



## Forest management certification

Summer bushfire battles

Bats on farms

*FREE school assignment poster inside!*



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## from the chief executive

Suppliers of timber products sourced from NSW State forests can confidently enter the global marketplace, following independent and internationally-recognised certification of Forests NSW management.

Late last year, Forests NSW was certified to the Australian Forestry Standard (AFS), an assessment scheme developed specifically for the management of Australian forests. AFS is sanctioned internationally by the Program for Endorsement of Forestry Certification Schemes (PEFC).

It is validation of all of the hard work our staff has put in to making our management sustainable in environmental, social and economic terms.

We have joined forest managers from Europe, America and other parts of the world in seeking certification, as consumers worldwide become increasingly demanding about the environmental credentials of the products they buy.

Already, some of Forests NSW sawmill customers are seeking 'chain of custody' certification under the scheme, which will enable them to stamp their products with the AFS brand. It is expected that this brand will become increasingly recognised in both domestic and export markets.

While December gave us this piece of good news, it was also the time of a significant fire in our pine plantations near Tumut. Hundreds of Forests NSW and Rural Fire Service staff and volunteers battled these blazes for more than a week, with significant loss of pine.

We will continue to work with our pine customers to maintain continuity of product supply while we finalise and implement a salvage and re-establishment plan.

I would like to thank all those involved in tackling the fires, not only near Tumut but elsewhere in the state. Your hard work and skills are vital to the continued profitability of our business.



Alastair Howard  
Acting Chief Executive



**Editor** Leah Flint  
**Design & Layout** Kathryn Laidlaw / Libero Design  
**Print Production** Elena Clark / Pomegranate Production  
**Sub-editor** Joanna Munro  
**Printing** Lindsay Yates and Partners

### Editorial & subscription enquiries

*Bush Telegraph* Forests NSW, PO Box 100, Beecroft  
 NSW 2119 Ph: (02) 9872 0111 Fax: (02) 9871 6941  
 Email: busstele@sf.nsw.gov.au

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**Cover photograph** Independent certification, carbon trading and placing a financial value on more non-timber forest products are just a few of the recent trends in forestry around the globe. Read how Forests NSW is keeping pace on page 10. *Created image by Kathryn Laidlaw / Libero Design*

# Stamp of approval for forest management

Forests NSW management of the State's productive public forests has been granted certification under the internationally-recognised Australian Forestry Standard (AFS).

AFS certification is an independent endorsement of the sustainable forest management of NSW State forests.

Most Australian forest growers who have obtained certification have done so through AFS, which is based on a rigorous assessment of forest management practices to meet customer and community expectations.

"Increasingly, consumers want more information about the goods and services they buy and use," NSW Minister for Primary Industries, Ian Macdonald, said. "People want to use environmentally-friendly and sustainably produced products.

"AFS certification demonstrates to home builders and renovators that timber products from NSW State forests are exactly that. Timber is indeed a renewable and environmentally-friendly choice for construction."

AFS sets a benchmark for the management of Australian forests. Meeting that standard demonstrates that timber production is done

in an environmentally-friendly, socially aware and economically viable manner.

Internationally, the market preference for sustainable products has increased the pressure for forest industries to gain forest management certification.

"We can now verify in the international arena that our forests are being sustainably managed," Mr Macdonald said.

"AFS is recognised under the Program for the Endorsement of Forest Certification Schemes, the program with the most certified forests in the world, so we are going with the strength."

Mr Macdonald said that now when customers ask for timber from sustainably managed forests, Forests NSW could assure them that it met those standards.

It also means that Forests NSW customers could seek a 'chain of custody' certification from independent accredited bodies to stamp their products showing that they met the Australian Forestry Standard.

– **Howard Spencer** Public Affairs & Media, Coffs Harbour

Forests NSW forest management has been independently certified to the Australian Forestry Standard. *Photo Forests NSW Image Library*



# Eden exports a strategic move

The opportunity to thin State-owned plantations around Bombala in south eastern New South Wales to produce logs for export fulfils a fundamental forest management objective for Forests NSW.

Forests NSW sales coordinator, Jason Molkenntin, said by exporting low-grade logs out of Eden on the far south coast, Forests NSW was able to grow and maintain a healthy and high quality forest; something that would be difficult to achieve without an opportunity to thin the forest.

"The logs do not meet domestic sawmill's specifications and are surplus to local pulp mill requirements," he said.

Jason said the thinning operation had increased the sawlog yield and value of the Bombala plantation estate, while at the same time creating employment for an additional 35 people in forest harvesting, haulage and log marshalling and stevedoring at the wharf.

Since Forests NSW began its export contract in 2003/04 with Pentarch – an Australian-owned company – more than 300 000 tonnes has been exported primarily to China and Korea.

The exported logs are mainly used as sawn timber or veneer, with any residue used for reconstituted wood products such as particleboard or medium density fibreboard.

Pentarch is utilising the Australian Navy's multi-purpose wharf in Twofold Bay at Eden.

Jason said the demand for export logs was incredibly volatile, with exposure to fluctuating currency exchange and shipping costs, as well as variable supply and demand on a global scale.

Right: Logs from the thinning of pine plantations near Bombala, being loaded for export to China and Korea through the south coast port of Eden. *Photo by Jason Molkenntin*

"Pentarch brings a high level of export management and marketing expertise to its partnership with Forests NSW, which ultimately gives us access to overseas markets and the opportunity to successfully utilise excess pulp logs," he said.

– **Sarah Chester** Public Affairs & Media, Albury



# Gunnedah's tree champion

Janet Hathway went from being Forests NSW Gunnedah nursery's best customer to being manager, all because of her passion for trees.

It is not something new to her.

"My mother said I have been gardening since the time I could walk," says Janet. "Give me a tree and I will plant it."

Plant them she has. The forest of 5000 ironbarks she and her father planted more than 30 years ago has been the subject of study by Forests NSW scientists.

The efforts in her three hectare garden have not gone unnoticed. She has more than a few champion and best native garden awards.

She and husband Jim have been so successful in creating their dry-tolerant garden that they were chosen as ABC Open Garden candidates last year.

Janet has overseen the improvement of Forests NSW nursery from a site out of town to a plot in town that has more than tripled the tube stock she sells each year.

"People are catching on that they can't grow exotics in these areas. They and conifers over the past three years have just died," Janet said.

"The soil temperature here during the drought has been 35 to 36 degrees Celsius and everyone is conscious of saving water."

The top choices Janet recommends for the Gunnedah area are bumblebox (*Eucalyptus populnea*), which is appropriate as koalas love it and Gunnedah is the 'koala capital of the world', Blakely's red gum (*Eucalyptus blakelyi*) and emu bush (*Eremophila sp.*), all of which Janet grows at home.

She has given in to the realities of little water, on what she describes as a "shocking, once-impoverished dairy farm" with lots of sandstone, and has replaced lawns with gravel paths and pavers close to the house.

