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CONDONG AND BROADWATER BIOENERGY FACILITIES REMAIN KEY OPPORTUNITIES FOR BIOENERGY ON THE NORTH COAST

With a strong commitment to local sustainable energy, the North Coast of New South Wales has a number of opportunities to develop a vibrant bioenergy sector, according to a new report for Sustain Northern Rivers published today.

The *New South Wales North Coast Bioenergy Scoping Study* was commissioned from the Institute of Sustainable Futures (ISF) at the University of Technology, Sydney, at a time when there is increasing interest in the development of alternative energy sources to fossil fuels, including Coal Seam Gas.

The 30 page study, funded with assistance from the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage and managed by Regional Development Australia – Northern Rivers, provides an overview of the main bioenergy technologies and notes a number of key opportunities, including the revitalisation of the sugar mill facilities at Condong and Broadwater alongside the new pyrolysis plant in Ballina, which will generate energy and biochar from municipal green waste.

Lead author Nicky Ison from the ISF says: “Forestry plantation residues, sugar cane, camphor laurel and municipal solid waste all have significant energy generation potential in the region. Other possible feedstocks include waste from meat and livestock processing, and growing and coppicing woody crops.”

Paul Cruickshank of NSW Office of Environment and Heritage added: “We know that many people in the region are keen to find alternatives to fossil fuels, and this report sets out the potential for a number of raw materials and by-products from other industries that are currently under used.”

The report also suggests that bioenergy production should be co-located with large energy users and that partnerships across sectors will be key to ensuring regular production to meet ongoing demand.

The report recommends the development of this important sector and the commissioning of a comprehensive Bioenergy Resource Assessment to address current knowledge gaps as next step towards a wider Sustainable Energy Strategy for the North Coast.

The report is available to download from the RDA-Northern Rivers website at www.rdanorthernrivers.org.au along with an annotated bibliography of bioenergy resources and articles, courtesy of the Office of Environment and Heritage.

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Notes to editors:

1. Bioenergy is a significant source of renewable energy in Australia, and supplied 2% of all electricity in 2002. The sector offers a diverse range of opportunities for the North Coast. Already, two of Australia's largest bioenergy facilities are located in the region, and the climate and agricultural base position the North Coast well to develop a significant bioenergy sector.
2. *The Future Energy Skills for the North Coast* (Sustain Northern Rivers 2012) report identified many opportunities for the North Coast to address skills gaps to develop and support a sustainable energy future.
3. Sustain Northern Rivers is a collaboration of 27 regional organisations, which aims to empower local communities to become self-sustaining. Its focus areas are **food, transport, energy** and **behaviour** change.