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## TIMBER PLANTATION INDUSTRY SUSTAINS REGIONAL COMMUNITIES



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A3P has welcomed the launch of a study undertaken by the Bureau of Rural Sciences which clearly demonstrates that the timber plantation industry helps to sustain regional communities.

The study, *'Socio-economic Impacts of Plantation Forestry'*, was launched today by Senator the Hon Ian Macdonald, Minister for Fisheries, Forestry and Conservation.

"This study confirms the role that plantations and wood processing can and do play in many regional areas of Australia", said A3P Chief Executive Officer Mr Neil Fisher

"Government's need to provide a supportive regulatory and economic environment so that investment in plantations and wood processing can continue to assist regional communities to meet the major socio-economic challenges they face, such as population decline and reduction in services", Mr Fisher added.

On the basis of a detailed socio-economic analysis the study concluded:

*'The presence of a mature plantation industry in the South West Slopes [of NSW] has been associated with higher than average growth in working age population and stable household income, both of which are good indicators for ongoing economic and population growth.'*

In 2003-04 the management, harvesting and processing associated with plantations in the South West Slopes directly generated 1,680 jobs and indirectly a further 3,250 jobs. More than 90% of the employment generated by the industry was based in the region.

The study also examined the socio-economic impacts of a rapid expansion of the area of plantation in a region and concluded that:

*'Plantation expansion has not been associated with increased rates of rural and population decline at the local government area (LGA) scale. The three LGAs that experienced the highest rate of plantation expansion over 1996 to 2001 experienced rural population growth or lower rates of decline that most other areas of the Great Southern [WA].'*

The study was funded by the Forest and Wood Products Research and Development Corporation and can be obtained [www.fwprdc.org.au](http://www.fwprdc.org.au) or [www.brs.gov.au](http://www.brs.gov.au).

### Further information

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