Dispelling Myths
Welcome

Welcome to the Spring 2007 edition of TREELine.

As the new CEO of Private Forests Tasmania I have arrived at a very positive time for private forest growers with the announcement of the new pulp mill. As we are all so well aware, the pulp mill has been a very divisive issue in the community. However, now that the approval processes of the State and Australian governments are complete, we can look forward with optimism to the future of the forest industry in our State.

It is important for private forest growers to seize the opportunities provided by further downstream processing in Tasmania. Private forest growers can now have more long-term certainty for investment in the forest industry and more security for supply arrangements in the market place. Growers will have a far more stable domestic market to rely on rather than the fluctuating international ‘spot’ market.

Throughout the pulp mill debate there has been a lot of confusing, and sometimes misleading, information in the media regarding forestry. In this edition we have tried to address a number of those issues and provide some factual information to dispel a number of myths that are often heard from opponents of forestry.

I hope they provide you with some worthwhile information to respond to our critics.

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Cover photo: Integrated farming practices, Tasman Peninsula

New Chief Executive Officer

Graham Sargison has been appointed as Chief Executive Officer of Private Forests Tasmania, replacing Simon Eldridge (see page 3).

Graham was born and educated in New Zealand, and graduated with Bachelors of Agriculture (1969) and Forestry Science (1971).

When he moved to Tasmania in 1974 he worked as the Logging and Roading Superintendent for Australian Newsprint Mills at Maydena.

He joined the fledgling Private Forestry Division of the Tasmanian Forestry Commission in 1978 as Regional Private Forester, North West.

By 1981 he had moved out of the Private Forestry Division to the position of Regional Staff Forester for the commission, then Regional Forester North West (1984), then Regional Forester South East in 1987.

Following the restructuring of the Forestry Commission in 1994, and the formation of Forestry Tasmania, Graham was appointed as Manager Field Services.

On the home front Graham is married to Rosemary, with two daughters, Jane and Sarah, and two grandchildren, Ben and Rachael.

Graham’s other passions are orienteering (please see him about future events), and old English cars (especially Jensens).

He is an animal lover and has a wonderful nine year old Cavalier King Charles Spaniel (Chloe) and three seahorses, which were his daughter’s parting gift when she left home.

Despite 33 years in Tasmania he is still an ardent All Blacks Supporter (You can take the boy out of NZ but you can’t take NZ out of the boy!)

Graham has had wide experience in forestry in Tasmania, and he is very excited to have come full circle and be back in the private forestry sector where he started.

Graham is based in our Hobart office. In his second week he was out in the field with our Launceston and Camdale staff – amongst his first concerns were that he had a hard hat and safety vest – he didn’t join forestry to wear a tie all day.

We welcome Graham and look forward to benefiting from his experience and enthusiasm.
Farewell to Andy Warner

After 12 years with Private Forests Tasmania, Andy Warner has resigned. Andy has been a leader and major contributor to private forestry within Tasmania and Australia wide. Andy joined Private Forests Tasmania after some 20 years with a major private forestry company. He has been the driving force in the introduction of geographical information systems for private forestry, the development of the Farm Forestry Toolbox – versions 1, 2, 3, 4 and now 5. He has also been a keen advocate for the use of satellite imagery in private forestry.

Andy is a positive person, enthusiastically pursues ideas, and is innovative. He was always keen to ensure that Private Forests Tasmania acted as an ‘honest broker’, seeking to bring parties together to resolve issues and to pursue new ideas. Andy has been very clear in what he was seeking to achieve when working with landowners and others. Andy sought to empower people to enable them to make their own decisions - decisions based on good science and clear thinking.

Andy has been a team player with his Camdale based staff, the staff of PFT and the private forestry sector, and forestry industry in general. Andy is a past president to the local chapter of the Australian Forest Growers; and an active member of forestry research working groups, the Hoo Hoo Club, and the Institute of Foresters of Australia.

The contribution made by Andy to the private forestry sector in Australia has been considerable, perhaps the most notable being the Farm Forestry Toolbox (versions 1 to 5), Pruned Stand Certification (PSC) and the use of satellite imagery, especially the Quickbird imagery.

Andy is leaving to work at the Kasetsart University in Bangkok, Thailand on private forestry extension and education projects. He has been keen for some time to link his expertise gained over 30 years with his interest in supporting sustainable resource management and education in SE Asia.

