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## Western Australia RFA extension securing the future of forest industries

A vital milestone for Western Australia's and the whole country's forest industries has been achieved with the extension of the WA Regional Forest Agreement (RFA) for an additional 20-years. The landmark agreement signed off by Prime Minister, Scott Morrison, and WA Premier, Mark McGowan, has been welcomed by the Forest Industries Federation of WA (FIFWA) and the Australian Forest Products Association (AFPA).

"The RFA is a key element in the regulatory architecture governing the timber industry. Forestry and timber industry stakeholders in WA have been waiting a long time for this extension and for the certainty it provides to allow them to plan and invest for the future," FIFWA Acting Chief Executive Officer, Mr Matt Granger said.

The WA RFA establishes a bilateral framework recognising the State's comprehensive, adequate and representative (CAR) reserve system within the South West region and provides for the sustainable management of public multi-use forests and plantations and for a long-term sustainable native forest products industry.

The Forest Management Plan 2014-2023 (FMP) remains the primary framework for managing forests and plantations on public land in WA. The RFA is an administrative agreement between the State and the Commonwealth that recognises WA's forest management system processes are based on the principles of ecologically sustainable forest management and are sufficiently robust to address impacts on environmental values.

"We appreciate the work of the WA and Commonwealth Governments in consulting with stakeholders and implementing improvements to aspects of process relating to the RFA. This conclusion follows the completion of the NSW RFA last year and the Tasmanian RFA prior to that. Unfortunately, there is a delay on a final RFA in Victoria until at least next year," AFPA Chief Executive Officer, Mr Ross Hampton said.

"With its 20-year rolling horizon, subject to five-yearly reviews, the extended WA RFA provides stability to the regulatory framework that is essential for investment and employment in WA's \$1.4 billion per year industry.

"In WA, forest industries provide jobs for thousands of people and underpin numerous regional communities and economies. Those people can now be assured their children will have productive jobs in our renewable industries," Mr Hampton concluded.