

Media Release

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Aussies demand more locally grown timber as building supply constraints continue to bite

More than 9 out of 10 Australians want our nation to become more self-sufficient in providing timber for our homes and offices, and more than three quarters strongly support government policy to ensure the country can meet future demand by growing more timber in sustainably managed plantations.

These are two key findings from a UComms survey conducted in the Western Sydney federal electorate of Lindsay, commissioned by the Australian Forest Products Association (AFPA).

AFPA, Deputy Chief Executive Officer Victor Violante said the results show Australian governments must take more responsibility to ensure we have the sovereign capability to secure our housing construction needs.

“Australia’s post-pandemic housing construction boom, spurred by welcome incentives like *HomeBuilder* and exacerbated by a sharp decline in imported timber, has highlighted just how important it is to grow our own timber for housing.

“This experience should be a wake-up call for policy makers that domestic supply of timber for our homes is as vital for our nation as food and fuel.

“For far too long governments have ignored the fact that our domestic timber supply has not kept pace with population growth. The global surge in timber prices has made it harder to fill this gap with imported timber and revealed just how vulnerable we are.”

Australia produces three times as much food as we can consume as a nation, but we are far from self-sufficient in timber – both hardwoods and softwoods.

“Timber sawmills around Australia are working overtime, double shifts and weekends at maximum capacity to try to meet the unprecedented demand,” Mr Violante said.

“But decades of failing to plan for our population’s housing needs means we will continue to see cyclical shortages unless we start growing our timber plantation footprint today.”

Analysts have identified that we need about another 400,000 hectares of plantations to keep pace with our population, from about 2 million hectares to some 2.4 million hectares. For context there is about 370 million hectares of agricultural land in Australia.

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“All previous plantation expansion in Australia has been the result of state and federal government policy, in recognition that securing our housing needs should be core government business.

“The Federal Government’s [One Billion Trees program](#) has the potential to secure our future timber needs, and we urge state and federal governments to work together to fast-track meeting this goal,” Mr Violante concluded.

About the poll:

UComms poll of 633 residents conducted in the Western Sydney federal electorate of Lindsay over the 1st, 2nd & 3rd of June 2021.

Key Results:

- More than 94 per cent of respondents either ‘strongly agree’ or ‘agree’ that Australia should produce its own timber to meet its housing needs.
- Almost 9 in 10 respondents ‘strongly agree’ or ‘agree’ that state and federal governments have a responsibility to ensure Australia has enough timber for its housing needs.
- More than 9 in 10 respondents said it was either ‘very important’ or ‘important’ for Australia to be self-sufficient in supplying its own timber, instead of relying on imports.
- More than 92 per cent of respondents either ‘strongly supported’ or ‘supported’ government policy to grow more timber in sustainably managed plantations.

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