



**Executive summary of responses to consultation:**

**Developing a Regional Strategic Plan for Durable Eucalypt Forests**

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## Summary of responses: overview

Overall, there was mainly positive feedback for the NZDFI from respondents. This included NZDFI having good leadership and communications, along with demonstrating research and practical experience through the trial and breeding work done to date.

### Potential benefits of durable eucalypts identified

- diversify land-use in drier regions, by providing landowners with a new opportunity on marginal land – primarily as an alternative to radiata pine
- reduce market and biological risks associated with New Zealand’s radiata pine near-monoculture
- increase regional forest industry diversity by creating a sustainable eucalypt wood products supply chain
- give a reputational boost to high-value premium horticulture and wine-growing businesses operating under sustainable or organic production systems (by acting as a replacement to CCA-treated radiata pine)
- control soil erosion, thanks partly to their ability to coppice (regrow vigorously from a cut stump)
- contribute to climate change mitigation by storing carbon
- cope with the increasingly lengthy and intense droughts forecast to become a feature of the already summer-dry areas being targeted by the NZDFI
- produce large quantities of pollen and nectar on which bees and native birds can feed at times of year when supplies from other plant species are short
- increase diversity in rural landscapes.

### Potential negative impacts and barriers to adoption identified:

- a shortage/unreliable supply of planting stock
- lack of growth and economic models so that durable eucalypts can be compared with other potential enterprises on the same land (e.g. livestock grazing, radiata pine, and manuka)
- uncertainty about timber properties and performance
- lack of market information, and lack of evidence of actual markets
- perceived high risk of pests and diseases decimating eucalypt forests
- concern about possible risks eucalypts plantations may pose to water quality and human health
- concern about eucalypt plantations reducing water catchment yield
- concern about eucalypt forests being a significant fire hazard.

### Overall:

The feedback received reinforces that while NZDFI’s research team can directly work on mitigating barriers to adoption, much wider engagement and support is needed for research and land-use planning so that regional communities can successfully grow eucalypts to sustainably deliver the benefits that have been identified.

Some suggestions of options for gaining grower confidence are covered in Section 1.4 in the full report. There is obviously a critical need to get ‘the right tree in the right place’, right from the start of the programme, if confidence amongst landowners is to be developed and sustained. Growth and economic models (which include potential returns from carbon) are a significant priority.

Other priorities identified include the provision of more information and evidence around timber properties, processing options, and the potential scale and range of markets for durable eucalypt products.

Respondents generally believe that there is no shortage of land potentially available in the target east-coast regions. This land includes bare pastoral land and also cutover sites following radiata pine harvest. Current high farmland prices are a disincentive to new entrants wishing to buy bare land and plant trees. The challenge is to convince existing landowners to plant eucalypts and to ensure they have the knowledge and resources to do this successfully. Initially it is thought likely that plantings will be relatively small-scale, perhaps with the exception of some Māori properties.

Regional councils are seen as the major driver of extension and planting initiatives, supported by other organisations. Ideally respondents want the economics of growing durable eucalypts to be profitable without any need of grants for planting, but indicated that grants are needed to encourage new planting, with joint ventures considered the best option amongst the various types of planting incentives which are already available, or could be made available in future.

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