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MEDIA RELEASE

More Commercially Grown Trees for the Rural Landscape

Gippsland Private Forestry (GPF) have assisted a number of local landowners to establish commercial tree plantations on a number of sites throughout Gippsland through technical and financial assistance. Species trials established in the late 1990's have now reached an age where they are providing valuable information to the farm forester to assist in species and site selection to gain the most from farm forestry activities. Additional more recent plantings are demonstrating further how commercial farm forestry can be mixed with traditional farming practices to provide a range of benefits to the landowner and the community.

GPF provides free advice and assistance to private forest growers on plantation planning and establishment, native forest management and links to finance and market opportunities through demonstration sites, research and the 40+ years of experience of their professional foresters.

"Farm forestry is another means of diversifying farm income" said Rob Willersdorf, Executive Officer of GPF. "There are many benefits of having trees on farms. Improved farm productivity, increased farm value, sustainable land use and integration with other farm enterprises can potentially increase the profitability of agricultural enterprises in Gippsland which all mean more \$ in the pocket for the landowner".

"These benefits have flow on effects into the entire community" said Ashley Goldstraw, Private Forestry Officer in Bairnsdale. "Well managed timber resources on private land means increased wood resources for industry, regional industry development and employment and improved catchment and environmental management".

"Our aim is to incorporate farm forestry as a main stream farming enterprise as demonstrated in New Zealand where a significant portion of farm income is derived from forestry activities" said Ashley

Since 1996 GPF has been working with private growers to encourage commercial wood production that is well managed, strategically located and market orientated. John Davenport, Private Forestry Officer in Traralgon regards Gippsland as the "Heart of forestry" in Victoria. With a large forest resource, supplemented by farm forests and several major processors in the area, Gippsland is an ideal place to grow trees.

GPF can assist new and existing private tree growers with information on commercial species selection, site selection and establishment, advice for plantations, woodlots, timberbelts, agroforestry, market opportunities and ways to integrate commercial tree growing with farming activities. GPF advisory role also includes private native forest management to assist landowners in a variety of management options and opportunities.

Currently, GPF is assisting several landowners establish indigenous commercial species plantations on their properties. The plantations have been established with assistance from funding made available through the Federal Government's Envirofund. GPF looks forward to hearing from landowners who may be interested in participating in a similar project in 2005 and will shortly be calling for expressions of interest.

If you are interested in visiting one of the GPF demonstration sites to see for yourself the benefits of farm forestry, contact GPF.

John Davenport is located in the West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority office at 16 Hotham Street, Traralgon and can be contacted on 5175 7837 or email john@gpf.com.au. Ashley Goldstraw is located in 26b Bailey Street, Bairnsdale and can be contacted on 5153 2947 or email ashley@gpf.com.au.

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