

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

**For immediate release**

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### **Regrowing commercial opportunities in East Gippsland**

After a year of extensive collaborative research VicForests, in conjunction with the Forest Wood Products Research and Development Council (FWPRDC) and the University of Tasmania's Timber Research Unit, have released a report on the impact of harvesting age on sawing, drying, and solid wood properties of key regrowth eucalypt species.

Due to its extensive and vigorous nature within East Gippsland, Silvertop Ash (*Eucalyptus sieberi*) regrowth was selected as the species of most interest and the one to better understand.

Samples investigated illustrated that processing small diameter Silvertop regrowth (less than 45 centimetres in diameter under bark) for the most part will produce large quantities of high feature grade material. It also showed that strength in small diameter regrowth is not significantly different to mature examples, although hardness was behind slightly.

"This research has been extremely helpful for VicForests to understand the wood qualities of regrowth Silvertop," commented VicForests Sales Manager, East Gippsland, Mick Theobald.

"It will allow us to make more informed decisions on how to manage a growing stand, when to harvest and importantly, what markets need to be pursued so as we can deliver the right products to the right consumer and in doing so, maximise the return on this valuable resource.

"It is clear that young Silvertop is not going to produce extremely clean boards free of defect and East Gippsland sawmillers have known this for a long time and have reacted positively," Mr Theobald said.

"Local sawmillers and allied industries continue to spend a huge amount of energy, time and money promoting a wood product that is different, where defects tell a story of each tree's forest life.

"Borer holes, fire scars, growth rings, branches, bumps and bruises are all a part of the life of a tree and consumers are maturing in their views on this. A defect can now be a talking point or a facet to ponder," Mr Theobald said.

Invaluable local support from South East Fibre Exports, together with contractor Malcolm Beveridge, and sawmill Fennings Bairnsdale made the research and development possible.

A copy of the research paper is available through the FWPRDC.

*VicForests is a State-owned business enterprise, responsible for the sustainable harvest and sale of timber from Victoria's State forests.*

**ENDS**

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