



Media Release

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## Research says: fight climate change - use wood

*- New initiative launches to highlight the environmental benefits of wood -*

Australia's wood industry today launches a multi-million dollar programme to highlight the important role wood products play in tackling climate change, and to dispel misconceptions about the material.

A Newspoll survey commissioned by Forest & Wood Products Australia (FWPA) ahead of today's launch of the *Wood Naturally Better* campaign shows that half\* of Australians don't know that using wood is good for the environment and nearly 1 in 2\* people don't know the basic fact that wood stores carbon.

*Wood Naturally Better* follows the launch of similar initiatives around the world - in what has become a global drive - to highlight the sustainable, renewable and carbon storage benefits of wood.

Ric Sinclair, Forest & Wood Products Australia Managing Director, says it is astonishing that while Australians are voicing their concerns about global warming, many are still oblivious to the environmental benefits of wood products.

"It is well known that trees absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, but nearly half\* of those we surveyed weren't aware that carbon is stored in the wood of a tree – and stays there even after the wood has been turned into manufactured products."

On average, carbon accounts for nearly 50 per cent of the dry weight of a wood product.<sup>1</sup> For every tonne of wood produced, 1.8 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> is taken from the atmosphere.

Mr Sinclair says the forest and wood products industry is the only industry sector that stores more carbon dioxide than it releases into the atmosphere.<sup>2</sup>

"By choosing wood products wherever possible in house construction, emissions equivalent to up to 25 tonnes of carbon dioxide per house could be saved in Australia.<sup>1</sup>



“This has been seen in New Zealand, where the use of wood in new buildings has been shown to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases - due to the manufacturer of materials - by 30 to 85 per cent.<sup>1</sup>

“We hope that through the *Wood Naturally Better* initiative we can educate professionals and consumers about the environmental benefits of using wood and help further the sustainable development of the forest and wood products industry in this country.

“Not only is wood an environmentally sound option, it also provides employment for thousands of Australians. There are currently more than 83,000 people directly employed in Australia’s forest industries,” concluded Mr Sinclair.<sup>2</sup>

*Wood Naturally Better* is a long-term programme that will incorporate advertising campaigns and promotional activities nationally to drive its messages. In addition to its educational aspects, industry members hope to use *Wood Naturally Better* as a platform to discuss and create awareness of industry issues.

For more information about the campaign please visit the *Wood Naturally Better* website [www.naturallybetter.com.au](http://www.naturallybetter.com.au).

#### Research findings

\* In relation to the environment 51% of consumers think using wood is bad, very bad, neither good nor bad or don’t know.

\* When asked to select the industry with the lowest carbon emissions, 33% of consumers answered steel, concrete or plastic over wood.

\*45% of those surveyed did not know that wood stores carbon.

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**For more information or to request a photo or interview contact:**

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### ***Wood Naturally Better***

The *Wood Naturally Better* programme is being run by Forest & Wood Products Australia on behalf of levy payers within the industry.

It is a multi-million dollar initiative designed to enable professionals and consumers to understand how they can play a part in tackling climate change by using one of the planet's most natural materials - wood.

It will be a first for the Australian market and is the largest joint-activity ever undertaken by the forest and wood products industry.

### ***Forest & Wood Products Australia***

Forest & Wood Products Australia (FWPA) is the forestry and wood industry's service provider, investing in research and development, and providing research outcome information to the forest and wood products industry in Australia.

FWPA aims to improve the competitiveness and sustainability of the Australian forest and wood products industry through innovation, and investment in effective and relevant R&D.

FWPA undertakes industry-level activities where a collective approach can deliver more effective and valuable commercial outcomes than individual action.

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<sup>1</sup> Forest and Wood Products Research and Development Corporation. (2008). *Forests, Wood and Australia's Carbon Balance*. Retrieved July 14, 2008, from <http://www.plantations2020.com.au/assets/acrobat/Forests,Wood&CarbonBalance.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry. (2008). *Australia's State of the Forests Report*. Retrieved July 14, 2008, from <http://adl.brs.gov.au/forestsaustralia/publications/sofr2008.html>