



BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT BRANCH

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Media Release

New market for pines

27 March 2007

Harvesting has started on thinning Albany's radiata pine plantings following an agreement between the Forest Products Commission and Pentarch Holdings Ltd.

Finding a market for these small logs means the future is looking good for radiata pine sawlogs according to Forest Products Commission General Manager Dr Paul Biggs.

Over the next four years, approximately 3,500 hectares of radiata pines, planted between 1987-1992, will be thinned providing employment opportunities as well as an improved commodity for participating farmers.

"It has been difficult finding a market for the thinnings but now that we have, the poorer trees can be removed enabling the remainder to grow quickly and produce higher priced sawlogs," Dr Biggs said.

"The farmers who entered the scheme, which was ahead of its time and the precursor to the bluegum investment wave, will now see an increase in the value of their crop share.

"It has been a difficult wait for the farmers and we appreciate the patience they have shown. A second thinning of older stands will start once the first is completed bringing plantations on track with original silvicultural plans.

"The community will also benefit. Approximately 12 people will be directly employed by FPC contractors involved in the harvesting and carting of the logs to the port. In addition, contractors will be involved in tree marking and roading to allow access for the truck," he said.

Pentarch will also be engaging contractors to unload the logs at the port and onto the ship. Local businesses will benefit from the extra income that will be generated from the operation.

Pentarch will begin shipping the resource in May to overseas markets. The size of the resource was too small for a local processing plant to be set up.

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