

MALLEE PRODUCT TRIAL A SUCCESS

Verve Energy has announced the successful completion of their work on the 'integrated wood processing' (IWP) demonstration plant at Narrogin. This was a test facility that was used to show whether the process would work on an operational scale. Verve Energy has concluded that the process is viable and have called for expressions of interest from prospective commercial partners, see:

www.verveenergy.com.au/mainContent/sustainableEnergy/futureProjects/iwp.html.

Verve Energy spent some \$19 million and seven years on this development. They saw their process being best applied to biomass supplied from wheatbelt mallee crops. They showed that the IWP process could convert whole mallee biomass (i.e. chipped whole trees) to three products (activated carbon from the wood fraction, eucalyptus oil from the leaves and electricity from the residues). Their goal is now to find commercial partners. All of the IWP development work has been done on mallee and it is anticipated that the first commercial plants will be built in the wheatbelt and will utilise the considerable mallee resource that has been developed since 1994.

Large scale regional industries based on mallee could provide many benefits including a strong commercial driver behind salinity management, regional economic development, carbon sequestration and better environmental outcomes for the wheatbelt.

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