

**Welcome** to the 6th update on the ‘Socio-economic impacts of land use change in the Green Triangle and Central Victoria’ research project. These updates keep you in touch with progress of the project.

The latest news is that our third research report, *Impacts of land use change to farm forestry and plantation forestry*, has been released. We have provided a summary of key findings below.

Go to the results and reports section of [www.landusechange.net.au](http://www.landusechange.net.au) to download a copy of the executive summary or full report. If you do not have internet access, please contact Alex Campbell-Wilson (details on page 3) for a printed copy.

We now only have results of one part of the project to release – our report on quantifying and analysing land use and socio-economic change. While the final report for this part of the project, *Socio-economic impacts of land use change: what do the statistics tell us?*, will only be released in March, we will be presenting the key findings of this part of the project in public seminars in the region, and providing them to you in a project update, in December 2008.

#### Public seminars on project results

**We will be presenting our project results in public seminars during December 8-11<sup>th</sup> at six locations in the study region (Timboon, Mortlake, Hamilton, Casterton, Penola and Horsham). Seminar dates and times are provided at the end of this update. Please attend a seminar if you are interested in the results, or invite others who may be interested to come along.**

#### Impacts of land use change to farm forestry and plantation forestry: results of a survey of landholders

Land use change to bluegum plantations has been particularly controversial in the study region, with a wide range of differing views about its impacts. Because it was identified as a particularly important land use change in our study region, as part of the *Land Use Change* project we conducted a survey of landholders who had established their own farm forestry or leased or sold land to plantation companies. We also gathered extensive data from plantation companies in the region.

The purpose of the survey and data gathering was to understand the impacts of land use change to plantation forestry and farm forestry on:

- the landholders who make this land use change
- the population and social infrastructure of rural communities, and
- the agricultural sector in terms of the types of land use and infrastructure changes involved.

We also wanted to better understand the factors influencing the decision to change land use to plantation and farm forestry.

We obtained data from 158 landholders who had changed land use to plantation or farm forestry, and were also able to obtain data from plantation companies on approximately 78% of properties leased or sold to plantation companies in the study region between 1995 and 2007. Read on to hear what we found out...

For more information, or to unsubscribe from these updates, please contact:  
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## Rural population – study findings

The results of the study identified that:

- the establishment of farm forestry by landholders on their farm enterprise has no impacts on the number of people living on rural properties
- leasing of land to a plantation company results in a reduction of population in a small number of cases
- the sale of land to a plantation company results in change in the population living on a property in a majority of cases.

In many cases where land is sold to a plantation company, the overall number of people living on a property doesn't change, but the people living on the property do change, with previous residents shifting away and new residents shifting onto a property.

When properties are sold, in approximately 44-52% of cases they have residents living on them before the land is sold to a plantation company. Where residents were living on the property before sale, about 75% of the time they shift away when the property is sold to a plantation company. Of those cases where the previous residents shift away, new residents then shift onto the property in anywhere from 50-80% of cases, depending on the timeframe examined – sometimes it takes some time for new residents to shift in, and hence it may take one or two years before some properties are occupied.

In the study region this means that plantation expansion has not led to a large decline in rural population numbers (although there was a net loss of anywhere

between 130 and 315 people living on rural properties across the 17 local government areas of the study region over 1995-2007). It has, however, led to a high rate of population turnover in the areas where plantations have been established. This represents ongoing social change, with some type of change in resident population occurring in 75% of cases in which a property with residents living on it is sold to a plantation company.

## Membership of community and service groups

Land use change to farm forestry was not associated with any change in membership of community and service groups by landholders involved in the land use change. Leasing of land to a plantation company was associated with changes in membership in approximately 10% of cases.

Sale of land to a plantation company led to changes in community and service group membership in just over 50% of cases.

Membership of rural fire fighting services and sporting groups were most commonly reported to be affected. In about half of cases, the landholder ceased membership of the group altogether, while in the other half they changed the location of their group membership.

It was not possible to identify whether new residents who shift into houses on plantation properties join community and service groups, so the 'net' impact of the land use change to plantations on community and service group membership could not be estimated.

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## Rural property infrastructure

In most cases, land use change to plantation and farm forestry resulted in relatively little change to infrastructure on the property involved. Those who sold land to a plantation company were most likely to report a decrease in infrastructure, with removal of fences and sheds/storage infrastructure the most common decreases reported. It was rare for housing to be removed or demolished as a result of establishment of any type of plantation or farm forestry, although houses were removed in 4% of cases where a property was sold or leased to a plantation company. These results reflect practice in recent years, and may not be representative of practices in earlier years of plantation establishment in the region.

## Want to find out more?

We examined a range of issues other than those described above in this part of the *Land Use Change* project. If you would like to read more about the results, you can download the report at [www.landusechange.net.au](http://www.landusechange.net.au)

### Forthcoming reports and events:

Impacts of land use change to farm forestry and plantation forestry: landholder survey results	November 2008
Socio-economic impacts of land use change: what do the statistics tell us?	Full report: Mar 09 Summary: Dec 08
Socio-economic impacts of land use change: Summary report & Integration report	Dec 2008
Seminars on project results	Dec 8-12 <sup>th</sup> 2008

## Land Use Change public seminar series – December 2008

The results of the project will be presented at a series of six public seminars over December 8<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup>. The seminars will discuss the extent of each land use change, how it is perceived and experienced by different people, and what socio-economic changes have accompanied it. Anyone with an interest in the social dimensions of land use change is encouraged to attend the seminars.

### Seminar locations and times

Town	Date	Time	Venue
Timboon	Monday Dec 8 <sup>th</sup>	1-3pm	Timboon District Hall Address: 98 Bailey St, Timboon
Mortlake	Monday Dec 8 <sup>th</sup>	7-9pm	Mortlake Memorial Hall Address: Shaw St, Mortlake
Hamilton	Tuesday Dec 9 <sup>th</sup>	2-4pm	DPI Victoria offices, Theatrette Address: Mount Napier Rd, Hamilton
Casterton	Tuesday Dec 9 <sup>th</sup>	7-9pm	Casterton Town Hall Address: 67 Henty St, Casterton
Penola	Wednesday Dec 10 <sup>th</sup>	7-9pm	Chardonnay Lodge Address: Riddoch Highway, Coonawarra
Horsham	Thursday Dec 11 <sup>th</sup>	1-3pm	DPI Victoria, Yellow-gum room Address: 110 Natimuk Rd, Horsham

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