



media release & photo opportunity

October 1, 2007

North East focus for Tree Change Forum

'Tree change', an emerging issue for the North East will be the focus of a two day forum to be held at La Trobe in Beechworth on October 22 and 23, 2007.

Sponsored by the Australian Alpine Valleys Agribusiness Forum, North East Catchment Management Authority and La Trobe University, the forum will attract a wide cross-section of participants who will discuss how to meet the needs of the North East community and 'tree changers' in the future. Key sectors represented at the forum will be local planning and development, tourism, food and wine purveyors, local and state government agencies and departments, heritage managers and property developers.

Key note speakers will present case studies and planning models successfully used in other regions impacted by the permanent and semi-permanent tree and sea change populations. New 'tree and sea change' research conducted by the Department of Sustainability and Environment recently uncovered that over 50% of Mansfield's population did not live in the area, which impacted heavily on the region during the recent bushfires and drought.

According to Greg Hayes, Board member of the Australian Alpine Valleys Agribusiness Forum, "The North East has great amenity. The region's natural beauty is the reason why people want to move here, to enjoy a change in lifestyle. However, what is essential for the region is that we take learning's from other areas experiencing 'tree and sea change' to shape our future."

"A careful and united plan can ensure that we don't lose the region's natural beauty, traditional farming opportunities and attractions to sub-divisions", said Greg Hayes. This is why we have drawn together expert speakers and a panel of local leaders representing economic development, planning, agribusiness and industry to discuss models and opportunities, working forward towards an action plan for the North East at the end of the two day forum."

According to forum panel expert, Trevor Budge of La Trobe University, "The North East is one of the most significant identified 'tree change' areas in Australia which needs careful management and planning for an increasing population. The majority of the 'tree changers' moving to the area will be middle aged or older, which in itself brings large implications. It is essential that the leaders who attend the forum produce some solid actions for the North East on which to build in the future."

To register for the forum and find out more about the North East Planning and Managing Tree Change Forum call Lachlan Campbell of the Australian Alpine Valleys Agribusiness Forum on 0357216088 or 0419243225 or go to www.alpvalleys.com.au

For more information or photo opportunity contact Lachlan Campbell