

November 11 2009

### A Time for Reflection and Celebration

Victoria's peak independent forestry body, the Victorian Association of Forest Industries (VAFI) recently celebrated another year of achievement for the Victorian timber community with its 2009 Annual dinner.

The evening provided an opportunity to reflect on the many issues the industry has faced in recent times, and also make a number of exciting announcements about the coming year.

The VAFI Chief Executive Philip Dalidakis said the night was a great chance to pay tribute to all members of the Victorian timber industry.

"The evening was an opportunity to acknowledge the men and women of our great industry and the important role they play as the backbone of many rural and regional communities," Mr Dalidakis said.

The VAFI was also pleased to announce a number of initiatives including a collaborative partnership with the not-for-profit organisation Living Trees, commencing January 2010 for a period of two years.

Living Trees is an Australian not-for-profit organisation, which undertakes significant environmental repair projects throughout the wider Australian community. Currently there are a number of significant projects underway throughout Victoria, with more to be commenced over the coming year.

"We are proud to partner with Living Trees in projects that will benefit the wider Victorian community, and we look forward to announcing a number of specific environmental repair projects throughout Victoria next year," Mr Dalidakis said.

The evening also provided an opportunity to reflect on past and present icons of the Victorian timber industry with the VAFI announcing the inaugural 'Graeme Gooding Scholarship for Indigenous Australians'. Graeme Gooding was a former CEO of the VAFI, who sadly passed away earlier this year.

"Graeme was a much loved member of our broader timber industry family, who was passionate about education, our industry and issues affecting indigenous people. To combine these three passions is a wonderful way to pay tribute to a much respected industry leader," Mr Dalidakis said.

The VAFI was also pleased to recognise Bob Humphreys for his continued service to the Victorian timber industry by presenting him with the '2009 Lifetime Service Award'.

"Bob Humphreys has been a passionate member of the timber industry for many years, and it was a pleasure to recognise his tireless efforts on behalf of the industry," Mr Dalidakis said.

Mr Dalidakis also announced that the VAFI plans to revisit the 2025 Strategic Paper during 2010 in light of the expected upcoming announcement of the 20 year Timber Industry Strategy.

"With the timber industry strategy focusing on the next 20 years, it will be an appropriate time to revisit our long term strategy paper, and look forward to undertaking the process," Mr Dalidakis said.

**MEDIA CONTACT: JAMES COPSEY**

Ph: (03) 9611 9005 Mobile: 0400 956 741 Email: [jcopsey@vafi.org.au](mailto:jcopsey@vafi.org.au) Internet: [www.vafi.org.au](http://www.vafi.org.au)