The best wishes of the Board and staff of PFT, the North West private forest growers and the Australian private forestry sector are extended to Andy.

Departure of Simon Eldridge

PFT staff farewelled their CEO, Simon Eldridge on 30 August. Simon left his position to pursue a change of career with the mining industry in Queensland and to be close to his sons who live in Brisbane.

Simon came to the PFT role in 2004 and whilst he freely admits that he came with little knowledge of forestry, being a Tasmanian and having previously worked in both the private and public sectors and for Ministers, he brought a wealth of relevant experience and knowledge.

In the three years he has spent with PFT Simon has achieved an enormous amount. He gained the respect of both his work colleagues and external stakeholders through his willingness to learn, his strengths in communication and his ability to quickly understand the issues and concerns.

He successfully promoted PFT’s views and its objectives within government and provided great support through the relationships he built with all sectors of the industry.

I am most grateful for Simon’s outstanding contribution and wish him all the best for the future.

Jeff Battersby agreed to take the reins as Acting CEO until my appointment of Graham Sargison as Simon’s replacement.

Mark Addis
Secretary

GIS ex PARIS

Perrine Szuba has recently completed a Master’s degree in Geography at the Sorbonne in Paris and is here on a one year Australian Working Holiday Visa. She will assist our Camdale staff, part-time for six months, to update the computerised digitising of forest areas on private property in Tasmania using QuickBird satellite imagery.

Look out for more details on her recruitment and background in our January TREELine.

We welcome Perrine and hope she enjoys her time with us.
Myth: Forestry is a major user of toxic pesticides and is exempt from the rules that apply to everyone else

A pesticide is any chemical or chemical mixture used for controlling weeds, insects, fungi, nematodes and animals, which affect growth (quantity and quality) and the health of plantations. This is a forestry definition.

Chemical pesticide use in Australia is regulated by the Australian Pesticide and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) and State agencies under The Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals (control of use) Act 1995 and approved codes of practice.

The forest industry is subject to the same legislation as everyone else.

Section E of the Forest Practices Code 2000 (FPC) states that “agricultural chemical use will comply with codes of practices approved by APVMA under the Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals (control of use) Act 1995”. Approved codes include the DPIW Code of Practice for Ground Spraying and Code of Practice for Aerial Spraying. Both are available at www.dpiw.tas.gov.au. Regulations for the control of aerial spraying are being developed and are in draft form. It is likely that the new regulations will replace the existing code of practice.

Section E of the FPC goes on to state that those handling and applying agricultural chemicals will be undertaken by appropriately trained and licensed persons.

How does the use of pesticides in forestry compare with other sectors of the agricultural and horticultural (eg viticulture) sectors?

In 2003 - 2004 the estimated chemical pesticide expenditure in plantation forestry was $16-$21 million or 0.7% of the national total of pesticide expenditure of around $2.4 billion.

99% of pesticide spending in the forest industry is on herbicides (including wetting agents).

Plantation forestry expenditure was some 10% of the $175 million domestic household expenditure on herbicides and insecticides for that period.

Pesticide use in plantations is usually confined to the first 2 years of a plantation cycle (around 12 years, for pulpwood, and up to 30 years for some softwood sawlog regimes).

Subsequent pesticide use is normally confined to any pest or disease outbreaks, should any occur.

Agricultural crops tend to have a higher frequency of use, often with multiple applications in each year or for each crop cycle. For example, a potato crop may require some 10 - 14 spray applications in one season.

A report from the Forest and Wood Products Australia found that aerial application of chemical pesticides by the...
plantation forest industry accounts for a maximum of 0.5% of the 10 million hectares aerially treated with a range of chemical products each year across Australia.

Are the pesticides used in forestry any different from those used in agriculture and viticulture?

The chemical pesticides used in the Australian plantation forest industry have been developed for other uses and have been adapted to the needs of plantation forestry.

The majority of chemical pesticides used in the Australian plantation forest industry are also used in food production systems by Australian agriculture, with the exception of Sulfometuron methyl (active ingredient in ‘Eucmix’), which has been approved for other industrial uses.

Do Forestry chemicals pollute waterways?

All chemical use, in agriculture, in forestry, in heavy industry or in the household, has the potential for off site movement of chemical and soil into waterways.

Chemical use, in forestry, is regulated and subject to approved codes of practice. In plantation forestry in Tasmania, pesticide use is planned through the development and implementation of a Forest Practices Plan.

