

Media Release

Minister for Fisheries, Forestry and Conservation – Senator Hon Ian Macdonald

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Forestry reports will bring balance to timber debate

Australian Forestry and Conservation Minister Senator Ian Macdonald has launched three new reports on the important issues of sustainability, the barriers to investing in timber plantations and the availability of plantation-grown hardwood sawlogs.

The publications - *Eucalypt Plantations for Solid Wood Products in Australia*, *Impediments to Investments in Long Rotation Timber Plantations* and *Forests for Tomorrow*, were launched in Melbourne today.

Senator Macdonald said recent media claims incorrectly suggesting there is enough plantation-grown hardwood available to replace those logged in native forests proves the need for facts in the debate.

"These reports clearly dispel some of these myths being pushed by the radical Green groups," Senator Macdonald said. "In fact, the *Eucalypt Plantations for Solid Wood Products in Australia* report highlights that by 2035, plantation logs are likely to make up only about 18 per cent of the total log availability.

"The report brings together all the information on Australia's plantation hardwood supply, as well as its potential for value-added timber products. It recommends a greater focus on research, particularly in the areas of:

- improving industry understanding of market structures; and
- improving log availability modelling in plantations and native forests."

Senator Macdonald said the second report - *Impediments to Investments in Long Rotation Timber Plantations* - identifies the barriers to investing in these types of plantations, and ways of overcoming them.

"The right investment environment is crucial to any industry's long-term growth and survival," he said. "The Australian Government believes it is especially important with regard to long rotation timber plantations, and we contributed \$20,000 towards this report in the hope some of the recommendations will help move the industry forward."

The final publication, *Forests for Tomorrow*, examines how timber products are used and produced, and also provides a range of views on the important issue of sustainability.

"As the report states, 'people love wood, and love forests, but sometimes struggle to agree on how to have both'," Senator Macdonald said.

"These three reports make an important contribution to the debate on sustainability in Australia's forest and wood products industry; the investment climate during a very capital intensive period; and the future of the plantation hardwood sector."

The reports are available from the Forest and Wood Products Research and Development Corporation (FWPRDC) web site - www.fwprdc.org.au. Hard copies are also available - free-of-charge - by calling **(03) 9614 7544**.

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