



THE NIMBIN GOOD TIMES

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Local foresters win state award

The Australian Forest Growers (AFG) NSW Tree Farmer of the Year award has been won by the Wright family business, Super Forest Plantations, based in the Northern Rivers region.

The award is given every two years to the most outstanding tree farmer in the entire state.

The prestigious award was presented by Associate Professor Doland Nichols from Southern Cross University (SCU) School of Environment, Science and Engineering.

When presenting the award, Prof Nichols praised the Wrights for their efforts, and said the Wright's Nimbin plantation is the best example of well-managed plantation forestry in the region and it is where he takes SCU students and visiting forestry academics to see excellent sub tropical plantation forestry in practice.

Mark Wright said, "It is for our innovation and dedication to the farm forestry industry that we have received this award. It is acknowledgement of nearly 15 years of really hard work by all those involved with Super Forest Plantations. We have invested a lot of time and effort into this enterprise, taken significant risks and as a result along the way there have been a few failures but it has been, for the most part, an overwhelming success."

"We have shown that a broad range of timber species traditionally sourced from native forests can be successfully grown in plantations. We hope that by bringing attention to what we have been doing and achieved that it will help promote farm forestry and tree growing as a feasible option for others working in agriculture, particularly as it can be integrated with other farming activities increasing the productive capacity of the land."

Siblings James, Mark and Wendy Wright have been working in the hills in the region for the last 13 years, implementing advanced plantation forestry strategies and trialling a range of methods and species, in efforts to achieve best



practice results for hardwood plantation timber production in the sub tropics.

Super Forest Plantations, with its staff of eight locals, manages over 3500 acres of land in the area and are gradually converting cleared grazing land to mixed hardwood plantations with cattle production integrated into the mixed farming enterprise. Over 13 different timber species have been trialled and their performance in a plantation situation monitored and evaluated. They have converted 250 acres of their 500-acre Nimbin property to mixed species plantation forest, a further 500 acres of plantation have been developed at Toonumbar, with another 1000 acres of plantation planned to be established.

From the collection and sowing of seed to the preparation, planting and maintenance of the trees, Super Forest Plantations has been

able to produce firewood and small pole products in ten years. By year 20 they will have small sawlog and large pole products with a final harvest of large sawlogs and poles at age 30. This is a long term, inter-generational operation that produces timber, the only truly sustainable, renewable, environmentally friendly, carbon positive building resource, for use in the local community.

This small family business is involved in large-scale environmental remediation works on their properties as well as supporting local community organisations. The revegetation of riparian zones on several properties has been undertaken, in particular a 12 acre section of Calico Creek north of Nimbin village has been planted with mixed rainforest species. A 10 acre rainforest remnant on their Toonumbar



Mark and James Wright

property has had extensive bush regeneration works conducted in it, the removal of weeds has allowed the successful recruitment of diverse understory. A further 100 acres of land has been earmarked for environmental remediation works.

The poles that hold up the Nimbin Headers Sports Club roof were donated by Super Forest Plantations, these are from 10 year old plantation grown trees. Annual donations over the last five years to the Headers have helped the club to operate successfully. A nesting box project is underway with students and staff at the Nimbin Central School using timber donated by Super Forest Plantations, where students are designing and building nesting boxes for native fauna that will be strategically placed in and around the village.

Following the award presentation on Sunday 26th May on their Nimbin property, there was a tour of their mixed hardwood plantations (pictured) where the 30 visitors were shown examples and given explanation of the methods and species utilised in the operation.

James and Mark are dedicated to the promotion of sustainable farming practices, in particular farm forestry; they also continue to sell timber product at the farm gate and can be contacted for tree growing advice or the purchase of small poles, fencing and landscape material on 0427-431-266 or at 277 Blue Knob Road, Nimbin.

Aquarian events make May a merry month



It was a month of reflection, celebration and prognostication, with a two-day conference, concerts, a ball and a happening, three exhibitions and multiple film screenings providing plenty of insight into the significance of the 1973 Aquarius Festival.

If the six-part doco *Woodstock Downunder* or the *Aquarius and Beyond* conference program weren't evidence enough of the huge and growing influence of Aquarian ideals on mainstream society, then Jan Barham's motion carried by the NSW upper house is certainly the clincher.

But most of all, it was the people who were interesting: their values, their lifestyles, their talents, their humour, their experiences and struggles, and their life's journeys.

After 40 years, original settler Daisy Stewart said to the conference, "I don't know what a hippie is. I say to people, you tell me what a hippie is."

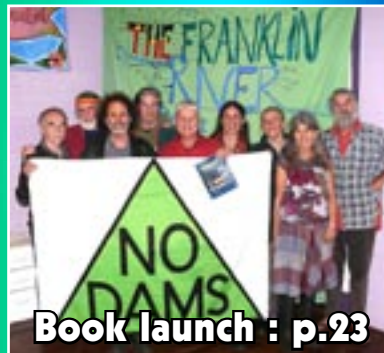
• See centre pages for our coverage of the 40th anniversary



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