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### **Media Release**

#### **New Zealand-India Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement tariff elimination welcomed by Wood Processors and Manufacturers of NZ**

The immediate tariff elimination on over 95 percent of all New Zealand wood product exports to India at entry into force of the newly signed New Zealand-India Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (CFTA) is welcomed by the Wood Processors and Manufacturers Association of New Zealand (WPMA).

“With the Indian wood products market projected to grow from USD \$1 billion in 2025 to USD \$1.47 billion by 2029, and India’s economy expanding at an estimated rate of 8 percent, the country is set to become one of the largest consumers of wood globally. This tariff elimination on over 95 percent of timber, lumber and their derivatives (e.g. pulp, paperboard) exported to India presents significant opportunities for New Zealand wood processors and manufacturers,” said WPMA Chief Executive, Mark Ross.

The removal of tariffs on wood products covered under Harmonised Systems Codes 44 (Wood and Articles of Wood), 47 (Pulp of Wood), and 48 (Paperboard) aligns New Zealand exporters with key competitors such as Australia. Currently, tariffs on the majority of New Zealand wood products range between 5.5 and 11 percent, adding costs to trade and reducing profitability. The 5 percent remainder of tariffs on wood products being eliminated over a period of 7 years.

WPMA emphasize that to fully capitalize on this opportunity, the New Zealand wood sector will need to work collaboratively to promote the unique qualities of NZ Radiata Pine. Highlighting the story of our sustainably managed plantation forests and the diverse range of high-value processed outputs—including lumber, pulp, panels, engineered wood, and remanufactured products—will be critical in expanding our exports to India.

‘Reports indicate growing demand in India for sustainably harvested softwood, driven by factors such as a rising middle class, timber shortages for construction, increasing environmental awareness, and higher disposable incomes’, said Ross. ‘However, challenges remain for New Zealand exporters looking to enter the Indian market, such as competing with global timber producers and the need to work through the administrative Indian customs procedures.’

Proactive industry involvement will be essential to address these barriers, for example, the development of Brand New Zealand for wood products, along with focused building codes and product standards within India to facilitate greater acceptance of our Radiata Pine timber in higher-end applications.

“We look forward to seeing growth in the Indian export market for New Zealand wood products and thank Minister for Trade and Investment, Hon Todd McClay, along with his officials, for their hard work in securing the New Zealand-India CFTA,” Ross added.

**Contact:**

Mark Ross

Chief Executive

Wood Processors and Manufacturers Association of NZ

027 442 9965

[mark@wpma.org.nz](mailto:mark@wpma.org.nz)

**About WPMA**

*The Wood Processors and Manufacturers Association of New Zealand (WPMA) represents the interests of New Zealand’s wood processing and manufacturing sector. WPMA advocates for sustainable practices, innovation, and growth opportunities to strengthen the industry’s contribution to the national economy.*