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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **CODE OF PRACTICE REVIEW MUST DELIVER GREATER CERTAINTY FOR INDUSTRY**

Following the State Government's announcement of a review of the Code of Practice for Timber Production 2014 (the Code), the Victorian Association of Forest Industries Inc. (VAFI) has welcomed the intent to provide greater certainty for industry.

"There are some elements of the Code that are often open to broad interpretation, which has led to this review," said VAFI CEO Tim Johnston. "As such, VAFI agrees with the Government's intent to review The Code to limit risks from future litigation."

Mr Johnston said that any review of the Code should lead to greater operational certainty and protection for forestry operators to go about their jobs. Security of supply is essential for the native hardwood processing sector, which relies on timber from Victoria's State forests.

"We call on the Government to make good on its commitment to mitigating risks to supply."

"However, VAFI continues its strong opposition to the Andrews' government policy of phasing out the native hardwood industry. We will need to see further detail on the review to be assured that it will not create even further limitations on native forest harvesting."

"Only 3,000 hectares (or less than 0.04% of forests) of public forest is harvested and regrown each year. From this small operating area, the native hardwood sector generates over 2,500 jobs in Victoria and is a key employer in many regional communities," Mr Johnston said.

Mr Johnston also emphasised opportunities for the review to establish landscape-scale forest management in State forests. "The Code, in its current form, mandates a wide range of prescriptions and harvesting exclusions which are imposed in an *ad hoc* way. This review should consider how the Code can support a more holistic, landscape-scale approach to forest management, to balance economic, social and environmental values."

"VAFI will continue to call on the State Government to support the entire forest and timber industry. This means it must provide policy certainty for the native hardwood sector, to implement its commitment to new plantations, and to provide bushfire recovery support across the entire industry" he said.

**ENDS**

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