— **Howard Spencer** Public Affairs & Media, Coffs Harbour

Forests NSW Gunnedah nursery manager, Janet Hathway, has had a passion for planting trees for her entire life. *Photo by Howard Spencer*



## Tracking eastern pygmy possums

Can you imagine catching a creature that weighs 25 grams, is just eight centimetres long, nocturnal and extremely agile? And then tracking this animal through the bush?

Scientists from NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI), together with staff from Forests NSW, have spent the last 18 months doing just that, in a project to catch and track tiny eastern pygmy possums.

NSW DPI researcher, Dr Brad Law, said 53 of the possums had been caught in McPherson State Forest, not far from Gosford on the New South Wales Central Coast.

"Eastern pygmy possums (*Cercartetus nanus*) in this area prefer banksia woodland habitat, feeding on nectar and pollen with their long, brush-tipped tongue," Brad said.

Brad explained that the possums are a recent addition to the list of threatened fauna in NSW, with very little known of their ecology in forests.

"Without targeted research, it would not be clear how this species should be managed when their favoured forests are logged, and what the impact of logging might be," he said.

The project has been set up with exactly this in mind – it is an experiment with control sites and logged sites, tracking possums before and after logging to reveal where they den, estimate home range size and identify how their habitat recovers after logging.

Brad said that two additional sites were included because they were logged four years ago. Already, trap rates are high at these sites and preliminary data on den use and foraging movements suggests the possums survive and breed in the thick understorey regenerating after logging.

The pre-logging phase of the project is almost complete and already much has been learnt about the habitat requirements of the possums. The project will re-commence after logging has finished.

— **Leah Flint** Communications, Maitland

Top: One of the 53 pygmy possums caught as part of a research project in McPherson State Forest on the NSW Central Coast. *Photo courtesy Brad Law*

# 'Carbon Planet' paves way for environmentally-concerned consumers

If you would like to offset the effects of your monthly carbon dioxide emissions, then perhaps 'Carbon Planet' is the solution for you.

Founded by Ross Williams and Dave Sag in 2000, Carbon Planet is a revolutionary business seeking to reduce the effects of greenhouse gas emissions on the environment.

"We have teamed up with Forests NSW to combat global warming by giving people a mechanism to erase their carbon footprint," Carbon Planet founder, Dave Sag, said.

"We buy tens of thousands of tonnes of Forests NSW carbon credits through the NSW Greenhouse Gas Abatement Scheme, which can then be sold on to interested businesses and individuals."

Dave said that consumers purchasing one carbon credit were effectively offsetting one tonne of the greenhouse gas carbon dioxide, removed from the atmosphere through Forests NSW tree sequestration projects.

Trees remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and store it as carbon in trunks and branches.

Dave said that each Australian contributes an average of 27.54 tonnes of carbon dioxide to the atmosphere every year, making us one of the highest emitters in the world.

One carbon credit from Carbon Planet costs AU \$23.00, or \$53.67 for a monthly subscription, with Carbon Planet also offering the opportunity to offset individuals' entire lifetime emissions.

"We are selling these credits every single day to environmentally-aware consumers," Dave said.

For more information check out [www.carbonplanet.com](http://www.carbonplanet.com)

– Carolyn Fisher Communications, Maitland

Carbon credits generated by Forests NSW from plantation forests are being retailed to consumers by 'Carbon Planet'. Photo Forests NSW Image Library



## Forest Recreation Council flourishes

A new community partnership focused on improving recreation management in the State forests of the Hunter and Central Coast continues to go from strength to strength.

The Forest Recreation Council, formed in 2006, meets monthly and brings together members from established recreational groups that use local forests regularly.

The council includes the Australian Horse Alliance, Mountain Bike Association, Four-Wheel Drive Association and Dual Sport Motorcycle Riders Association, along with staff from Forests NSW and NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service.

The council's aim is to foster discussion and cooperation amongst principal forest recreational user groups and land managers to address key issues like anti-social behaviour and rubbish dumping, and also

to come up with strategies to improve the planning and management of forest recreational areas.

Forest Recreational Council secretary, Rob Kelly, said that the council had been formed to promote responsible use of State forests.

"Major events we staged in 2006 included a clean-up campaign in Ourimbah State Forest and a Forest Expo in Watagan State Forest, both of which received a high level of support," Rob said.

"Such events gave participating associations the opportunity to inform other forest users about safe and sustainable ways to enjoy their forests."

Right: Safe and sustainable recreational use of forests is the focus of a new community partnership on the Central Coast. Photo Forests NSW Image Library

The council is planning events and strategies for 2007, with members of the council looking forward to a continued relationship with Forests NSW to foster enjoyable and responsible recreational use of forests.

For more information on the council, contact Rob Kelly on Ph: (02) 4932 3678.

– Carolyn Fisher Communications, Maitland





## Firefighter stars in new display

Hunter Valley bushfire fighting legend Cec Gavenlock has been immortalised in a new display at the Timbertown heritage village at Wauchope on the NSW mid north coast.

Cec has become a cardboard cut-out figure, fully decked out in his Forests NSW overalls, hard hat and rake hoe, behind which visitors stand to have their photograph taken.

Close by, there is a fire tanker and a fire scene.

"Port Macquarie – Hastings Council and Timbertown have created a new entrance which reflects their theme of a 'step back in time'," says NSW Department of Primary Industries education coordinator, Carmen Perry.

"Forests NSW developed the concept for the foyer and donated \$5000 plus the writing, design and photographic work for key parts of the project."

The entrance walk begins with colour posters and interpretations of forestry in today's world, as told by foresters, ecologists and Aboriginal cultural heritage officers.

There is a re-creation of a forest floor that visitors can touch and feel.

Visitors will then move to a façade of a modern building showing how timber is used today.

When they pass through, they reach a timbergetter's house of the 1890s, and move into the world of the sleepercutter and bullocky.

"Timbertown has created a place for regional events, including a schools education program," Carmen said. "It is an educational experience the kids can actually live."

Timbertown is on the Oxley Highway a few kilometres west of Wauchope. It is an entire village set in 87 acres of natural forest and has attracted more than two million visitors since it opened in 1976.

A steam train still runs, timber is still sawn and the bullock team still hauls its load of timber.

– **Howard Spencer** Public Affairs & Media, Coffs Harbour



Inset photo: Trialling the firefighter cut-out in the new Timbertown display. *Photo by Alex Flint*  
 Top: A steam train ride is just one of the attractions of the heritage park. *Photo by Howard Spencer*



## Australia Day honour for Alastair Howard

Forests NSW acting Chief Executive, Alastair Howard, was honoured in the 2007 Australia Day Awards with a prestigious Public Service Medal.

Director-General of NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI), Barry Buffier, said the award recognised Alastair's distinguished and wide-ranging career in natural resource management within the NSW public sector.

"The Public Service Medal is an important medal within the Australian Honours system. It recognises the community contribution made by public service officers through the outstanding performance of their duties," Barry said.

"Alastair has made an exceptional contribution to the success of Forests NSW, particularly over the last two years which have seen the organisation's realignment and integration into NSW DPI.

