

## Media Release

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### **‘Nothing more important than supply of timber products’, Fitzgibbon says in final speech to Parliament**

In his valedictory speech in Parliament today, the outgoing Member for Hunter Hon. Joel Fitzgibbon spoke passionately in support of Australia’s sustainable forest industries, declaring that “nothing is more important than the supply of our timber products”.

In his speech, Mr Fitzgibbon urged the Parliament to put a greater emphasis on securing Australia’s future timber needs as he reflected on his time in the agriculture and forestry portfolio and as co-convenor of the Parliamentary Friends of Forestry and Forest Industries group with Liberal Member for Barker Tony Pasin over the past decade.

“We talk about supply chains and sovereign capability in the COVID environment – nothing is more important than the supply of our timber products,” Mr Fitzgibbon said.

“We are becoming increasingly import-dependent and there’s a shortage around the world, so it’s going to be harder to get those timber products.”

Mr Fitzgibbon also said in his speech that “we need to get more plantations in the ground, and it requires patient capital. We support industries in all sorts of forms, all we need to do is give them full access to carbon credits under the Emissions Reduction Fund. There’s been a bit of movement, but we need to do much more.”

Australian Forest Products Association (AFPA) CEO Ross Hampton thanked Mr Fitzgibbon for his strong support for our forest industries and for helping raise the profile of the industry in Parliament.

“It is heartening to know that Joel, a politician respected by both sides of Parliament, recognises that sovereign capability in forestry is critically important to our nation’s future and in helping Australia reach its net zero by 2050 target,” Mr Hampton said.

“For a politician that has seen so much in his 26 years of Parliament to highlight forestry in his valedictory speech is telling on its importance.”

Mr Hampton said Mr Fitzgibbon’s contribution to Parliament would be missed, and on behalf of the industry wished him all the best on his next endeavours.

“Joel has been an absolute champion of forest industries, and those across industry and in the Parliament will miss him,” Mr Hampton concluded.

**ENDS**

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