

The concept

Many farmers and small-scale landholders are growing a wide range of wonderful native trees and local species that are unknown and unappreciated.

In central Victoria, farm foresters have combined to set up a co-operative SMARTimbers, which stands for Sustainably Managed Australian Regional Timbers. The co-operative will market small quantities of their unique eucalypts and wattles, casuarinas or cypress, for high quality furniture or appearance products.

The co-operative's treegrower members love and care for their plantations and bush. To demonstrate that this is more than rhetoric, SMARTimbers' members are signing on to comply with individually prepared Environmental Management Systems (EMS) for their farms. Independently audited, the EMS farm plans will guarantee that the growers have not only the will, but also the skills to manage their trees sustainably, as well as achieve a high quality product.

SMARTimbers membership charter

1. SMARTimbers will aggregate mature, regionally-sourced timbers on a species specific basis, and sell associated wood and non-wood products utilising a single desk co-operative marketing structure.
2. SMARTimbers will value add members' products as far along the processing path as practicable via a combination of member investment and the formation of strategic alliances with processors throughout the supply chain.
3. SMARTimbers will facilitate stewardship planning for member's plantations and forests, ensuring that all products handled by SMARTimbers are produced in a sustainable and environmentally responsible manner using current best practices.

SMARTimbers has arisen out of a marketing study undertaken by the Central Victorian Farm Plantations Inc (CVFP), one of 18 regional plantation councils funded by Commonwealth and state governments.

CVFP's vision is the integration of commercial trees into rural landscapes and farming systems to provide agricultural, social, economic and environmental benefits.

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Sustainably Managed Australian Regional Timbers

A co-operative marketing unique, sustainably sourced family farm timbers.

Good for the landholder, the community and the environment.

That's smart thinking!



Why is SMARTtimbers good for the landholder?

The SMARTtimbers model suits what small-scale landholders and farm foresters want.

It celebrates, rather than frowning on, a diversity of tree species.

It embraces the desire of most farm foresters for their trees to serve a wide range of purposes from shelter to aesthetics, wildlife habitat to controlling land degradation. While farm foresters regard selective logging as helping provide an essential source of income diversification, it is not necessarily the overriding goal behind their tree planting.

It will offer training and support in selective silviculture, thereby enabling best practice management of either plantation or farm forest.

Operating alone, a landholder can expect little more than a low stumpage return at harvest time. Membership of a co-operative achieves economies of scale by aggregating members' wood and non-wood products within a single desk marketing structure.

By pursuing a niche market, value adding approach SMARTtimbers will optimise returns to grower members from their small scale, but intensively managed, plantation or farm forest.

Why is SMARTtimbers good for the buyer and community?

SMARTtimbers will be selling unsung local species, the equal of any exotic imported timber for beauty, strength and durability. That increases the range of choice, while strengthening our culture and economy.

Farm foresters and small-scale landholders are naturally inclined to provide a personalised service. SMARTtimbers will emulate this aspect of its grower members.

SMARTtimbers is putting in place a chain of custody that will ensure the delivery of a quality assured product. A series of strategic alliances is being established between the co-operative and other like-minded, small scale, local processors, ensuring that control is maintained over quality, while boosting job creation in regional areas.

As its value added end product, SMARTtimbers will offer architects, interior designers and furniture manufacturers a range of specialty kiln dried timbers. To achieve this, SMARTtimbers intends to venture into downstream processing by establishing its own kiln drying facility.



Why is SMARTtimbers good for the environment?

Timber is one of the few renewable material resources. People are, however, increasingly concerned about whether or not the timber they buy can be traced back to a well-managed plantation or forest.

Purchasing a SMARTtimbers product will allay these fears. SMARTtimbers intends to live up to its name, by seeking independently audited accreditation of members' plantation and forest management practices so that the co-op can assure people who buy a product branded with the SMARTtimbers logo that it comes from a well-managed source. Instituting an EMS will be a condition of membership.