"As Director, Land Management and Technical Services, he has brought together diverse functions to create a cohesive service branch that enabled Forests NSW to achieve major efficiency gains and cost savings, contributing to significant improvements in financial performance.

"Under Alastair's leadership, the skilled professionals in his branch recorded many outstanding achievements including a Premier's Public Sector Gold Award for the development of a market supply modelling system for forestry plantation products; the establishment of the Grafton Forest Technology Centre as a world-leading research institute; and the registration of NSW Greenhouse Abatement Certificates for carbon sequestered by state-owned hardwood and softwood plantations.

"As acting Chief Executive since March 2006, he has overseen further notable successes including certification of forest management activities under the internationally recognised Australian Forestry Standard," Barry said.

– **Bill Frew** Public Affairs & Media, Sydney

Forests NSW acting Chief Executive, Alastair Howard, was awarded a Public Service Medal on Australia Day 2007. *Photo by David Barnes*

## Fallen tree reveals owl secrets

Forests NSW ecologists have first-hand confirmation of their assumptions about the inhabitants of a large spotted gum habitat tree in Bermagui State Forest: the tree fell across an interpretive sign erected in its honour.

"The sign indicated it was a likely roost for a large forest owl," said Forests NSW Southern Region ecologist, Chris Slade.

"This has turned out to be the case with the pellets, bones and skulls collected from within the tree's cavity indicating it was most likely being used by a sooty owl, which thankfully wasn't at home at the time."

The owl had a varied diet of native and introduced species including:

- Agile antechinus (*Antechinus agilis*)
- Long-nosed bandicoot (*Perameles nasuta*)
- Common ring-tailed possum (*Petauroides volans*)
- Greater glider (*Pseudocheirus peregrinus*)
- Sugar Glider (*Petaurus breviceps*)
- Bush rat (*Rattus fuscipes*)

- Rabbit (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*)
- Dusky antechinus (*Antechinus swainsoni*)

"We will incorporate this new information into a revised sign and we now know that there are long-nosed bandicoots, and all the other species taken by the owl, inhabiting this forest," Chris said.

"The height of the tree was 37.6 metres with a diameter at breast height over bark of 193 centimetres.

"The tree contained multiple hollow entrances with the bird most likely using a hollow located 18.7 metres off the ground. We assumed this to be the hollow entrance due to the amount of claw marks on the entrance lip, presumably made by the bird landing.

"The bones, skulls and pellets were collected from the bird's roosting point, 15.8 metres off the ground, where the termite mud and intact wood had formed a platform within the cavity."

– Howard Spencer

Public Affairs & Media, Coffs Harbour



The huge south coast spotted gum fell on its explanatory sign – and confirmed it was an owl roost as suspected. Photo by Chris Slade

## Barking owl survey goes like clockwork



A barking owl family in Newfoundland State Forest east of Grafton were curious witnesses to a textbook ecology survey which played out beneath them late last year.

The owls first heard a tinny call of what they thought was another barking owl (*Ninox connivens*), but in reality it was ecology field workers Noel Douglas and Robyn Herklots playing a pre-recorded call through a megaphone.

The owls, which are not normally found in coastal forests, dutifully replied, and so a blue dot went on the harvest plan being prepared for the area showing a record for barking owls.

The next bit of detective work was carried out by supervising forestry officer Brent Smith, who saw two owls late one afternoon watching him survey and mark up trees before harvest.

He did some homework overnight, and knowing barking owls had been heard in the area, went back the next day armed with some references, and other Forests NSW staff including regional ecologist Brian Tolhurst, Tim Ruska and Matt Dobson. They found the birds roosting in the same place.

"I started to give the guys a spiel on how they were likely to be a breeding pair and their nest might not be far away," Brian said.

"About ten seconds later Brent looked up the tree we were standing under."

Sure enough, there was a juvenile barking owl peering out of a hollow in the tree.

The nesting and roost tree areas have been protected from disturbance and the barking owl family have returned to their usual quiet country life.

– Howard Spencer Public Affairs & Media, Coffs Harbour

Left: A barking owl sighted by Forests NSW staff during pre-harvest surveys in Newfoundland State Forest, east of Grafton. Photo by Matt Dobson



# Fast and furious fires in the west

**The people of the Pilliga are no strangers to fire,** but there were some nerves on edge late last year in the face of two bushfires that ran 12 kilometres in one direction and then turned, joined and made another 25 kilometre run in under twelve hours.

It was an eye opener for newly appointed forester, Tamara Campbell, directing Forests NSW field staff from Baradine. But it was even a surprise for veteran local fire-fighters.

It began with lightning strikes and was dubbed the Pilliga 4 fire; the fourth to be brought under a Section 44 bushfire emergency run by the NSW Rural Fire Service from Coonabarabran, and declared to control a series of fires from the same storm.

“It started on the 28th November,” Tamara said. “It ran under strong south westerly winds which turned south easterly, pushing the fire to cypress forests in the north west around the Aloes.

“Forests NSW staff from Baradine and Narrabri withdrew from the firestorm that developed, and monitored its progress.

“At 11pm on the 29th of November we were discussing establishing protection lines with graders to keep the fire out of Baradine.

“Thankfully, lower temperatures and wind speed overnight pulled the fire up about five kilometres from the town.”

Baradine is the major Pilliga township, and is home to many forest workers.

The next day reinforcements came from Forests NSW coastal regions, as well as volunteers from NSW and Queensland. A major battle ensued for several weeks to contain and control the fire.

It was a literally ‘baptism-of-fire’ for 15 newly trained brush cutter operators, under the guidance of ‘battle hardened’ Forests NSW fireground crews.

After the initial night’s run, the fire was effectively stopped in its tracks with more than 180km of fireline being held. It ultimately burnt 103 446 hectares.

A further 22 682 hectares was burnt in the Kerringle fire, which Tamara said made a big initial run on the same evening.

“But it ran into a hazard reduced area from earlier in 2006, and an area burnt by wildfire the previous year, and stopped,” Tamara said.

Each of the fires began in different spots in Pilliga Nature Reserve.

That wasn’t the last fire for the season. In December lightning again ignited a blaze that, like the others, forced the closure of the Newell Highway, a main freight route between Melbourne and Brisbane. Further strikes started even more fires in January.

Much of the area burnt in the fires had been severely affected by a 145 000 hectare fire in 1997.

Baradine forester-in-charge, Tom Newby, was deputy incident controller.

“The 2006 fires took 12 hours to cover the same distance the ‘97 fire moved in three days,” Tom said.

Forests NSW lost cypress forests and two wooden bridges. A major salvage harvest operation commenced immediately.

“Forests NSW and industry moved quickly on salvage harvesting, as cypress is susceptible to jewel beetles that bore holes in wood when it is stressed or fire affected, and from radial cracking as the logs dry out under severe drought conditions,” Tom said.

By mid January, more than 1 000 tonnes of wood had been removed and sawn.

