

MEDIA RELEASE

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A3P Congratulates Minister Burke for delivering funding for key election promises



29 Torrens Street
Braddon ACT 2612

T +61 2 6273 8111
F +61 2 6273 8011
W www.a3p.asn.au

A3P, the peak body representing the plantations products and paper industry, has today welcomed the 2008 – 09 budget, and thanked the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, the Hon. Tony Burke, for delivering on commitments made during the lead up to the 2007 Federal election.

A3P CEO Mr Neil Fisher said, “I applaud the Minister for delivering on key policy promises in relation to the forestry sector set out during the lead up to the 2007 Federal election.

“This is a demonstration of the Ministers’ support for our sector and recognition of the role our industry can make to addressing climate change.

“By delivering on these promises the Minister is allowing the forestry sector to continue to better research, improve and advance in key areas such as climate change, skills shortages and emissions trading.

“We look forward to working with the Minister and his Department on the key deliverables of this budget particularly in the lead up to finalising our Forestry and Climate Change Action Plan, a report that is being written to assist the whole industry to respond to the impact of climate change.”

Key policy promises that were funded in the budget include:

- \$8.0 million over three years to carry out more research into the impact of climate change on the forestry systems and industries.
- \$1.0 million to help address the forest industry skills shortage by declaring ForestWorks as the new *Forest Products Industry Skills Council*.
- \$1.0 million to update and expand the existing forest industry database to meet the future information needs of industry and government, including identifying areas of skills shortage and informing workplace skills development.
- \$9.0 million towards a *Forest Industries Development Fund* which will expand investment in value-adding initiatives in the forest industries and boost exports.
- \$1.0 million to tackle illegal logging through working with regional neighbours and within Australia to restrict the sale of illegal-logged timber.

Mr Neil Fisher said, “Through budget initiatives such as addressing the forest industries skills shortage by declaring ForestWorks as the new *Forest Products Industry Skills Council* and boosting the export of forest products through the *Forest Industries Development Fund* the Government is enabling forestry to continue to grow and be a sustainable and profitable sector to the Australian economy.”

To view information on the ‘Forestry and Climate Change Action Plan’ please visit <http://www.a3p.asn.au/news/Action%20Plan%20workshop.html>

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Further information

Neil Fisher, CEO A3P - 0412 637 550

Lisa Dogan, Communications Officer A3P – 0414 552 225