

Media Release

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Policy incentives for tree farmers needed as plantation estate shrinks by number of house-frames used in whole city of Geelong

New Australian Forest Products Association (AFPA) analysis has revealed that Australia's forestry plantation estate has shrunk by the equivalent of 76-thousand timber house-frames as farmers and landowners pivot to other commodities which pay higher, short term, returns.

Over the last six years the loss to the national estate has been staggering. It has fallen 230,000 hectares from 1.973 million hectares in 2014-15 to 1.744 million hectares in 2020-21.



“This is devastating news for builders as it means we have lost the equivalent of 76-thousand frames – that’s a city the size of Geelong. This serves as a warning to governments that policy incentives for farmers to plant production trees are critical”, Chief Executive Officer of AFPA Ross Hampton said today.

“Farmers and landholders need the right policy assistance to ensure that when their tree crop is harvested, they make the decision to plant another. Timber crops are a great investment delivering a huge windfall for farmers when they are harvested (softwood is harvested at about 30 years for example) but they currently offer a slower return than some other options. They can also help farmers achieve carbon neutrality.

“That is why it is so vital that the farmer or landowner is able to participate in national carbon markets and be rewarded for their decision to replant production trees rather than change to another commodity - usually red meat.

“The Albanese Government has a target of getting [one billion more production trees](#) in the ground by 2030 to help make our nation far less dependent on timber imports, which in the past have had to come from as far away as Europe, and help achieve more ambitious climate targets. The first vital step in going forward is to stop going backwards.”

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