



MEDIA RELEASE

(27th October 2006)

Plantations are a legitimate land use that the community needs to supply its timber demands.

Mr Gary Featherston, National Media spokesperson for the Institute of Foresters Australia has welcomed the debate on trees and water but asked that science and facts be used by both sides of the argument. In responding to the article in last Sunday's Age, Gary said.

Just because water is currently scarce and therefore highly valued doesn't mean that we should stop tree planting.

Sustainable landscapes cannot be generated by trying to fix one issue at a time. Holistic, whole of life cycle and triple bottom line approaches are necessary, he said.

All trees intercept and use rainfall at rates generally greater than grassland. If anyone wants to charge plantations for the rainfall they use then they will also have to charge Landcare plantings and native forest that also intercept more rainfall than grasslands. The charge would have to apply to all the trees in the landscape including farmer's windbreaks and shelter belts.

Plantations occupy less than 1% of Victoria, hardly massive.

Plantation companies are subject to the same tax laws as all other businesses, hardly lucrative tax breaks.

Plantations provide natural resource benefits, use fewer chemicals than agriculture and sequester carbon, hardly environmentally damaging.

Forested catchments are the preferred choice for domestic water supplies because the benefits of high water quality outweigh the cost of the additional water used by the trees. The most efficient water catchment is concrete and that's what we will end up with if you value water above all else and don't attempt to create sustainable landscapes, Mr Featherston concluded.

The Institute of Foresters of Australia Inc. has represented the forestry profession since 1935. Its 1302 members are engaged in forest management and conservation in Australia. The Institute is strongly committed to the principles of sustainable forest management and the processes and practices which translate these principles into outcomes.

The membership represents all segments of the forestry profession, including public and private practitioners engaged in many aspects of forestry, plantation management, nature conservation, resource and land management, research, administration and education.

Contacts:

Mark Poynter, Victorian Media Liaison Officer, ph. 9855 9766 /0415 846 819

Gary Featherston, Chairman, IFA Victorian Division, ph. 9470 3391 /0428 408 144