

Media Release

26 October 2021

Scrapping perverse rainfall regulation means more trees planted; more carbon stored

VFPA welcomes the Federal Government's announcement to reverse the highly contested rainfall regulation, known as 'water rule', under the Carbon Farming Initiative (CFI).

The Victorian Forest Products Association (VFPA) welcomed today's decision as a win for forestry and the environment, and importantly, the decision will improve Victoria's sovereign timber capability. The amendment clears the way for planting up to **100 million trees Australia-wide** in the next decade.

The [Emissions Reduction Fund \(ERF\)](#) incentivises Australian businesses to undertake activities that store carbon. Forestry naturally sequesters carbon, and every tree harvested – and replanted – will store carbon, along with any harvested wood products. Participating in the ERF is a great incentive for developing new plantations that contribute to climate policy targets. However, a barrier to participation was the ineligibility of projects in areas receiving more than 600mm of annual rainfall. It meant that growers could only earn carbon credits if they planted trees in unsuitable areas – or the plantings were for biodiversity or carbon plantings and thus not commercial. Until now, only Victoria's Northeast was exempt from the contested water rule.

"The regulation was not only inherently unfair towards forestry compared with the environmental and carbon plantings. It also defied any logic and science. The Federal Government has committed to planting 1 billion trees by 2030. For that to happen, the right kind of trees need to be planted at scale in the right areas, and not somewhere where there is so little rainfall that they basically can't grow", explained Deb Kerr, VFPA CEO.

"Today's announcement means that our Victorian growers can start planning to expand our plantation estate in the Green Triangle and Gippsland. It's also important to understand that around half the area is simply replanting the estate lost to other uses or fire over the last decade."

"We commend Victoria's Minister for Agriculture The Hon. Mary-Anne Thomas MP who stood alongside our plantation industry and drove this issue on a federal level. Today's decision is an important milestone for forestry - we can finally get underway with planting much-needed trees. Every dollar invested in plantations and every tree put in the ground and harvested is part of the climate solution", Ms Kerr concluded.

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About

The Victorian Forest Products Association (VFPA) represents all elements of the value chain from both

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sustainable harvesting of plantations and multiple-use natural forest resources. VFPA is a policy development and advocacy group which represents the interests of Victoria's sustainable forestry. We collaborate strongly with other industry bodies to ensure the best outcomes for forestry in general and our members more specifically. Our charter provides autonomy to manage State issues. We cooperate with the Australian Forest Products Association (AFPA) on any issues that transcend State borders and have National implications.

VFPA represents forest growers, harvesters,
and manufacturers of timber and paper products.