

# Media Release

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## **AFPA welcomes investment for National Forest Biosecurity Surveillance Strategy**

The Australian Forest Products Association (AFPA) welcomes the Federal Government's investment of nearly \$900,000 to combat exotic pests and diseases that threaten forests, through its newly released *National Forest Biosecurity Surveillance Strategy 2018-2023*, Chief Executive Officer of AFPA, Mr Ross Hampton, said today.

"AFPA looks forward to working with the recently announced National Forest Biosecurity Surveillance Group and Coordinator, Paco Tovar, to tackle the biological risks facing our forest industries. AFPA members worked closely with the Government to develop the contents of the strategy," Mr Hampton said.

"Since 1900, over 125 exotic forestry pests have established in Australia, while there are currently 20 forest pests deemed high risk to Australian forests. As advocates for the full product value chain of forest industries, it's incumbent on AFPA and the Government to do all we can to prevent the incursion and proliferation of exotic forest threatening pests.

"Forest industries are responsible for tens of thousands of jobs and billions of dollars in economic value in Australia, which is why it's so important that the aims of this strategy are realised. We need to ensure that everyone involved along our full product value chain is doing everything possible to support forestry biosecurity surveillance, while measures like incursion preparedness plans for pests are developed and effectively implemented.

"Exotic forest pests and diseases have the ability to cause major negative social, economic and environmental harm. AFPA will work with industry stakeholders along with Federal and State Governments to make sure this Strategy counts. The stakes are too high for it not to," Mr Hampton concluded.

ENDS.

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

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