

**MEDIA RELEASE MARKETS FOR CHANGE
REJECT DESPERATE PUSH FOR GOVERNMENT RET SUBSIDIES TO BURN NATIVE
FORESTS FOR INDUSTRIAL HEAT 19.04.2016**

Always on the hunt for government assistance to entrench industrial logging of native forests in the face of international rejection of Australian woodchip exports from that source, a forest industry push launched today to include burning native forest biomass for industrial heat in the Renewable Energy Target should be rejected outright, according to Markets For Change.

Markets For Change points out that burning natural forest material is actually highly emissive of greenhouse gases, and that flaws in carbon accounting internationally that give a false impression of carbon neutrality have provoked a strong reaction against wood-based biomass energy generation in Europe – something that the Australian Forest Products Association and their advisors have chosen to completely ignore as they line up to squeeze more for loggers in the run to a Federal election.

“Native forest biomass is not a clean renewable energy, and this breathtaking demand to further extend government assistance under the Renewable Energy Target to industrial heat in addition to electricity generation would entrench industrial logging of native forests from which enormous amounts of material would then be burnt. It should be rejected outright,” said Markets For Change CEO, Peg Putt.

“Remember that the inclusion of native forest biomass burning for electricity into the RET last year was extremely controversial and opposed by Labor and the Greens. We expect them to maintain a policy of excluding native forest materials from the RET, yet the industry wants it extended further.”

“There are many flaws in the argument put forward by logging advocates. This is not just about post sawmill residue but actually about huge amounts coming straight out of the forest to the furnace. In the Orwellian world of forest industry parlance this freshly cut forest is badged as ‘waste’ or ‘residue’ in the same way as were export woodchips – because so much is cut down regardless of the fact that it is not high grade sawlog.”

“Neither is this a carbon neutral energy source. Burning native forest emits more greenhouse gases per unit of energy produced than does burning coal, and the time taken to recover those emissions in growing forests is measured in many decades or even centuries – not in the next ten to twenty years which is the time we have in which to make inroads into our emissions and turn around climate change. The claim that it’s all Ok because the forest grows back one day is simplistic and deeply flawed.”

“Calling this energy form ‘renewable’ is dubious, and claiming it to be ‘clean’ in the sense of being non-emissive is complete nonsense.”

Recent work from Chatham House exposing loopholes in carbon accounting that create a false impression of carbon neutrality by simply excluding the emissions from accounts globally was presented to the UN Climate Negotiations last year, and a briefing held yesterday in the British Parliament by the Partnership For Policy Integrity also exposed that relying on this form of bioenergy undermines efforts to tackle climate change.

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