The Forest Practices Plan considers streamside reserves, different methods of application (including aerial, ground-based, spot spraying etc.) and avoidance of certain chemicals around watercourses and dams in a planned approach to manage risk.

Failure to comply with a Forest Practices Plan is an offence.

The goals of control over chemical use are to:

- Minimise the use of chemical pesticides.
- Promote an internationally competitive forest industry, and gain market access through best practice and certification.
- Conserve a range of environmental values, including water quality.
- Maximise the value of tree crops.
- Create a safe workplace.
- Undertake regular monitoring and review of practices.

The results of water monitoring support the view, that when used according to the label and according to approved codes of practice, chemical use, in forestry, has had very little impact on water quality.

Established plantations have the capacity to provide a range of environmental services, including improved water quality through improved soil stability and reduced soil erosion.

Who monitors water quality (pesticides) in our waterways?

Industry sectors undertake water quality monitoring programs.

Forestry Tasmania undertakes a systematic program of water quality monitoring in State Forests.

Water quality monitoring in Tasmania is supported by a number of government, community (e.g. NRM and Waterwatch groups) and private organisations.

DPIW is the central agency for water quality monitoring, undertakes a number of water quality monitoring programs, manages the State Water Quality Data Base and produces a number of annual reports.

A review of recent results of DPIW’s ‘Baseline and Flood Monitoring Programs’ (available on DPIW’s website) show very few instances of pesticide detection.

This observation is supported by the FWPRDC summary report on pesticide use in plantations, which concludes that ‘when conducted on a systematic basis, water monitoring on a whole catchment basis in Tasmania has shown few detections of chemical pesticides from any source’.

The Australian plantation forestry industry is a limited user, with less than 1% of the national pesticide expenditure, and around 10% of the total pesticide expenditure of domestic households. Pesticide use is usually limited to a short period in the plantation cycle, and it is actively regulated. There is ongoing monitoring, and research and development into cost efficiency, alternatives to chemical use and environmental protection.

David Bower
Private Forest Advisor

Source:

Pesticides and plantations: www.fwprdc.org.au
Plantation and environment: www.tpa.asn.au
Water quality monitoring: www.dpiw.tas.gov.au
www.forestrytas.com.au - Tasforests vol 15
Myth: There are no alternatives to the use of 1080 to control native browsing animals in tree plantations and agriculture

The State Government aims to reduce the use of 1080 in Tasmania. In recent years here has been a dramatic decline in the use of 1080 in Tasmania. Between 2000 and 2006, the use of 1080 fell from 15.2kg to 4.7kg. This is just 2.3% of the annual use of 1080 in Australia.

The Tasmanian Code of Practice for the Use of 1080 Poison for Native Animal Browsing Management has been strengthened such that 1080 use is a last resort. This Code is administered by the Department of Primary Industries and Water.

There are a range of alternatives to 1080 use but many are costly and to be successful need to be part of an integrated control program. Further, the damage caused by native browsing animals is poorly quantified thus it is difficult for land holders to make economic decisions about how to control browsing native animals.

In 2005, the Australian Government provided $4 million under the Tasmanian Community Forest Agreement to research, test and demonstrate alternatives to the use of 1080 and develop practical, effective and financially viable alternatives for control of browsing animals on private forest and agricultural land in Tasmania. Comprehensive information about the Alternatives to 1080 Program including 93 page strategic report, “Review of Research into Alternatives to the use of 1080 for Management of Browsing Damage by Mammals in Tasmania, July 2006”, is at the project website.

In mid 2007, twelve 12 month projects were announced under the first $1.4M round of funding. These include:

- identification of reasons to use 1080 and its alternatives.
- development of tools to predict the impact of browsing damage on pastures.
- investigation of the regulatory and social potential of cyanide-based products as a more humane alternative to 1080.
- investigating integrated non-lethal techniques to decrease plantation damage.
- improvements in trapping and performance-based contractor management methods.
- regional approaches to browsing control.

A $2 million three year investment by the State Government to develop wildlife management plans and economic models focusing on the demonstration and extension of trapping, shooting and fencing complements the Alternatives to 1080 Program.

Arthur Lyons
Regional Private Forester

Source:
The project web site contains detailed up-to-date information on each project. See:

For information about this Code see:
All private landowners in Tasmania pay local government rates. Owners of native forest and plantation pay rates. Rates are a tax levied by Councils and is the main means used to raise the funds necessary to provide services to the local community. Councils also receive grants from the Australian and State governments.

