

25 August 2004

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

**Embargo - nil**

### **Commercial Treegrowers Celebrate National Wattle Day**

The beginning of spring brings the celebration of national wattle day on September 1. Wattle is represented on our coat of arms and is our national floral emblem. It is the most prolific of all woody plants in Australia represented by about 1500 species. All but about 15 species grow naturally on the Australian continent.

Apart from the beautiful golden flowers that we recognise wattle by, it has a myriad of other uses including bush tucker, habitat, firewood and a range of high quality wood products.

"Since European settlement in the late 1700's, large areas of the Australian Bush have been cleared to provide farmland" said Ashley Goldstraw, Private Forestry Officer with Gippsland Private Forestry (GPF) in Bairnsdale. "Establishment of commercial indigenous species plantations with a component of wattle species is the ideal mechanism for re-establishing our national emblem on a broad scale".

John Davenport, GPF Private Forestry Officer in Traralgon highlighted the importance of indigenous species plantations in Gippsland. "The plantations are managed to provide a financial return to the landowner as well as providing environmental benefits including habitat, reduced salinity, improved water quality and a beautiful landscape" said John. "There is nothing better than the smell of the eucalypts and the beautiful golden flowers of the wattles in these mixed plantations".

GPF has assisted a number of landowners with financial and technical support to establish commercial indigenous species plantations in the Gippsland region, all of which include 20% wattle species. The plantations will be grown and harvested for high quality sawlogs before being replanted again.

"The best way to re-establish large areas of trees is to have a commercial focus, which provides a return for the initial establishment costs" said Rob Willersdorf, GPF's Executive Officer based in Bairnsdale.

For landowners that would like to establish a commercial plantation, including a component of wattle to celebrate national wattle day, GPF is available to assist Gippsland landowners with free information and advice.

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*Promoting sustainable, commercial private forestry development in Gippsland*