



Media release

Gum trees in China

Eucalypts or gum-trees are overwhelmingly native to Australia but China was the location for a major international conference about the iconic trees in October this year. More than 400 people - including 30 Australians - from around the world gathered to attend the Eucalypt conference in Zhanjiang City, Guangdong, China organized by the International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO).

Dr Roger Arnold formerly of the CSIRO Tree Seed Centre was formally recognised during the conference opening for his contribution to eucalypt breeding and development in China.

Rob de Fegely, National President of the Institute of Foresters of Australia said, 'China is rapidly catching up to the rest of the world in the quality and quantity of its eucalypt plantations and silvicultural management and the ties between our two countries continue to grow.

'The formal recognition of Dr Arnold along with the award to Gary Waugh of the Chinese Friendship Medal in recognition of an outstanding contribution to China's economic and social progress - focusing on forestry, is a clear recognition of Australia's leadership in forestry and forest science.

'Many of the forestry management challenges in China are remarkably similar to those we face at home - supply from Chinas' natural forests is declining as increasing areas are reserved from harvesting and designated for conservation and protection forests.

'In the long term, this will mean all of the domestic forest production in China will have to come from plantations but there is also a growing resistance by the residents of some provinces to continued expansion of plantations,' said Rob.

Imported wood will remain an important source of supply to Chinas' processing industry for many years to come, a welcome development for many Australian exporters.

The conference covered a wide range of topics including:

- Genetics and tree breeding the value of hybrids and individual tree selection.
- Climate change impacts
- Managing water
- Soil nutrient management
- New wood based products

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The IFA is Australia's professional body for foresters and other forestry professionals