

# The Institute of Foresters of Australia

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## Media Release

### Institute of Foresters walk the forest walk and talk the forest talk

Just who should be sitting at the table if talks begin in Victoria over the future of the States forest industry seems to be on everyone's mind including politicians.

Premier Brumby has recently announced 'Tasmanian-style' peace talks between loggers, unions and environmentalists' however it should be noted that politicians were never involved in the Tasmanian talks. The meetings occurred independently of Government for the purpose of the represented groups finding a uniting position to take to Government.

It is important that the groups that participate in the talks are collectively representative of the whole forest industry. Most importantly, the people who manage Australia's land are the ones that should be there. The Institute of Foresters of Australia (IFA) is the group that represents land managers who know the do's and don'ts of working with plantations and native forests.

IFA Chief Executive Officer Cassandra Spencer commented that what many people may not realise is professional foresters are the ones who know how the balance between native forests and plantations work. Foresters are neither loggers nor environmentalists. 'These guys and girls are the ones who can tell you what effects a plantation or native forest will have on water catchment areas and they are the ones who know what areas are suitable for wood production and which areas are not. They know this because its their job to know it - this is what they do for a living' she said.

Any future talks will benefit from having a group that can represent the broad ranging users of the industry. The IFA is representative of professional forest managers who work on all sides of the fence from conservation and production in native forests to plantations. All forest resource and land management. Without a doubt the IFA knows what the best way to sustainably manage Australia's forest estate is.

'Australia is forest rich with 8 hectares of forest per person compared to the global average of 0.6 hectares per person. If we cannot use our own forests we have to unfairly draw on other countries to fill our needs which would be a pretty impractical thing to do. Why shouldn't Australia responsibly manage its own wood supply? Professional foresters know how it's done and they should to be at that table to find the best way to make this happen.' Ms Spencer said.

Members of the IFA provide policy and strategic planning, commercial and technical development which cannot be provided by other disciplines. They also provide alternative insights to competing land uses such as agriculture, conservation and mining.

Through extensive multidisciplinary education, foresters have valuable capacity to innovate effective low cost solutions often overlooked by less broadly trained and experienced personnel.

Lets take forestry off the election trail. If the talks are needed they will go ahead regardless of who is voted in. Let's get on with responsibly growing Australia's forests and the benefits that come from them.

Cassandra Spencer  
Chief Executive Officer  
Institute of Foresters of Australia

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