Rates are normally made up of a general rate and a service rate and/or charge. Under certain circumstances, a council may levy a construction rate or charge, or a separate rate. A general rate is a ‘progressive’ tax, reflecting the land, capital or Assessed Annual Value (AAV) of property. It may involve an additional fixed charge which applies equally to every property, such as a charge for the removal of rubbish. A council may make a general rate whether or not it provides any services to the land upon which the rating is made.

A council may make a service rate for any, all, or a combination of the following services: water supply, sewage removal, waste management, stormwater removal, fire protection, a community medical service, an on-site wastewater treatment or disposal system requiring a permit, any other prescribed service.

The service rate is also ‘progressive’, being determined by the same property value as the general rate. Councils may set a minimum amount payable for a service rate if it does not include a fixed charge.

Councils may levy a service charge in addition to, or instead of, making a service charge.

A service charge is a fixed charge payable on each property. The charge may differ in various parts of the municipal area depending on the type of service being provided and the circumstances in a particular area.

If a service is not provided or is unavailable, the prescribed rate or charge for that service may not apply. Nevertheless, councils may, for example, determine that a service rate relating to water supply and sewage removal still applies to unserviced land if the nearest boundary lies within 30 metres from council pipes that carry water and sewage.

**How is a rate set?**

Rates are set by the local Council. Rates are expressed as a ‘rate of cents in the dollar on the assessed annual value of the land’.

For example, for the financial year 2006/2007, Break O’Day has set the general rate at a rate of 5.9 cents in the dollar on the assessed annual value of the land. The Council also sets a minimum amount payable in respect of the general rate of $230. A sewerage service rate of 3.5 cents in the dollar of the assessed annual value of the land is also payable. Council has also sets a minimum amount payable in respect of the sewerage service rate of $450 (expect for Fingal Sewerage District and St Mary’s Sewerage District, where the minimum is $250).

Similarly, the Council has set a water rate, a waste management rate and a fire service contribution, with minimum payable varying, and some water rates include a cost per kilolitre used.

**What is Assessed Annual Value?**

In simple terms, the Assessed Annual Value (AAV) is the gross annual rental value of the property, excluding GST, municipal rates and land tax. It is the gross annual income that, at the time of valuation, the owner of the property might reasonably expect to obtain from letting it to a tenant. The AAV of the land cannot be less than 4 per cent of the Capital Value of the land. In practice, for rural properties the assessed annual valuation is 4 per cent of Capital Value of the land.

The Valuer-General determines the AAV under the Valuation of Land Act 2001.

The Capital Value is the total value of the property, excluding plant and machinery, and includes the Land Value. It is the expected sum of money that might be realised if the land, and any existing dwelling or improvements, were offered for sale at a particular time. For instance, on a rates notice, it may show land value as $40,000 and capital value as $125,000. The capital value includes the land value plus the value of any buildings on the site. Capital Value is based on actual sales.

Land Value is the value of the property excluding all visible improvements such as buildings, structures, fixtures, roads, standings, dams, channels, artificially established trees, artificially established pastures and other like improvements. It does include draining, excavation, filling, reclamation, clearing and any other such like invisible improvements made to the land. Land value is based on actual land sales and adjusted to remove value of visible improvements.

Private land used for forestry purposes - native forest or plantation or shelterbelts or environmental plantings - is valued in the same manner as other artificially established...

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**Myth: Private forest owners, owners of native forest or plantation, don’t pay rates**

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pastures and other like improvements. The Council rate is set by the Council and is payable whether the land is used to grow trees, livestock or crops or set aside for conservation purposes. In some areas, Councils provide a ‘rate rebate’ for areas set aside for conservation purposes.

Peter Taylor
Regional Private Forester

Source:

Myth: MIS funded plantations are subsidised by the Commonwealth government

In recent years plantations in Tasmania have been planted using funds raised by a managed investment scheme or MIS. Three forest companies, Gunns Limited, Forest Enterprises Australia and Great Southern Plantation offer MIS woodlots investments. The plantations established using MIS funding are established on cleared agricultural land, and as second rotation plantations. Since December 2006 cleared native forest areas are not used for MIS funded plantations.

What are MIS?

