

Media Release

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Delivery of forest products sector commitments continues in Federal Budget

The Australian Forest Products Association (AFPA) welcomes the Albanese Government's continued support of the forest products sector with the ongoing delivery of key funding commitments in the Federal Budget, Chief Executive Officer of AFPA Joel Fitzgibbon said.

The 2023-24 Budget continues the rollout of key forestry initiatives including the National Institute for Forest Products Innovation (NIFPI) and plantation establishment and innovation grants. The Budget also includes \$1 billion over four years to strengthen biosecurity.

"Australia's forest products sector is crucial in Australia's battle against climate change and for the country to meet national emissions reduction targets. The sector also provides employment for tens of thousands of Australians and creates essential and sustainable everyday products we cannot live without. We welcome the Government's recognition and support for the sector," Joel Fitzgibbon said.

In the previous Budget, the Government committed \$100 million for a Launceston headquartered NIFPI, \$86 million for plantation establishment grants, \$113 million for wood processing innovation grants, \$10 million for skills and training and extended funding for Regional Forestry Hubs.

"We welcome the Government's ongoing delivery of the 2022 Federal Election commitments and welcome action to remove the Emissions Reduction Fund (ERF) 'water rule' which prevents forest growers' access to carbon markets. We also look forward to the Government announcing a strategic partnership with sector stakeholders," Joel Fitzgibbon said.

"Like the broader agriculture and primary industries sectors, effective biosecurity is essential to protecting the integrity of forestry and forest health. We welcome the Government's plans to strengthen the national biosecurity system. However, we are watchful of plans to increase biosecurity costs for the sector through increased levies. We will work closely with the Government on the design of the reforms.

"I look forward to continuing work with Minister Watt, Prime Minister Albanese and other members of the Government to ensure that Australia's forest product sector thrives to fight climate change, create essential, sustainable products and provide ongoing and secure jobs for thousands of Australians," Joel Fitzgibbon concluded.

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