

Media Release

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Disappointing decision on sustainable native forest biomass in RET ignores the science

The Australian Forest Products Association (AFPA) is disappointed the Federal Government has bowed to pressure from anti-forestry groups and removed the eligibility of native forest biomass from the Renewable Energy Target (RET), at odds with the international scientific consensus.

AFPA Chief Executive Officer Ross Hampton said the decision ignored the advice from the United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) that sustainably sourced forest biomass is a renewable energy feedstock.

"Bioenergy produced from sustainable biomass wood residues is carbon neutral and recognised internationally as a renewable energy resource," Ross Hampton said.

"Australia should not close the door to a dispatchable renewable energy source that is widely used around the world at a time when we need more renewable energy sources."

The significant potential for the forestry and forest products industry to contribute to climate change mitigation – including through renewable bioenergy – is acknowledged in the [4th assessment](#) report of the IPCC, which states:

*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.*

"The fact is that over the past 20 years there have been no projects under the RET that have used native forest residues for electricity anywhere in Australia. That is because our native forests are primarily managed for high-value hardwood timber products such as floorboards, decking, furniture and joinery. The industry then tries to find the highest value uses for the residues," Ross Hampton said.

"However, Australia's wood and paper product industries routinely use mill residues for heat energy for a wide variety of applications, including drying, preheating, and process heating. In doing so, they are using a renewable energy source instead of fossil fuels, and we welcome that the Government has recognised this and that mill residues will continue to be an eligible feedstock in the RET."

Ross Hampton said Australia's forest industries will continue to work with the Federal Government on supporting innovation and R&D to unlock even higher value uses for renewable wood residues and build the circular economy.

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“Increasingly, the sector is looking for higher value uses for residues, such as engineered wood products, biomaterials and biochemicals to displace plastics and other fossil fuel-based chemicals. It is important that the Federal Government continues to support rather than discourage investment in all our sustainable forest industries,” Ross Hampton concluded.

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