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Direct democracy unleashed by AFPA

In another national first for an Association, the Australian Forest Products Association (AFPA) will be providing all participants at the upcoming Great Debate the chance to "live vote" for the best answers given by politicians on stage.

The event at the National Press Club next Wednesday evening June 1 is a sell-out with 160 to be seated. To cater to the extra demand, AFPA will be live screening the event on YouTube enabling anyone, anywhere to watch, provide comments, and importantly to be able to join in the live voting.

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.

Chief Executive Officer of AFPA, Mr Ross Hampton said, "This is our chance to really bring home to our political leaders the importance of our issues. It is the evening when 'Direct democracy' comes to our industries. The three MPs on the stage know the nine big policy asks of our industries in this campaign. They also know that June 1 is the day that they will be asked directly where their Parties stand."

"There are 120,000 people who work across the entire forest industries value chain. The live voting results next Wednesday will guide all of them in regards to issues of importance to our industries. AFPA will be reporting these results directly into our 32 chosen marginal and forestry electorates," said Mr Hampton.

AFPA 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 on AFPA's official YouTube page: [YouTube **AustForests**](https://www.youtube.com/AustForests)

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

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