

Media Release

22 November 2022

Departure of Chief Executive Officer of the Australian Forest Products Association in February 2023

Hon Joel Fitzgibbon appointed Interim CEO from February 2023

The Chair of the Board of Directors of the Australian Forest Products Association (AFPA) regretfully announces the coming departure of long-standing Chief Executive Officer, Ross Hampton. The Chair also announces the appointment of Hon Joel Fitzgibbon as Interim Chief Executive Officer who will guide AFPA whilst a search is conducted for a new Chief Executive Officer.

Chair Diana Gibbs said, “After a decade guiding AFPA in the role of CEO, Ross Hampton has announced that he plans to move to the United Kingdom. AFPA and the whole industry was very fortunate to secure Ross ten years ago when AFPA was less than two years old. Ross has overseen the growth of our Association from modest beginnings to being truly the influential, pan-industry, advocacy body the founders envisaged. Ross has led AFPA into a deep and mutually supportive relationship with agriculture and helped place forest industries in the centre of the vital work of climate mitigation. Under his guidance, AFPA helped secure more than \$300 million in new commitments for forest industries in the last election, including \$100 million for a National Institute for Forest Products Innovation (NIFPI) in partnership with UTAS. The NIFPI will help shape the future of our industries for generations to come. Ross leaves with our thanks and best wishes.”

CEO Ross Hampton said, “It has been a great honour and privilege to work with the incredibly talented AFPA team members, our dedicated Directors and the hundreds I have met in our member companies. To a woman and man, they believe passionately in the place for sustainable forest industries in the environmental, social and economic life of our nation. There are some 80,000 people employed across the full value chain of forest industries from the truck drivers and machine operators to the scientists in their lab coats. Every morning I have gone to work thinking of them and how we can better their lives and help secure their futures. If the last decade has had one overriding theme it has been that our national leadership, processes and systems need to better recognise the miracle of forestry. Done sustainably, as we do in Australia - with every tree we use replanted or regrown - our nation and the world, has access to the ultimate renewable and a big part of the solution to the greatest environmental challenge of our generation in climate change.

“My work has necessarily involved deep and ongoing connections with federal politicians and I am deeply indebted to each and every one of them as they have listened to our arguments and helped us co-create outcomes which are for the good of Australia. My special thanks go to the Ministers and Shadow Ministers, and Assistant Ministers and Shadow Assistant Ministers, as well as the Co-Convenors of our Federal Parliamentary Friendship group, who have had responsibility for forest industries across the last decade. I also pay tribute to the Members of the cross bench who have been so willing to open their

Media Contact:

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

doors to us. All these federal politicians have made their positive mark on our shared future.”

Diana Gibbs said, “Whilst Ross will remain as CEO until early next year, the search will begin immediately for our next CEO. We will cast the net very widely and look to ensure continuity and even more successes for AFPA in the years to come.”

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