

## **Willmott Forests Fire Update**

**Monday 9 February 2009**

The Churchill Jeeralong Complex (Glendonald road) fire in Gippsland is yet to be fully contained and the Country Fire Authority (CFA) website is alerting communities within the region to remain alert due to a high level of fire activity in the surrounding area.

Firefighters from the CFA, Department of Sustainability & Environment (DSE), Parks Victoria, and Hancock Victorian Plantations, are doing everything within their power to contain this blaze with current favourable weather conditions assisting firefighters to minimise any further damage. These favourable conditions are expected to remain for much of this week with warmer conditions returning later in the week.

The overall size of the fire is still to be ascertained however fireline reports detail that a total of approximately 400 hectares of young Willmott Forests plantations aged between 6 months and 2 years were located within the perimeter of the burnt area. This follows on from 152.9 hectares of young plantation that was damaged in the previous week's fires in Gippsland.

The combined area of approximately 553 hectares represents approximately 1% of Willmott Forests plantations under management.

Willmott Forests senior forestry staff intend to inspect the damaged areas over the course of the next two weeks in order to assess the full extent of the damage incurred. As all of the Willmott Forests plantations damaged are under two years of age, it is likely that most of the areas will be replanted over the course of the next 18 months.