

# What has AFG achieved for private forest growers?

Established in 1969, Australian Forest Growers (AFG) is recognised in national and State forums as the pre-eminent national representative voice of private forestry. AFG has advanced the interests of private growers in all major forest policy initiatives – the National Forest Policy Statement, Wood and Paper Industry Strategy, Plantations 2020 Vision, Forest and Wood Products Action Agenda, Australian Forestry Standard.

## Activities

AFG offers members and the private forestry sector a range of **services**...

- technical and market information via regional **field days** and **seminars**, a three-day biennial **conference**, and **publications** such as *Australian Forest Grower* magazine and the acclaimed introductory booklet *Getting started in farm forestry*;
- the AFG National and State Treefarmer **Awards**;
- a competitive and reliable plantation **insurance** scheme;
- the pruned stand **certification** scheme;
- support for treegrower **co-operatives**;
- a national **membership and policy forum**; and, especially,
- **representation** and advocacy to all levels of government.

## Achievements

### Taxation

AFG is renowned in **forestry tax reform**. For example, AFG, alone or jointly...

- stopped the Government quarantining off-farm and on-farm income for tax purposes (1985);
- corrected highly adverse Tax Office views of forestry operations and managed investment plantation in the tax rulings TR95/6 and TR2000/8;
- secured the tax law change removing the anomaly that discouraged plantation trading (1995);
- prevented the Ralph Report proposal to defer forest establishment deductions until income is derived from the forest (1999);
- protected forest grower interests in the new non-commercial loss tax law (2000, 2002);
- restored a prepayment provision for managed investment plantations (2002).

### Programs

- Substantially influenced the direction of **federal funding programs**, such as the Farm Forestry Program and the Joint Venture Agroforestry (R&D) Program.
- Successfully proposed the formation of '**regional forestry committees**' (later known as RPCs) and helped secure their funding in 1995, 1999 and 2002 (interim).
- Led the successful campaign for **private native forestry** projects to be eligible for funding, and to be included in the National Forest Inventory.
- Established [www.farmforestline.com](http://www.farmforestline.com) (National Farm Forestry Information Service) offering multimedia access to up-to-date technical and economic information and research results.
- Developed a **Disclosure Code** and **Investors' Guide** for managed investment plantations.

### Markets and marketing

- Initiated the ANU Forestry Market Report, providing **log price information** to growers.
- Raised the profile of **treegrower co-operatives** with policy makers, through a 'starter kit' for new co-ops, a national co-ops newsletter, and a national treegrower co-ops workshop.
- Successfully lobbied for **removal of export controls** on unprocessed plantation logs, and was solely responsible in 1996 for the inclusion of wood from thinnings and other forest surplus in the additional **woodchip export quota**.
- Led the way in turning the attention of forestry policymakers towards the development of industries to use **thinnings and other forest surplus**.
- Is developing guidelines and templates for small growers under the **Australian Forestry Standard**.