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Finkel Review paves way for renewable energy from wood waste

The Finkel Report's recommendation of a Clean Energy Target (CET) creates an opportunity for Australia to embrace renewable energy from wood waste as part of our clean energy mix, with the potential to provide baseload electricity and help meet Australia's emissions reduction target, the Australian Forest Products Association (AFPA) said today.

AFPA Chief Executive Officer, Mr Ross Hampton, said under a CET as proposed by Finkel, Renewable energy from wood waste sourced from Australia's sustainably managed forests and timber operations may be encouraged to play a much greater role as a provider of renewable baseload energy, as it already is around the world.

"Bioenergy uniquely provides both renewable and secure baseload energy that would complement intermittent renewables like wind and solar. Bioenergy from agriculture residues, timber operation waste and waste from cities is already widely used to help meet renewable energy targets in other parts of the world," Mr Hampton said.

Under the Kyoto Protocol, bioenergy is regarded as CO₂ neutral. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change also defines bioenergy as renewable, if it is produced from biomass that is sustainably managed – as Australia's commercial forestry operations are.

Mr Hampton said including bioenergy and industrial renewable heat in Australia's clean energy mix will have the additional benefit of supporting Australian manufacturing jobs at a time when the sector is being hit hard by huge increases in both gas and electricity prices.

"Affordable and secure energy supply is essential for the forest products industry, and the tens of thousands of associated regional jobs it supports. With the right policy settings, other industry sectors with bioenergy potential such as agriculture, landfill and waste-to-energy could play an important role in Australia's clean energy future, while substantially reducing emissions and reusing waste by-products from industrial processes," Mr Hampton said.

The technology to maximise the energy potential of wood waste already exists in Australia, but as the Adelaide Advertiser [reported](#) today, opportunities such as Altus Renewables' wood pellet fuel is currently being exported to Europe and Asia because it is recognised under other countries' renewable energy schemes.

The Clean Energy Finance Corporation (CEFC) has created a \$100 million dedicated fund for bioenergy projects – the Australian Bioenergy Fund – in recognition of the significant potential for bioenergy to contribute to renewable energy, biofuels and carbon emissions.

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

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