



Sustainable forestry will generate the largest benefit for carbon stocks

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In the long term, a sustainable forest management strategy aimed at maintaining or increasing forest carbon stocks, while producing an annual yield of timber, fibre, or energy from the forest, will generate the largest sustained mitigation benefit (IPCC, 2007). Source: Timberbiz

"Sustainable forestry, the science and craft of creating, managing, conserving, using and caring for forests, has a vital role to play in addressing climate change and will be key to ensuring a resilient and healthy future for Australian society and the environment," Mr Gordon said.

"Forests are one of Australia's greatest natural assets, and Australia has first class forest management skills, experience and people, and an international reputation for sustainable management of our forests.

"However, as a nation, we can always do more," he said.

There were significant unrealised and exciting opportunities to manage Australia's precious forests actively and adaptively across all land tenures including National Parks, State forests and private land to achieve best outcomes now, and into the future.

"As climate change continues to impact our forests and communities, better and more effective year-round land management and wildfire prevention activities are required," Mr Gordon said.

"To do this, we need to ensure we continue to invest in human capital and support those equipped with the required specialised skill sets and knowledge.

"More investment in forest science and forest managers, and the right policy settings, would enable us to implement the active management approaches required to conserve and restore resilient forests and carbon stocks," he said.

"A key path to achieving this lies in working with Indigenous Australians, who have looked after the land for tens of thousands of years.

"We must respect and embrace the knowledge and experience of Traditional Owners and participate in two-way capacity building to implement forest-based solutions to mitigating human-induced climate change, together."

Australian Forest Products Association CEO Ross Hampton said Australia's sustainable and renewable forest industries had significantly contributed to reducing CO2 levels but could do a lot more, whilst also providing more timber for houses, sustainable products to replace plastics and emissions-intensive building materials, and renewable bioenergy to replace fossil fuels.

"The Australian Government understands the importance of Australia's forest industries and in 2018 committed to a billion more plantation trees over the next decade," he said.

"This goal is a win/win to meet Australia's demand for timber and wood-fibre as well as reducing CO2 levels," Mr Hampton said.

"Unfortunately, since that commitment only 2800 hectares of new plantations have been planted.

"Refocusing efforts to increase Australia's forestry plantations will turbocharge Australia's ability to sequester more carbon.

“The one billion trees goal can be achieved sooner by enabling timber plantations to fully participate in the Emissions Reduction Fund (ERF), and by prioritising the development of a new ERF methodology to incentivise the use of timber and engineered wood products to replace more emissions-intensive building materials in the construction sector,” Mr Hampton said.

Sustainable forestry management is an important part of the toolkit that will be required to curb the “unequivocal” human influence on climate change, as reported by the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), according to the Institute of Foresters.

The new IPCC report paints a dire picture of the effects of current unprecedented climate change and highlights that urgent action is required now.

The assessment, released on Monday, also warns of unprecedented increases in climate extremes such as bushfires, floods and drought.

But it says deep, rapid emissions cuts could spare Australia, and the world, from the most severe warming and associated harms.

IFA president, Bob Gordon said that the IPCC has previously noted:

Sustainable forest management aimed at providing timber, fibre, biomass, non-timber resources and other ecosystem functions and services, can lower GHG emissions and can contribute to adaptation (IPCC, 2019).

Source: <https://www.timberbiz.com.au/sustainable-forestry-will-generate-the-largest-benefit-for-carbon-stocks/>