

20 June 2016

Greens isolated on natural forestry and out of step with mainstream environmentalists

The Australian Forest Products Association (AFPA) has expressed regret that sections of the Australian Greens continue to create unnecessary conflict in regional communities by promoting an extreme “winner takes all” approach to natural forestry.

Chief Executive Officer of AFPA Mr Ross Hampton said, “Our industries are on the same page as the Greens when it comes to so many things.”

“We share a desire to combat dangerous climate change.”

“We agree that it is not good enough that the 7th most forested nation on earth is not self-sufficient in timber and fibre (we import over \$5 billion worth of forest products every year).”

“We share a passion for kick-starting forest plantations and for turbo-charging productivity enhancing farm forestry.”

“We agree on investment in research and development being vital.”

“And we agree, as do the serious mainstream global environmental groups, that as a world we are consuming finite resources far too quickly and that sustainable forest industries must shoulder a far greater share of the load.”

Mr Hampton said, “It is regrettable that we cannot agree on the role of sustainably managed natural forestry in Australia which is a vital contributor to those shared goals. An example of the impact of the “winner takes all” approach as it would apply to NSW, should give voters pause as we approach the federal poll.”

“There are 850 National Parks and Reserves in NSW, covering some 7 million hectares which is about 9% of the area of the whole State. There is about 2 million ha of public multiple use forest which is accessed by forest industries at the rate of about half of one percent a year. And every area harvested is resown and regrown. The extreme “winner takes all” position says that the remaining 2 million ha should also be added to the 7 million ha of reserves. This raises big questions: How much would NSW taxes increase to pay for maintaining those reserves? Are the Greens really content to see yet more imports of forest products from countries which do not have Australia’s record for sustainable forest management?” said Mr Hampton.