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BANZ MEDIA STATEMENT

Bay of Plenty is rich in bioenergy potential

The release today of the Bay of Plenty Energy Strategy highlights the significant opportunities available in the Bay of Plenty region for creating economic wealth from a wide range of bioenergy projects.

Speaking today at the launch of the Energy Strategy, Mr Jason Cordes, representing the Bioenergy Association of New Zealand (BANZ) said there really is no better time to be maximising the economic, social and environmental benefits that are available from bioenergy. It is a very important energy source for us in industry *“Whilst the region is already a significant user of forest harvested residues for the production of heat and exportable biofuels, this is just a fraction of the regions potential within the bioenergy sector. As we move from a petroleum based era because of the shortage of low cost oil, we will require replacements for natural gas, transport fuel, and plastic products. All of these can be sourced from biomass which the region is rich in.”*

“The Government through its Energy Strategy has signalled the importance of bioenergy to national energy supply. The Bay of Plenty region has the natural resources best positioned to meet the Government’s bioenergy objectives. The use of bioenergy in the region is already well established using proven technologies. From this we can develop and grow alternative sources of solid and transport fuels, for all energy needs.”

“Pulp mills and sawmills already rely on bioenergy, but the remainder of industry has been slow to recognise wood fuel as an alternative, despite an abundance of biomass being available throughout New Zealand. In Europe, thousands of businesses source their heat requirements from the combustion of wood chip or wood pellets, and we can also make the investment required to access this secure energy future. Wood fuel can supply the full range of commercial heat requirements, from relatively small heat users such as hotels, right up to the largest users such as meat and dairy processors.”

Mr Cordes added *“The release of the region’s Energy Strategy is a welcomed initiative and will assist the region to become the renewable energy centre of New Zealand. The Bay of Connections Governance Group is to be congratulated on giving this lead. We now all need to get behind the strategy and ensure that it is implemented as soon as practically possible so that we all gain from the economic growth and wellbeing that it suggests.”*

“With the amount of sustainable forestry resources and wood residue streams generated all over the region, greater use of wood fuel will create jobs and support the environment by being carbon neutral. It is therefore a very beneficial long term financial, social, environmental, and risk management decision for enterprise and the community as a whole.”

Mr Cordes said that *“The recently published New Zealand Bioenergy Strategy has identified that by 2040 30% of New Zealand’s transport fuel could be generated from biofuels. In doing so, research suggests that New Zealand has the potential to develop a six billion dollar bioenergy industry. Economic growth and security of energy supply from bioenergy go hand in hand and the Bay of Plenty region can lead this initiative.”*

Notes to Editors

1. Media enquiries

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- 2. The Bioenergy Association of New Zealand (BANZ)** - BANZ was established in 2001 to promote and coordinate the development of a bioenergy industry in New Zealand. BANZ provides a central focus point for liaison with Government agencies, the dissemination of information amongst the industry and long-term positioning of bioenergy into New Zealand's energy system. Members include anyone with a commercial interest in bioenergy - sawmillers, wood processors, energy suppliers, energy researchers, consultants, manufacturers and investors.
- 3.** For more information on Bioenergy and the Bioenergy Association of new Zealand refer to www.bioenergy.org.nz
- 4.** For information on the Bay of Plenty Energy Strategy refer www.bayofconnections.com