



Media Release

3rd March 2011

PM GILLARD URGED TO TAKE GARNAUT'S ADVICE AND INCLUDE FORESTS IN CLIMATE POLICIES

The Australian Forests and Climate Alliance said today that the statement by Professor Ross Garnaut that forestry and agriculture should be included in any new carbon price regime was a welcome addition to the carbon emissions debate.

‘Including a mechanism to avoid the emissions from forestry offers a positive and relatively low cost way to make an immediate and substantial reduction impact in Australia’s greenhouse gas emissions. We call upon the PM to bring the protection of native forests into her climate change policies and deliver important climate benefits to the nation,’ said Lorraine Bower, spokesperson for the Australian Forests and Climate Alliance.

“Clearing and logging of forests is estimated to account for 20% of Australia’s carbon dioxide emissions. Ending native forest logging and allowing forests to mature would make an important contribution to emissions reductions” said Ms Bower.

AFCA welcomed the attention Professor Garnaut has drawn to the importance of improved carbon accounting for the emissions from logging forests. Recently science has shown that Australia has some of the most carbon dense forests on the Earth. However, a cautionary approach is required considering that setting a carbon price could overlook the distortions in current forestry industry economics that hinder the transition out of native forest logging.

“Inherent subsidies and underpricing of native forest wood by State forestry agencies has distorted the value of timber. There is much evidence that their current logging regimes are unsustainable economically as well as environmentally, and that the private plantation sector will struggle to compete so long as this situation continues” said Lorraine Bower.

“Australia should be showing leadership by demanding new international carbon accounting rules for forestry that take full responsibility for all logging emissions, instead of backing the creation of a logging loophole that understates emissions and reduces the incentive to act on them,” said Peg Putt, also speaking on behalf of AFCA.

“What is needed is a Green Carbon Fund to pay for the protection and restoration of Australia’s native forests so they can help secure a safe climate for our future”, concluded Ms Bower.

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