

The Institute of Foresters of Australia

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A/g Director
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Australian Competition & Consumer Commission
GPO Box 3131
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The Trade Practices Act and Carbon Offset Claims

The Institute of Foresters of Australia (IFA) wishes to make the following submission on the Issues Paper 'Trade Practices Act and Carbon Offset Claims'.

The Institute of Foresters of Australia is a professional body representing over 1200 graduate foresters throughout Australia (see www.forestry.org.au). The Association of Consulting Foresters of Australia is a part of the IFA organisation.

IFA administers a Registered Professional Forester (RPF®) scheme, which provides a certification of the professional credentials of foresters.

The IFA is concerned that claims of tree planting for carbon offset should meet a number of criteria:

1. Tree planting schemes for carbon offsets should be planned and managed by a professional forester or equivalent. At the very least a suitably qualified professional forester should independently audit the planting scheme at the planning phase, the establishment of the plantation and periodically during the life of the plantation.
2. Companies or individuals, who are claiming to offset their carbon emitting activities by planting trees, should use established and verifiable methods, eg Australian Greenhouse Office tools to calculate and report their offsets.
3. IFA would like to see a standard, similar to an accounting standard that would specify how offsets are accounted and reported.
4. Any such standard would need to include economic, social and environmental aspects, including the carbon offsets, which could be audited and reported to investors/contributors to the scheme. These should be reported in company annual reports, where they claim to run such schemes.
5. The "Independent Foresters Report" should also be required to be included in such annual reporting. This would be similar to current reporting requirements for forestry managed investment schemes.

IFA is concerned that trees that are planted for offsets are professionally established and maintained so that they do the job they are created to do. The IFA's RPF scheme should be considered as a means of accrediting those that claim expertise in forest management.

IFA would be pleased to provide further information and consultation to ACCC on this matter.

Yours sincerely

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National President