Managed investment schemes are also known as ‘managed funds’, ‘pooled investments’ or ‘collective investments’. A MIS company brings people together to contribute funds to a pool of funds to be used in a common enterprise or scheme. The schemes often have hundreds or thousands of investors. A ‘responsible entity’ operates the scheme and investors do not have day to day control over the operation of the scheme.

Managed investment schemes cover a wide variety of investments. Some of the popular managed investment schemes include cash management trusts, property trusts, Australian equity (share) trusts, international equity trusts, some film schemes, timeshare schemes, some mortgage schemes, actively managed strata title schemes and many agricultural schemes (for example, forestry, horticulture, aquaculture, commercial horse breeding).

MIS schemes for forestry, often referred as ‘retail forestry’ schemes, raise less than 1% of the $100 billion that flows annually into managed funds industries. There are some 70,000 individual investors in forestry MIS. These investors come from a diverse set of backgrounds and income levels, and live in cites and non-metropolitan towns and regions.

What can investors have as a tax deduction?

The Commonwealth government has decided that, with effect from 1 July 2007, investors in forestry MIS will be entitled to immediate upfront deductibility for all expenditure provided that at least 70 per cent of the expenditure is expenditure directly related to developing forestry, referred to as ‘direct forestry expenditure’.

Direct forestry expenditure includes expenditures associated with planting, tending and harvesting of trees at any time over the life of the investment, and annual costs of the land used to develop forestry, whether that be effective rental costs or lease payments for land.

The Government believes that the continued expansion of the plantation forestry estate reduces reliance on native forests and on imports and recognises the critical role plantation forestry plays in sequestering greenhouse gases.

Is any tax paid?

The funds invested in forestry MIS are used to plant trees. Funds are used to employ people to grow seedlings in nurseries, prepare the sites for planting, plant and fertilise the trees, and the on-going tending of the plantation. Any wages paid are subject to income tax. Companies promoting schemes, and the companies and firms who supply goods and services, pay company tax. Finally, on harvest, the income received from the sale of the wood by the investor is taxable. The companies that purchase the wood for processing would also pay taxes.

Are MIS funded plantations subsidised by Commonwealth government?

The Commonwealth government does not provide any subsidy or payment of funds to investors or companies operating MIS.
The forestry MIS investor is able to claim the same deductions available to other investors in management trusts, property trusts, Australian equity (share) trusts, international equity trusts, some film schemes, timeshare schemes, some mortgage schemes, actively managed strata title schemes and many similar schemes.

The same tax deduction is available for individual landowners, or any other person, wishing to establish a plantation themselves.

**MIS funded plantation forces farmers off the land**

MIS companies purchase or lease land for plantation development. The MIS companies purchase land in the same manner as any other company or person. They use Real Estate agents to act on their behalf to purchase land. There are no special treatment or provisions for MIS companies when they purchase land.

The price a MIS company is willing to pay for land depends on how much of the land is able to be planted, the greater the proportion of the property that is able to be planted, the higher the price. The most important factor influencing the price paid is the potential growth rate the trees may achieve on the land. Soil type, depth, stoniness, steepness, annual rainfall and temperatures (daily temperatures) are all important factors that directly influence tree growth. Forest researchers have developed a number of complex ‘growth models’ that can model tree growth for a particular site.

As with any buyer in a marketplace the MIS companies will have an affect on the market. The factors that would influence landowners to sell or not are the same, whether the land is being purchased to plant crops or graze dairy cattle, or plant trees.

**Peter Taylor**
Regional Private Forester

*For more information:*


**Myth: Plantation trees use water and should pay for the water**

Many regard plantations as a crop and any water licence and allocation regulations that apply to any crop should apply to plantations.

In Tasmania water licences allocation is the responsibility of the Water Resources Division of the Department of Primary Industries and Water (DPIW) and regulated under the Water Management Act 1999. The aim is to manage sustainably the resource. DPIW is also responsible for managing the State’s groundwater resources under the provisions of the Water Management Act 1999.

The Environment Division of Department of Tourism, Arts and Environment (DTAE) ensures that water quality measures are consistent with the objectives of the State Policy on Water Quality Management 1997. The main objective of the State Policy on Water Quality Management is to maintain or enhance water quality. The Environment Division is responsible for addressing problems associated with water pollution. It is responsible for the environmental assessment of high-risk activities that have significant potential to pollute waterways and may use the enforcement provisions of the Environmental Management and Pollution Control Act 1994 to require the clean-up and remediation of waterbodies affected by industrial pollution.

