



## Media Release

1 December 2014

### Renewable biomass from fast growing trees

The Australian Renewable Energy Agency (ARENA) today announced \$2 million funding support to develop a solution for collecting renewable biomass from fast growing trees.

ARENA CEO Ivor Frischknecht said Biosystems Engineering would be further developing, building and testing an innovative woody biomass harvester.

“Fast growing trees have the potential to offer an attractive renewable feedstock if a cost effective harvesting method were developed,” Mr Frischknecht said.

“Biosystems Engineering plans to collect biomass from certain species of eucalyptus trees that can be harvested every three to five years.

“These species are complementary to food production and are already being used on Australian farms as wind screens and to tackle salinity and boost biodiversity.

“Using them as a renewable fuel may offer a win-win outcome for farmers and could potentially create a new model for community based biomass energy hubs in rural Australia.”

The \$3.5 million project aims to collect 15,000 tonnes of chipped Mallee at a plantation near Casino in NSW during a 33 day harvester trial. This will be used to supplement feedstock to the 30MW bioenergy power plant at the Broadwater sugar mill in NSW.

Mr Frischknecht said the new harvester will use a clever design that could significantly lower the cost of producing wood chips for biomass.

“Prototype trials have already demonstrated the system’s potential to process more trees per hour than existing technology.

“It simultaneously cuts down trees and converts them to woodchips in a single pass,” Mr Frischknecht said.

“The harvesting process is designed to integrate with in-field haulout vehicles and roadside collection, similar to the current supply chain model for sugar cane.

“Biosystems Engineering plans to increase the size of the harvester and upgrade the design to enable it to operate under full-scale commercial conditions.

“The harvester also has potential as an Australian technology export, should it be successfully developed and perform to expectations.”

The project is scheduled for completion in 2017.

### **About ARENA**

ARENA was established by the Australian Government as an independent agency on 1 July 2012 to make renewable energy technologies more affordable and increase the amount of renewable energy used in Australia. ARENA invests in renewable energy projects, supports research and development activities, boosts job creation and industry development, and increases knowledge about renewable energy.

### **About Biosystems Engineering**

Since its inception in 1999, Biosystems Engineering has practiced as a research and development business, demonstrating expertise in managing innovative technical projects for their clients, from conceptual ideas through to commercially implemented technologies.