



## **Press Release - From The Oil Mallee Company of Australia 29<sup>th</sup> June 2004**

### **OMC secures another international mallee planting project.**

A Director of the Japanese Ecological Projects Organization, Dr Tomomitsu Katsuyama said during a recent visit to Australia “EPO is pleased to announce the successful planting of 20 hectares of mallee eucalypts on the Willcocks’ farms near Newdegate in Western Australia’s wheatbelt”.

Dr Katsuyama was present at commencement of planting which involved efforts from local community members, the Newdegate Shire, the OMC and the landowners, Terry, Dot, Bill and Carol Willcocks.

“After investigating many sites around the world for potential planting we chose Western Australia and Newdegate to establish the first planting for our organisation” said Dr Katsuyama during his visit.

“The available land, the need to plant trees to help prevent salinity and the support of local communities and businesses makes this an ideal location to plant trees as carbon sinks.”

“EPO is a not for profit organisation and one of over 20,000 similar non-government bodies.”

“EPO would like to thank the Japanese National Land Afforestation Promotional Organisation and The Oil Mallee Company for their assistance and support.”

The Oil Mallee Company of Australia was formed by the Oil Mallee Association, which has over 1100 members, in 1997. Together these two farmer based organisations have been promoting the establishment of an industry based on Mallee Eucalypt tree crops grown in the Western Australian wheatbelt to reduce salinity for more than a decade.

Professor Syd Shea, the Chairman of The Oil Mallee Company, said that this initial planting was being undertaken by EPO to demonstrate the potential of mallees to absorb carbon dioxide on a large scale and to contribute to reducing salinity.

“Mallee Eucalypts are an ideal tree to create a carbon sink because of their ability to grow at high levels of productivity in low rainfall areas; their capacity to form a large underground sink (the mallee root); and their longevity.

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“Western Australia was one of the best regions in the world to grow trees for the purposes of reducing greenhouse gas emissions,” Professor Shea said.

Professor Shea said that “The Oil Mallee Company had recently planted 2.5 million trees on farmland on behalf of the Kansai Electric Power Company to demonstrate the effectiveness of mallee as a carbon sink. The Japanese Company, which produces more electrical power than the total produced in Australia, paid all costs for the establishment of the trees and is paying farmers an annual lease fee which is at least equal to the value of the agricultural crop that the tree planting replaced.”

“There is no question that there would be a major investment by local and international companies resulting in hundreds of thousands of hectares of mallee eucalypt tree belts established on farmland if Australia signs the Kyoto Protocol. This would result in a major contribution to the amelioration of salinity and would create thousands of new jobs in regional Western Australia” Professor Shea said

Professor Shea said “Tree planting by itself would solve neither salinity nor global warming. There was no doubt, however, that establishing tree crops on a large scale could make a significant contribution to ameliorating both environmental crises. If the strategic plan, developed by the farmer-driven Oil Mallee Company, to plant 2 million hectares of mallee eucalypts in the agricultural region of Western Australia was successful, more than 80 million tonnes of carbon dioxide would be absorbed from the atmosphere each year and salinity would be reduced over more than 10 million hectares.”

A number of the 9 regional nurseries growing mallee seedlings still have stock available for sale. Orders can be placed by ringing 1800 625 511

For further comment please contact Professor Syd Shea on 0403 309 003 or 08 9335 2491