

## Media Release

16 November 2022

### **Aussie forestry researcher among the world's best in prestigious international innovation prize**

Australia's Dr Sam Van Holsbeeck has been recognised as among the world's best young researchers working in forestry and forest product innovation, reaching the next round of the prestigious international [Blue-Sky Young Researcher Innovation Awards](#).

Sam is one of 14 national finalists selected for the next round of the competition which is sponsored by the International Council of Forest and Paper Associations (ICFPA). The Blue-Sky Awards are a biennial program to recognise, celebrate and promote game-changing innovations being developed across the global forest sector.

Australian Forest Products Association (AFPA) Acting CEO Victor Violante said Sam was a wonderful example of a young research leader working to advance Australia's forest industries.

“AFPA was proud to nominate Sam to the international round as the winner of our local competition and a worthy ambassador for Australia, and we congratulate Sam on his nomination as a global finalist in these awards,” Victor Violante said.

On hearing the news about reaching the final round Sam said, “I'm very honoured to have been selected and to compete against a fine selection of international colleagues.

“My project is looking at opportunities to enhance sustainable development in remote areas through forest and wood-product industries, to build local bioeconomies and deliver benefits for remote communities.

“Hopefully I will get the chance to present my work at the Global CEO Roundtable and have a discussion about the practical, win-win climate solutions offered by forest industries.”

The next stage will see an international judging panel convened to assess the strength and potential of each entry, with three eventual winners receiving cash prizes and the opportunity to present their work at the ICFPA's Global CEO Roundtable in early 2023.

Announcing the 14 global finalists, ICFPA President Jori Ringman said, “The global forest sector has the potential to address some of the most urgent social, environmental, and economic challenges of today.

“From advancing a lower-carbon world through sustainable forest management, to building the forest bioeconomy and leveraging the power of carbon-storing wood products – we are thrilled to help recognise the brilliant young minds whose disruptive ideas and innovations can help pave the way forward.”

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**Media Contact:**

Joe Prevedello - AFPA Communications Director  
(m) 0491 205 633 (e) [joe.prevedello@ausfpa.com.au](mailto:joe.prevedello@ausfpa.com.au)