



Senator the Hon Richard Colbeck

Assistant Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources

Liberal Senator for Tasmania

Nola Marino MP

Member for Forrest, Western Australia

MEDIA RELEASE

21 March 2019

Support for South West WA Region on International Day of Forests

To mark International Day of Forests, Assistant Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources, Senator Colbeck, yesterday visited the SW Timber Hub in the Bunbury Geographe region with the Member for Forrest, Nola Marino MP, to discuss the National Forest Industries Plan and launch a new forestry education program.

Senator Colbeck joined Mrs Marino for a tour of the SW Timber Hub at Wespine and other forest related operations in the region.

“In last year’s Federal Budget, the Liberal National government announced \$20 million over four years to support the implementation of the National Forest Industries Plan, to drive expansion of the wood and fibre production forest estate. This will create regional jobs, support regional communities and add value to Australia’s wood and fibre industries,” Senator Colbeck said.

“Forestry education is identified as a key to supporting the growth of the industry. Last night at the World Forestry Day Dinner - hosted by the Leschenault Timber Industry Club - I [announced](#) that in partnership with Forest and Wood Products Australia (FWPA), the Government will provide \$200,000 for two exciting new education activities in line with our Plan and the theme of International Day Forests.”

“One will be running a competition across Australia for Universities to look for innovative uses for wood residues. The second activity will be at the secondary level supporting further developing virtual reality experiences to capture the renewable cycle of forests and wood products.”

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Senator Colbeck also outlined the next steps to progress the SW WA Regional Forestry Pilot Hub.

“The Government via my Department will ask FIFWA to be the lead organisation for the South West WA Regional Forestry Hub on behalf of the broader industry in the region. I outlined that \$250,000 has already been announced to be contracted this financial year as a Pilot hub, and a further three years funding of up to \$250,000 per year will be available for this Hub subject to ongoing negotiations.”

“Also as outlined in our Plan, the Government is working on establishing at least two additional centres of the National Institute for Forest Products Innovation (NIFPI). My intention is, subject to State Government agreement and matching funding, to provide \$2m over 3 years for this region of WA, to have one of these new NIFPI centres.

“I have also written to the relevant NSW and Queensland Ministers to begin discussions towards having a NIFPI in those States too”.

“The Australian Liberal National Government also remains committed to securing the future of native forestry with rolling 20 year extensions of the Regional Forest Agreements (RFA).”

“I was pleased to be able to confirm that the Prime Minister has signed the WA RFA for the Commonwealth and we now await the State Premiers signature to extend this agreement.”

Federal Member for Forrest Nola Marino MP said these positive announcements were important for the area.

“This announcement will mean more jobs as the industry expands and will add hugely to our regional economy,” Mrs Marino said.

“I have been working with Assistant Minister Colbeck to establish this hub in the South West and I look forward to watching it grow and continuing to be an important economic benefit for the South West.”

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