

## Media Release

8 December 2022

### **Federal Government's recommitment to Regional Forest Agreements welcomed**

The Federal Government's commitment to retain Australia's Regional Forest Agreements (RFAs) is an endorsement of Australia's sustainable forest practices and will be welcomed by forest industry workers around the country, Australian Forest Products Association (AFPA) Chief Executive Officer Ross Hampton said.

"Environment Minister Tanya Plibersek's commitment today that RFAs are here to stay provides much-needed certainty to the tens of thousands of timber workers whose livelihoods depend on our sustainably managed timber industries that RFAs support," Ross Hampton said.

Ross Hampton said industry stands ready to work with the Federal Government on ensuring that RFAs – and the robust state government environmental laws accredited under RFAs – continue to meet the objectives of the Environment Protection, Biodiversity and Conservation (EPBC) Act.

"Forestry operations in Australia are regulated to the highest environmental standards in the world, regenerating every harvested area to ensure no net loss of forested area whilst providing robust protections for threatened species," Ross Hampton said.

"Since their inception, RFAs have ensured that the objectives of the EPBC Act are met by the robust state government environmental laws accredited under them. As the EPBC Act evolves to include National Environmental Standards, we welcome Minister Plibersek's commitment to work with industry to ensure RFAs continue to meet the Act's objectives."

Ross Hampton said forest industries welcomed the Federal Government's rejection of the bulk of Samuel's recommendations around RFAs, which would have significantly undermined the continued operation of the hardwood timber industry and the national supply of many essential products.

"We are pleased that Minister Plibersek has reiterated the position of the former Coalition Government in recommitting to the continued operation of RFAs.

"We look forward to working with the Federal Government and the signatory states on sensible reforms to the RFAs so they continue to deliver the social and economic objectives that they were intended to provide timber workers and their communities, alongside the environmental objectives," Ross Hampton concluded.

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