

Media Release

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Extension of Regional Forestry Hub funding welcomed, but progress needed on vital timber plantations to meet Australia's future housing needs

Australia's forest industries welcome the Federal Government's \$9 million funding boost to nine Regional Forestry Hubs across the country, Chief Executive Officer of the Australian Forest Products Association (AFPA), Ross Hampton said today.

"This is a great announcement and will ensure that Regional Forestry Hubs continue to do the vital planning for forestry to grow in their regions," Mr Hampton said.

"As Assistant Minister for Forestry Senator Jonno Duniham says, we need the 'right trees at the right scale in the right locations'.

"By supporting the Regional Forestry Hubs, the Federal Government is acknowledging that the goal of one billion new trees should be all about ensuring growth occurs in the regional locations where there is the processing capacity, a skilled workforce and transport networks."

Mr Hampton said the additional Regional Forestry Hubs and recent changes to the Emissions Reduction Fund that allows new plantations to contribute to Australia's emissions reductions are a great start, but more is needed to deliver the urgently needed timber for our homes.

"Australia imports about a quarter of the timber we use and the disruption to supply chains through the COVID pandemic has shown that is not a reliable position. We must become far more self-sufficient. And yet we are going backwards in tree area.

"The latest ABARES report shows that plantations in Australia have shrunk from around [2 million hectares to less than 1.8 million hectares](#). Meanwhile, [by 2035 Australia will fall 250,000 house frames short](#) of producing enough timber to meet demand unless we urgently grow our timber plantation estate.

"Growing new timber plantations should be a major part of Australia's net-zero emissions by 2050 goal, producing a win for the environment, the farmer and the builders needing timber."

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