Household water supply to the major centres is managed by the three water authorities, in the north (Esk Water), south Hobart Water) and north-west (Cradle Coast Water). Thses water authorities provide bulk water to Tasmanian Councils. Local councils provide reticulated drinking water to homes and businesses, and test water quality, both for drinking water and recreational waters;

Under the Public Health Act 1997 - Water Quality Guidelines there is a requirement that all drinking water suppliers provide to the Department of Health and Human Services an Annual Report covering a range of matters relevant to public health. The Annual Water Report details each drinking water supplier’s compliance with the Water Quality Guidelines and the various systems in place for the protection of public health.

Hydro Tasmania has a special water licence to take water for generation purposes. Hydro Tasmania manages an extensive network of modified lakes, rivers, streams and canals. There are also a number of local Water Management Plans implemented by groups of water users or other corporate bodies to look after local water resources.
The Rivers and Water Supply Commission (RWSC) is a Government Business Enterprise responsible for the State Government owned water schemes and is also responsible for the construction and management of the Meander Dam Project.

Who requires a water licence?

A water licence is required before water can be taken from a water resource. A water licence are not required for riparian landholders wishing to take water for stock, domestic house and garden purposes.

A water licence becomes a property right and is not specifically attached to land. A water licence is normally issued for a period of 10 years. Licences contain provisions for a review of conditions after 5 years.

A water licence is not required for the water that falls as rain.

What is the difference between a water licence and water allocation?

A licence entitles the holder to take water out of a water resource, under the terms of the licence. A water allocation specifies the amount of water that can be taken under the licence and the purpose for which the water is taken.

Water licences are required for plantation in other States

In the Lower Limestone Coast water management area in South Australia a regulation to declare commercial forestry a ‘water affecting activity’ came into effect in June 2004. For each of the 35 groundwater management areas within Lower Limestone Coast water management area, the total area that could be planted to commercial forest was determined. ‘Water affecting activity’ permits for forestry will be issued in each management area until the total forested area in the management area reaches the threshold level for the management area. Plantings of areas above the determined total area would require offsetting water allocations.

Recently the South Australian government has decided that the in the Lower Limestone Coast water management area, plantations have been declared a water affecting activity need to be accounted for in the 2007 Water Allocation Plan (WAP) along with other water users such as irrigators and domestic users. The 2007 WAP proposes that plantations will require a water licence. New plantations, established after July 2007, will require licences. The details of licence provisions and the cost are yet to be resolved.

Why have water licences for plantation in part of South Australia?

Groundwater is the main source of water used by irrigators, industry and for domestic use in the Lower Limestone Coast water management area, in South Australia. In this region irrigation is a significant water user, using over 270,000ML of groundwater, some 25% of inflows. Plantation incepts rainfall, which is part of the inflow to the ground water, and in some cases, where ground is within 6 metres of the surface, plantation can lower the ground water level. Water is a valuable resource in this area with much of the resource already allocated to various uses.

The water licences requirements for plantations are proposed to be the same as those for other groundwater users.

There is an exception for farm forestry. A total 10% of the farm area can be planted without the need to have a water licence.

Peter Taylor
Regional Private Forester

Source:


Myth: Plantations cause rural decline

In some areas of Australia there has been an increase in the rate of plantation establishment in the past decade. Media articles have suggested that the plantation expansion has been a factor in the decline of rural communities, whilst others have praised the plantations for providing new hope for run down rural economies.

Recent studies also provide some results that help shed some light on the range of claims.

Work by Jacki Schirmer, a research fellow at the Australian National University has highlighted some of the socio-economic impacts of plantations from recent research. She found that there has been a limited number of detailed studies and these have usually only looked at one or two of the many interacting relationships. So she conducted a study that:

- used independent data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics that was analysed to provide answers to key questions on population change, location of employment and spending and rural land prices.
- examined changes over a long period of time (1991 to 2004).
- only examined questions which could be answered using independent data.

The conclusions the study reached were:

- plantation expansion is associated with socio-economic change, not socio-economic decline at the local government area scale.
- the plantation sector creates regional employment and investment, with most of this occurring in regional towns.
- plantation expansion can lead to a higher rate of land price increase when there is a strong demand for land.
- plantation processing expansion can create overall population growth, particularly of the working age population.
- there is a need to examine impacts at smaller scales.

