

# Projects stem from Federal funds

## Tree breeding association receives \$1.6m in government support

JOCELYN NICKELS

THE Southern Tree Breeding Association (STBA) has two new and exciting projects on the go after scoring a \$1.6m grant from the Federal Government.

Playing an important part in the country's forestry industry, the national body currently manages Australian tree improvement breeding programs for radiata pine and blue gum.

Aiming to genetically improve the quality and value of the plantation resource, the company is involved in a number of trials throughout Victoria, Tasmania, Western Australia and New Zealand.

Undertaking cross-pollination programs at their 28 acre property on Kilsby Road, pine breeder Peter Buxton and a team of field workers are working towards a new generation of trees with improved biological characteristics.

STBA general manager Dr Tony McRae explained the process involved careful

cross-pollination.

"We take pollen from the male tree, isolate the flower on the female and artificially pollinate them," he said.

"They are planted in trials across the country and tested over a number of years on their growth rate, branch size and density.

"This is all so we can produce high grade timber."

With the recently received government and industry funding from Forest and Woods Products Australia totaling \$3.4m, the company is now able to research tree genetics to a more detailed level.

Researching their DNA, scientists will be able to determine how different each tree is and where the majority of the genes come from.

Tasmanian leading project scientist Dr Richard Kerr said this will speed up the process significantly and provide great benefits for the industry.

"We have to cross-pollinate them in specific way and

design who gets mated with who," he said.

"Examining their DNA will mean faster gain and ability to select them at a younger age for breeding.

"It is very important for forestry and improves productivity."

The second project aims to forge relationships with other tree breeding facilities across the world - analysing the genetic data of various trees to improve their productivity.

Working with tree breeding programs across the world, scientists will send the data collected to Mount Gambier to be analysed for further use.

With data already being sent from France and Sweden it is just another way for the STBA to better connect with geneticists and researchers across the globe.

Identified as a \$21b industry across Australia these projects and the work of the STBA play an important role in producing the highest grade timber for both local and national companies.



**CROSS POLLINATION:** Southern Tree Breeding Association field worker David McKersie inspects the pollination of a radiata pine at the breeding stud on Kilsby Road.

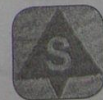


**TREE BREEDING:** Southern Tree Breeding Association pine breeder Peter Buxton has worked hard over winter to ensure each tree is correctly pollinated.



**NEW GENERATION:** Southern Tree Breeding Association general manager Dr Tony McRae inspects a sample of cross-pollination of radiata pine at the breeding stud on Kilsby Road.  
Pictures: JOCELYN NICKELS

### SOFTWOODS REUNION



Panelboard & Particleboard employees prior to the CSR take over.

Meet at the RSL on Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> of September from 1700hrs

Meal served at 1800hrs

\$25 per person  
2 course meal

Come along and renew old friendships

Bob Sandow 0418 829 239  
Robert Adams 0439 980 744