

# 2004 Softwood Project

Australian Forestry Management Pty Limited (AFM)



Forests NSW Annual Report

Financial Year 2011-2012

## Legal Context

This annual report has been prepared in accordance with Schedule 1 Part 3(h) of the Forestry Management Contract between Australian Forestry Management Pty Limited and the Forestry Commission of New South Wales (Forests NSW) for the 2004 Softwood Project.

## Overview

The plantations at Dr Vance and The Valley are in good condition and are generally performing well.

Rainfall in Hume Region has been well above average during the reporting period, with significant rainfall events during spring and summer. Continuing above average rainfall has resulted in generally good tree growth for all plantation areas. Total rainfall at Tumbarumba from July 11 to June 12 was 1214mm compared to the long term average of 980mm. Total rainfall for Yass was 50% above the long term average.

## Stand Condition

The Dr Vance plantation is in good condition with very good growth being achieved to date.

The Valley plantation has maintained good growth on trees planted in 2005 and restocked trees planted in 2006, which account for the major portion of the plantation. Stocking is acceptable in the majority of the plantation, however recently replanted trees are smaller in some areas compared to those planted in 2005 and 2006.



The Valley (2005 Age Class) – well stocked & good growth

## Pest and Disease Information

Minimal areas of pest damage were noted during the report period.

Dothistroma needle blight is present in The Valley in low levels, similar to other plantation areas in the Region, which is associated with wet seasonal condition during spring, summer and autumn. Dothistroma will require monitoring for increased levels of infestation which can adversely affect tree growth to the extent that treatment is justified.

## Activities Undertaken

Grazing of cattle has continued in The Valley, where the trees are sufficiently well established. The grazing is conditional on there being no significant tree damage and is being carefully monitored by FNSW to achieve this outcome. Grazing has significantly reduced grass fuel levels and associated fire hazards during the summer.

Pest animal control has occurred during the reporting period, predominantly feral pig control.

Fire trail and road maintenance and noxious weed control has also been undertaken.

## Fire Incidents

There were no fire incidents within or in close to the 2004 Softwood Project plantations.

## Other Management Issues

The residual effects of drought and animal pests has resulted in the need for ongoing localised replanting over a three year period up to 2008. This has lead to areas of plantation having a range of age classes (predominantly 1 to 3 years old) and stocking densities. It is anticipated that there may be some impact on the future productivity (timber yield) of these areas. The extent of this impact will not be quantifiable until 2015 when age 10 inventory is undertaken.

Treatment of the area burnt by wildfire in January 2010 was undertaken by additional herbicide treatment for blackberry and clearing of the site to facilitate planting. Planting is scheduled for August 2012. It is noted that post plant blackberry control using chemicals is not an option on steep sites as it is restricted by labelling conditions. If heavy blackberry regrowth occurs post planting it is likely to significantly affect tree seedling survival on this site.

It is also proposed that up to 10 hectares of 2005 AC plantation that is severely under stocked (due to very heavy blackberry regrowth) is reviewed for blackberry control and any potential replanting over the next 12 months, where opportunity for effective weed control is available. These affected areas were originally reported in the 2008-09 report.

## Planned Activities for 2012/2013

- Replanting of area burnt by wildfire – site preparation completed in reporting period
- Maintaining grazing in suitable areas to reduce grass fire hazard
- Pest animal control
- Blackberry spraying
- Maintenance of tracks and access roads
- Fire risk reduction works and surveillance
- Identification and signage of plantation fire roads to comply with amendments to the Plantations and Reafforestation Code.

- Review and replanting of areas where 2006 replanting has failed due to heavy blackberry regrowth.

Report Prepared by

Charlie Taylor  
Operations and Protection Manger  
Hume Region  
Forests NSW

For  
Bob Germantse  
Regional Manger Hume