



**PRESS RELEASE**  
**For immediate publication**

## **APRIL GROUP LAUNCHES FIRE FREE VILLAGE PROGRAMME**

### *MULTI STAKEHOLDER EFFORT TO PROMOTE FIRE PREVENTION*

**Pangkalan Kerinci, 28 July 2015** – Multiple stakeholders have come together to actively promote fire prevention in Riau province. Initiated and led by PT. Riau Andalan Pulp and Paper (RAPP), the operations arm of Asia Pacific Resources International Holdings Ltd (APRIL), the Fire Free Village Programme aims to create fire free villages through collaboration with the villages, community stakeholders, non-governmental organizations and enforcement agencies.

Partnering with Riau Andalan Pulp and Paper (RAPP), to roll the Programme out to 9 villages in Riau are 2 local NGOs, Rumah Pohon and Blue Green. The 9 villages are in fire-prone areas, close to the Kampar River. The Programme is also supported by Masyarakat Peduli Api (MPA), local government, police, military and the Provincial Disaster Mitigation Agency (BPBD) who witnessed the official launch of the Programme in Kerinci, Riau this morning. General TNI Moeldoko, former Commander in Chief of the Indonesian National Armed Forces (TNI) witnessed the official launch of the Programme in Kerinci, Riau this morning.

The Fire Free Village Programme recognizes that collaboration is key in fire prevention. APRIL has taken a comprehensive landscape management approach to fire management, which includes fire prevention and suppression. Fire prevention means stopping the fires before they start and this requires a multi-faceted programme with a range of stakeholders.

The Programme has a comprehensive five-pronged approach that includes community incentives to not burn, community fire crew leaders, sustainable agricultural alternatives, air quality monitoring and a community awareness campaign.



The program partners with local NGO's like Rumah Pohon, and Blue Green to identify and support alternatives to fire as a land management tool, support community fire crews, and continue to raise awareness of the environmental, economic impact of fire and haze.

Rudy Fajar, RAPP Director: " This community-level focus, in partnership with community and local government leaders and NGOs, is key to long term change by directly addressing the root causes of fires. The success of our community level programmes has encouraged us to increase our efforts to build capability among the communities at the heart of this issue,"

Abu Sama, Kuala Panduk village head: "The programme is good for our community from an economic and environmental perspective. It gives us the chance to develop our land without fire and get information about better ways to farm these areas"

Dede Kunaif of RUMAH POHON, "Uncontrolled fires can destroy homes and livelihoods, and fire and haze is detriment to the environment and health. By collaborating with like-minded stakeholders, we hope to see a win-win and lasting solution on the ground."

Head of Pelalawan Regent, HM. Harris added: "This initiative deserves appreciation for fire prevention effort. The Fire Free Village Programme is synonymous with government's effort"

APRIL Group has enforced a strict no-burn policy since the beginning of its operations. It estimates damage to its forestry assets caused by fire at approximately US\$140 million since 2009. In response, the company has invested US\$6 million alone on fire fighting equipment and spends US\$3-4 million per annum to fire suppression.

At local level, APRIL Group provides equipment such as the use of a company helicopter and water pumps, fire fighters team as well fire suppression training for more than 630 volunteers across 39 Riau villages.



The programme extends beyond the boundaries of RAPP's forestry concessions reflecting the company's commitment to establishing long-term solutions that address the root causes of uncontrolled burning.

**About APRIL Group:**

APRIL Group is a leading producer of fibre, pulp and paper with manufacturing operations in Pangkalan Kerinci, Riau Province, Indonesia. APRIL is a pioneer in the implementation of sustainability best practices in Indonesia's pulp and paper industry, including the elimination of deforestation from its supply chain. APRIL Group is working towards conserving, protecting and restoring one hectare of High Conservation Value Forest for every hectare of renewable plantation. Today, APRIL Group conserves more than 250,000 hectares with a further 70,000 hectares undergoing ecosystem restoration.

For more information, visit [www.aprilasia.com](http://www.aprilasia.com) and follow APRIL on Twitter @aprilpulp.

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