



Media Release

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Timber Industry Strategy real test for Victorian Government commitment to Regional Forest Agreements

The National Association of Forest Industries (NAFI) welcomes the recently announced reviews of the five Victorian Regional Forest Agreements (RFAs).

“We are pleased State Governments are acting on their reporting commitments to the RFAs, after Minister Tony Burke asked for the State Governments to ensure they had their house in order on RFAs,” said NAFI CEO Allan Hansard.

This announcement by the Victoria Government follows commitments by Tasmania and New South Wales to ensure routine reporting requirements for RFAs are up to date.

However, the real test of the Victorian Government’s commitment to the resource security provided by the RFAs will be the recognition of the RFAs in the upcoming Timber Industry Strategy. NAFI hopes the Victorian Government will follow the lead of Minister Burke and recognise RFAs are ‘central to the sustainable management of Australia’s forests and forest industries’.

“If the Victorian Government is serious about its commitment to the Victorian timber industry they will build their strategy around the RFA framework and the long term security they provide. As Victorian Environment Minister Gavin Jennings has stated, they aim to ‘strike the right balance between providing timber resources and jobs while protecting Victoria’s significant forest ecosystems’.

“NAFI would like to see the Victorian Government through the Timber Industry Strategy make a clear commitment to the continuation of RFAs on an ‘evergreen’ roll over basis. This would provide ongoing resource security beyond the current 20 year timeline that is fast approaching. We would also like to see this commitment backed by state legislation as in the case with Tasmania,” said Mr Hansard.

“It should be remembered that Victoria led the way in the development of the RFAs with the first RFA being signed for the East Gippsland region in 1997. Unfortunately, Victoria was also one of the first States to renege on the RFAs, placing short term politics before the longer term principles of the forest agreements, the interests of the forest industry and the timber communities reliant upon them.

The Timber Industry Strategy is the opportunity for the Victorian Government to show a strengthened commitment to the RFAs, the forest industry and timber communities.

NAFI looks forward to contributing to the RFA reviews and working with the Victorian Government to build a strong secure future for Victoria’s timber industries and dependant communities,” Mr Hansard said.

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Media contact: James Gray **0408 940 935** or **02 6285 3833** james.gray@nafi.com.au