

11 August 2015

Forest products industry can play a larger role in Australia's low carbon future

The Australian Forest Products Association (AFPFA) urges the Federal Government, following its announcement to reduce emissions 26-28% below 2005 levels by 2030, to recognise the extensive role that Australia's forest product industries can play in Australia's low carbon future.

The forest products industry is based on a renewable biological resource and can contribute to long term carbon emissions abatement through multiple pathways. These pathways include the atmospheric carbon captured and stored in growing forests and in durable wood products; the substitution of emissions intensive materials such as steel, aluminium and concrete with timber; and the use of woody biomass for renewable bioenergy.

The Chief Executive Officer of AFPFA, Mr Ross Hampton said, "In a carbon constrained global economy which, of necessity, is moving rapidly to greater use of renewable and recyclable products, forestry and fibre are vital, and could play a much larger role in Australia. Internationally it is broadly accepted that well-managed, sustainable forest industries are the environment's best friend. We need to recognise that here, and embrace the growing opportunities for sustainably-sourced fibre."

"The forest products industry looks forward to engaging with climate policy makers to ensure the climate mitigation opportunities from forestry activities are fully recognised. This would help stimulate further investment in the forest, wood and paper products industry which can be a win-win outcome for both the economy and a lower carbon future".

"Foremost amongst these priorities is ensuring that the carbon sequestration benefits from new wood plantations are fully recognised in the Carbon Faming Initiative. Other priorities include better recognition of renewable thermal energy used in wood and paper processing activities, which can significantly displace fossil fuel inputs such as coal fired power and natural gas," Mr Hampton said.

Mr Hampton said, "The forest products industry is ideally placed to assist the transition of the Australian economy to this lower emissions future. With a growing population and higher demand for a range of building, paper and energy products to meet future needs, our industry can help satisfy this demand with a sustainable, renewable resource."

"As the only carbon positive sector of the Australian economy, the forest products industry could, and should, be at the forefront of a renewable and sustainable economy," said Mr Hampton.

AFPFA represents forest growers, harvesters, and manufacturers of timber and paper products.

Media Contact: Elizabeth Goodfellow
AFPFA Communications and New Media Officer
(m) 0409 962 250 (e) elizabeth.goodfellow@ausfpa.com.au