

# Tas AFG 2006 travel emissions offset by tree planting

BY TONY RICHARDSON

Last year's Tasmanian AFG Conference was connected with trees in more ways than one. Given the large number of air flights into Launceston by delegates to attend the conference, TreeSmart Australia took the opportunity to sponsor the conference by offsetting the greenhouse gas emissions associated with travel to and from the conference by delegates. TreeSmart offsets these emissions by financially supporting the establishment and management of farm forestry plantations, destined for eventual harvesting and replanting.

Over 300 delegates attended the conference from all states of Australia, plus a number of delegates from New Zealand and the USA. In total, they travelled nearly 600,000km (most of it by air) to get to and from the conference, and generated nearly 250 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>-equivalent. To offset these emissions, TreeSmart has set aside about 12ha of plantation for 2007 to extract the equivalent amount of CO<sub>2</sub> from the atmosphere and lock it up in the trees. TreeSmart has offered the same sponsorship arrangement for the next AFG conference in 2008 in Albury-Wodonga.

The AFG conference is just one of several conferences whose delegate travel has been offset by TreeSmart, with the Australasian Transport Research Forum being another offset in 2006. Over 80 farm forestry plantations have now signed up their trees with TreeSmart, and will be receiving annual support for the carbon being sequestered in their trees. In addition, newly established plantations in 2007 will receive an Establishment Bonus to help defray some of the upfront costs involved in getting the trees into the ground. The TreeSmart



*Tony Richardson (left) and AFG CE Warwick Ragg: TreeSmart has set aside plantations to offset carbon emissions for delegates' air travel to last year's Tasmanian AFG Conference.*

website ([www.treesmart.com.au](http://www.treesmart.com.au)) now sports an online facility where travellers can buy subscriptions to offset their vehicular or air travel.

TreeSmart will continue its association with Launceston in 2007, by offsetting the emissions associated with air travel by the Hawthorn Football Club as they take players and support staff to Launceston to play four home games at Aurora Stadium.

TreeSmart was also one of six organisations recently selected by the Victorian Government to form a Carbon Offset Panel, whereby emissions from the 6,000 vehicles in the Victorian Government Fleet are offset over a two year period. Such offsetting schemes are a sign of things to come as more governments and private companies start getting serious about doing something to combat global warming.



**Dr. Tony Richardson is a Director of TreeSmart Australia.**