



Media Release

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BIPARTISAN SUPPORT – FORESTRY CRITICAL TO COMBAT CLIMATE CHANGE

The National Association of Forest Industries (NAFI) has welcomed recognition of the climate change benefits of forestry by the Coalition in its new climate change initiative. “This confirms bipartisan recognition of the critical importance of forestry in combating the effects of climate change,” said NAFI CEO Allan Hansard.

“Already, forestry is Australia’s only carbon positive industry, meaning it sequesters more carbon than it emits. The announcement by Leader of the Opposition, Malcolm Turnbull, of the Coalition’s plan to reduce Australia’s carbon emissions highlights these wide-reaching environmental benefits of Australia’s sustainable, renewable forest industry.

“The Coalition’s plan outlines a number of areas where forestry will be key to meeting the nation’s carbon reduction targets including biosequestration through plantation expansion and biochar produced from wood waste, however there’s more that forestry can do to reduce Australia’s greenhouse emissions with the appropriate regulatory framework.

“*Plantations* - Based on Australia’s national carbon accounts, Australia’s ‘Kyoto’ plantations currently deliver around 20 million tonnes of CO₂ abatement each year. Given the appropriate regulatory framework the contribution could increase to around 50 million tonnes of CO₂ abatement per annum by 2020 as the number of plantations increases.

“*Biochar* – The forest industry will provide the feedstock for biochar which is produced from existing forestry waste. Biochar could produce significant amounts of green energy while also improving agricultural soil.

“However, this could be greatly increased if the recent Mandatory Renewable Energy Regulations legislation was extended to recognise use of all wood waste so it can be used to produce biochar and renewable energy. There is enough wood waste available from existing forest industry activities in Australia (without harvesting a single extra tree) to produce around 3 million megawatt hours of electricity per annum – enough to power 400,000 homes, and provide a permanent reduction in Australia’s greenhouse gas emissions of 3 million tonnes of CO₂ per year.

“Forestry is the key to meeting Australia’s climate change obligations while generating jobs and investment. This is vital at a time when many other industries are downsizing, leaving thousands of Australians out of work.

“Australia’s sustainable forest industry, made up of plantations and sustainably managed native forests, can provide significant economic, environmental and social benefits. With the appropriate government support forestry has the potential to provide 16,000 new jobs, \$19 billion in new investment and annual carbon sequestration of around 81 million tonnes, by 2020. Most of this new investment and employment will be in regional areas, providing a much-needed boost to communities struggling to cope with the effects of drought and a reduction in agricultural production.

“We are pleased that the Government and the Coalition agree that forestry is a significant part of the solution to climate change - and can deliver much needed economic stability and jobs growth to rural and regional Australia in these troubled economic times. NAFI will be working with the Government and Coalition to

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ensure the maximum environmental and economic benefits of Australia's sustainable forest industry are realised for the benefit of all Australians," Mr Hansard said.

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