

# South Gippsland Agroforestry Harvest

## Profitable farm forestry, local economy and sustainable construction Summary

In 2016 Gippsland Agroforestry Network<sup>1</sup> member Frank Hirst started harvesting the bluegum agroforestry plot on his farm at Ranceby. Results to date will interest Gippsland farmers, State and Local Government, regional economic stakeholders and other parties interested in sustainability with solid economic credentials.

- Attractive returns to Ranceby farmers Frank and Sharon Hirst from well-grown farm forestry timber sold to Amber Creek Sawmill in Fish Creek for use as high-value, heavy timber framing beams.
- Benefits of a flexible harvest program with the farmer and sawmiller working together on “just-in-time” wood supply.
- Locally grown, sustainable, low embodied energy, low greenhouse gas emissions, renewable building material used by Amber Creek Sawmill in the new Cidery at Foster.
- Increased farmer income and growing workforce at Amber Creek Sawmill demonstrating community economic development and resilience from small-scale, localised timber supply chains.
- Iconic Gippsland timber species bluegum used for a premium timber market instead of low-value pulp.
- New potential market for bluegum timber in axe handles manufactured locally.
- Harvest returning \$200+/tree to the grower after harvest and transport costs. Equivalent to \$20,000/hectare 25 years after planting.
- Farmer used onfarm equipment in harvest which kept more money onfarm.
- Livestock have grazed in the agroforestry coupe since soon after planting.
- Thinnings used for onfarm posts and firewood with some firewood and posts sold.
- High sawmill recovery rate for long, large section beams from well-grown trees and flexible milling for other products.
- Amber Creek Sawmill building Gippsland economy and employment through growing sawmill workforce, using and selling timber milled from locally bought wood.

### Selected Ranceby agroforestry plot outcomes

<sup>1</sup> Gippsland Agroforestry Network (GAN) is the regional agroforestry body representing the interests of Gippsland farmers growing trees for a range of purposes including the harvest and sale of farm grown timber. GAN is affiliated with Landcare.

The farm forestry harvest case study project is supported by Latrobe Catchment Landcare Network through funding from the West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority.

