

Media Release

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National Forestry Ministers' meeting an important step towards securing Australia's future timber needs

The Australian Forest Products Association (AFPA) has welcomed the willingness of national, state and territory forestry ministers to work together on policies that will grow Australia's timber plantation estate, as the nation faces a critical housing timber shortage in the coming decades.

AFPA Acting CEO Victor Violante commended Federal Assistant Minister Jonno Duniam for convening yesterday's landmark meeting of forestry ministers, and for giving industry representatives the opportunity to brief the ministers on the challenges and opportunities facing the sector.

"The Ministers heard first-hand from some of Australia's leading timber sawmills and plantation growers about the need for immediate policy support to grow Australia's timber plantation estate, which has fallen well short of meeting our future housing construction needs," Mr Violante said.

"A [report](#) from Master Builders Australia and AFPA released yesterday on Australia's house framing timber shortage revealed Australia is headed towards a major cliff in timber framing production – we will be 250,000 house frames short by 2035 without immediate action to grow our timber plantation resource."

Mr Violante said Australia's forest industries hoped the meeting was the start of a new era of state and federal government resolve to grow Australia's plantation estate, and to unlock forestry's potential to contribute further to Australia's climate change mitigation efforts.

"Our industry's key message to the Ministers is that we do not have enough timber plantations in the ground today to meet Australia's future home-building needs.

"This is a vital issue that demands a COAG-level plan to deliver on the Federal [Commonwealth's goal to grow our plantation estate by one billion trees by 2030](#). We hope yesterday's meeting was a significant step towards that."

Mr Violante said industry representatives outlined a range of measures that governments could deliver that would trigger the private sector to establish new plantations, including:

- Unlocking the carbon market opportunities for the plantations sector through the Commonwealth's Emissions Reduction Fund as well as the voluntary national and international carbon markets.

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- Supporting farmers to incorporate forestry alongside their agricultural production, which studies have found can boost crop and lambing yields as well as provide an additional income stream for farmers.
- More regulatory certainty, particularly around water, land use and planning laws, to provide the stability forest growers need to make 30-plus year investment decisions.
- Supporting innovation in forestry and wood processing to find higher value uses for sawmill and forest residues and smaller logs, such as engineered timber products and biomaterials.

“The good news is that Australia is well-placed to achieve these goals. We have some of the best forestry and timber operations in the world that lead the way in innovation, sustainability, skilled workforce, and market confidence.

“What we need now is a national consensus to grow the plantation estate to secure the home-building needs for future generations, and industry stands ready to play its part,” Mr Violante concluded.

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