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Groundhog Day? PM Turnbull you forgot bioenergy again!

It's Groundhog Day for our sustainable forest product industries. Again, the significant potential of bioenergy sourced from renewable woody biomass, including the recognition of industrial heat, is being ignored in energy policy development.

Chief Executive Officer of the Australian Forest Products Association (AFPA) Mr Ross Hampton said, "In his National Press Club Address Prime Minister Turnbull discussed the major transitions to a lower emissions future needed in the energy sector. The PM committed to a 'technology neutral' policy approach to ensure energy markets embrace renewable energy options but remain secure and affordable, mentioning efficient coal, wind, solar, and energy storage. What isn't being recognised is that bioenergy sourced from renewable biomass has the potential to help realise these goals."

"The forest products industry could make a significant contribution to delivering lower emissions and affordable renewable energy security, while also providing much needed investment and jobs in forestry, wood and paper product manufacturing," said Mr Hampton.

Tasmania and South Australia's recent energy security issues naturally lead to energy policy reform that should prioritise investment in those sources of renewable energy that can better substitute for base-load non-renewable power. This approach should result in a focus on bioenergy.

Other countries are adopting ambitious climate targets by incentivising their businesses to transfer from energy sourced from coal, oil and gas to renewable biomass sources (e.g. from forestry or wood wastes or other sources).

Globally, bioenergy sourced from biomass accounts for around 77% of renewable energy, which represents 13% of the world's primary energy mix. However, despite having the highest area of forest per capita of the developed nations, Australia uses bioenergy in less than 1% of the electricity production. In contrast, bioenergy contributes 16% of renewable power in Finland, 15% in Denmark and more than 7% in Sweden. Ambitious emissions reduction targets and significant new investment could be achieved by supporting bioenergy sourced from biomass including the recognition of industrial heat.

The UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change states that over the long term, a sustainably managed working forest, with carbon stored in products and residues used for energy, is one of the very best things we can and should do about climate change (IPCC 4th Assessment).

AFPA urges the PM and policy makers to recognise and embrace the potential of bioenergy sourced from biomass in their deliberations on lowering emissions and energy policy reform.

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

Media Contact: Bernadette Cording
AFPA Communications Manager
(m) 0409 962 250 (e) bernadette.cording@ausfpa.com.au