

# Forestry research in spotlight

## Scientists converge on city to explore advances in tree genetics



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PROMINENT forestry research scientists and industry representatives converged on Mount Gambier last week for a series of key meetings to canvass developments in the area of tree genetics.

More than 40 scientists and industry representatives attended the meetings held by the Southern Tree Breeding Association, which is the peak body of its kind in Australia.

Association general manager Tony McRae said the series of meetings and field tours were held as part of the national group's technical advisory committee.

He said the association - which was headquartered in Mount Gambier - was undertaking a major project to improve wood quality to boost profitability for the radiata sawmilling sector.

Dr McRae said the association was a national body that managed radiata pine and bluegum tree improvement programs and was funded by industry.

Fifteen companies from across Australia fund the body, including Green Triangle Forest Products, Auspine/Gunns and ForestrySA in the local region.

One of Australia's leading research geneticists Dr Richard Kerr, from PlantPlan Genetics, said a \$1.8m research project was underway to match tree genetics to the environment in a bid to improve wood quality.

He said he was using a genetic valuation tool, known as Treepplan, to select the "genetic winners" for radiata pine.

He explained the Green Triangle's soils were diverse and research was underway to improve the quality of the



**KEY RESEARCH:** Andrew Cameron of seedEnergy, Wolfgang Drexler of Green Triangle Forest Products and Dr Richard Kerr of PlantPlan Genetics discuss design of pine seed orchards near Mount Gambier.

**(The Green Triangle) is probably the best in the world for growing radiata pine - it is the benchmark worldwide**

Professor John Walker

wood to lift profitability for sawmillers.

"Higher quality grade timber equates to more money - we are always striving to achieve a higher grade," Dr Kerr said.

He said Green Triangle radiata pine was Australia's best and well ahead of imports.

"The Green Triangle is an icon when it comes to radiata pine," the scientist said during

his visit to Mount Gambier.

He said he enjoyed visiting timber regions so he was not just known as a university-based scientist.

Meanwhile, Professor John Walker - from the University of Canterbury in New Zealand - said the Green Triangle grew "top end" radiata pine.

"It is probably the best in the world for growing radiata pine - it is the benchmark worldwide," Prof Walker said.

Explaining research money had been poured into developing tree genetics that led to "straight and vigorous" trees, he said little had been done to improve wood quality.

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**A CLOSE-UP LOOK:** Eucalypt breeder David Pilbeam, from the Southern Tree Breeders Association in Bunbury, Western Australia, inspects buds on a bluegum.

## Star Watch



WITH *Sarah Kulkens*

### ARIES: (March 21 - April 20)

Lucky Colour: White  
Lucky Day: Tuesday  
Racing Numbers: 1.6.5.2  
Lotto Numbers: 2.5.12.26.36.39  
Do not let other people complicate your life and give you extra hassles. Not a good time to give advice, without being asked. Moving or travelling will be very much on the agenda.



### TAURUS: (April 21 - May 20)

Lucky Colour: Orange  
Lucky Day: Friday  
Racing Numbers: 2.6.8.5  
Lotto Numbers: 1.15.24.40.22.8  
Try to sort out your career matters without too many problems or your ideas might not be so welcome after all. Someone could be instrumental in increasing your income.



### GEMINI: (May 21 - June 21)

Lucky Colour: Green  
Lucky Day: Thursday  
Racing Numbers: 1.3.5.9  
Lotto Numbers: 1.15.26.34.40.33  
Give a sympathetic ear to someone but do not tell them what to do, sometimes it is the wisest thing to do. If planning changes in your career matters, best to keep quiet about it until well on the way.



### CANCER: (June 22 - July 22)

Lucky Colour: Blue  
Lucky Day: Wednesday  
Racing Numbers: 2.3.5.6  
Lotto Numbers: 1.15.26.34.42.2  
If in need of advice, go to the professionals, well meaning people do not always know what they are talking about. A very good chance of a business venture, with a good opportunity to succeed.



### LEO: (July 23 - August 22)

Lucky Colour: Cream  
Lucky Day: Monday  
Racing Numbers: 1.6.9.8  
Lotto Numbers: 9.8.15.45.32.6  
Very good period for romance and love affairs but keep them separate from working life or there could be complications. Someone would like to hear from you in the near future.



### VIRGO: (August 23 - September 23)

Lucky Colour: Violet  
Lucky Day: Tuesday  
Racing Numbers: 5.6.2.3  
Lotto Numbers: 2.15.26.34.40.5  
Someone from your past could bring some luck to you and also make a few changes to your future. Problems you have been worrying about should be solved very quickly.



### LIBRA: (September 24 - October 23)

Lucky Colour: Green  
Lucky Day: Monday  
Racing Numbers: 5.6.2.3.  
Lotto Numbers: 5.12.23.36.39.4.  
Some big changes that should be taken up, at the first opportunity, to make a good profit. Also a good time to sort out your love life and friendship matters now.



