



## **Plantations continue to grow**

A new study has found the Australian plantation timber industry increased in size by over 50,000 hectares last year.

Addressing the final in a series of investment workshops in Hobart today, Australian Forestry and Conservation Minister, Senator Ian Macdonald, said the 2005 *National Plantations Inventory* update proves that investment in new plantations continues to be attractive.

“The study revealed about 27 per cent more new plantations were established in 2004, compared to 2003,” Senator Macdonald said.

“This is good news for the timber industry, investors and the environment.

“We now have over 1.7 million hectares of plantations.

“Over 1 million hectares of the total estate are softwood species. It has taken 128 years to get to this impressive achievement, but it is a benchmark that shows how important plantation timber is to our country.”

Senator Macdonald said plantation timber was a great way of reducing Australia’s \$1.8 billion trade deficit in forest and wood products.

“The genuine conservationists support the push to increase plantation timber, as they realise it reduces our reliance on imported timber from forests that are not logged sustainably,” Senator Macdonald said.

“Australia also has a natural geographical advantage for trade within the Asia-Pacific region, which augurs well for the future.”

Senator Macdonald said the industry should be proud of the contribution it had made through the investment workshops that have been held over the past two-and-a-half years.

DAFF05/62M

29 April 2005

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## **Media Release**