



Branching out in bid to tackle climate change

NIGEL AUSTIN
RURAL EDITOR

PLANTING trees to offset carbon emissions is on the verge of becoming big business, with several South Australian organisations well placed to lead the way.

These include Colliers International, which is developing an alliance with carbon sink provider Canopy and Greening Australia.

Canopy has already planted trees for various companies such as Commonwealth Bank, Colonial First State, Mitsubishi, Lexus, CMI Toyota and also the State Government and utility SA Water.

Colliers International Rural & Agribusiness director Matt Benson said the Federal Government's decision to sign the Kyoto Protocol last year meant Australian companies must offset carbon emissions.

Colliers held an information seminar in Adelaide last week where the benefits for farmers, business and the environment were spelt out.

A formal trading system is expected to be in place by 2010 or 2011 when companies will be required to either buy carbon credits or invest in "carbon sinks" - namely trees.

The Garnaut Report - released last week - which recommended incentives for business to store greenhouse gases, is expected to make the move to carbon sinks a lot more financially attractive.

Mr Benson said companies would have to spend a similar amount of money whether they bought carbon credits or invested in carbon sinks.

"We say that investing in carbon sinks in Australia is the way to go because it is supporting Australia rather than an overseas country,"

Mr Benson said.

Colliers' alliance with Canopy and Greening Australia involves it offering a total service - sourcing land, planning, producing contracts, carbon

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analysis, record-keeping and certification.

Only about 4000ha of trees were planted in Australia to offset greenhouse emissions last year. But Mr Benson expected the total would increase.

He said there was a genuine opportunity for Colliers to play a lead role in carbon sinks.

"Australians have a long way to go to get their head around the reduction of carbon emissions," Mr Benson said.



MEN WITH A MISSION: Canopy chief executive Noel McArdle, Matt Benson and Greening Australia chief executive Mark Anderson.
Picture: CAMPBELL BRODIE