



Media Release

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**SOUTHERN WOOD INDUSTRY LAUNCHES
JOURNALISM AWARD**

The Southern Wood Council (SWC) is launching the inaugural Southern Wood Council (SWC) Journalism Excellence award.

SWC Chairman Matt Hitchings said southern forestry companies, wood manufacturing and processing companies, port companies and councils decided it was time to promote the positive features of the industry.

“We know our industry has some good stories to tell and we want to reward journalists who dig a bit deeper to find out what makes the southern wood industry an exciting and vibrant sector.

“Our wood products are being exported throughout the world. We maintain our competitive edge by investing heavily in training initiatives and technology and research.

“We have been leaders in the development of alcohol and drug free workplace policies for the region and have led the way in electricity and energy saving initiatives.

”Our innovative thinking has also seen us take the lead on some National forestry initiatives as well.” Mr Hitchings said.

The Council is committed to fostering public support and understanding of the industry and has held a number of Forestry Open Days to allow the public to see the industry first hand.

Mr Hitchings said the Council has also commissioned an Economic Impact Assessment of the Southern wood industry, which will be released in the next month.

“We are expecting the report will show the industry’s potential and the large part it plays in the southern economy.

““The wood industry plays a big part in the southern economy and we are confident the journalism prize will act as an incentive for journalists to produce some well researched articles about our dynamic industry, Mr Hitchings said.

Key Facts

- The closing date for entries will be July 31 2005. Winners will be announced at a ceremony in August.
- Entry forms can be obtained by writing to the Southern Wood Council PO Box 904, Dunedin or emailing Tina Nixon on tina@cqr.co.nz
- First Prize will be \$1500 and a trophy and a runner up prize of \$500.
- The competition is open to all journalists but the stories must have a southern wood industry focus and must have been printed, published or broadcast between 1st July 2004 and 31 July 2005.
- The Southern Wood council members include all major forestry companies, saw mills and wood processors, local body council representatives and port authorities.
- The industry employs 2443 people in the southern region (Southland, Otago, and South Canterbury)
- There is an estimated 242,341 ha of planted production forests in the southern region.
- Further information on the region's forestry industry and the Southern Wood Council can be found on www.southernwoodcouncil.co.nz

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