

## Bioenergy body hails hospital move to wood

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**A DECISION to replace two coal-fired boilers at Christchurch Hospital with boilers that burn wood will help to create confidence in the woody biomass market, the Bioenergy Association says.**

Health Minister David Clark says that the current boilers will be replaced at a cost of \$45 million. The hospital's boiler house was damaged in the 2011 earthquake and could fail in another large earthquake.

Clark says that replacing the current coal-fired boilers with wood-fired boilers will ensure the hospital has a modern, reliable and safe source of energy.

"The new boilers will use sustainably produced wood biomass, which is a renewable resource and affordable," he said. "The boilers are a great way to dispose of waste wood and will emit far less carbon dioxide than conventional fossil fuels."

### Important signal

Bioenergy Association chief executive Brian Cox says the move shows the Government has confidence in the future of wood as a fuel and sends an important signal to the market.

"The installation of yet more biomass fuelled heat plant in Canterbury is providing the demand pull that is encouraging biomass fuel suppliers to grow their capabilities to source and supply fuel," he said. "The growing pool of heat plant fuelled by biomass in Canterbury is also providing the critical mass necessary for having adequate levels of advisers and service providers in the region.

"Government has signalled that it wants a focus on reducing greenhouse gas emissions from process heat, so it is encouraging to see that its own investment decisions are making Canterbury a role model on how 20 petajoules of coal and gas could be replaced by biomass fuel by 2050."

### Earthquake funds

The association recently published research showing that New Zealand could avoid the release of five million tonnes a year of greenhouse gases by 2050 by using biomass energy for heat in factories and for heavy-transport fuel.

The contract to design, build and install the new 7.5 megawatt boilers has gone to Austrian company Polytechnik Biomass Energy. Funds for the work is coming from the Earthquake Repairs Programme of Works.

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