



Media Release

23 June 2010

Government votes to keep Australia in the dark ages on renewable energy from forest wood waste

In the Senate today the Government voted down amendments to the Renewable Energy Target legislation that would have allowed the wood waste and residues from existing operations in native forest and plantations to be fully recognized for the creation of renewable energy credits.

The National Association of Forest Industries (NAFI) CEO Allan Hansard said “He was disappointed with the Government’s decision to vote down the amendments as they were common sense amendments that would have provided considerable greenhouse benefits, regional investment and jobs. They also ensured environmental and sustainable credibility as only wood covered under the strict management prescriptions of the regional forest agreement process would be eligible”.

“Without harvesting an additional tree, the amendments would have allowed the offset of 3 million tonnes of carbon emissions per year, generated 3,000 gigawatt hours of renewable energy (approximately 7 per cent of the RET target) and supported hundreds of millions of dollars of investment with an additional 2300 jobs in rural and regional Australia.

“Unfortunately Australia is being left behind other developed nations in the recognition of renewable wood waste for electricity and generation. The European Union, Canada and USA generate a significant amount of electricity and heat from renewable resources; in Europe over two thirds of this comes from biomass, most of which is wood waste from forestry operations.

“The industry endorses the approach in Europe and North America where only wood waste from forest operations in sustainably managed forests are recognised for renewable energy. Australia’s renewable, sustainable forest industry is managed to world’s best practice standards of environmental management.

“The Government’s decision will severely limit the ability of the forest industry to provide positive climate change outcomes in the bioenergy sector and will have a negative impact on investment in renewable energy technology, innovation and infrastructure in Australia”, said Mr Hansard.

“Again we have seen Senator Brown and the Greens politicise the issue and through the Government’s decision, have contributed to a bad outcome for the environment, the communities reliant on the timber industry and the industry. NAFI is now concerned about the Government’s commitment to Australia’s sustainable forest industry.

NAFI acknowledges the efforts of Senator Richard Colbeck and the Coalition for putting forward such common sense amendments with respect to the full use of forestry wood wastes for renewable energy.

[ENDS]

Contact: James Gray 0408 940 935 or 02 6285 3833 james.gray@nafi.com.au

About the National Association of Forest Industries (NAFI)

The National Association of Forest Industries (NAFI) is the peak national body representing the Australian forestry and forest products industries. NAFI represents companies, individuals and organisations involved in these industries and works with governments and other stakeholders to support its members, improve industry standards and practices, promote sustainable forest management and educate the community on the broader economic, environment and social benefits of a strong and vibrant forest industry.



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