

## Media Release

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### **Action needed to drive Victorian plantation growth**

Figures highlighted by the media this week again show the sharp fall in Victorian plantation areas over more than 10 years. It's a reminder to the Victorian Government and Opposition that plantation expansion should be addressed by both sides of politics ahead of the state election later this year, CEO of the Victorian Forest Products Association (VFPA) Deb Kerr said today.

The *Weekly Times* has highlighted the shrinking of Victoria's commercial plantations over the past decade, with many affected by bushfires. The total area has fallen from more than 430,000 hectares in 2009-10 to under 387,000 hectares in 2019-20.

"This is the wrong direction for our plantation estate to be going in," Deb Kerr said.

"At a time when demand for timber and wood fibre products is high and forecast to boom over the coming decades, we need more trees planted to shore up future supply. That's not to mention the major contribution our plantations make towards fighting climate change.

"While the Government has prioritised its \$110M for plantation forestry in Gippsland, our other major plantation regions have been left behind.

"We need substantial government programs for the Green Triangle and Murray Region Forestry Hubs to match current investments in the Gippsland Forestry Region – an additional \$310m will improve our sovereign supply capability across these important plantation regions.

"Investment in plantations is good for the planet as the trees will sequester carbon, and it will provide timber and wood fibre for the next generations," Deb Kerr concluded.

**ENDS**

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**About**

The Victorian Forest Products Association (VFPA) represents all elements of the value chain from sustainable harvesting of plantations and multiple-use natural forest resources. VFPA is a policy development and advocacy group that 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 collaborate with the Australian Forest Products Association (AFPA) on any issues that transcend state borders and have national implications.