### SCORPIO: (October 24 - November 22)

Lucky Colour: Silver  
Lucky Day: Sunday  
Racing Numbers: 2.3.5.6  
Lotto Numbers: 2.12.26.35.40.33  
Some slight problem in your travel plans should work out to your advantage and make you more happy than you have been for some time. Romance is in the air and good prospects for singles.



### SAGITTARIUS: (November 23 - December 20)

Lucky Colour: Peach  
Lucky Day: Saturday  
Racing Numbers: 4.6.8.9  
Lotto Numbers: 8.15.9.6.21.33  
Relationship matters should be much better during this period and many singles could be planning marriages and engagements. Something you did in the past should start to pay dividends.



### CAPRICORN: (December 21 - January 19)

Lucky Colour: White  
Lucky Day: Friday  
Racing Numbers: 2.3.5.8  
Lotto Numbers: 2.15.26.34.40.11  
Good news and some very good luck will boost your chances in the financial matters a lot. People are looking for your company and romantic indications are very strong also.



### AQUARIUS: (January 20 - February 19)

Lucky Colour: Blue  
Lucky Day: Wednesday  
Racing Numbers: 8.9.5.2  
Lotto Numbers: 8.15.29.34.40.11  
Not a good period for confidences, keep your secrets to yourself just now. Also, a time for being careful on the roads, and near machinery. Some luck with a person born in June.



### PISCES: (February 20 - March 20)

Lucky Colour: Blue  
Lucky Day: Tuesday  
Racing Numbers: 2.6.5.4  
Lotto Numbers: 5.12.24.45.40.33  
If you are sure that things at home are ok, you can indulge a little outside, but make sure it does not expand your waist line. Financial matters should be moving towards a good conclusion.



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## Coastal centre revamp plan

GLENELG Shire Council will create a future vision for Portland's civic precinct after Victorian Government funding was announced last week.

Member for the South West Coast Denis Napthine visited Portland for the funding announcement, granting \$30,000 towards the Portland Civic Precinct Masterplan initiative.

The project will help the council determine priorities and maximise usability of community spaces within central Portland, with the aim to create a vibrant precinct that will improve connectivity to the central business district and foreshore and

improve community, cultural, tourism and business opportunities.

Estimated total cost of the project is \$50,000, with council to provide the balance of the funds required.

"The Portland Civic Precinct Masterplan will assist council to address issues including usability, connectivity, safety and visual appeal and to create a civic precinct that will attract visitors to the area," Glenelg Shire Mayor Gilbert Wilson said.

The Portland Civic Precinct Masterplan is expected to be completed by August 2013.



**THINKTANK:** Dr Greg Dutkowski of PlantPlan Genetics in Hobart, Ken Nethercott of Auspine Mount Gambier, Wayne Smith of Arborgen New Zealand and Dr Milos Ivkovic of the CSIRO in Canberra enjoyed sharing research and knowledge in the field in Mount Gambier.

## Help cut out hunger in South Australia

Foodbank is an independent South Australian not for profit association that sources donations of food and groceries from the food industry for distribution to welfare agencies.

We put over 2.2 million meals a year on the tables of hungry people, many of them elderly and children.



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An Australia Without Hunger  
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As times get tougher, we need your help. Every dollar we receive is invested in ongoing programs to buy needed foods. Your donation or bequest will continue to generate food long after we are all gone.

Foodbank Mt Gambier branch services the Limestone Coast and Western Victoria region.

To donate visit [www.fbsa.org.au](http://www.fbsa.org.au)

## Research challenge

### Scientists get back to root of timber profits

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"The wood quality inside the tree hasn't improved in 100 years," said the professor, who explained this was a massive task given felled trees were needed to conduct research.

Green Triangle Forest Products technical forester Wolfgang Drexler - who was based in Mount Gambier - said the technical advisory committee met regularly and brought industry representatives and tree breeders together.

He said the committee's aim was to promote and develop new breeding programs to improve wood quality and tree growth.

Mr Drexler said wood improvement was important because sawmillers needed to convert trees into "saleable products".

He said Green Triangle Forest Products grew structural timber that was sold into Carter Holt Harvey mills.

Mr Drexler said the company had 23,000 hectares of radiata pine that was spread across the South East and Western Victoria.

While explaining the Green Triangle had high quality timber, he said organisations such as ForestrySA had worked over a long period of time to improve tree quality.

"A lot of money and science and research has gone into growing better trees," Mr Drexler said.



**TREE EXPERT:** Dr Harry Wu, a forestry genetics professor with the SLU University in Sweden, inspects inbred trees in a CSIRO research experiment in Mount Gambier.



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