MEDIA RELEASE

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FORESTRY INNOVATION AND TRAINING FOCUS OF NATIONALS IN GOVERNMENT

The Nationals in Government are investing almost $40 million to support innovation and training for NSW’s forestry industry, Minister for Forestry Paul Toole announced in Coffs Harbour.

“We recognise the important role forestry plays in NSW in providing jobs, wood products and supporting manufacturing industries,” Mr Toole said.

Nationals candidate for Coffs Harbour Gurmesh Singh said round two of the $34 million NSW Forest Industries Innovation Fund loan scheme had opened this week.

“The scheme aims to support innovative projects that improve efficiencies, sustainability and invest in smarter processes or ways to deal with future forestry opportunities and challenges,” Mr Singh said.

“Round two of the NSW FIIF will close on 3 May 2019, with potential loan sizes of up to $3 million.”

The NSW FIIF loan scheme is administered by the NSW Rural Assistance Authority. Information on the scheme and how to apply is available at www.raa.nsw.gov.au

Mr Toole said in addition to the FIIF, $4.6 million would be used to support a training and certification scheme for forestry contractors that will focus on environment, safety and best practice.

“The Nationals recognise the long term value to the wider forestry industry of facilitating access to training, recognition of skills, proficiencies and professionalism of forestry contracting businesses,” Mr Toole said.

“We want to promote best practice operations in our State’s forests for forestry contractors that will enhance environmental and safety practices and compliance.”

The training and certification scheme has been jointly developed by industry and the NSW Government in partnership with the Australian Forest Contractors Association (AFCA).

AFCA chairman Adan Taylor said the scheme would create professional development opportunities for forestry contracting businesses whilst recognising and rewarding those with good practices.
“The development of the scheme will not only be positive for industry in promoting best practice, it also gives the community greater confidence that contracting businesses are operating safely and meeting the necessary compliance requirements,” Mr Taylor said.

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