

The Intensive Forest Management Program

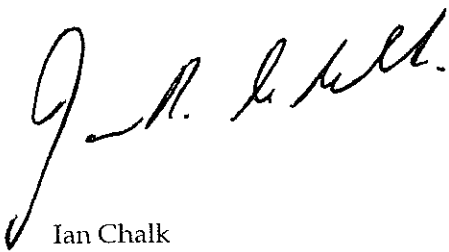
In 1988 following the Helsham Inquiry, the Commonwealth Government provided funding to Tasmania as compensation for the loss of forest resource included in the expanded World Heritage Area. The Forests and Forest Industry Council of Tasmania, in co-operation with the Commonwealth Government, allocated a substantial proportion of this funding to an Intensive Forest Management (IFM) Program, designed to enhance the production of eucalypt and special timbers sawlogs.

Between 1990 and 1996, forest operations and research projects were conducted to meet the aims of the Program. The bulk of the funding has been used to establish a eucalypt plantation estate which is being intensively managed through pruning and thinning regimes to produce sawlogs. In addition, eucalypt regrowth has been thinned to concentrate stand growth increment on selected well-formed trees, thereby producing high quality sawlogs in a shorter time than in unthinned stands. To support these large-scale operational initiatives, strategic planning and information projects and research studies into silvicultural regimes, thinning equipment and systems development, soils and site selection, and pests and diseases were conducted.

This special edition of *Tasforests* summarises the operations and research conducted during the IFM Program. Although the bulk of the work is described in the papers, other important studies were undertaken through specific contracts and post-graduate scholarships wholly or partly funded by the Program, and the results have been or will be published in separate reports or in scientific journals.

Much of the work involved the development of techniques which enable new, cost effective and practicable approaches to forest management. The eucalypt estate established under the IFM Program is one of the first large-scale hardwood plantation developments being managed primarily for solid wood production in Australia.

The operations and research work conducted during the Program have laid a strong foundation for greatly expanded intensive forest management of Tasmania's forests, and the developments announced by Forestry Tasmania and forestry companies since the Regional Forest Agreement are confirmation of the State's commitment to a more productive forestry sector.



Ian Chalk
CHAIRMAN
Forests and Forest Industry Council

