

4 December 2018

VAFI SEEKS MEETING WITH NEW MINISTER

The Victorian Association of Forest Industries Inc. (VAFI) congratulates the Andrews Government's newly appointed Agriculture Minister, Jaclyn Symes, MP.

VAFI CEO, Tim Johnston, said he looks forward to working closely with Minister Symes on behalf of VAFI members given the industry's economic and social importance to Victoria.

"The forest and timber industry needs security, certainty and a coherent policy given it generates more than \$7.3 billion dollars in sales and service income to the Victorian economy and is the lifeblood of many regional communities," he said.

"We need a commitment to the thousands of workers employed directly and indirectly by our sector. Government is crucial to businesses making future investment and employment decisions. Therefore, we need assurances that they will work constructively with VAFI to ensure the future of the timber and forest industry."

Mr Johnston said he is confident Minister Symes will help secure the future of the industry given her background and relationships with many in the sector.

"I believe Minister Symes understands the important role played by our industry in regional Victoria, given her representation for Northern Victoria, as well as the complexities that it faces. I feel confident that this understanding will help inform a well-articulated policy to ensure that Victoria's timber and forest industry continues to grow and prosper so that our members can continue to positively contribute to the state economy," he said.

VAFI will continue to work closely with the Government to identify where they can assist on issues and initiatives that will improve the short and long-term prospects for our industry, including existing state forest resource certainty, plantation development, jobs and economic contribution, wood use encouragement, training and skills, as well as investment and infrastructure.

VAFI's core purpose is to support its members and ensure a sustainable long-term industry which will benefit the economy and community.

"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," Mr Johnston said.

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