– Don Nicholson (Native Forests Operations, Dubbo) & Howard Spencer (Public Affairs & Media, Coffs Harbour)



Top L-R: Lightning strikes were the cause of a huge blaze in the cypress forests of the Pilliga; The fire took just twelve hours to move 37 kilometres through the forests with evidence of the intensity of the blaze clearly evident from the air; Salvage harvesting in areas burnt commenced almost immediately. Left: The fires forced the closure of the Newell Highway. Photos by Tereene Hill

# Wildfires in Tumut pine



**T**he endless mopping up, the patrols, the assessment and the salvage are underway in the hills around Tumut following a fire that affected around 11 000 hectares of plantation pine.

The Billo Road fire started on the 10th December 2006 within a picnic area in Buccleuch State Forest, north east of Tumut.

Unpredictable winds, coupled with high temperatures and very dry fuel, resulted in a rapid rate of spread.

Forests NSW acting director Planted Forests, Bob Orman, said that although the fire was a blow to the regional timber industry and the local community, it should not impact on Forests NSW meeting its contracted supply obligations or the long-term viability of industry.

"The fire burnt areas of Billapaloola, Buccleuch and Bondo State Forests, which represent about eight per cent of the state-owned pines in the area," he said.

The fire damaged 8 500 hectares planted with trees, while the remaining area included roads/easements, environmental exclusion zones and areas already clearfelled in preparation for another crop.

Approximately 500 hectares of private property was also affected.

Bob said Forests NSW had been talking with customers including Visy, Weyerhaeuser, Ausply, Norske Skog and Hyne, seeking their opinions and offering advice in order to minimise any

immediate disruption to their wood supplies.

"This community is dependent upon the timber industry, and we need to reassure everyone that through careful planning there is a way forward, and the industry will remain vibrant," he said.

Bob said the extent of damage to the standing pine trees varied significantly across the areas burnt, depending on the age of the stands and the intensity of the fire.

"A full assessment of the extent of the resource lost and capacity to salvage timber is underway, but the full extent of the impact on the industry and the flow-on effect to the local community will take some time to assess," he said.

"While the window of opportunity to salvage the higher grade pine sawlogs is normally around six months, some of the lower grade products can be salvaged over a longer period."

Forests NSW Forest Health unit is working to combat the Ips beetle, capable of destroying unburnt trees if conditions suit their build up in the heavy fire burnt slash.

Bob said it was likely that most, if not all of the area affected by the fire, would be returned to plantation.

"Together with the State Government, timber industry and local communities, we will work to make sure that the forest industry remains the lifeblood of this region," he said.

– Sarah Chester Public Affairs & Media, Albury

## Firefighting resources

Up to 400 people including firefighters from Forests NSW, Rural Fire Service, National Parks and Wildlife Service, NSW Fire Brigades and ACT Fire Service, plus the NSW Police, SES, and a huge team of volunteers were involved in fighting the Billo Road fire.

Incident controller Brian Royal praised the skills of firefighters, who did a remarkable job in limiting the fire to the final boundaries.

"The rapidly spreading fire during the first three days, and the extreme weather on Thursday 14th December 2006 between 6pm and 8pm, made firefighting particularly challenging," he said.

Firefighting equipment included 80 fire tankers, six fixed-wing aircraft, 11 helicopters, 19 bulldozers, six graders and 40 slip-on units.

'Delilah', sister of the air crane 'Elvis', also played an important role with its 9000-litre capacity.

Some 8 500 hectares of pine was burnt near Tumut in late 2006. Unpredictable winds, high temperatures and dry fuels saw the fire spread very quickly. Photos by Steve Cathcart/NSW DEC

# Global trends in forestry

What are the latest trends in forest management across the globe? And how is Forests NSW keeping pace? Leah Flint takes a look at some of the emerging forestry-related issues.

## Certification

Increasingly, consumers want more information about the goods and services they buy and use. Recycling glass, paper and steel; saying no to plastic bags; and signing up for 'green power' are all part of daily life. But when it comes to timber products, information can be emotive or confusing with the science of forest management complicated. As a consumer, can you be easily assured that the timber you are buying is from a sustainably managed forest?



In many instances, the answer is yes, with Forests NSW recently joining other forest managers in Australia, America, Europe and elsewhere in the world to be independently certified to a globally recognised standard.

Forests NSW certification officer, Morgan Roche, said that NCS International had recently independently audited Forests NSW to the Australian Forestry Standard.

"The Australian Forestry Standard (AFS) sets a benchmark for the management of Australian forests," Morgan said. "Meeting this standard demonstrates that timber production in New South Wales public forests is done in an environmentally responsible, socially aware and economically viable manner."

Morgan said that AFS had recognition from both Standards Australia (AS 4708) and also internationally through the Program for the Endorsement of Forest Certification schemes (PEFC).

"The standard is based in internationally-agreed criteria for sustainable forest management and importantly will foster continuous improvement in timber production and other aspects of our business," Morgan said.

"Put simply, Forests NSW has demonstrated that timber harvesting in NSW State forests is sustainable. Consumers of timber products manufactured from our logs can be assured that timber is indeed renewable and an environmentally-friendly choice for construction and other uses."

Morgan said that organisations certified to AFS will use a simple logo in branding their timber products, which would make it easier for those wanting to make an informed choice.

"Many of our sawmill customers already have or are seeking 'chain of custody' certification, which will assure home builders or renovators that the timber products they buy are made from timber that was certified in the forest," he said.

"Local timber from New South Wales' own public forests should be consumers' first choice, particularly over imported timbers that may not be produced to the same environmental standards. Consumers should use their buying power."

## Carbon trading



Forests NSW has been a leader in the field of forest-based carbon trading since the Kyoto Protocol was signed in 1997. And while Australia has not ratified the protocol, NSW has continued its pioneering foray into carbon trading, with a localised scheme operating effectively and forming a benchmark for a recently proposed national emissions trading scheme.

Forests NSW manager investor relations, Nick Cameron, said that Forests NSW has so far registered several hundred thousand forest-based greenhouse gas abatement certificates with the scheme administrator, most of which have already been sold.

*Photos from Forests NSW Image Library by Philip Green, Peter Solness and David Barnes*



“We all know that trees are vital to human health, locking up carbon dioxide gas as they grow and releasing oxygen for us to breathe,” Nick said. “What carbon trading does is place a financial value on this ‘environmental service’, and gives individuals and companies a mechanism to offset their greenhouse gas emissions.”

While the NSW Government has made it mandatory for electricity suppliers to participate in the scheme, many individuals are also seeking to offset the emissions generated by their activities (see story page 5).

“Carbon trading gives an additional financial incentive to forest growers. In some cases, it might make a plantation in an area where timber growth would be slow, and therefore the economic returns delayed, more viable,” Nick said.

### Non-timber forest products

Forests NSW has established a group specifically to examine the opportunities that arise from the non-timber products and services from forests. The newly created group is led by manager enterprise development, Dr Hilary Smith.

