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## Australian forest, wood and paper sector welcome industry – government partnership

The Australian forest, wood products and paper manufacturing industry has welcomed the announcement of a new partnership between the Australian Government and forest products and paper manufacturing sector. The joint announcement was made today by the Ministers for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Warren Truss, and Fisheries, Forestry and Conservation, Senator Ian Macdonald.

“This is a defining project for the industry as it is the first time that the entire industry has come together with the Australian Government to jointly develop a road-map for the full value chain of the forest, wood products and paper manufacturing industry” said the project’s steering committee Chair, Belinda Robinson.

“The difference between this initiative and other attempts to provide the industry with a future strategy is the recognition by both Ministers that to be successful the project must be industry initiated, driven and owned” said Ms Robinson.

The Steering Committee, comprising industry, government and union representation, has agreed that the Wood and Paper Industry Growth Strategy will provide an overarching national framework within which the industry will be better able to compete, innovate and grow.

Consultants GHD and Fifth Estate in conjunction with ABARE have been engaged to develop Stage 1 of the project. NAFI’s Acting Chief Executive and steering committee member, Phil Townsend commended the Government for its demonstrated commitment to the industry’s future.

“NAFI has long supported the need for a single industry vision and the growth strategy is the obvious vehicle for delivering a unified and joint industry-government strategy for growth and renewal” Mr Townsend said.

“This is the culmination of a number of substantial initiatives of the Australian Government including its recent announcement to review the tax and other policy options for plantation investment in Australia and the Tasmanian Community Forest Agreement.” said Mr Warwick Ragg, Executive Director of the Australian Forest Growers.

The purpose of the strategy is to assess the growth potential of the national Australian forest, wood products and paper industry; identify the barriers to realising this potential; and articulate the measures necessary for overcoming these impediments.

“These industries are major contributors to Australia’s wealth and to regional jobs and development,” said the Minister for Industry



Tourism and Resources, Ian Macfarlane.

“This Government recognises the value in working closely with these industries to reduce our trade deficit in wood and paper products. It is important that we value-add to our forest resources and address any barriers to the wood processing and paper manufacturing industry realising its full potential” said Mr Macfarlane.

Development of the growth strategy is being conducted in three stages. This first step, or *Stage 1* contains the following key components:

- ▶ A review of recent and current initiatives and strategies;
- ▶ Description of industry structure;
- ▶ Data compilation and gap analysis;
- ▶ Current industry thinking on;
  - Impediments to growth;
  - Comparative advantages;
  - Opportunities for growth;
- ▶ Recommendations for subsequent stages of the industry strategy.

**Further information:**

Belinda Robinson, CEO – A3P  
0412 220882