

## DAFF PUBLIC APPROVAL OF TIWI ISLANDS FORESTRY PROJECT 2005 - 2007

1.

[http://www.daff.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0008/40301/nifs\\_snapshot.pdf](http://www.daff.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0008/40301/nifs_snapshot.pdf)

**NATIONAL INDIGENOUS FORESTRY STRATEGY (NIFS)  
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND  
FORESTRY (DAFF)  
GROWING PARTNERSHIPS – A SNAPSHOT  
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from PAGE 11...

“A number of projects already exist which involve Indigenous communities in the forestry industry. Some of these are described briefly. Further information on most of these projects can be found in the National Indigenous Forestry Strategy (NIFS), which can be accessed on the DAFF website at [www.daff.gov.au/nifs](http://www.daff.gov.au/nifs)

### **“...Forestry Project, Northern Territory**

A partnership has been agreed between Sylvatech Limited, now part of Great Southern Plantations Ltd, and the Tiwi Land Council. **This project has created a sustainable and profitable business partnership model based on the development of an integrated forest products industry on the Tiwi Islands.**”

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2.

[http://www.daff.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0007/111895/bulletin\\_feb05.pdf](http://www.daff.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0007/111895/bulletin_feb05.pdf)

**AQUIS BULLETIN – QUARANTINE - Number 1/2005  
FEBRUARY 2005**

### **TIWI TIMBER HEADS TO CHINA**

More than 14,000 eucalypt logs set sail for China from the Tiwi Islands north of Darwin late last year, in a historic first for the commercial partnership between the Tiwi Land Council and Pentarch Forest Products. Pentarch is managing a sustainable forestry program on behalf of the Tiwi people, from Melville and Bathurst Islands, that has seen extensive logging of native forest and replanting with fast-growing plantation timber. **The first shipment, of 6498 cubic metres of Eucalyptus tetradonta and E. miniata, was the culmination of the cycle so important to the future economic well-being of this small indigenous community.**

AQIS Darwin has been involved in the planning for this shipment for at least a year; part of an ongoing consultation process to expedite export from these remote islands with very basic infrastructure.

AQIS officer Alex James says: “Over a period of three weeks late last year, AQIS officers from Darwin made five visits to Melville Island to inspect the logs. A few inspections were required because some of the timber had been stored over the wet, making soil and termites a problem. “Pentarch minimised soil and seed contamination by carefully selecting the logs. These were fumigated after an inspection detected live insects, though fumigation is also a requirement of the importing country.” AQIS staff monitored the fumigation of the logs and conducted post-fumigation inspections before certifying them for export to China and Indonesia.

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### 3.

[http://www.daff.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0006/37608/nifs\\_strategy.pdf](http://www.daff.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0006/37608/nifs_strategy.pdf)

## THE NATIONAL INDIGENOUS FORESTRY STRATEGY

May 2005

Original document see link above, includes forward by **Senator Ian Macdonald**, then Minister for Fisheries, Forestry and Conservation. (see page 2 - not quoted here)

### THE TIWI FORESTRY PROJECT – NT (from PAGES 21 & 22)

“The Tiwi Forestry Project is a partnership between Sylvatech Limited, an unlisted Australian public company, and the Tiwi Land Council. The Tiwi Land Council was established in 1978 under the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976* (Cth), and represents the Tiwi people who hold inalienable freehold title to their land under the Act. The overall objective of the Tiwi Forestry Project is the continual development of an integrated forest products industry on the Tiwi Islands.

The project has been running for about six years and has a potentially unlimited lifespan as it is based on rotational cropping. The Tiwi people were introduced to plantation forestry in the 1960s, when the Australian Government established significant pine plantations on Melville Island. The maturing plantations were gifted to the Tiwi people in 1985 and now form part of the Tiwi Forestry Project.

In 1986, the Tiwi elders decided on strategies for health, education and economic development to build a secure future for their people. They had been exposed to plantation forestry through the pine plantation establishment programme. Because it had provided employment opportunities and demonstrated the potential for plantation forestry on their land, they supported forestry development and keen to participate. As tropical forestry specialists, Sylvatech saw the potential for a large-scale industry based on the fast-growing tropical hardwood, *Acacia mangium*, native to northern Queensland and Papua New Guinea.

