



Media release

Australia celebrates UN International Day of Forests 2017

In 2012, the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed the 21st of March every year as the International Day of Forests. The Day celebrates and raises awareness of the importance of all types of forests.

The UN chooses a theme for each International Day of Forests and the theme for 2017 is Forests and Energy.

Bob Gordon, CEO of the Institute of Foresters said, 'While the international theme is, ' Forests and Energy, we have so much more to celebrate. IFA members have a proud history starting out as the 'custodians' of Australia's forests but now work with the original custodians to ensure our children and children's children can enjoy the beauty and bounty of our forests.

'Activities happen worldwide to celebrate the role forests have played in the development of human civilisation. Originally they provided our ancestors with warmth while today we use timber in multi-storey wood buildings and recognise that forests, when managed sustainably, can provide renewable energy without introducing any more carbon onto the biosphere.

'Australia lags most developed countries by relying on fossil fuels to provide the bulk of its energy needs. A greater focus on renewables along with the inclusion of forestry by-products in the Renewable Energy Target should see an increase in bio-energy contribution to Australia's overall energy mix as we develop a low-carbon economy.

'Australia's forests and plantations provide carbon sinks, tourist hubs, biodiversity havens as well as construction material and beautiful timber for boats, furniture and even items as diverse as bicycles and lamp-posts. IFA members are working to ensure they continue to do so into the future', said Bob.

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Supporting Notes:

UN International Day of Forests webpage www.fao.org/international-day-of-forests/en/

UN Paper *Forestry for a low-carbon future*

<http://www.fao.org/publications/card/en/c/45619457-bbf1-4fda-964b-d24dcdefbadf/>