



Media Release

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Brown ignores carbon positive forest industry

“NAFI agrees with comments by Senator Bob Brown that the Prime Minister has missed a low-cost carbon reduction opportunity by not including native forests and the products produced from them, in the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme,” said Allan Hansard, CEO of National Association of Forest Industries (NAFI).

“However, Senator Brown has failed to make the point that Australia’s forest industry is the only industry that is carbon positive – meaning it sequesters more carbon than it emits.

“Through sustainable forest management practices we are increasing the amount of carbon stored in our forests while the products produced from sustainably managed native forests also store carbon.

“The carbon stored in native forests amounts to 23 million tonnes each year, and a further 5 million tonnes a year is stored in wood products. If this massive carbon store was to be counted in the CPRS the cost to households of meeting the country’s carbon reduction target could be significantly reduced.

“In addition to the massive environmental benefits Australia’s sustainably managed forest industry provides it is a vital part of Australia’s economy, employing over 76,000 people and providing nearly \$19 billion in economic turnover each year.

“Forestry is a vital part of many rural and regional communities, often providing the bulk of employment. NAFI is disappointed that in this tight economic climate, and approaching Christmas, Senator Brown condones the actions of protesters who have prevented timber workers from lawfully earning an income.

“Less than 0.1% of Australia’s native forests are harvested each year, and in keeping with sustainable forest management, all of these are regenerated meaning every tree that is harvested is replanted.

“This is in line with the recommendations of the international scientists on the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change 2007 which stated the largest carbon sequestration benefit from forests is produced by the long term sustainable management of forests for timber, fibre and energy production.

“This active management mimics the natural state of the forest and helps to protect the forest against bush-fires, which can have a devastating effect on wildlife as well as emitting millions of tonnes of carbon into the atmosphere.

“The passive management, ‘lock and leave’ approach often used in forest reserves and national parks, results in the excessive build-up of fuel leading to more intense and destructive wildfires and greater carbon emissions.

“While Australia’s plantation timber industry continues to grow, it is not enough to meet Australia’s wood product needs. Currently Australia imports more than \$2 billion worth of timber each year, and this would only increase if native forest logging was to end, putting more pressure on the economy and resulting in thousands of jobs lost in rural and regional Australia.

“The carbon positive forest industry is the elephant in Senator Brown’s room,” said Mr Hansard.
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