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RELEASE

Timber in construction supported by the Prime Minister at Red Stag VoMo celebration

Hearing Prime Minister Christopher Luxon speak positively about the future of value-added wood products at last week's official commemoration of Red Stag's VoMo¹ manufacturing system was encouraging for everyone involved in New Zealand's wood processing and manufacturing sector.

When the Prime Minister spoke about the potential to use more value-added timber in domestic construction and said he was "interested in" VoMo's ability to keep more construction spending in New Zealand, it signalled growing recognition of the economic and strategic benefits of building with New Zealand wood.

His statement, "I don't want to send money offshore to bring in overseas steel and cement into New Zealand," resonated strongly. It reflects a simple but important principle: where we have the capability to manufacture high-value building products here at home, we should be making the most of it.

It was equally encouraging to hear the Prime Minister acknowledge the need to "use more wood" in government construction projects. With a substantial pipeline of schools, hospitals and defence facilities on the horizon, there is a real opportunity for engineered timber to play a much greater role in delivering these projects.

Forestry Minister Todd McClay reinforced this message when he said, "It is taking the trees that we grow well and providing a choice, providing an option." His observation that processing trees domestically rather than exporting them as logs could "add about seven times the value to those trees for New Zealand, the local economy" captures exactly why value-added manufacturing matters. Every additional stage of processing creates more skilled jobs, more regional investment and greater economic returns for New Zealand.

The VoMo initiative itself deserves recognition as an example of what our sector can achieve through innovation and collaboration. Credit goes to Red Stag Group CEO Marty Verry and his team for driving this project and demonstrating what is possible with wood. VoMo is being developed alongside German architecture firm NKBK and Austrian construction company Kaufmann Bausysteme, with support from the Ministry for Primary Industries' Primary Sector Growth Fund.

As Verry said the VoMo system has the potential to improve productivity, reduce waste and costly variations, lower construction costs and deliver buildings faster. By allowing building foundations and modular components to be constructed simultaneously rather than

¹ VoMo (short for Volumetric Modular) is a sustainable, mass timber prefabricated construction system. It utilizes cross-laminated timber (CLT) to build fully finished, off-site modules for buildings like schools, hotels, and apartments.

sequentially, overall project time can typically be reduced by between one-third and one-half.

Importantly, the new facility is designed to support a wide range of projects, including classrooms, apartments, townhouses, hotels, student accommodation, offices and retirement villages. It also strengthens the competitiveness of New Zealand's wood processors by creating a more efficient cost base for both domestic and export markets.

From the Wood Processors and Manufacturers Association's perspective, VoMo represents exactly the kind of innovation our industry needs. It demonstrates that New Zealand's wood processing sector is not standing still but investing in advanced manufacturing that delivers economic, environmental and construction benefits.

The opportunity now is to turn supportive words into meaningful action. If we are serious about growing New Zealand's wood processing sector and making better use of the renewable resources we already produce, then increasing the use of New Zealand made wood products in domestic construction should be a key Government priority. The challenge now is to seize the opportunity.

Credit to Annabel Reid of the NZ Herald for her video and story, which can be accessed here [Timber in Construction support by PM at Red Stag VoMo launch](#)



Minister Todd McClay, Prime Minister Christopher Luxon, and Marty Verry Red Stag Group CEO, cutting the ribbon at the VoMo commemoration

WPMA – who we are:

WPMA is an industry membership association representing companies involved in the wider wood processing and manufacturing industries, including sawn timber, pulp and paperboard, manufactured and engineered wood products, along with bio-forest products. Our vision champions wood

processing and manufacturing as the core to New Zealand's economic growth, regional development, and sustainable environment.