



## Media Release

(NO EMBARGO)

### **UN World Forestry Day (21 March 2009)**

The United Nations celebrates World Forestry Day on Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> March 2009 and foresters throughout the world, including Australia, celebrate this day.

The President of the Institute of Foresters of Australia (IFA) Dr Peter Volker has used this Day to call for attention to appropriate forest management in Australia which assists us, as a wealthy nation, to take responsibility for meeting our own resource needs.

In most parts of the developing world sustainable management of both native forests and plantations is recognized as the best way to alleviate poverty and provide resources for conservation programs. Dr Volker says, "Those of us who live in the developed world must contribute our share of forest resources to meet the increasing global demand for paper, timber and other forest products. We cannot push the burden on to developing countries and then chastise them for illegal logging or poor forest management."

"Some elements of the Australian conservation movement are out of step with their counterparts throughout the world in their continued push for conservation as the primary objective of all natural forests at the expense of sustainable timber production from some of these areas. This push for just one management objective is unnecessary and leads to poor outcomes for the forests and communities that rely on them," Dr Volker said.

People need to understand that forests are integral to life. "I guarantee that every Australian spends every day utilising some form of forest product" he said. "many of these products are now imported from south-east Asia. We must find a sensible balance of production and conservation from our own native forest resources".

Dr Volker recognises the importance of a comprehensive parks system but says this must be in balance with multiple use State forests. The practice of declaration of new National Parks by various governments during times of elections may appease "green" voters in major capital cities but severely limits sustainable timber production and has had a detrimental effect on rural communities who depend on forests for employment. "It is easy to declare National Parks, but it is much harder to provide funding for proper management." Dr Volker says that colleagues in National Parks management throughout Australia are continually frustrated by the lack of funding and resources to manage these new park areas.

The IFA calls for revision of the National Forest Policy Statement which recognises the role that Australia's forests and plantations can make to the balance of economy, society and environment. It must recognise that Australia needs to lead by example in finding this balance. Dr Volker says, "Many of our neighbours see our vast forest resources and wonder why we continue to import forest products from their dwindling resources."

On this World Forestry Day the IFA celebrates the achievements of forestry professionals in all areas of forest stewardship and urges all Australians to think seriously about the role of our forests on a world scale.

Further contact: Dr Peter Volker Ph: 0418 125 319

National Office: Adrian O'Loughlin Executive Director Ph: 02 - 6292 3992