



THE AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY

Intensively managed planted forests: starting points for dialogue

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Plantation forests: a C20 phenomenon



Tasmanian Forestry Association, 1922:

“to promote ... the planting of the great waste areas of Tasmania with suitable exotic conifers ...
... by the establishment of forest plantations, homes or colleges
in which destitute and waif boys of the Empire may find their place, their manhood and their citizenship in planting the waste and leaving a heritage of enormous value to those who came after.”



C20: creation of plantation forest resources (c. 190 M ha), industries & economies

c. 15% PF “intensively managed”
(production threshold: 14m³/ha/yr)

- the answer to a maiden's prayer

Plantations divide community – report

By KAREN COOPER

FARMING communities targeted for the purchase of land for pine plantations are angry and frustrated by the Conservation, Forests and Lands Department's apparent insensitivity. This is a finding of an independent consultant's report conducted by Melbourne University's Centre for Farm Planning and Land Management into the communities affected by pine plantations in Victoria.

The report, based on submissions from 95 individuals and 53 rural organisations plus discussions with councils and farming communities, was made to the Steering Committee of the State Plantations Impact Study this week. The situation of "diminished confidence" in CFL "demanded urgent attention," the report claimed.

The report said the plantation's programs had "divided communities."

The Tallangatta Valley in the north-east was "split between people who were hostile to the Government program and the few who sup-

ported it or wanted to sell and had been prevented from doing so." Farmers who did not wish to sell their farms to CFL "experienced a sense of uncertainty and fear," the report said.

"They do not know whether to invest in their farms by improving pastures and planting trees because of the uncertain future."

Because of the plantations, it is claimed that the demand for land will decline and that land prices will drop.

A community proposal from Rose River and Dandenong residents aimed at allowing the Government to establish a large proportion of its plantation area while still enabling the community to survive, did not get a "meaningful response."

"Twenty-seven submissions from Shires, farmers and concerned citizens from the Upper Murray to Morwell in the Latrobe Valley suggested that the purchase of farms for plantations had already caused a population decline."

"This had led to a reduction in local economic activity and rural

community services such as schools, libraries, transport, health services, mail deliveries and fire protection."

The report highlighted the chain reaction which occurred following the sale of a single farm, or even just the fear of a sale.

"People will leave the community because they fear they will be surrounded by softwood plantations and because they believe in the domino theory."

The report said farming families felt alienated because they tended to find out about the CFL land purchase and the change in land use after the event.

"They also felt resentment towards CFL for not having to pay rates or stamp duty and for not controlling weed infestations which downgrade neighbouring properties."

Recommendations were made to the Steering Committee regarding land purchase and management and community education and awareness, explaining the rationale and benefits of the State Plantation Program.

They called on CFL to

publish maps in each plantation management area classifying land according to its plantation potential, contri-

bute of rates and stamp duty by payment into a trust account and promote an understanding of and interest in private forestry throughout rural communities.

The report also suggested plantation share-farming was a "better alternative" to Government land purchases because it kept farmers farming in the area and maintained communities.

It suggested a series of workshops on share-farming be developed to encourage more flexibility in terms of farmer cash flows, recognition of existing farm woodlots,

and flexibility of plantation design to better complement farm management.

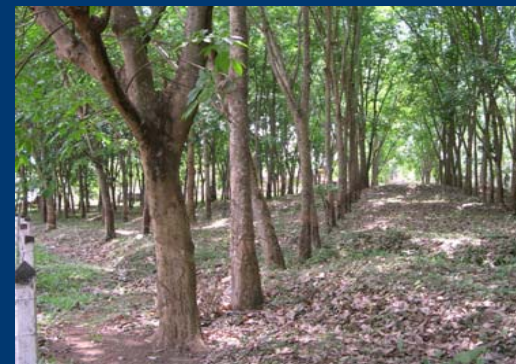
A recommendation supported the establishment of plantation management areas to show how plantations could best be planned and integrated into farming systems to complement agricultural and forestry production and enhance environmental values.



- environmentally and socially destructive & disadvantageous

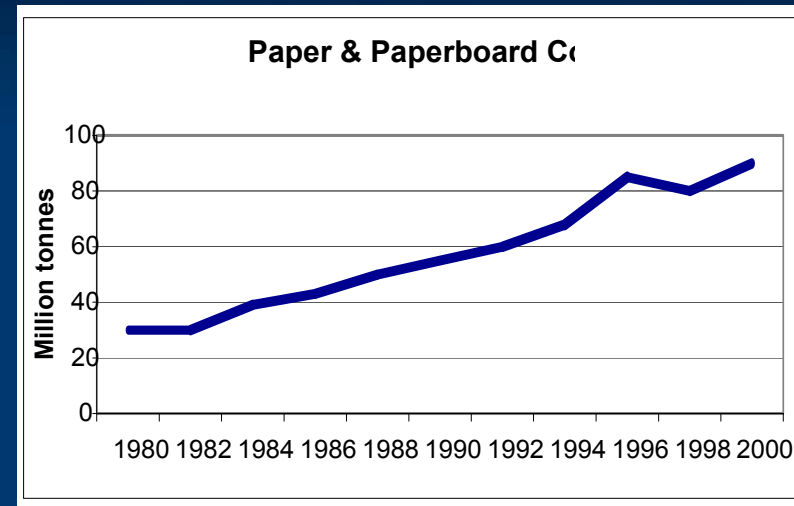
IMPF typology

- 1st generation, 13M ha:
longer rotation,
slower growing,
solid wood + fibre
- 2nd generation, 11+M ha:
shorter rotation,
faster growing,
wood fibre
- 3rd generation, 25+M ha:
tropical estate crops - NTFP;
significant potential,
wood & fibre



