



**Media release from the Southern Wood Council
December 22**

The carbon positive benefits of forests in Otago and Southland

The Southern Wood Council welcomes research that shows New Zealand wood wins the wood miles argument.

A recent New Zealand study that analysed the carbon footprint of a cubic metre of timber from “forest to market” found it can be just as environmentally friendly to ship timber overseas from New Zealand, as it is for the timber to be used locally.

And that’s good news for the Dunedin’s log exporters and wood producers which are primarily export focused.

The report by Dan McCallum, commissioned by Nelson Forests Ltd earlier in the year, found ocean freight is five to ten times more efficient than road transport for carbon emissions, and is particularly efficient using large ships. It is just as efficient for example to ship timber products to Australia as it is to truck them from Nelson to Christchurch.

It concluded the country’s wood products are just as carbon competitive, if not more so, than those of other leading forest and wood producing countries, and are much more carbon friendly than steel, concrete and aluminium

The carbon footprint study showed that emissions from log harvesting and trucking, kiln drying, but not sea freight, accounting for most of the forestry company’s carbon emissions.

However, these emissions are offset by the positive effect of the trees’ sequestering and storing carbon from the atmosphere, producing an overall carbon neutral position.

What’s more, the carbon efficiency of the forestry industry is increasing all the time. More and more wood residues from tree harvesting are being used to fuel wood



processing, with the New Zealand timber processing sector now two-thirds self-sufficient in bio-energy.

The Southern Wood Council believes these findings are relevant to Otago and Southland's considerable forestry resource, offering a powerful counter to any wood miles argument.

"The overall carbon footprint from timber production - from the forest to the end product - is more relevant than simply looking at the miles travelled to market. We now have clear data that shows exporting is just as efficient as producing for the domestic market in terms of its carbon benefits," Southern Wood Council Chairman Mr Dodson said.

The region's carbon footprint looks particularly good when you consider many of the wood processors in Otago and Southland have for some time been fuelling some of their processing with recovered wood waste, displacing fossil fuel emissions.

"Again we're seeing that the forestry sector in New Zealand is being recognised for the vital role it plays in reducing carbon emissions globally. There's growing appreciation of the value of renewable wood grown sustainably in Otago and Southland for the environment as well as the economy."

The Southern Wood Council Inc was set up in 2001 to promote, encourage and coordinate the sustainable economic development of the forest products industry in Otago and Southland. One of a few truly independent groups of its type in New Zealand, it includes all the major forest owners within the region (ownership or management of over 140,000 hectares of production forests with an annual harvest of over 1.2 million m³ of wood), the larger wood processing and manufacturing companies, the port authorities, and each of the three economic development agencies from local councils.

For further information contact Grant Dodson on 03- 467-7722.



**Southern
Wood Council**