Tasmania has been included in a current study underway from 2005 to 2012.

More information can be obtained at:
http://www.gtplantations.org/downloads/Schirmer%20Hamilton_SEIA_pres_Feb_06.ppt
http://www.fwprdc.org.au/content/pdfs/PN04.4007%20info.pdf
http://www.fwprdc.org.au/content/pdfs/Socio-econ%20WEB.pdf

Are trees an effective way to reduce atmospheric greenhouse gas levels? Do managed forests store more carbon than old-growth forests?

All plants capture CO2 from the atmosphere via photosynthesis and convert this carbon to biomass. Trees store much more carbon than other plants and the largest portion of carbon in the earth’s terrestrial ecosystems is stored in forests.

One tonne of carbon stored within a tree represents 3.67 tonnes of carbon dioxide that has been removed from the atmosphere. Carbon stored in wood is released back into the atmosphere only when the wood or wood product decays or is burnt.

There is a popular myth that old-growth forests are the most effective way of continuing to store carbon. However, once a forest is mature, its ability to take up carbon declines. Establishing forests, including plantation forests as well as regenerating cleared forests, coupled with sound and efficient management practices, is a positive way to store carbon and reduce carbon dioxide in the atmosphere.

The wood removed from the forest is used in wood products and continues to store carbon.

The CRC for Greenhouse Accounting has produced a model to compare the carbon storage in an un-harvested forest over 200 years with a forest that is harvested on a 35-year rotation basis for the same period. The findings are that at the end of the 200-year period the carbon stored in the forest that is harvested together with the carbon stored in the wood products from those trees harvested, is more than double the carbon stored in the forest that is left un-harvested.

More information can be obtained at:
www.greenhouse.crc.org.au or at
Myth: Nitens is only good for woodchips

*Eucalyptus nitens* or Shining gum is a desirable species to use to produce woodchips because it yields a high quality fibre that is used in high quality paper products. *E. nitens* woodchips can be transformed into engineered wood products such as medium density fibreboard (MDF), high density fibreboard (hardboard), cementboard and particleboard. As veneer it can be used as a high value appearance product, or reconstructed into plywood or laminated veneer lumber (LVL).

*E.nitens* does not need to be chipped to perform as a quality timber. As roundwood it has high strength characteristics that can be used in external applications (if preservative treated) as fenceposts, vineyard posts, hop poles, soft fruit netting poles, piles and power poles. Research is being conducted into how utilise the inherent strengths of roundwood in construction. The research is focussing especially on methods of connecting round timbers.

With appropriate sawmilling and seasoning techniques, *E. nitens* produces stable, strong, light-coloured timber that can be used for utility products (pallets, packaging etc), structural applications (house framing, bearers, joists etc), high volume appearance products (flooring, lining and decking) and speciality appearance products (furniture, carpentry, cabinet work and joinery).

*E.nitens’* uses could be further expanded by timber modification processes. In particular, heat treatment of timber can improve many characteristics, including increased hardness, improved stability, increased density, darker colour, improved durability, greater permeability, increased preservative performance and better machining properties.

*E. nitens* is a good species to use to produce high quality paper and is also a highly versatile timber for a multitude of uses. It also makes good firewood!

Rob Smith
Private Forest Advisor

Myth: Riparian areas cannot be used for production forestry

Harvesting operations within riparian areas are strictly controlled and a certified Forest Practices Plan (FPP) is required before harvest can commence.

The Forest Practices Code 2000 allows selective harvesting in native forest riparian reserves of up to 30% of the canopy cover and up to 100% canopy removal for Class 4 riparian areas, however, conditions apply.

Plantations planted pre-2000 on riparian areas can be harvested. However, conditions apply on high and very high erodibility soils and on plantations planted after 2000.

No controls are placed on the establishment of plantations on cleared land if they do not exceed 10 hectares per property per year. However, post-2000 plantation harvesting conditions will apply. In all other situations more conditions apply and may need to be in a certified Forest Practices Plan (FPP).

Formal advice on the need for a Forest Practices Plan and the conditions relating to riparian areas, are available from Forest Practices Officers and the Forest Practices Authority (FPA).

Landowners should consult with their local government authority to determine whether planning approval is necessary for the activity.

Rob Smith
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References

Forest Practices Regulations 1997
Forest Practices Act 1985
Forest Practices Code 2000
www.fpa.tas.gov.au

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