Hilary said that here in NSW, as elsewhere in Australia and overseas, there was increasing pressure to try and place a financial value on the other environmental services and products provided by forests.

“There is a general feeling that if people understand what a service is worth, in dollar terms, they may more actively manage and conserve these values,” she said.

“There is increasing recognition that products from forests are more than timber, and in fact contribute much more to the community.”

Hilary said that in addition to generating dollar returns from environmental services, Forests NSW was looking more closely at markets for non-timber forest products.

“There’s a diversity of opportunities that may not have been considered in the more traditional models of forestry,” Hilary said.



“This ranges from extractive resources like hard rock and gravel through to opportunities for telecommunications and other infrastructure within forests. We are developing mechanisms to ensure this will be done in an appropriate and environmentally responsible way.

“We are also looking at opportunities for commercial tourism ventures, ranging from forest-based four-wheel drive or walking tours through to trail developments and construction of huts and lodges.”

Hilary is monitoring trends in other parts of the world with interest.

“In Japan and New Zealand, alternative products like mushrooms and truffles are harvested in forests,” Hilary said. “It might not sound like it, but these are exciting community and business opportunities for high value foods.”

The risk of climate change is also resulting in innovative use of forest products.

“Power generation from timber logs or waste is also an increasing focus in countries like the United Kingdom, where the government recently announced an electricity generation plant fuelled entirely by timber, rather than coal,” she said.

Research is also continuing into options for ‘biofuels’ as an alternative to petroleum, with eucalypts a possible option.

“Forests NSW is watching movements in all of these areas, and will continue to work on initiatives that bring social, environmental or economic benefits for our local communities,” Hilary said.

– Leah Flint Communications, Maitland

Created image of hands by Kathryn Laidlaw/Libero Design



# New timber mill for Bathurst



Before Allied Timber Products (ATP) came to Bathurst, it had been quite some time since there had been significant timber processing in town.

It took the vision of a Queensland family company to bring milling back onto the agenda for a town that is ideally situated to tap into Forests NSW 68 000 hectares of plantation pine (and around 16 000 hectares of privately-owned plantation) in the central west of New South Wales.

In June last year, ATP began production from its impressive \$15 million new sawmill at Raglan.

The man behind the mill is ATP's managing director, Richard Galley. An unassuming, hardworking Queensland, he is tricky to track down as he splits his time between Bathurst and the family's established processing operation at Burpengary, 40 kilometres north of Brisbane.

In this competitive environment, Richard is proud of the fact that ATP has remained a family-run business, with his father Colin chairman of the board, and brother Steven company secretary.

"The reason we chose Bathurst was that the resource in Queensland was fully utilised, and we saw the potential to expand

our business here due to the available pine resource," he said.

"We are very excited about the future of our business at Bathurst, and we are enjoying working with the local community and suppliers."

Proximity to market was also important in the company's choice of location as its main markets are Sydney, Newcastle, the Illawarra and Canberra.

It also exports a small amount of sawn timber to China and has plans to further explore this market.

Forests NSW softwood sales manager, Gavin Matthew, said after being successful in a competitive tender process, ATP had signed a 10-year timber supply agreement with Forests NSW, for the supply of up to 90 000 cubic metres of softwood sawlogs each year, with an option to extend for a further 10 years, underpinning ATP's investment.

"ATP's mill provides a good fit with the other processing facilities that are supplied from Macquarie Region, and allows Forests NSW to more efficiently utilise each plantation tree," he said.

The mill employs about 25 local people, with more jobs to come on line with planned expansion in the next few years.

The state-of-the-art sawmill, imported from Finland, specialises in sawing small sawlogs (12 to 25 centimetres) to produce timbers for a range of products including fencing, landscaping, pallets, packaging and framing.

The plant also incorporates a debarking line, kiln and a timber preservation unit, which has the capacity to custom treat products for customers.

There are also plans in the next 12 to 18 months to construct a planer mill for the production of a range of 'dressed products' including decking and appearance grade boards. Plus there are plans for more timber drying kilns.

Richard won't make grandiose statements about the company's vision for the future – but he would say that producing a 'quality product' was what mattered.

"We are aiming to produce a range of quality outdoor products that will be long lasting," he said before whizzing out the door to the mill.

Top: Forests NSW Mike Freeman in the ATP mill yard with pine logs from publicly-owned plantations near Bathurst in the central west of NSW. Below: Mike Freeman with ATP's managing director, Richard Galley. Photos by Alf Manciangli



– Sarah Chester Public Affairs & Media, Albury

# Planting better bat habitat

## A recent study of bats on farms

suggests that new approaches are needed to revegetation and that it should not be automatically assumed that planting of native trees will increase biodiversity.

NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI) researcher, Dr Brad Law, says eucalypts are primarily planted on farms to stem land degradation and improve agricultural productivity.

"It is assumed these plantings will also improve nature conservation and biodiversity, when this is not necessarily the case," Brad said.

"Very few Australian studies have investigated the use of native revegetation by fauna and the importance of such factors as the size, age or mix of trees or where they are located in the landscape."

Brad's research on how bats use eucalypt plantings in south-eastern Australia is part of a larger study of all terrestrial vertebrates by the Forest Biodiversity group at NSW DPI.

Undertaken across 120 sites, the bat study found many species were just as likely to fly through paddocks as they were revegetation sites.

"Most bat species need space to navigate, and their preference is open woodland, but old, large plantings are a close second.

"The reason for this is probably not the age or height of the trees but the fact that tree stands in older plantings are generally patchy, and have gaps because of trees dying through drought or use by cattle.

