



Promoting Plantation Forestry

Tree Plantations Australia (TPA) is hosting the Plantations and Water Roundtable to discuss the issues raised in regards to plantations within the National Water Initiative (NWI). This Roundtable will provide the various sectors of the industry with the opportunity to commence the process of defining a number of key terms in the NWI and to identify the potential benefits that could be derived where trees improve water quality.

About TPA

TPA is an industry association established in November 2004 and is affiliated with the National Association of Forest Industries (NAFI). TPA is based at Forest Industries House, in the Canberra suburb of Deakin.

Key issues and activities for TPA

Tree plantations provide economic, social and environmental benefits to the communities in which they are established, including increasing economic activity, improving social health, and environmental benefits such as increasing biodiversity, salinity mitigation and carbon sequestration. However, while local communities are increasingly interested in the relationship between tree plantations and the landscapes in which they are established, they have expressed concerns at the changing land use patterns associated with plantation forestry.

Of current interest to local communities and plantation growers are the uncertain impacts that an increasing plantation estate may have on water availability, and the perception that agricultural chemical use by plantation managers is excessive and/or poorly regulated.

By convening the Plantations and Water Roundtable TPA is helping to deliver an industry response to the NWI. To address the community concerns over plantation chemical use, TPA is working with the APVMA (the chemical use regulator) and AvCare (the national association for crop protection and animal health) to promote the best management and safe working practices of the sector.

For plantation growers, a number of issues are beginning to impact upon their businesses and have the potential to affect the social and economic wellbeing of rural and regional communities. These include finding and keeping skilled staff (an issue that is affecting many industries in rural and regional Australia) and the burden that excessive government legislation and regulation can have on new or continued investment in plantations.

TPA is promoting the maintenance of the twelve month rule, to ensure that private investment plantations can continue; and is currently developing options for investment in long-rotation crops. Long term investment structures (including taxation reform) are necessary to ensure that the plantation sector is able to meet the future demand for plantation-grown solid timber products.

TPA is striving to ensure that Australia's Governments recognise the importance and capacity of the Australian tree plantation sector for providing jobs and investment in our regional communities, addressing a number of environmental problems and reducing the national trade deficit in forest products