



SOUTH AUSTRALIAN BRANCH

Australian Forest Products Association

MEDIA RELEASE

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Attracting skilled workers to forest industries and the Green Triangle

An initiative to address forest industry skill shortages in the Green Triangle region is one step closer following a forum organised by the Australian Forest Products Association – SA Branch (AFPA-SA) last week (17 August 2016).

AFPA-SA brought together local forest industry employers with representatives from Holden and the State Government's Automotive Transitions Team to explore the potential for skilled workers from the auto industry to be attracted into the Green Triangle's expanding forest industry.

AFPA-SA State Manager Ms Clare Scriven said there was great potential for a win-win-win situation for the region, the local forest industries and for some of the hundreds of automotive workers, who will be losing their jobs as Holden ceases manufacturing in South Australia.

"Forest industries have significantly expanded over the past five years through improved manufacturing technology, increased international demand for timber products and a growing awareness of the carbon benefits of growing, harvesting and re-planting forests," Ms Scriven said. "Harvest operations in the region have already doubled, and are set to expand further, which creates demand throughout the value chain. The huge demand for harvest and haulage operators is well known in the area, but there is also an unmet need for machinery tradespeople, experienced manufacturing leaders and other high-skill roles."

Holden and the Auto Transitions Team outlined the types of skills on offer from workers from both Holden and the greater supply chain, with examples including lean manufacturing skills, quality assurance, change management and mechanical maintenance.

"The breadth of skills available from the auto chain was quite surprising. People tend to think mainly of production line workers, but in fact the potential employees include qualified tradespeople, engineers, IT specialists, as well as staff in procurement, logistics, human resources and finance."

"Local employers want to use local people wherever possible, but where there are shortages of skilled personnel, it is crucial for the local economy that we attract staff from other areas. Now that they are aware of the expertise available, we will be promoting both the industry and the region to attract skilled staff," said Ms Scriven.

Regional Development Australia Limestone Coast and local councils will be working with AFPA-SA to stage an industry and regional Expo at the Holden Transitions Centre in Adelaide at the end of September.

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

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