



Senator the Hon. Richard Colbeck
Assistant Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources
Senator for Tasmania

MEDIA RELEASE

Bright future, clear risks for forestry, fisheries and horticulture

The outlook for the forest, seafood and horticulture sectors is bright despite clear risks, with continued growth both in Australia and overseas providing new markets and opportunities for Australian producers.

That was the key message delivered by Assistant Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources, Senator Richard Colbeck, to delegates at the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resources Economics and Sciences (ABARES) annual Outlook conference in Canberra today.

“The Liberal National Government is committed to making the tough choices to boost agricultural productivity and resilience in the forest, seafood and horticulture industries,” Minister Colbeck said.

“The Liberal National Government will hold the line on native forestry, a vital industry for regional jobs that is under persistent threat from anti-science activists.

“We have the balance right on economic and environmental security in the native forest industry.

“We will also clear the roadblocks that have caused the stagnation of plantation growth and plant a billion new trees over the next decade.

“A few weeks ago I launched *Australia’s State of the Forests Report 2018*, produced by ABARES—the fifth in the series of national five-yearly reports on Australia’s forests covering all levels of forest management.

“The report demonstrated that our forest and wood products industries have a strong future, but as a nation we can’t risk going back to anti-industry ideology that did so much damage in the past.

“Our fisheries industry is another that has gone from strength to strength and today I was proud to release the fourth edition of the *Fisheries Research and Development Corporation 2018 Australian Stock Status Reports*.

“This is more hard evidence of the responsible management delivering powerful returns to the Australian community and shows why locking our fishers out of these resources is simply regressive and anti-science.

“Australia’s horticulture sector is also on the upwards trajectory—consumer demand for Australian grown fresh produce continues to rise, with the value of production in the vegetable industry alone expected to be around \$4 billion in 2018–19.

“Additionally, ABARES has forecast that the value of the horticultural industry will be almost \$12 billion in 2019–20.”

“Further opportunities exist in horticulture including genomic mapping for key tree species and I will soon hold a protected horticulture Roundtable to help drive the sector.

“Crucially, all three sectors will benefit from the series of free trade agreements delivered by the Liberal National Government, including most recently with Indonesia.

“We are working with industry to reduce regulatory burden and remove unnecessary red and green tape—this will help create more jobs and a secure future for our forest, seafood and horticulture industries.”

Find out more about the ABARES Outlook conference at:

<http://www.agriculture.gov.au/abares/outlook>

Fast Facts:

- **In last year’s Federal Budget, the government announced \$20 million over four years to 2021–22 to support the implementation of the National Forest Industries Plan with a goal to plant a billion more trees over a decade.**
- **In November 2018, the Australian Government announced a \$13.3 million joint research project to look at tree genetics to better understand how genes control traits that are valuable to Australian horticultural growers.**
- **The Australian Government continues to invest in horticulture research and innovation through its Rural Research and Development Corporations. In 2018–19 it is expected that matching government contributions to Hort Innovation will be over \$55 million.**

Media contact

Felix Ellis, 0457 517 734