

# Native trees will ease the carbon credit crunch

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If Australia stopped logging native forests it would meet almost half of its five per cent carbon emission reduction target for 2020, according to an expert from the Australian National University.

According to Andrew Macintosh, Associate Director of the ANU Centre for [Climate](#) Law and Policy, stopping native forest harvesting would generate enough carbon credits during the period 2013-2020 to meet 45 per cent of [Australia](#)'s abatement task.

In a new report, Potential carbon credits from reducing native forest harvesting in Australia, Mr. Macintosh compared four possible approaches – harvesting rates at 2002-2009 average levels, keeping

harvesting at 2010 levels (30 per cent below the 2002-2009 average), reducing harvesting by 50 per cent and a complete end to logging.

“The results of the study suggest that by reducing the harvesting of native forests, Australia could generate a substantial quantity of carbon credits,” said Mr. Macintosh.

“The most significant of these is putting a halt to logging. Stopping native harvesting altogether would yield 38 mega tonnes of CO2 credits each year – providing almost half of Australia’s abatement task with a five per cent reduction target to 2020.

“Reducing logging by 50 per cent would generate enough carbon credits to meet 22 per cent of the task. Even if harvesting rates were kept at 2010 levels, Australia could generate enough [carbon credits](#) to meet 14 per cent of its 2013-2020 abatement task.”

Mr. Macintosh said there was significant public interest in identifying cost-effective ways of reducing emissions that may not be captured by the Government’s proposed carbon pricing scheme.

“The carbon pricing scheme and accompanying Carbon Farming Initiative are likely to be the main drivers of change in the Australian economy. However, there is space for complementary policies that capture cheap abatement opportunities that might not be realised through carbon markets. The native forest sector is one area where there are these additional opportunities,” said Mr. [Macintosh](#).

“And if the Opposition wins the next election, and the carbon pricing scheme is abolished, it will be essential that cheap abatement opportunities in the forest sector are realised.

“Despite this, it should be emphasised that the results of this study do not

imply that reducing native forest harvesting is necessarily the cheapest way to reduce emissions. Further research is now required to evaluate this issue, and to analyse the budgetary implications of abatement in this area.”

**More information:** Copies of the report are available at [law.anu.edu.au/cclp/Index.asp](http://law.anu.edu.au/cclp/Index.asp)

Provided by Australian National University

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