

Media Release

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Growth and innovation to help meet Australia's future timber needs secured by AFPA

The Australian Forest Products Association (AFPA) has confirmed that Australia's forest industries have been assured more than \$300 million in new funding, including a new National Institute for Forest Products Innovation (NIFPI), new measures to boost the billion timber trees program and support for timber mill innovation to help tackle the nation's timber shortages.

Last night, AFPA hosted the National Forest Industries Election Forum in Launceston, where the crowd heard from Assistant Minister for Forestry, Senator Jonno Duniam, and Shadow Minister for Agriculture Julie Collins about the Coalition and Labor's respective plans to help drive the future of forest industries if elected.

AFPA Chief Executive Officer Ross Hampton said, "The Coalition led the way in commitments over the last two months based on AFPA's 'Plan for Growth'. These were \$100 million for a new NIFPI to be headquartered in Tasmania, \$112.9 million of grants to boost adoption of new wood processing technologies to get more timber into the hands of builders and \$86.2 million to kickstart stalled new plantation growth. Last night Labor too agreed to all these measures.

"Pleasingly, both the Coalition and Labor also committed to fast-tracking the removal of regulatory barriers in the Emissions Reduction Fund in five key forestry regions currently excluded from accessing carbon credits."

Labor agreed to match the Government's announced \$6.6 million for ongoing Regional Forestry Hubs Funding and \$4.4 million to strengthen Australia's illegal logging and timber traceability ID systems.

Labor also committed \$10 million for skills and training specifically for the sector.

Assistant Minister Duniam reiterated the Coalition's determination to ensure the future of sustainably harvested and regrown native forestry, promising no more lockups and a process to ensure state governments which signed Regional Forest Agreements were not able to unilaterally reduce timber volumes.

Shadow Minister Collins told the audience an Albanese Government would also back native forestry and that there would be no more native forestry lock ups under her.

Regarding the 'safeguard mechanism' which applies to some facilities in the pulp, paper, tissue and packaging sector, Senator Duniam gave a categorical assurance that there would

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be no carbon liability under a Morrison Government. Shadow Minister Collins said under Labor's climate policy the Clean Energy Regulator would be told to take into account facilities' exposure to overseas competition which did not face the same carbon regulations when determining facilities' liabilities.

"The hundreds of thousands of Australians who work directly in our industry or with the products we create, thank Jonno Duniam and Julie Collins for their leadership, and we look forward to working with the next Federal Government on implementing these announcements to get more timber into the hands of home builders and make an even larger contribution to Australia's target of being net zero emissions by 2050," Ross Hampton concluded.

**A complete video of the forum will be available on the AFPA website shortly.*

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