, Shadow Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry; and Senator Janet Rice, Australian Greens Forestry spokesperson.

In two exciting initiatives, AFPA will live screen the event on YouTube enabling anyone to watch and will be providing some audience participation via a live feedback web application.

AFPA Chairman Mr Greg McCormack said, "The Great Debate will provide a platform for the forest, wood and paper products industry across Australia to connect with the major Parties leading up to the election. We will have a great opportunity to discuss policies that matter and challenges facing the industry as a whole. We directly represent 120,000 Australians across the whole forest products value chain, and a total of 300,000 direct and indirect employees right across Australia."

AFPA CEO Mr Ross Hampton said, "Our multi-media platform will provide a two-way communication opportunity for forest industry players and those who seek endorsement to fill the roles where they will make decisions about our livelihoods. Observers (in the room and online) will be able to register their views on specific policies, and the politicians will have a valuable chance to road test their policies with still a month to go before polling day."

AFPA's nine big policy asks for this election are: a National Forest and Fibre Plan; access to the Carbon Farming Initiative to support plantation investment; support for R&D through a National Institute for Forest Products Innovation; recognition of thermal heat in the Renewable Energy Target; strengthening of the antidumping system; promotion of renewable bioenergy opportunities from biomass; funding for farm forestry; bushfire mitigation through a national mechanical fuel reduction program; and renewal of the Regional Forest Agreements.

The event will be live streamed from 7pm AEST Wednesday 1 June on AFPA's official YouTube page: [YouTube](#) **AustForests**.

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