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Timber Industry welcomes funding announcement for South West regional forest industry hub

The Forest Industries Federation of WA (FIFWA) has welcomed the Prime Minister's weekend announcement of funding for new forest industry hubs, including the South West regional forest industry hub (known locally as the Bunbury-Geographe Timber Hub).

On Saturday, the Prime Minister announced \$12.5 million in funding to kick-start new forest industry hubs, with four initial pilot hubs, including South West WA.

The announcement is a very positive initiative for the WA timber industry, according to FIFWA Acting CEO, Matt Granger.

"The industry has been anticipating this since last year's launch of the National Forest Industries Plan, with its commitment of planting a billion trees over a decade (including 400,000 new hectares of plantations nationally)," Mr Granger said.

"The Bunbury-Geographe Timber Hub is already a vibrant timber processing precinct, generating an estimated \$490 million gross regional product per annum and over 700 jobs. This hub is poised to benefit from new investment arising from the Prime Minister's announcement," he said.

"The industry is keen to speak with the Federal Government about how this funding can help "turbo-charge" the Bunbury-Geographe Timber Hub, and how the \$12.5 million will be distributed. The fundamental challenge at the WA and national level is getting those billion trees planted, in the right place and at the right scale, to support jobs and enterprise in the forestry hubs," Mr Granger said.

"We acknowledge the dogged efforts of Forrest MHR, Nola Marino, in helping elevate the Bunbury-Geographe Timber Hub for inclusion amongst the first national forestry hubs," Mr Granger concluded.

Please direct all media enquiries to FIFWA Acting CEO Matt Granger on 0407 448 648 or m.granger@fifwa.asn.au

About FIFWA

Forest Industries Federation WA (FIFWA) has been representing the interests of the Western Australian timber industry since 1895. The industry is a key driver of economic activity and jobs in Western Australia, contributing \$1.4 billion to the WA economy and creating about 6000 jobs in WA, with more than 90% of those in regional areas. The industry employs careful and comprehensive management policies to ensure WA's forests are sustainably managed. Less than 1% of the total forest area is harvested annually.

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