

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE GLOBAL CARBON PROJECT SAYS AUSTRALIA COULD BENEFIT ENORMOUSLY BY LEAVING FORESTS IN THE GROUND

The Executive Director of the Global Carbon Project Pep Canadell says Australia could make huge savings in climate change mitigation by leaving forests in the ground, and says forests must play an important role in emerging carbon markets.

Dr Canadell, whose breakthrough findings on forests as carbon sinks were published in the journal *Science* last month, will join other eminent scientists, academics and influencers at this week's Forests and Climate Forum at the Australian National University in Canberra.

In the paper, *A Large and Persistent Carbon Sink in the World's Forests*, which Dr Canadell co-authored, it was revealed the world's established forests remove 2.4 billion tonnes of carbon per year from the atmosphere - equivalent to one third of annual fossil emissions.

"We can make huge savings in climate change mitigation by leaving forests in the ground. These findings have shown us that forests are very large carbon sinks.

Dr Canadell, who is based at the CSIRO, said the continuing destruction of forests globally, including in Australia, was responsible for emitting 2.9 billion tonnes of carbon annually – more than a quarter of the world's emissions stemming from human activity. He said scientists had previously thought this figure was much lower. Adding up the new figures reveal that all the world's forests combined are a net sink or sponge for carbon, equivalent of 13 per cent of all the oil, coal and gas burned across the planet annually."

"Now more than ever there is overwhelming evidence that forests should be at the forefront of climate change mitigation strategies," he said.

Dr Canadell said he would be talking about his findings at the forum on Saturday.

Leading Australian climate-change scientists will come together with economists, politicians and high profile conservationists at the Australian National University, to look at current policies on public forests and implications for the mainland post the Tasmanian forest negotiations.

The national Forests and Climate Forum will be held from 9am, Saturday 13th August, at the John Curtin School of Medical Research, 131 Garran Road, Australian National University, Canberra.

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