

## Media Release

19 September 2022

### **AFPA employs National Forest Biosecurity Manager**

In a move to recognise the heightened importance of effective biosecurity across the sector, the Australian Forest Products Association (AFPA) has recruited forest health and biosecurity expert, Paco Tovar as its new National Forest Biosecurity Manager, Chief Executive Officer of AFPA Ross Hampton announced today.

Paco's new role is responsible for improving forest industries' awareness, preparedness, and management of biosecurity issues.

"We welcome Paco to the AFPA team and look forward to his expertise making a real impact protecting our forest industries from biosecurity threats. Australia's working forests need to be as pest and disease free as possible to protect their health, ensure maximum yields, guarantee timber and fibre product quality, and to protect access to export markets," Ross Hampton said.

"I'm excited to have joined AFPA and to contribute to the organisation's leading role in improving forest biosecurity in Australia," Paco Tovar said.

"Over the coming months work will commence with AFPA members and the Growers Chamber's Forest Health and Biosecurity (FH&B) subcommittee to develop improved biosecurity procedures and business continuity arrangements.

"Our successful partnership with Plant Health Australia will continue, as we work together, to implement a National Forest Pest Surveillance Program. This program will deliver better forest pest surveillance from our ports and airports to our working forests and improve the chances of detecting and managing biosecurity threats before they significantly impact our forests," Paco Tovar concluded.

"Healthy forests that remain shielded from biosecurity threats are better for industry, for timber and fibre product consumers and of course the environment that forest industries are committed to effectively managing and protecting. Paco's employment demonstrates AFPA's continued and growing commitment in this area," Ross Hampton concluded.

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