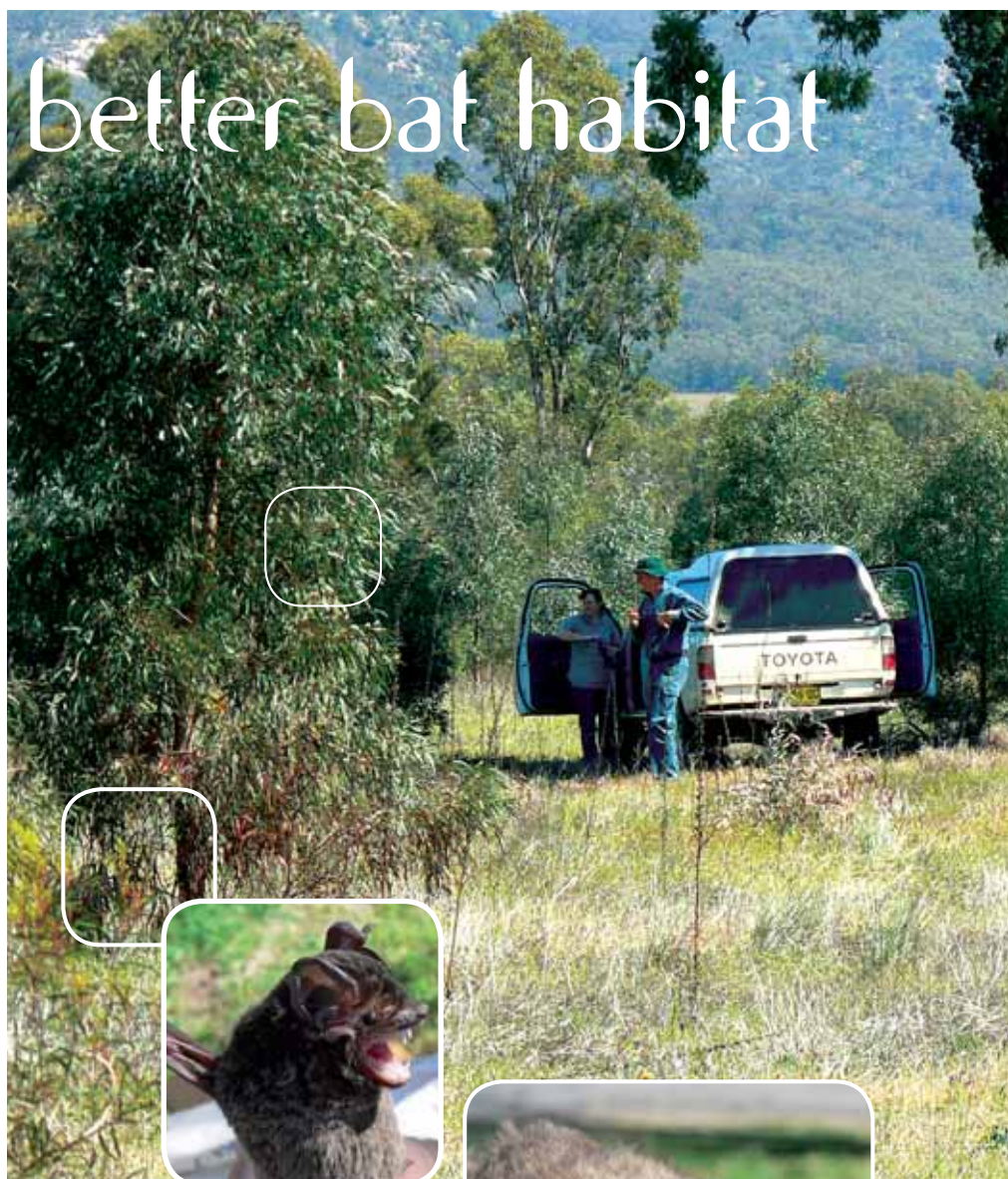
"Of course old trees are needed as well to provide hollows for roosting bats during the day."

Brad said most bat species dislike clutter (dense vegetation) in a landscape.

"What the bats dislike is dense understorey cover that is typical of young, fast growing plantings. Trees and bushes impede their echolocation, although bats are attracted to vegetation edges."

Brad suggested a number of approaches to improve revegetation programs for bats including reducing tree density or maintaining a mosaic of densities and gaps.

"Small tracks large enough for a four-wheel drive to pass through are likely to provide space for bats to forage. Management practices that reduce clutter, such as



thinning of high density stands, could also help," he said.

"Planting areas greater than 25 hectares is also an option, as these are used more by bats, especially as they approach 20 to 30 years of age.

"Retaining paddock trees and incorporating these into plantings to provide a focus for foraging and a source of roosts in hollows is another option to improve bat habitat, as is the inclusion of a dam, as bat activity is known to be high around water."

Brad said there was a great need to research the effect of revegetation on biodiversity.

"Existing recommendations of ways to improve biodiversity tend to be based on lessons learnt through studies of remnant bush," Brad said.

"Given that trees are being planted on farms principally to rehabilitate the landscape rather than to increase biodiversity, there is a need to find out what biodiversity benefits accrue when the primary purpose of planting is other than nature conservation."

— Joanne Finlay

Public Affairs & Media, Orange

Clockwise: NSW DPI researchers are assessing how bats use eucalypt plantings in south-eastern Australia; the little forest bat (*Vespadelus vulturnus*) is one of the Australia's smallest mammals. It is a widespread species found in remnant vegetation and revegetation; other bats like this Gould's wattled bat (*Chalinolobus gouldii*) was a common species in the rural landscape. Photos by Brad Law





# A Scot in our midst

**Chris Nixon is actually a Pom** masquerading as a Scot and he doesn't even own a kilt.

With his mild accent and manner, Chris has avoided being the butt of too many jokes, as he exchanges forestry in Scotland for New South Wales.

He's the first exchange forestry manager in a program between Forests NSW and the Forestry Commission of Scotland. The program was set up by the former head of Forests NSW Planted Forests Operations, Peter Crowe, following a visit to Scotland back in 2003.

Chris and his wife Alison arrived in our winter (June 2006), which he said felt just like their summer. They are here for a year and have settled well into Albury, but not so easily into the weather.

Home for Chris and Alison is Dornoch, way, way north in Scotland, above Inverness, and the Loch Ness monster.

"I'm used to mist and quite a high rainfall (about 1250 millimetres a year)," Chris said.

"I'm also in the habit of wearing Wellingtons and waterproofs. We spend a lot of time on site drainage – planning how to get the water off planting sites – rather than trying to keep the water on planting sites as you do here."

For the past eight years, Chris has managed Dornoch Forest District, the northern most district in Scotland, with 45 000 hectares of pine and spruce plantation.

"We mainly grow Scots pines (*Pinus sylvestris*) – which are slower growing than radiata pine, with final harvest after 60 to 80 years," he said.

Chris has 21 years experience in forestry in Britain and is relishing the opportunity to work in another country.

While in Australia, he has been contributing to the preparation of a plantation strategy, identifying some of the key issues Forests NSW needs to tackle in the next five years or so.

"It has been a fantastic experience and I've been able to provide an independent point of view," Chris said.

"I've been travelling around the state visiting regional offices, meeting a lot of staff, discussing current issues and seeing a great deal of countryside.

"The distances here are enormous. The UK would fit inside NSW, so you have to get used to the fact that it is going to take a lot longer to get there than the time you actually spend in a meeting."

One thing he finds great fun is the language, and he is often not at all sure what people are talking about.

"Take B-doubles, now that sounds like something you'd order at the bar. We don't really have them as they would not fit on narrow highland roads," he said.

Chris has been very excited to learn about carbon sequestration.

"It's on the horizon in Scotland, but Australia is the place to be when it comes to carbon trading."

He said another big difference was Australia's approach to recreation.

"In Scotland, demand for recreation in commercial forests is a lot higher, when you think we have 60 million people in Britain, there's a big demand for space and outdoor facilities.

"Our forests are full of people mountain biking, orienteering, fishing, et cetera, and we also provide camp sites and holiday chalet cabins – run by our Forest Holidays Unit.

"This could one of the many things someone on an exchange to Scotland could experience and bring back to NSW.

"I've had a brilliant reception here, and to return the favour, we are dead keen on giving someone from Forests NSW the opportunity to travel and work in Scotland," Chris said.

