

Media Release



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UN backs bioenergy on International Day of Forests

The 21st of March is the United Nations (UN) International Day of Forests.

In a timely endorsement as Australia grapples with energy security, the UN has this year chosen to forcefully support bioenergy as a significant potential value-add from sustainable forestry operations.

According to the UN, sustainably managed forests are 'nature's powerhouse', providing timber, paper and bioproducts but also reliable renewable bioenergy which can greatly assist nations meet ambitious emissions reduction targets.

Chief Executive Officer of the Australian Forest Products Association (AFPA) Mr Ross Hampton said, "The key thing about the UN position, which embraces all forest products, is that it is entirely predicated on nations ensuring that trees are replanted or regenerated after harvesting. This is exactly what happens in Australia. We can be proud of our forest products knowing that they are renewable and sustainable.

"The UN forecasts a global population of 9.5 billion people by 2050. The increasing demand for food, shelter and energy will mean that the world must turn ever more to the most renewable of resources and look to the countries that manage forestry sustainably to deliver. Australia is one of those nations. This is recognised by the serious global green groups but appears to be ignored by a small number of ideologues attempting to close Australia's sustainable forest industries.

Mr Hampton said, "Australia's forest industries contribute \$21 billion to the national economy with around 120,000 direct jobs across the full value chain. Sustainable forest product industries store carbon, provide renewable products and energy, and underpin much needed investment and regional jobs."

Note:

Under the Kyoto Protocol, bioenergy is regarded as CO₂ neutral. The UN Framework Convention on Climate Change also defines bioenergy as renewable, if it is produced from biomass that is sustainably managed. Australian governments recognise it as an eligible renewable source under the current Renewable Energy Target, and other renewable energy and climate change policies and initiatives. The Clean Energy Finance Corporation (CEFC) recognises the significant potential for bioenergy to contribute to renewable energy, biofuels and carbon emissions, creating the \$100 million Australian Bioenergy Fund to invest in bioenergy and waste to energy projects. As at June 2015, the Australian Renewable Energy Agency (ARENA) had invested over \$7.6 million in bioenergy projects.

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

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