

Green Institute Update, 5 June 2009

Happy World Environment Day! To mark the day the United Nations Environment Program, just a few hours ago, released a new report titled: '*The Natural Fix? The role of ecosystems in climate mitigation*'. UNEP says it's time to give forests, mangroves, peatlands and climate-friendly agriculture a bigger role in combating climate change : 'It is vital to manage carbon in biological systems, to safeguard existing stores of carbon, reduce emissions and to maximise the potential of natural and agricultural areas for removing carbon from the atmosphere.'

This is a message the Australian government should heed since around 20% of our annual emissions come from native forest logging and clearing which, under the CPRS, would continue essentially unabated. It should be noted that protecting green carbon (carbon in natural ecosystems) is not a substitute for tackling fossil fuel emissions but an essential complement. As well as reducing current emissions it will help redress the legacy of past clearing and land degradation which, globally, is responsible for about 25% of the post-industrial revolution increase in atmospheric CO₂ concentrations. Read the UNEP report at http://www.unep.org/wed/2009/english/content/information_material.asp