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Australian plantation industry launches national water policy



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A3P, in conjunction with the Forest Industry Water Policy Group, has today launched the first Australian plantation industry national water policy.

The policy details the industry's views on the National Water Initiative (NWI) and how the NWI clauses dealing with water interception should be dealt with in the development of regional water plans.

A3P CEO Neil Fisher said, "The Australian plantation industry calls for a national approach to water use policy that is underpinned by science and treats water interception by all land use change activities consistently and equitably.

"Plantations provide many environmental, social and economic benefits with little impact on water availability. When properly planned and managed, plantations can contribute to more sustainable land use in rural areas", he said.

Key points in the policy:

1. Plantation forestry is a dryland (non-irrigated) agricultural land use and any policy contemplated in relation to interception of water by plantations should be considered only as part of a full debate on water interception by all dryland agricultural land uses;
2. All policy on water interception must be underpinned by sound, repeatable and reliable science;
3. All policy on water interception should take into account issues of water quality as well as water quantity;
4. Clauses 55-57 of the National Water Initiative should only be implemented as written, that is, constrained to consideration of land use change (for example new plantations) not existing land uses.
5. Any inclusion of land use change to plantation forestry in a water entitlement system must take into account of the differences between the physical extraction of water from the water supply system by humans and the natural interception of water by plants.

Mr Fisher, who represents forest and paper industries in the National Water Commission's National Stakeholder Reference Group, said A3P was committed to working with Governments and industry to ensure the effective management and use of Australia's important water resources.

Members of the Forest Industry Water Policy Group include A3P, the Australian Forest Growers, National Association of Forest Industries and Timber Communities Australia.

Download the policy from www.a3p.asn.au

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Further information

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