



MEDIA RELEASE

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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STANDING COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, RESOURCES, FISHERIES AND FORESTRY

Inquiry into the Australian forestry industry

Chair: *The Hon Dick Adams MP*
Deputy Chair: *Mr Alby Schultz MP*

Growing Australian forestry

— *New Inquiry* —

The House of Representatives Agriculture, Resources, Fisheries and Forestry Committee has launched a new inquiry into the challenges and opportunities facing the Australian forestry industry.

The inquiry comes at a time when the industry faces change on an unprecedented scale, from the decline in value of traditional products such as wood chips to the advent of farm forestry and the use of forest products in energy production.

The Committee is keen to examine how the forestry industry can adapt to meet the challenges it faces, including improving productivity and value adding, boosting capital investment and making the industry and the communities that rely on it more resilient to change.

Committee Chair Dick Adams said it is important for governments to look at the current and future prospects of the forestry industry, to examine ways to help it grow into the future.

“The Australian community has a large and growing demand for forest products,” Mr Adams said “We need to ensure that that demand is being met in ways that are environmentally and economically sustainable, and beneficial to Australia.”

“We need to ensure that innovation is being identified and supported, that new ideas are accessible, and that the implications of change to the forestry industry upon communities and the economy are fully considered. We must get this right if we are to maintain an internationally competitive forestry sector.”

The Committee will inquire into and report upon:

- Opportunities for and constraints upon production.
- Opportunities for diversification, value adding and product innovation.
- Environmental impacts of forestry, including:
 - Impacts of plantations upon land and water availability for agriculture.
 - Balancing environmental costs with economic opportunities.
- Creating a better business environment for forest industries, including:
 - Investment models for saw log production.
 - New business and investment models for plantation production.
 - Superannuation investment in plantations.
- Social and economic benefits of forestry production.
- Potential energy production from the forestry sector, including:
 - Biofuels, Biomass, Biochar, Cogeneration and Carbon sequestration
- Land use competition between the forestry and agriculture sectors.
 - Implications of competing land uses for the cost and availability of timber, food and fibre.
 - Harmonising competing interests.
 - Opportunities for farm forestry.

Submissions are due by **Friday, 25 March 2011**, although the Committee would appreciate that submissions be sent as early as possible. The Committee would prefer submissions to be sent electronically to arff.reps@aph.gov.au. Submitters are encouraged to read the information on preparing a submission available on the committee website before lodging their submission.

For media comment: please contact the Committee Chair, the Hon Dick Adams MP, on (02) 6277 4293 or email D.Adams.MP@aph.gov.au

Further information: contact the Inquiry Secretary (02) 6277 4500, email arff.reps@aph.gov.au or visit the Committee's webpage at <http://www.aph.gov.au/arff>