

3 December 2015

Forest industry backs call for inquiry into paper procurement

The Australian Forest Products Association (AFPA) has welcomed the motion to seek a Senate inquiry into the Government's paper procurement policies.

This motion, co-sponsored by Senators Carr, Madigan, Muir, Rice and Xenophon, calls today for an inquiry to look into the impact of procurement connected policies, with particular reference to the ICT Sustainability Plan and National Waste Policy, on securing manufacturing investment and jobs in the paper sector.

The Australian Forest Products Association (AFPA) Chief Executive Officer, Mr Ross Hampton, said "This is an important inquiry in light of the recent scrapping of the Government's 'ICT Sustainability Plan', which required 100% recycled content for all office copy paper purchases by 1 July 2015".

"The Government has taken an initial first step in rectifying this issue via a letter from Environment Minister Greg Hunt to his Ministerial colleagues. This letter encourages Ministers and Departments to commit to purchasing 100% recycled paper and adopt sustainable practices consistent with the National Waste Policy".

"What we need now is a formal reinstatement of this 'buy 100% recycled rule', in a procurement connected policy. This would also have implications beyond the Australian Government, which is often seen as a market leader for State and local governments in the area of sustainable procurement".

"It would defy belief that the Turnbull Government has seemingly stepped away from the environmental gold standard of 100% recycled copy paper when 95% of households are in support of recycling".

"Australian Paper has a new \$90 million copy paper recycling facility which has commenced operations in Gippsland, Victoria. This plant has the potential to transform Australia's recycling landscape, diverting some 80,000 tonnes of Australian waste paper from local landfill each year."

"However unless the Government reverts back to its previous position and formally requires Departments to 'do the right thing', buy 100% recycled and minimise waste, the significant advantages of recycled paper made from Australian waste paper will not be realised and the plant's future will be undermined."

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

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