

## Media Release

Tuesday 27 November 2018

### SECURING VICTORIA'S CRUCIAL TIMBER INDUSTRY

The Victorian Association of Forest Industries Inc. (VAFI) looks forward to working with a re-elected Labor Government to strengthen and secure Victoria's vital timber and forest industry.

VAFI Chief Executive Officer, Tim Johnston, said a clear policy is needed to provide security and certainty to the industry which contributes \$7.3 billion annually to the Victorian economy.

"VAFI's core purpose is to support its members and ensure a sustainable resource supply which will benefit the economy and community. We have been working closely with the government on a number of critical policy issues that are important to our membership and the wider industry," he said.

"I look forward to opportunities to review current approaches to resource supply, operational regulation, and reporting and will continue to seek government commitment for a comprehensive industry plan to secure sustainable long-term timber supply from state forests and expanded supply from plantations.

VAFI hopes to see an expanded plantation estate over the next decade with plantation development in both eastern and western Victoria. Other policies include a \$15 million Industry Skills Fund and increased funding for timber haulage infrastructure.

VAFI will continue to work closely with the government on issues that affect the short and long-term viability of the industry, including existing state forest resource certainty, jobs and economic contribution, wood use encouragement, training and skills as well as innovation, investment and infrastructure.

Victorian timber products are not only renewable, recyclable, and store carbon, they represent an essential, economical, low-carbon component for new housing, paper production and technological innovation. The industry itself is the lifeblood of many rural and regional towns.

"If we want to ensure our regional towns have a future, we need to support industries that provide local jobs. The timber and forest industry also has a strong construction and manufacturing presence, particularly in metropolitan Melbourne. Take forestry out of the Victorian equation, and the results would be devastating," Mr Johnston said."

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