

Media Release

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AFPA congratulates new Nationals Ministry and urges focus on forest industries' regional economic potential

The Federal Coalition Government has a great opportunity to use the latest Nationals' Ministry changes to secure Australia's future timber needs and turbocharge regional manufacturing jobs by backing Australia's sustainable forest industries, the Australian Forest Products Association (AFPA) said today.

AFPA Chief Executive Officer Ross Hampton congratulated the new Ministers and says now is the time for the Government to future-proof our housing construction needs and harness the climate and economic benefits of our sustainable forest industries.

"On behalf of Australia's forest industries I congratulate the new Nationals Ministers, especially Senator Bridget McKenzie who has been a tireless advocate for our timber industries, especially in her home state of Victoria, over the past year," Mr Hampton said.

"Senator McKenzie is a great choice to lead the Government's regional economic development agenda. As well as being a passionate voice for the regions, Senator McKenzie also recognises the importance of our \$24 billion-a-year forest industries and their potential to play an even greater role in regional Australia.

"We congratulate new Deputy Prime Minister Barnaby Joyce and new Ministers, Andrew Gee, David Gillespie and Kevin Hogan, all of whom have vital forest industries resources and processing facilities in their electorates.

"We also pay tribute to former Deputy Prime Minister Michael McCormack and former Minister and Member for Gippsland, Darren Chester, both of whom will no doubt continue to be strong advocates for forest industries in their electorates."

Mr Hampton said Australia's forest industries are primed for growth to add to the 80,000 existing forest industry jobs around the nation.

"Our plantations already replant 70 million trees every year and our sustainable native forests are replanted after use. With modest growth in Australia's plantation estate to provide house frames and a secure future for our modest native estate to add the hardwood floors and windows, we can offset even more emissions, secure our future timber needs and create new advanced manufacturing industries to replace non-renewable plastics and energy-intensive building materials.

"AFPA already has an excellent working relationship with Assistant Minister for Forestry Jonno Duniam and his colleagues, and we look forward to building on that with the new members of the Nationals' Ministry," Mr Hampton concluded.

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