



## **New Forests and Gondwana Genomics Announce Collaboration to Deploy Genetic Technology in Tropical Eucalyptus Plantation Investments**

**CANBERRA AND SINGAPORE – 3 May 2018** – An innovative partnership has been announced between Australian genetics technology firm Gondwana Genomics and timberland investment manager New Forests, seeking to deploy genetic technology to boost productivity in tropical eucalyptus plantations. Following successful demonstrations, the two companies are collaborating on the world’s first large-scale investment in tropical eucalyptus Marker Assisted Selection (MAS), aiming to deliver significant gains in tree plantation productivity and resilience at two New Forests’ investments in Southeast Asia.

New Forests is an Australia-headquartered investment manager responsible for more than AUD 4.5 billion in assets under management across 915,000 hectares of forests and land in Australia, New Zealand, Southeast Asia, and the United States. New Forests’ Singapore office manages the company’s tropical forestry investments and operations in Southeast Asia. Gondwana Genomics is a privately held Australian company using pioneering genetic methods to make next generation tree breeding tools commercially available. The company holds an exclusive license to its MAS technology, which uses targeted DNA sequencing to identify specific genetic traits, such as disease resistance, strength, density, higher pulp yield, and faster growth.

The joint initiative will deploy MAS technology at two of New Forests’ investments from its Tropical Asia Forest Fund. Acacia Forest Industries of Sabah, Malaysia and Mekong Timber Plantations of central Laos will work together with Gondwana Genomics to execute a multi-year program of MAS tree breeding. The program targets improvements in growth, yield, and wood fibre characteristics while also seeking to enhance resilience to pests and disease. The collaboration aims to bring forward targeted growth improvements, resulting in faster growing plantations that achieve higher levels of performance in as little as three to five years, as compared to original targets of five to eight years.

“We are proud that New Forests has encouraged the adoption of our MAS technology at its Southeast Asian timber plantations,” said Robert Southerton, Managing Director at Gondwana Genomics. “As an environmentally responsible and proven technology, MAS is attractive to companies like New Forests who are seeking to enhance commercial returns from plantations but who also consider environmental factors and want healthy, genetically diverse plantations. Our MAS technology helps these plantations break through traditionally long breeding cycles and instead find ways to rapidly maximise yield and plantation quality.”

MAS technology is also known as smart breeding as it enables tree breeders to select for desirable traits and accurately predict the performance of a tree using a DNA test. This MAS approach does not require genetic modification but rather uses genetic sequencing to more accurately and rapidly identify traits in a structured breeding program. MAS technology enables highly targeted cross-breeding, with further tests able to determine whether offspring are inheriting the right genes from each parent, thereby speeding up the development of the next

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generation of elite trees. In commercial application, this can result in rapidly improving plantation quality to meet market and operational demands.

“By coordinating a collaboration among Mekong Timber Plantations, Acacia Forest Industries, and Gondwana Genomics, New Forests can leverage the genetic information of our two tropical eucalyptus plantations to accelerate their breeding programs and get better results faster,” said James Bullen, Director of Investments and Operations for New Forests. “This not only saves time and brings forward cash flows, but it also will help make our plantation investments more resilient, diverse, and adaptable to a combination of market preferences and environmental conditions.”

### **About New Forests**

As global demand for resources grows, there is a need to increase productivity while ensuring the conservation of the world’s remaining natural forests. New Forests seeks to create investment strategies that provide lasting solutions to this challenge. Through responsible management of forests and other real assets, we create shared benefit for investors and local communities alike. We believe that meeting the needs of a broad range of stakeholders will provide better returns over the long term.

New Forests has international reach, with offices and assets in Australia, New Zealand, Southeast Asia, and the US. This gives us a global perspective combined with local expertise that allows us to understand and manage our assets more effectively. Wherever we operate in the world, our strength lies in our people and their drive to make investments that create the best possible outcomes. By investing with integrity and transparency we aim to generate strong returns while helping tackle some of the world’s great sustainability challenges.

To learn more, visit [www.newforests.com.au](http://www.newforests.com.au).

### **About Gondwana Genomics**

Gondwana Genomics is now accelerating plantation performance through long-awaited genetic marker-assisted selection (MAS). Advanced MAS screening technology, developed through decades of plantation research, is now unlocking the genetic potential of trees. Our newly developed next-generation genotyping platform enables commercial scale implementation of testing programs, fast turnaround and high accuracy.

Formed in 2014, Gondwana Genomics is the world’s only provider of these advanced screening techniques, and the only company to have implemented large scale MAS screening in commercial forestry.

To find out more, visit [www.gondwanagenomics.com.au](http://www.gondwanagenomics.com.au)

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