

Media Release

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Incoming Chair of United Nations FAO forestry Committee says turbo-charging timber and forestry key to achieving 'Carbon Neutral by 2050'

Incoming Chair of the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation's (FAO) forestry advisory Council, Ross Hampton, says the world's renewable timber and forestry sectors must be turbo-charged if we are to have any chance of achieving the global goal of 'Carbon Neutral by 2050'.

Mr Hampton, who is also Chief Executive Officer of the Australian Forest Products Association (AFPA), has just been appointed Chair of the UN FAO's Advisory Committee on Sustainable Forest-based Industries (ACSF).

"I am honoured to be chosen for this role. The ACSFI is determined to promote world best practice sustainable forest management such as occurs in Australia and many parts of the globe. My ambition is to continue the powerful representation of outgoing Chair Carina Hakansson, who was DG of the Swedish Forest Industries Federation," Mr Hampton said.

Mr Hampton said the world's sustainably managed forestry and forest products industries were uniquely positioned to play a major role in the renewed global drive to achieve 'Carbon Neutral by 2050', and in the international post-COVID recovery efforts.

Mr Hampton pointed to the 4th assessment report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), which stated:

"A sustainable forest management strategy aimed at maintaining or increasing forest carbon stocks, while producing an annual sustained yield of timber, fibre or energy from the forest, will generate the largest sustained mitigation benefit."

"Wood and timber products don't just store carbon as the trees grow, they also store it in the products produced from forests. Timber is also far less energy-intensive to produce than steel and concrete, making it the 'green' choice for construction. However, despite some outstanding breakthroughs in innovative engineered timber products, the shift to medium and high-rise timber buildings has been too slow in Australia and internationally if we are to make a meaningful impact on climate. Every major city authority with a climate action plan should be demanding developers use more timber."

"Forestry products also have a huge role to play in providing biodegradable alternatives to single use plastics which are choking our waterways and oceans," Mr Hampton said.

The Secretary of the ACSFI, based in Rome, Sven Walter said, "I congratulate Mr Hampton as incoming Chair. Our push to increase the uptake of forest-based renewables needs strong leadership and Mr Hampton has shown he is a passionate and serious advocate for sustainable forest industries."

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FAO Forestry Officer, Australian Lyndall Bull said, “I have known Mr Hampton for many years. I am looking forward to working with him to implement the new 2020-2030 ACSFI Strategic Framework ensuring that the vital work of ACSFI is at the forefront of the wider global audience”.

ⁱ https://www.ipcc.ch/site/assets/uploads/2018/03/ar4_wg3_full_report-1.pdf

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