Sylvatech manages more than 8,000 hectares of established pine and *A. mangium* plantations for the Tiwi Forestry Project. **The area will be increased to 30,000 hectares over the next few years. This will create a world-scale forest products industry with a goal of exporting 1 million tonnes annually of high-grade *A. mangium* woodchips by 2013.**

Sylvatech and the Tiwi Land Council have made substantial investments in the Tiwi Forestry Project. Additional investment has come from private investors, and through the Sylvatech Tropical Timbers managed investment schemes. The schemes have proved popular with investors because of the Tiwi Forestry Project’s emphasis on achieving “triple bottom line” returns – delivering financial, social and environmental benefits. Sylvatech, the Tiwi people, private and institutional investors, and further managed investment schemes will fund the project’s continuing expansion.

**A eucalypt harvesting programme began in 2003. The project had stockpiled over 25,000 tonnes of logs for export to secured customers in Vietnam and China. The first 7,000 tonnes was exported to Indonesia and China in December 2004. It began a five-year, 1 million tonne, exporting programme at the end of the initial stage of the Port Melville development in mid-2004. Export sales over the five years will generate significant cash flow for the Tiwi Forestry Project. The eucalypt harvesting programme will continue until 2009.** Harvesting the maturing pine plantations will start in 2004, concurrent with continuing *A. mangium* establishment.

In 2008-09, the project is scheduled to harvest 200,000 tonnes from the first *A. mangium* plantations and convert the logs into woodchips for export.

**The Tiwi Forestry Project has created a sustainable and profitable business partnership model, and is already a “real” industry generating substantial**

revenue. Land lease fees paid to the Tiwi Land Council and, shortly, its share of profits from timber product marketing are being reinvested in the project's development. Along with royalties paid to the Tiwi, the income is also used to fund significant education, health and social infrastructure and services programmes for the 2,500 Tiwi people.

The ultimate benefit of the Tiwi Forestry Project for Sylvatech and the Tiwi people is equal participation in a viable export industry, which will earn substantial income for both parties. Many other positive outcomes have flowed from the project. **During 2003, it led to a major upgrade of roads on Melville Island through the provision of \$1.5 million in joint Australian and Northern Territory government funding.**

A deep-water port, capable of docking 24,000 tonne vessels, was constructed at Port Melville, just south of Pirlangimpi, to allow timber products to be shipped to overseas customers. Sylvatech will lease and operate the port, **which was constructed with Tiwi funds. (Actually ABA funds)** The Tiwi Land Council owns Port Melville, which is a valuable asset that will provide ongoing income to the community from its operations. More than 10 years, the Tiwi Land Council identified the development of meaningful work opportunities as the single most important factor in creating a better future for the Tiwi people.

A Community Services Deed, which began in April 1998, formally outlines the Tiwi Forestry Project's social objectives. Through the deed, Sylvatech agrees to provide training and employment opportunities for the Tiwi people. The deed also requires the Tiwi to encourage their people to take them up.

This is happening through the Tiwi and Sylvatech Management Advisory Committee and the Tiwi Forestry Employment Pilot. The latter programme breaks new ground by pooling and targeting the resources of several Northern Territory and Australian government agencies to deliver tangible employment results. There are 11 Tiwi apprentices and four full-time Tiwis working with contractors. The objective is for as many Tiwi as possible to fill the 100 full-time jobs available and, through a structured, four-year training programme, prepare more to accept highly skilled positions as they become available. It is a model for developing full time employment opportunities, without the need for ongoing government subsidies."

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**4.**

[http://wopared.parl.net/Senate/committee/rrat\\_ctte/estimates/bud\\_0506/daff/dafflist.pdf](http://wopared.parl.net/Senate/committee/rrat_ctte/estimates/bud_0506/daff/dafflist.pdf)

**Questions placed on notice at the Budget estimates hearings Wednesday, 25 and Thursday, 26 May 2005 Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF)**

*(Logging on Tiwi Islands)*

Is there clear-fell logging on the Tiwi islands?

