

“8 Nov 2018 New Zealand’s Minister of Forestry, Hon Shane Jones last night addressed an Australian Forest Products Association (AFPA) Dinner in Canberra, via video-link from New Zealand, where he discussed his own country’s target to plant one billion new trees, similar to Australia’s goal.

“It was very interesting to hear Minister Jones on the progress his government is making towards New Zealand’s billion trees goal and we can’t help but note the comparison to what is happening in Australia,” Chair of AFPA, Mr Greg McCormack said today.

“New Zealand has allocated nearly half a billion dollars to its one billion trees programme, while the Australian Government has only so far budgeted an initial \$20 million for the implementation of the National Forest Industries Plan, of which Australia’s one billion trees commitment is a key plank.

“Without artificial barriers being removed, which are currently preventing production trees readily bidding for carbon reduction funds via the Emissions Reduction Fund (ERF), it’s impossible to see how \$20 million will indeed bring forward a surge in plantings of the scale needed to meet the Australian Government’s one billion trees goal.

“Australia desperately needs to plant new trees at an ever-increasing rate to prevent future supply shortfalls and slow the increasing volume of imports. Because trees take at least a decade to start to deliver any returns, strong government policy support and direction is needed.

“Australia has a \$2 billion trade deficit in timber products, and it’s likely that will only worsen if nothing is done, as demand increases and supply tightens in the years ahead. 120,000 people across the whole value chain rely on forest industries for employment in Australia and their futures need to be assured,” Mr McCormack concluded”

- This sums it up, why are we inquiring into this if the Australian Government isn’t prepared to put the funds in to fix the problem. We need to not only plant more trees for the future of the timber industry, but for our livelihood and climate change. Instead of the Government wasting time discussing issues that don’t seem to go into effect to their full capability, why not spend the time planting trees instead and protecting our land instead of selling it off (That includes to stop building new houses when the existing could be rebuilt to reduce un-farmable land - seems pretty logical, right?)