



**Media release from the Southern Wood Council  
October, 2007**

## **SOUTHERN FORESTS GROWING**

**Over 3.6 million radiata pine and Douglas fir seedlings were planted in Otago and Southland's major forests over the past year.**

The seedlings were restocking the existing large commercial forests across Otago and Southland, as part of the routine cycle of sustainable forestry practiced by forest owners in replacing harvested trees.

Between them, six of the region's major forest owners - Matariki, Ernslaw One, Wenita, City Forests, SouthWood Export and Trinity Foundation (managed by PF Olsen & Co) planted around 3,658,380 seedlings over 3091 hectares. These forests represent around half of the total forestry land in Otago and Southland.

The amount of planting in Otago and Southland compares favorably with what is being undertaken in commercial forests elsewhere in New Zealand at present.

Provisional MAF figures show total replanting in forests throughout New Zealand was 26,000 hectares. The national trend shows replanting has slowed after 2005 following significant forestry development in the 1990's, due to reduced harvest levels and deforestation.

"In this current environment the sustainable replanting programme in Otago and Southland forests is significant, given the increasing level conversion to other land uses occurring elsewhere in New Zealand," Wenita Forest Products Limited Chief Executive Officer Rodger Hancock noted.

In the greater Dunedin area, 945,380 radiata pine and Douglas fir seedlings were planted in Wenita's Berwick Forest and in its Otago Coast group of forests, and 400,000 radiata pine seedlings in City Forest plantations.

This continuous cycle of growing, harvesting, using and replanting is providing the region with a valuable positive carbon balance as well as the obvious economic spin-offs that the region's substantial log production and wood processing sector offer," City Forests Limited Chief Executive Grant Dodson pointed out. "It all adds up to a sizeable resource for Otago and Southland."

“Having a strong replanting programme does strengthen the region’s ability to address climate change, and to mitigate carbon emissions by absorbing (sequestering) carbon to meet New Zealand’s Kyoto protocol obligations.”

The planted production forests in the region are dominated by Radiata pine, but Douglas fir is now a significant and growing proportion (26.96 percent) of the forest resource, much more than in other New Zealand regions. There is also a higher proportion of Eucalyptus plantations (5.26% of the total forest estate), mainly in Southland. Both species are proving hardy in Otago and Southland’s climate and soil conditions.

#### **Otago and Southland wood supply region, total forest hectares 2006**

Waitaki District	19 926 ha
Queenstown-Lakes District	714 ha
Central Otago District	8 107 ha
Dunedin City	15 938 ha
Clutha District	83 157 ha
Southland District	82 741 ha
Gore District	4 420 ha
Invercargill City	659 ha

#### **Trends**

Two decades of forestry development and replanting harvested forest areas within the commercial forests has produced a significant resource for Otago and Southland; Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry figures showing forest area in Otago and Southland has doubled in just over 20 years.

There are now 215,662 hectares in total of commercial forests south of the Waitaki, which is 12 percent of New Zealand’s total forestry area.

As a comparison, there were only around 128,000 hectares of commercial forest in Otago and Southland in 1991.

A key trend also is the amount of Douglas fir being planted; from 9000 hectares to over 50,000 in only 16 years.

*The Southern Wood Council Inc was set up in 2001 to promote, encourage and coordinate the sustainable economic development of the forest products industry in Otago and Southland. One of a few truly independent groups of its type in New Zealand, it includes all the major forest owners within the region (ownership or management of over 140,000 hectares of production forests with an annual harvest of over 1.2 million m<sup>3</sup> of wood), the larger wood processing and manufacturing companies, the port authorities, and each of the three economic development agencies from local councils.*

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