**Senator Ian Macdonald**—It is all plantation, if there is. I guess there would be. When I saw them they were fairly small trees.

**Senator BROWN**—Is it intended to increase the project from 30,000 to 100,000 hectares?

**Senator Ian Macdonald**—That is not really information that we would have, unfortunately.

**Senator BROWN**—Is the logging material going to Korea and other places overseas?

**Senator Ian Macdonald**—I can see whether we have that information, but it is unlikely that we would.

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**5.**

**Australian Government**

**Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry~ (DAFF)**

Date Received.. 3-3-06 (**3 March 2006**)

Submission # i00A (100A?)

Ms Cheryl Scarlett, Inquiry Secretary

House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs. Parliament House CANBERRA ACT 2600

*Dear Ms Scarlett*

*I thank the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs (the Committee) for the opportunity to contribute to its inquiry into Indigenous employment. As requested, here are the responses from the **Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry** (the Department) to the questions on notice that arose during the 6 February Public Hearing of the Committee.*

*Question 3 — Tiwi Islands Forestry*

*The Committee requested more specific information relating to the involvement of the Tiwi Island Community in Department's National Indigenous Forestry Strategy. The Tiwi Forestry Project is a partnership between Great Southern Plantations Limited and the Tiwi Land Council. The Tiwi Land Council was established in 1978, under the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976 (Cth), and represents the Tiwi people who hold inalienable freehold title to their land under the Act. The overall objective of the Tiwi Forestry Project is the continual development of an integrated forest products industry on the Tiwi Islands. As a result of the forestry operations, **Tiwi Islanders are guaranteed an income flow in the future, as well as in the short-term, as they receive returns from the sale of timber.** Furthermore, at the completion of the project, the established plantations along with any development (including the port) and an experienced and well trained local workforce revert to the Tiwi people. Currently the forest operations on the islands provide for 14 Tiwi forest apprentices and another ten positions in the area of natural resource management. These positions are full time and do not rely on Community Development Employment Project funding. **The Tiwi Islands project is included as a case study in the Department's National Indigenous Forestry Strategy (NIFS).** Further information in relation to the implementation of the NTFS has been compiled and is included for the Committee's information at Enclosure 2 and is also available on the DAFF website*

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**6.**

[http://www.daff.gov.au/nifs.http://www.daff.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0009/643743/20-report-final.pdf](http://www.daff.gov.au/nifs.http://www.daff.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0009/643743/20-report-final.pdf)

**Australia's Forestry Industry in the Year 2020**

(Department of Agriculture Forestry and Fisheries) (DAFF)

**12 December 2007**

From Page 76

**"... One success story that existed prior to NIFS is commercial forestry development on the Tiwi Islands. The Tiwi Islands is now home to a strong business partnership between the Tiwi Land Council and Great Southern Plantations, a plantation MIS company. Great Southern have engaged with the Tiwi Land Council who represent native**

title holders, **to develop Acacia plantations** for woodchip export. Land lease fees and a share in profits are paid to the Tiwi Land Council, which thusfar have been reinvested into the project. Plans for the project mean that **by 2013, the Tiwi Islands project will be a large scale woodchip producer with an export volume of over 1 million tonnes**. The partnership has now been in progress for seven years and has brought investment to the Tiwi Islands **including substantial funding for an upgrade to roads** and a commitment from the partnership to employ and train Indigenous locals to contribute and eventually take senior roles in managing the operations.

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**7.**

[http://www.forestry.org.au/pdf/pdf-public/Submissions/Tiwi%20Senate%20Submission%20\(170309\).pdf](http://www.forestry.org.au/pdf/pdf-public/Submissions/Tiwi%20Senate%20Submission%20(170309).pdf)

from IFA's Submission to Senate Inquiry into the forestry and mining operations on the Tiwi Islands,

**17 March 2009**

*“... The IFA notes that the Tiwi Forestry project is described in the National Indigenous Forest Strategy (2005) endorsed by DAFF, as creating “a sustainable and profitable business partnership model based on the development of an integrated forest products industry on the Tiwi Islands.”*

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