



# Media release

## **The Hon Peter Walsh MP**

Minister for Agriculture and Food Security  
Minister for Water

Friday 25 October 2013

## **Gippsland tree farm secures 10-year China contract**

A West Gippsland tree farm business has signed a 10-year service contract with a Chinese landscaping consortium, demonstrating the value of long-term relationships when doing business with China.

Minister for Agriculture and Food Security Peter Walsh said Blerick Tree Farm signed the agreement with Orisis Landscape at the Victorian Food, Beverage and Agribusiness Showcase in Shanghai.

"Blerick Tree Farm, the family business of Ron Geritz and Michelle Jones, has been working with Orisis Landscape for two years and this is the second 10-year agreement they have secured to provide technical and supply management advice at tree nurseries in China," Mr Walsh said.

"Blerick Tree Farm is also working through export protocols with a future goal of exporting high quality trees propagated at their Neerim South farm to China.

"This would be a high-value expansion of current operation and would generate new jobs at the Neerim South farm."

Mr Geritz said Blerick Tree Farm had focused on domestic supply for nearly two decades and had only explored development opportunities in China for the last two years.

"In the last 18 months we have established 50,000 trees at the Chinese farm, and these have a market value of \$12.5 million," Mr Geritz said.

"Our long term goal would be to supply this amount annually to China, and if successful this would create at least 30 new jobs in Victoria.

"Blerick Tree Farm has invested a lot of time and effort in establishing good relationships with our Chinese friends. We have travelled here many times and we host Orisis representatives to our farm in Victoria at every opportunity.

"Our advice to other businesses keen on exploring opportunities in China is to take advantage of programs like the Super Trade Mission and don't be intimidated by the scale of opportunity."

The Shanghai Victorian Food, Beverage and Agribusiness Showcase was a key activity for the 150 food, beverage and agribusiness delegates who are part of this week's Victorian Government Super Trade Mission to China.

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