

8 June 2016

## Media release

### Government needs to walk the talk with regard to climate change mitigation

“The Government need to walk the talk with regard to climate change mitigation”, says Brian Cox, Bioenergy Association Executive Officer. “Central and local government agencies seem to have not noticed that the Government has signed up to the Paris agreement and that we should all be working to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.” Cox notes “Members of our Association are coming up against many cases where government agency short term economic outcomes are dominating decisions that will have long term consequences to the taxpayers of New Zealand. This will result in our government needing to buy future offshore carbon credits at much higher costs than we could have offset those emissions using home-grown solutions”.

Recent examples that, in our view are not in the interests of future tax payers are:

“In Christchurch the Canterbury District Health Board is relocating its old coal-fired boilers when it has been shown that using modern ground source heat pumps, combined with wood fueled boilers, or using a mix of wood and coal as fuel would reduce greenhouse gas emissions more than 50%, set a good example for other hospitals partnering with more sustainable cities, and would protect tax payers from future offshore carbon costs.”

“In Wanaka the local swimming pool is currently fueled by wood and is being rebuilt in a new location. In doing so the town is planning to move away from a low carbon locally resourced wood-boiler solution and back to a higher cost gas-fired boiler. This is a huge backward step for the community and for New Zealand – especially when there are so many wilding pines in the region that could be used to fuel a new larger wood boiler. “

“In Invercargill the Department of Corrections has the opportunity to replace its old inefficient coal boilers and could move to using wood fuel, but they are still going for the lowest capital cost option with no guidance from government on it and the taxpayer’s future obligations to reducing our total carbon emissions. “

Cox adds, “We need some joined-up thinking here. If Invercargill City can move their swimming pool from being fueled on lignite to being fueled on wood – and are vocal about reaping multiple benefits – what is stopping a central government agency doing the same?”

“Last week 22 organisations came together at the “Yes we can!” symposium to show how greenhouse gas mitigation can be easily achieved. One of the key take-aways from the symposium is that we need better Government leadership if real traction is to be achieved on reducing our GHG emissions and developing opportunities with a lower carbon economy. “

“Government bodies need to walk the talk at all levels, only then can the rest of society be expected to follow” adds Cox.

At the symposium there were 120 attendees and representations made from 21 different low carbon and renewable associations with a wide range of greenhouse gas mitigation opportunities and current government procurement was one of the barriers recommended for revision.

The amount of greenhouse gas that can be mitigated using low carbon energy based solutions and the actions that could address barriers, such as conversion from coal to wood fuel, will now be collated and provided to Government as a “bottom up” contribution to new policy and target setting.

Mr Cox said that “The delegates at the Symposium were unanimous in their belief that domestic mitigation will, in addition to avoiding the high cost of offshore credits, also create employment, diversify economic growth and assist achieve a wide range of environmental outcomes such as improved air quality in our urban areas.”

“The symposium was really just starting the conversation. The objective at this point is to paint a big picture with a mitigation action plan that can be presented to Government to sit alongside the Emissions Trading Scheme. This is our chance to move the game up a notch and provide Government with an action plan.”

“However the place to start is with central and local government own investments”.

**For further information contact**

Brian Cox  
Executive Officer  
Bioenergy Association  
0274 771048  
[brian.cox@bioenergy.org.nz](mailto:brian.cox@bioenergy.org.nz)

**About the Symposium**

Information on the 20 stakeholder organisations and the opportunities available are available on the symposium webpage. [www.yeswecan.nz](http://www.yeswecan.nz)