



## PREMIER MEDIA STATEMENT

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### **Innovative timber process creates new industry for WA**

Western Australia is to get a new \$80 million manufacturing plant that will produce wood products from plantation timber – replacing old growth hardwood products.

The agreement, signed with Wesbeam, secures the plantation pine timber feedstock at the Neerabup Industrial Estate near Wanneroo, north of Perth.

The facility will produce about 100,000 cubic metres of laminated veneer lumber (LVL) board, plywood and veneer each year. Pine logs, predominantly from the Gngangara Forest, will be supplied to Wesbeam under a 25 year contract with the Forest Products Commission.

Dr Gallop said clearing the pines would also reduce pressure on Gngangara Mound, one of Perth's most valuable water resources.

The LVL project is expected to result in the eventual clear felling of the Gngangara pine plantation, which will increase recharge of the Gngangara aquifer by about 36 gigalitres a year.

"It is an excellent example of how innovative business development is helping add value to a State owned resource and preserve the precious water resource of the Gngangara region," he said.

State Development Minister Clive Brown said that the proposed development would have significant employment and industry development benefits for the region.

"The project will create valuable employment and training opportunities for 140 Western Australians," Mr Brown said.

"Laminated veneer lumber is a high-value engineered wood product made from plantation pine timber.

"Pine logs are peeled into veneers and glued together to form thick sheets of reinforced lumber to produce LVL, a substitute for old growth hardwood timber.

"This is great news for our finite old growth forest resource".

Laminated timber veneer lumber has been successfully used in heavy structural engineering applications such as roof structures and other weight-bearing beams.

Dr Gallop also welcomed the project as the first major development on the Neerabup Industrial Estate, managed by LandCorp on behalf of the State.

Work on the construction of the new facility is expected to start later this year, with operations due to commence in 2004.

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