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Australia faces timber deficit of 250,000 house frames in 15 years, urgent national plan needed to grow timber plantation estate

Australia faces a major sovereign capability gap in the production of timber house frames by 2035 – further signalling how crucial it is for the federal and state governments to deliver policies to urgently drive new production tree plantings.

A landmark new report by Master Builders Australia (MBA) and the Australian Forest Products Association (AFPA) shows Australia is headed towards a major cliff in timber framing production, concluding we will be 250,000 house frames short by 2035 – the equivalent of the cities of Newcastle and Geelong combined.

CEO of Master Builders Australia Denita Wawn said supply of quality Australian timber for new homes and buildings was critical for the national construction sector.

“This analysis is a wake-up call for decision makers to act now to avoid a construction industry crisis in the next decade. It’s in Australia’s national interest to secure our local timber supply by ensuring our timber plantation stock can meet future housing demand,” Ms Wawn said.

“The housing construction industry is the engine room of the Australian economy and it needs a consistent, reliable domestic timber supply. As the timber shortages of the past 18 months have shown, we cannot rely on imports to fill the gap when we have increased construction activity – we need to act now.”

The state-by-state analysis reveals just how many house frames short of demand Australia will be by 2035. Victoria will be a city the size of Geelong short, NSW will be Wagga Wagga and Tamworth short, Queensland will be a city the size of Cairns short, South Australia a Mount Gambier short, WA a Bunbury short, Tasmania a city the size of Kingston short, the NT a town the size of Tennant Creek short and the ACT a suburb the size of Kambah.

Chief Executive Officer of AFPA Ross Hampton said, “This report shows that state and federal governments need to seriously tackle the policies which will drive forward new plantings of the right types of trees at the right scale and in the right places.

“Australian governments need to work together on a national plan that delivers an immediate increase in our plantation estate to ensure Australia can meet its future housing construction needs. Future generations of Aussie homeowners are counting on it.”

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Media Contact:

Joe Prevedello - AFPA Communications Director
(m) 0491 205 633 (e) joe.prevedello@ausfpa.com.au