

## Media Release

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### **Abandoned timber highlights the need for sovereign capability**

*Supporting local forestry to reduce supply chain dependencies should be a national and state priority.*

Melbourne, 20 August 2021 – The COVID pandemic’s wrangling with international trade further highlights Australia’s need to develop sovereign capability in timber and fibre supply. It was revealed last week that a large shipment of European timber bound for Melbourne was abandoned in Shanghai after a shipping company was offered a better deal for the use of its shipping containers.

Victorian Forest Products Association (VFPA) CEO Deb Kerr said this development off the back of the pandemic further shows why Australia must become self-sufficient in timber and fibre.

“At a time when timber demand is high in Victoria, domestic supply is stretched, and some imports are uncertain, we need to ensure sovereign capability. A global container shortage is now exacerbating Australia’s shortage of imported timber, and strengthening local production capabilities is urgently required, said Ms Kerr.

“With a significant 25-year wait between planting and harvesting plantation trees that provide the wood for our homes, the situation faced by this importer is likely to be repeated over the next 25 years.

“Growing our softwood plantation estate is paramount to ensuring we can provide the housing we need for our children and grandchildren. Growing trees here is also beneficial for the climate as it ensures that the carbon in the wood is locked up in our homes.

“A long-term plan to deliver our growing timber demands is essential. With timber being the ultimate renewable, now is the time to mitigate risks and reduce these supply chain risks,” Ms Kerr concluded.

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#### **About**

The Victorian Forest Products Association (VFPA) represents all elements of the value chain from the sustainable harvesting of plantations and multiple use natural forest resource. VFPA is a policy development and advocacy group which represents the interests of Victoria’s sustainable forest industries. We collaborate strongly with other industry bodies to ensure the best outcomes for the industry generally and our members more specifically. Our charter provides autonomy to manage State issues and we cooperate with the Australian Forest Products Association (AFPA) on any issue that transcends State borders and has National implications.

#### **Media Contact:**

Ulrike Andresen-Nikolai - VFPA Public & Media Relations Manager  
(m) 0437 559 360 (e) [ulrike.andresen-nikolai@vfpa.com.au](mailto:ulrike.andresen-nikolai@vfpa.com.au)

