

## Media Release

23 August 2021

### **Inclusion of forestry sector under Australian Agriculture Visa welcomed**

The Australian Forest Products Association (AFPA) welcomes the Federal Government's inclusion of the forestry sector under the new Australian Agriculture Visa, AFPA CEO Ross Hampton said today.

The new visa is being established to build on successful existing Pacific worker schemes and will respond to workforce shortages across the agriculture, fisheries, and forestry sectors. It will be administered by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT).

"Like many industries across agriculture, forest industries also require the flexibility to onboard international workers in response to workforce shortages, including in activities like planting new production trees," Mr Hampton said.

"Australia is currently experiencing major timber supply constraints with peaking demand for new homes and renovations, constraints which will only worsen in the decades ahead if we don't get more production trees in the ground, under the Government's Billion Trees Plan. The increasing global demand for timber has also shown we can't rely on imports to fill the gap.

"The inclusion of the forestry sector under this visa will mean flexibility for the sector in hiring workers to boost the future supply of timber for houses and the array of sustainable fibre products increasingly replacing harmful plastics.

"We thank Agriculture Minister David Littleproud and Assistant Minister for Forestry and Fisheries Senator Jonno Duniham for recognising the increasing importance of forest industries to produce vital and sustainable timber and fibre products that are becoming more essential in everyday life for Australians," Mr Hampton concluded.

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