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Reforestation and Harvested Wood Products – Climate Change Solutions?

Reforestation and harvested wood products should play a key role in combating climate change according to the Australian Plantation Products and Paper Industry Council (A3P).

The proposed design of the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme (CPRS) enables eligible reforestation plantations to opt-in voluntarily.

“While the ability to sell carbon credits from eligible plantations is a positive aspect of the CPRS for the forestry industry, the Reforestation section of the draft legislation does raise concerns for us, especially the conditions that will be put on entities that opt-in to the Scheme,” said Richard Stanton, Chief Executive of A3P.

“The complex and onerous nature of the rules that the Government has designed may mean that very few additional commercial timber plantations will be established and the full potential to store carbon will not be realised.”

“The Government is tying liabilities to the land, but we fear this will limit the commercial arrangements that different players may be willing to enter into. It might mean that landowners won’t be willing to allow a third party to establish a plantation on their land.”

While Reforestation is included in the proposed CPRS, another potential opportunity to promote mitigation and forestry industry development is the recognition of carbon storage in wood products. A3P is advocating for the recognition of carbon stored in harvested wood products (HWP) in the CPRS, to encourage the use of wood in place of more carbon intense alternative products.

“HWP compete with highly emissions-intensive materials such as steel and concrete in the building sector. Increased use of HWP in place of these is the sort of thing that the Government should be encouraging through the CPRS,” said Mr Stanton.

“However, while steel and concrete receive permit allocations as emission-intensive, trade-exposed industries under the CPRS and HWP are not recognised, there could be perverse incentives which send the wrong signals to consumers.”

Both these topics and more are being discussed at the 2009 Institute of Foresters Australia conference.

The IFA conference is being held from Monday until Thursday 10th September. For more information visit www.forestry.org.au/conference

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Further information

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