– Sarah Chester Public Affairs & Media, Albury



Above right: Chris Nixon with the 2006 Scottish Forest Strategy. Photo by Sarah Chester  
Above: Carvisdale Castle in Dornoch District, Scotland. Photo courtesy UK Forestry Commission

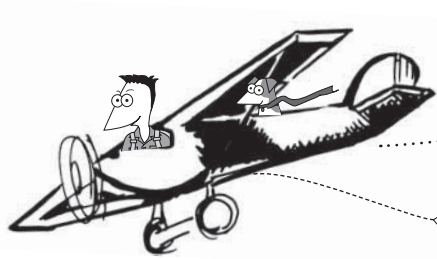
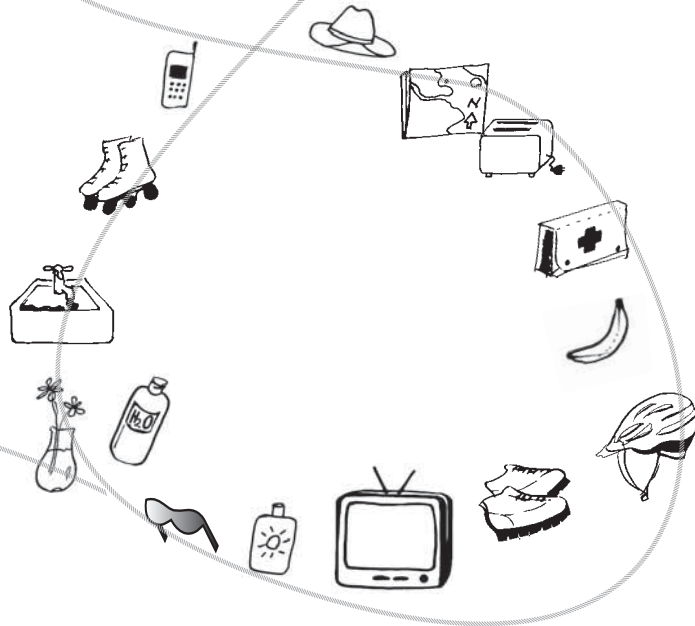
Centre: The iconic melancholy thistle. Photo by Isobel Cameron/UK Forestry Commission  
Above: Dornoch Forest District, Scotland, where Chris managed 45 000 hectares of pine and spruce plantation. Photo by Colin Leslie





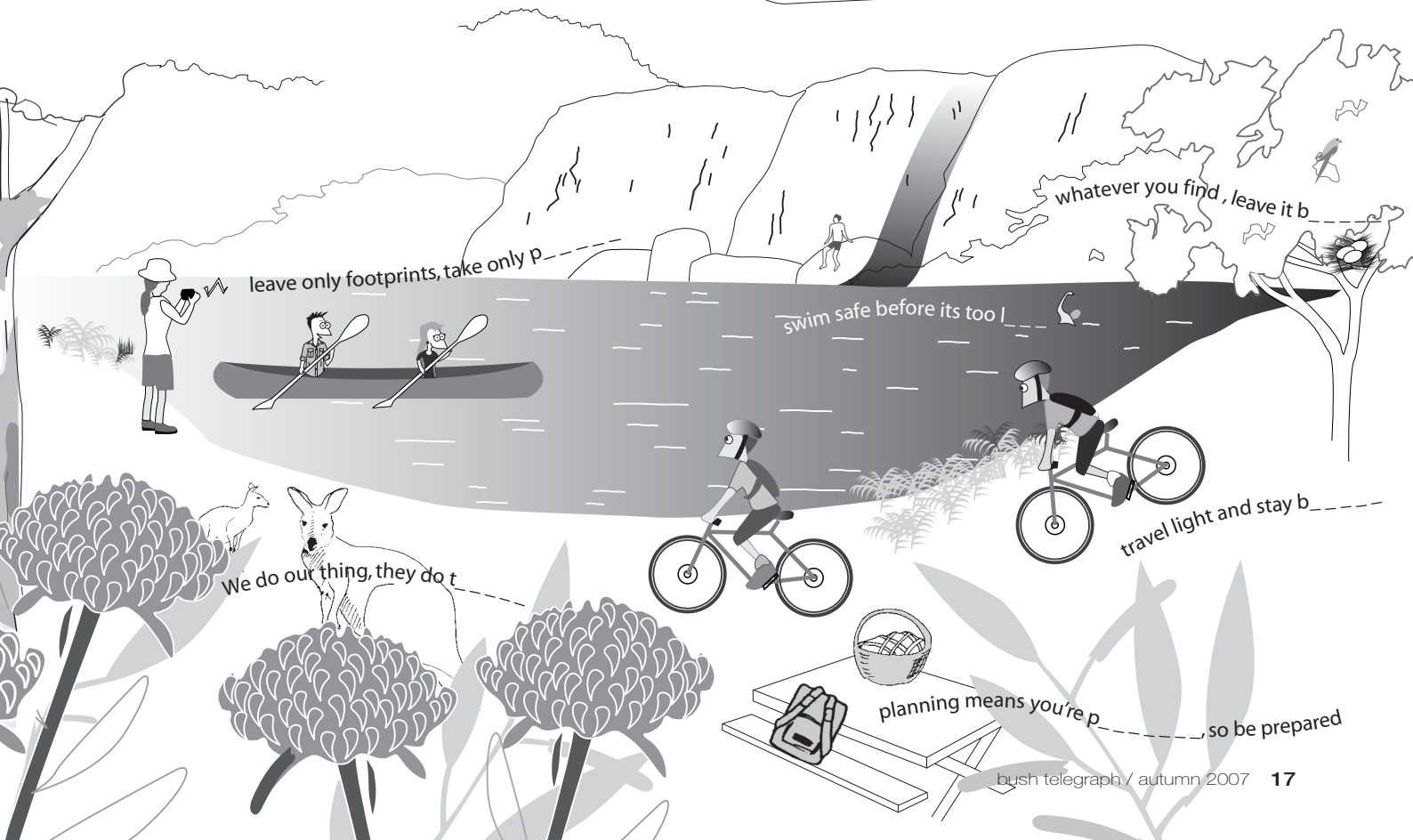
### 3 Get Scribbly ready to ride!

Circle the things Scribbly will need as he goes for a mountain bike ride through the forest.



### 4 Help Serge complete the forest mottos

Fill in the missing letters of the forest mottos. For hints go to [www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/forests](http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/forests)



leave only footprints, take only p

whatever you find, leave it b

swim safe before its too l

We do our thing, they do t

travel light and stay b

planning means you're p so be prepared



## North coast teachers tour forest

Thirteen teachers from the New South Wales north coast got a firsthand look at forest management practices on a hosted tour last December.

A key professional development opportunity offered by Forests NSW for teachers and environmental educators, the trip focused on forest management for timber production and other values.

Tour organiser, Forests NSW education officer, Gerard Nolan, said participants found the two-day trip informative, particularly sessions with community liaison forester, David Wilson.

According to David, the teachers were intrigued by Forests NSW ecology survey system, where ecologists visit proposed harvesting areas up to 18 months before harvesting to assess a range of threatened species.

