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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Housing Industry Calls for Action on Energy

HIA's National Manufacturers' Council confirmed yesterday that energy security and energy pricing remain the most significant factor in making investment decisions for Australian building product manufacturers.

Held in Sydney yesterday, the Housing Industry Association's eighth Building Better Cities Summit, *Manufacturing Australian Building Products: where to from here?* brought together industry leaders to discuss the future of Australian building products and the future of housing over the next decade.

The Summit drew a focus on the critical need to have affordable and reliable energy supply.

"We repeatedly heard today that when compared with other manufacturing destinations, Australia's energy costs are hampering our ability to attract investment into new manufacturing products and facilities," said HIA Managing Director, Shane Goodwin.

"Manufacturers need to have a solid foundation to maintain their operating costs and deliver price-competitive building materials for new housing.

"Many manufacturers are deciding to invest in their own generation capacity, at significant cost, to overcome the systemic problems in the National Electricity Market," said Mr Goodwin.

"It's equally important that we see support for industry continue in R&D to assist manufacturers take advantage of new technologies and follow the exponential curve of innovation on our doorstep from the digital economy.

"As always we need to solve some of the old chestnuts, like affordable and easy access to Australian Standards, achieve a better balance between federal and state regulation of building work and resolve the oversight of product quality.

"The building industry has always been a rapid adopter of new technology. Our building product manufacturers are embracing advances like 3D printing, robotisation and blockchain technology as disruptive technologies.

"These are big opportunities for Australian manufacturers. Clearly as an industry, building product manufacturing and the construction they support are too big to ignore.

"Despite the headwinds, there continues to be enormous opportunities to build the local building product manufacturing sector over the next decade. But its success depends on the Government's ability to provide stable input costs.

"The industry cannot fight to attract jobs to our economy whilst the fundamentals of doing business in Australia remain uncertain.

"The future of Australian building product manufacturing remains bright. Now is the time for industry and government to work together to get the fundamentals rebalanced and to ensure that we don't lose the opportunities on our door step," Mr Goodwin concluded.

For further information please contact:

Kristin Brookfield, Chief Executive Industry Policy
Tim Reardon, Principal Economist

0409 853 053
0423 141 031

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