



MEDIA RELEASE

Issued: 23 November 2011

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*

Seeing the forest through the trees

— Forestry inquiry report tabled —

The House of Representatives Standing Committee on Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry has today tabled its report which makes 19 recommendations into the Australian forestry industry.

The committee inquired into the prospects of the industry including: opportunities for and constraints upon production, opportunities for diversification, value adding and innovation, the environmental impacts of forestry, the potential for energy production and land-use competition.

Committee chair Dick Adams MP said the report had come at an important time for the industry.

“The committee believes that the industry is poised to take advantage of many opportunities for growth, if policy settings are right,” he said.

“The report confirms that the Australian forestry industry has a bright future, and there are exciting new avenues for investment and innovation opening up to Australian forestry.

“Forestry has the potential to supply more building materials to the construction industry, to contribute more renewable energy to the Australian economy, and to improve land management practices across the agricultural sector.”

The report has recommended that current Regional Forest Agreements (RFAs) be renewed, incorporating an ‘evergreen’ extension process – to ensure that the forestry industry has wood-supply security. The committee has called for new RFAs to be in place at least three years before the expiry of existing RFAs, and for a new regime within RFAs for ongoing monitoring and periodic assessment.

The report has recommended the Government address potential issues in the Carbon Farming Initiative, to ensure that it can support less-common land uses – such as long-rotation plantations – as well as supporting farm forestry. And the committee has recommended the Australian Government consider the appropriateness of providing financial incentives to the plantation sector, as well as existing Managed Investment Scheme (MIS) arrangements.

If incentives or MIS are no longer appropriate, other mechanisms should be considered. The committee has also called for a national plan for plantations, to ensure that plantations are planted in appropriate locations, and to ensure that appropriate regional infrastructure for plantations exists. The Committee has also recommended that native forest waste be considered a source of renewable energy under the Renewable Energy Target.

The inquiry, which commenced in February 2011, received 121 submissions and held 12 days of public hearings, taking evidence from government and non-government stakeholders.

Media Conference

WHERE: Committee Room 1R3
WHEN: Wednesday 23 November 2011, from 4.30pm – 5.00pm.
WEBCAST: <http://webcast.aph.gov.au/livebroadcasting/>

For media comment: please contact the Committee Chair, the Hon Dick Adams MP, on (03) 6398 1115 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>