



Willow farm to turn out bats

SYDNEY: Australian Test cricket captain Steve Waugh gets his bats from India, but his successor may be able to look closer to home if a new tree planting exercise is successful.

A company called Australian Cricket Bat Willow (ACBW) has planted 17,000 willow trees in an orchard in regional Victoria, aiming to have Australia producing its own cricket bats within seven years.

ACBW wants to raise \$5 million from investors to plant thousands more trees in the next several years.

According to Dr John Lill, chairman of ACBW and former Melbourne Cricket Club secretary, Australia has a rich history in making cricket bats.

He says the 'Salix Alba v Caerula' trees planted on its orchard at Wood Wood, near Swan Hill, are the best willow in the world for cricket bats.