

1 December 2006 - For Immediate release

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT TO FORM NATIONAL 'TIMBER COUNCILS TASKFORCE'

Local Government Mayors, Councillors and CEOs, representing councils from across Australia unanimously agreed to form a 'National Timber Councils Taskforce' at a breakfast meeting hosted by Timber Towns Victoria in conjunction with the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) National General Assembly in Canberra yesterday.

The councillors were strongly encouraged to form a national group to consider sustainable forestry issues by Sen the Hon Eric Abetz, Australian Government Minister for Fisheries, Forestry and Conservation, who addressed the meeting about a range of forestry matters.

"I think that such an organisation can bring substantial benefits in terms of a united voice and to get local government voices heard at a national level" said Minister Abetz.

Chair of the breakfast meeting, Councillor Malcolm Hole, President of Timber Towns Victoria and Mayor of Wellington Shire in Victoria, said, "As local governments working collectively we will have a stronger voice to work with individual State Governments and the Australian Government.

"It is also important that we form this taskforce so that we can share information about matters of common interest relating to sustainable forestry, such as funding of roads," said Councillor Hole.

Timber Towns Victoria will support the formation of this taskforce along with ALGA and Plantations for Australia: The 2020 Vision. The taskforce will operate like the National Seachange Taskforce.

National plantation industry organisations, Australian Forest Growers and A3P, the Australian Plantation Products and Paper Industry Council, were also represented at the meeting.

Mr Tony Cannon, President of Australian Forest Growers, said, "Australian Forest Growers look forward to having dialogue with this new national organisation of local government. It is important that the plantation sector develops a strong partnership with local government.'

The breakfast meeting also included the launch of a new website built for use by local government [www.PlanningPlantations.com.au](http://www.PlanningPlantations.com.au), which brings together scientific and planning information about forestry plantations.

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