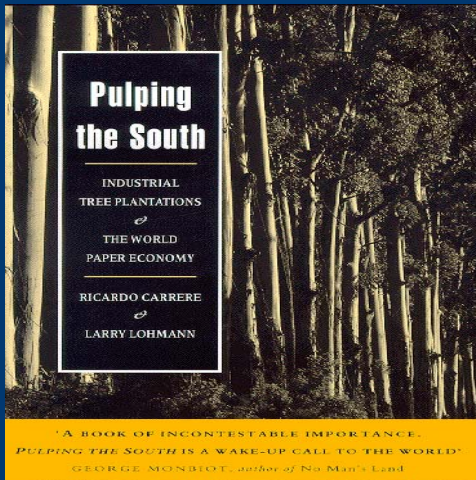
IMPF: key contexts

- increasing:
 - demand
 - trade
 - advantage
 - concentration
- private-sector led;
government-facilitated;
scope for smallholders
- both patient capital
& capital-intensive elements;
returns on investment



IMPF: key contexts

- Opposition to as well as support for IMPF expansion at a range of scales, for a variety of reasons ...



CONTROVERSY OVER EUCALYPTUS A FACT OR FICTION?

A TOWER OF HOPE

mpm FOREST RESEARCH WING HAS CONDUCTED A THOROUGH STUDY ON THE CONTROVERSIAL ASPECTS OF EUCALYPTUS. THE INTERIM RESULTS ARE BEFORE YOU.

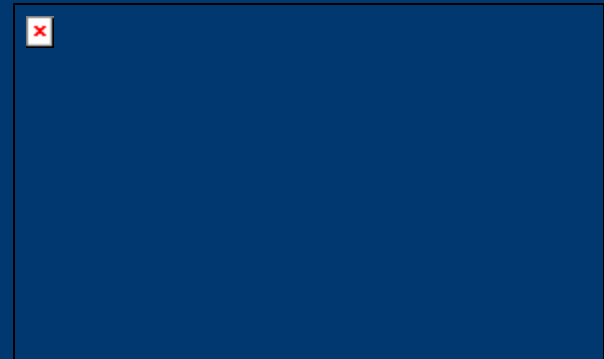
I IS IT CONSUMING MORE WATER THAN ANY OTHER SPECIES? REFER THE TABLE BELOW

SPECIES	Transpiration rate (ml/area in 24 hr)
1. Eucalyptus hybrid	30000
2. Athyriophobus cadamba	2000
3. Teakum grandis	2000000
4. Gmelina arborea	300

II IS IT THAT NO OTHER SPECIES GROWS BENEATH IT? SEE THE PHOTOGRAPHS.

III CAN YOU NOT GROW AGRICULTURAL CROPS BENEATH IT? SEE THE PHOTOGRAPHS.

IV DOES IT DEplete THE WATER TABLE? SEE THE GRAPHS INDICATING LEVEL OF SOIL MOISTURE IN A DEPTH OF 2' IN BOTH EUCALYPTUS AND NATURAL FORESTS.



The IMPF discourse

- “Discourse” ⇒ ideologies, values,
power & knowledge relations
- Participants:
 - proponents/ beneficiaries
those focused on various benefits:
(companies, communities, employees, governments, growers ...)
 - opponents/ ‘disadvantaged’
those focused on actual or potential costs:
(competing industries, communities, neighbours, NGOs/CBOs ...)
 - commentators
(academics, NGOs ...)
 - many participants’ contributions shouldn’t be stereotyped ...;
positions are complex & caveated ...
- Discourse can both enlighten & obscure ...

The IMPF discourse: focus #1

Economic benefits & costs

- undoubted economic benefit/ advantage in particular circumstances, but some caveats
 - few comprehensive regional economic studies where IMPF are important
 - analyses often confounded & often limited
- aggregate economic benefits associated 1^o with processing, though benefits to farm enterprise may be significant
- environmental services' economic potential mostly unrealised
- prices depressed by illegal trade

The IMPF discourse: focus #2 Environmental benefits & costs

- the relationship between IMPF & natural forests:
IMPF as a necessary but insufficient condition for conservation?
- biodiversity: at landscape, local & stand scales:
many + possible through good design at various scales,
& good management practices (but not business-as-usual)
- a range of genetic risk issues:
manageable with good practice?
- water yield & quality:
significant impacts (+/-), though particular expression;
knowledge base often inadequate, & playing field not level ...
- soils:
mostly but not always manageable with good practice
- carbon sinks:
yes, but only modest potential

The IMPF discourse: focus #3

Social benefits & costs

- judgements are value- & context-dependent:
though some ethical & moral bottomlines?
- partly dependent on economic and environmental impacts:
some may be judged “unacceptable”
- strongly dependent on distribution of benefits & costs:
advantaged & disadvantaged to varying degrees;
political as well as operational dimensions
- often confounded by broader social change processes:
IMPF as manifestation rather than cause
- may also be confounded by individual/ cultural preference

- there are cases where IMPF seems to be “good”,
& others where it seems to be “bad”

The IMPF discourse: moving forward

- Dimensions have to be integrated:
the role of politics (→ political economy, decision processes ...)
- IMPF neither inherently good nor bad:
but technologies for meeting human needs/ wants, with +/-
- IMPF proponents can be leaders or laggards:
examples of both
- Recognition of alternative values, & complexity, necessary:
discourse → dialogue
- Most participants offer qualified support for IMPF,
based on broad interpretation of sustainability:
- *eg* WWF 2002:
maintenance of HCVF; multifunctional forest landscapes;
good environmental management; respect for peoples' rights;
positive social impacts; proficient regulatory & governance frameworks

Acknowledgements

- Much of your work
- Canberra colleagues:
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Jacki Schirmer
- New frontiers,
exemplifying potential