"These surveys include calls for bats, surveys for koalas, quolls and owls that require areas to be set aside from harvest to protect them or their habitat," David said.

"They also heard about different silviculture methods. Most people don't realise that in north coast native forests, there are just two harvest methods: single tree selection, where the forest is disturbed as little as possible to extract trees, and Australian group selection, where areas up to a quarter of a hectare are opened up to allow the area to regenerate."

Gerard Nolan said the teachers on the trip gained information applicable to their subject areas that included senior science and biology, senior geography and primary Human Society and Its Environment (HSIE) syllabus.

"Gaining contemporary information with the opportunity to ask frank questions face-to-face is a real bonus," he said.

Gerard said that free development tours for educators are planned for 2007, with details available at [www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/forests](http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/forests) or Ph: (02) 9872 0105.

– **Howard Spencer** Public Affairs & Media, Coffs Harbour

Coffs Harbour-based community liaison forester, David Wilson, presents to teachers on a hosted tour in December 2006. *Photo by Howard Spencer*

## 'In the Living Forest' on-line for teachers

Teachers of Industrial Technology can now obtain a free copy of 'In the Living Forest'.

The book explores forest management in Australia and gives readers a snapshot of today's modern timber industry committed to innovation, efficiency and growth.

With 76 articles covering topics as diverse as cultural heritage management, the science informing forest management, economic growth, investment and social development, the book is a valuable resource for a range of teachers.

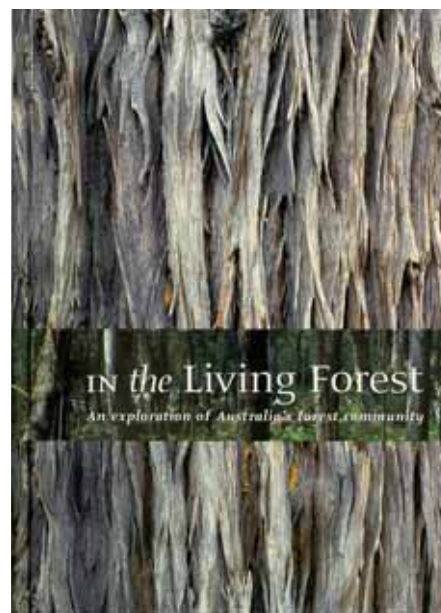
A number of articles contained in the book have been reviewed by the Curriculum K-12 Directorate of NSW Department of Education and Training and mapped to the Industrial Technology stage 5 and stage 6 syllabuses.

To read these article reviews or download an order form to secure a copy of 'In the Living Forest' visit Forests NSW education webpages at [www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/forests](http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/forests)

Alternatively, 'In the Living Forest' can be purchased from Forests NSW Information Centre for \$39.95 plus \$5.00 postage and handling. Ph: 1300 655 687 or 02 9871 3377.

– **Carmen Perry** Communications, Maitland

Selected articles from 'In the Living Forest' have been reviewed by teachers and placed on Forests NSW website.



# A big sense of community spirit

The township of Tumbarumba may be small but its sense of community spirit is big, according to Forests NSW forester Chris Rhynehart, who this year received an Australia Day award for his contribution to sport.

For the past ten years, Chris has helped local kids with cricket, athletics and football.

"I've really enjoyed it. I have four children of my own, and it's a way of helping them while also putting something back into the community," he said.

Chris's 16-year-old son Bernard is also experiencing some community spirit of his own. Along with 16 other senior students from Tumbarumba High, he will be walking the Kokoda Trail in April on a trip organised by the local Rotary Club.

Rotarians Bruce Wright and Dave Bennett, who work for Hyne and Son, came up with the idea to help broaden the teenagers' experiences.

Bruce said Hyne and Son, one of Forests NSW largest customers, had been supportive with four students working at its Tumbarumba mill during their holidays to raise money for the trip.

"The students have been busy fundraising to get to Papua New Guinea and donations from local businesses and individuals have been amazing," he said.

"As well as raising money, they have to find time to get fit. I can see them really developing mentally and getting fitter.

"One child lost around 15 kilos alone before Christmas. Some of the parents are coming along too to get fit and lose weight. These are spin-offs we did not see coming."

– Sarah Chester Public Affairs & Media, Albury

Forests NSW operations and sales forester, Chris Rhynehart, with son Bernard after receiving his local Australia Day Award. Photo courtesy Chris Rhynehart



## hot off the press

– our latest publications

### Project Sheet

Free with this issue of *Bush Telegraph* is a school project sheet. Designed to give students an overview of forest management in NSW, the sheet contains pictures and captions relating to many aspects of Forests NSW management including wildlife, timber harvesting, products and recreation. Additional copies are available from Forests NSW Information Centre Ph: 1300 655 687.

### Sticker

A bright sticker suited for car bumpers, folders and more.



### Tattoos

A series of temporary tattoos for children, featuring Forests NSW web characters Serge, Kim, Flo and Scribbly.

Copies of Forests NSW publications are available from Forests NSW offices across NSW. To locate your nearest office or to order publications call 1300 655 687, fax (02) 9872 6447 or email [cumberland@sf.nsw.gov.au](mailto:cumberland@sf.nsw.gov.au)

## March – May 2007 events

- 10-11 March **Polaris Mountain Bike Challenge** A two-day overnight event combining mountain biking with navigation, bush skills and touring [www.wildhorizons.com.au/challenge/index.htm](http://www.wildhorizons.com.au/challenge/index.htm)
- 21 March **World Forestry Day** Celebrating the value of forests and forestry to the community  
Forests NSW Information Centre Ph: (02) 9871 3377 or 1300 655 687
- April-July **Cumberland State Forest activity program**  
A fabulous range of activities for children and adults  
Cumberland State Forest Ph: (02) 9871 3377 or 1300 655 687
- 5-18 April **Sydney Royal Easter Show** Get an insight into agriculture, be amazed at the strength of the axemen and take a few rides. Don't forget to visit NSW DPI's display [www.eastershow.com.au](http://www.eastershow.com.au)
- 19-20 April **Educators field trip** A free two-day tour near Bathurst, designed to inform educators about sustainable management of softwood plantations. Further dates later in 2007 Bookings and details call Forests NSW education officer Ph: (02) 9871 0050
- 4-6 May **Tocal Field Days** A fantastic event in the Hunter promoting environmentally-friendly farming. Water is the 2007 theme – how to save it, water quality, habitat protection and rivers [www.tocalfielddays.com](http://www.tocalfielddays.com)



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T **02 6391 3100** head office **1300 655 687** forests

T **1300 550 474** fisheries **1300 736 122** minerals

T **1800 808 095** agriculture

Don't forget to call in to NSW Department of Primary Industries stand at the 2007 Sydney Royal Easter Show 5-18 April, Sydney Olympic Park. Be one of the million show goers to enjoy agricultural displays, woodchopping, street performances, live music and so much more! [www.eastershow.com.au](http://www.eastershow.com.au)