

## Media Release

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### **Resumption of timber harvesting on NSW Coast urgently needed to save hundreds of jobs**

The Australian Forest Products Association (AFPA) has welcomed reports that urgently needed hardwood timber harvesting on the South Coast will resume soon, as timber mills have been starved of log deliveries for more than a year and are at crisis point.

AFPA CEO Mr Ross Hampton said there were hundreds of forestry-dependent jobs at stake on the South Coast if supply to timber mills does not resume, and thousands more hardwood timber jobs across the state on the line.

“Forestry Corporation of NSW has done the right thing and taken on board the EPA advice to develop additional environmental safeguards that strike a balance on the environment and the need to resume supply to industry,” Mr Hampton said.

“Almost 15 months since the fires, we have seen the resilience of our native forests with abundant regrowth. It is time to focus on providing certainty for the timber industry that is a major employer on the South Coast, and avoid an imminent crisis if these mills close.”

“Already there are mills that have run out of logs to process and are on the verge of laying off workers and closing. Others will follow if FCNSW does not take this course of action.”

Mr Hampton urged the EPA to allow the experienced forest scientists and ecologists at FCNSW to get on with the job of sustainably managing the state’s multi-use forests.

“The science shows that it is not an “either-or’ proposition – native forests managed sustainably for timber production and recreation deliver the same or better environmental outcomes as NSW’s millions of hectares of National Parks and reserves.”

Mr Hampton said the real environmental catastrophe would be if Australia’s sustainable native timber industry closed and we relied solely on imported hardwood timber.

“Our native timber harvesting operations are among the most sustainable, strictly regulated in the world, with only 0.2% of NSW native forests harvested annually for timber production, and they are all regenerated by law,” Mr Hampton said.

“Closing Australia’s sustainably managed native timber industry won’t stop the demand for quality appearance-grade hardwood for floorboards, staircases and furniture. It will just increase imports from countries with weaker environmental safeguards at high risk of illegal logging and deforestation,” Mr Hampton concluded.

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