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Australia launches AFWI program with $100M in grant for Forest and Wood Innovations

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To secure sustainable future for forestry



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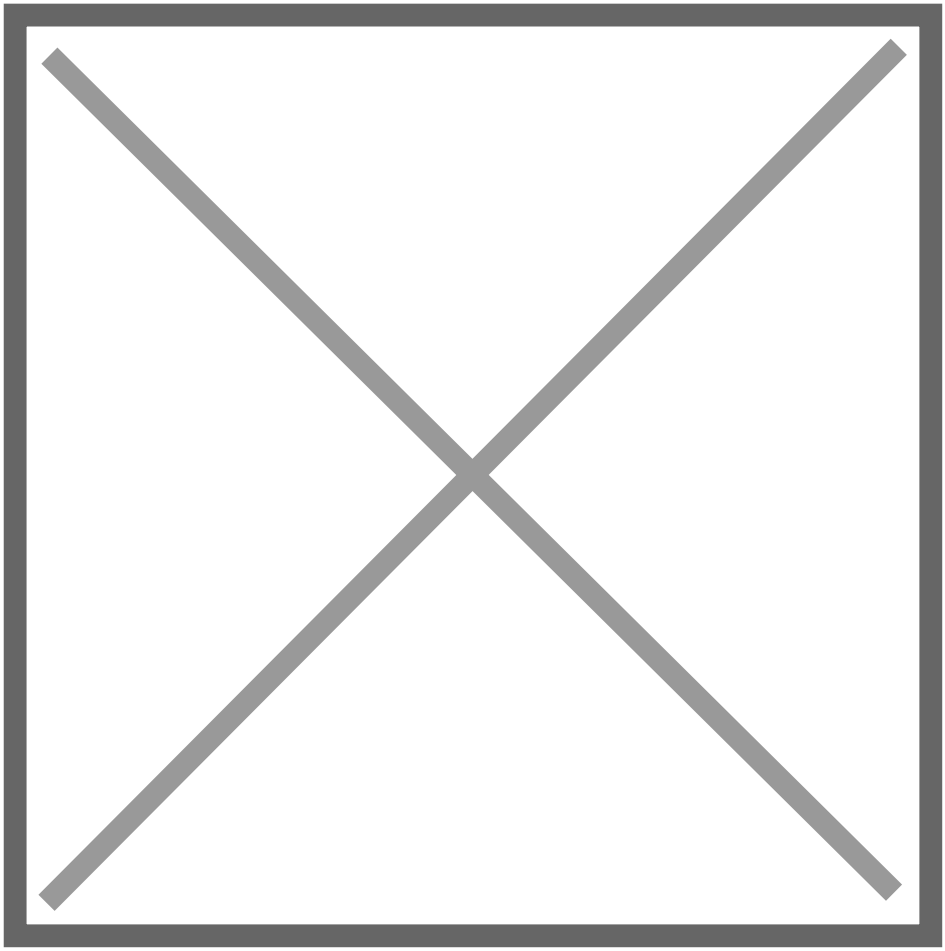
The future of sustainable forestry received a significant boost with the official launch of Australia's $100 million Australian Forest and Wood Innovations (AFWI) program.

AFWI is a collaboration between Australia and the University of Tasmania, committed to advancing research and innovation in Australian forest and wood products. AFWI would also shortly be announcing the opening of the first of four, $5 million annual national open calls for forestry research projects. The annual national open calls will be open to applications from all Australian-based researchers supporting the forest industry, and not be limited to the research centres established by AFWI. AWFI is a key part of this ensuring forestry research and innovation can continue to meet wood and fibre needs into the future.

Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Murray Watt, said the University of Tasmania AFWI Headquarters in Launceston would support a local AFWI research centre, with further centres planned for the University of the Sunshine Coast and the University of Melbourne.

â??Establishing AFWI was an election commitment which we are proud to deliver and forms part of our record $300 million investment in the Australian forestry and forest product sector. This program will support sustainable forestry, while also helping to deliver a future made in Australia. We work towards unlocking the full potential of wood as the ultimate renewable material and growing our forests and forestry industryâ?• Minister Watt said.



The three research centres will undertake research to enhance our production forests and the wood products sourced from them â?? managing and sustainably expanding our Australian forestry resources, transforming wood residues into renewable products and energy solutions â?? all while helping to address the threat of climate change. AFWI will draw on the best researchers and facilities across the nation to ensure Australiaâ??s forest and wood products industries remain on the front foot, supporting applied research, development and innovation.

â??We saw demand for forest products significantly increase during the Covid-19 pandemic â?? increasing production in our sustainably managed plantation estate and product recovery from our sawmills and wood and fibre processing plants will see us better positioned to meet demand into the futureâ?• added Minister Watt.

The AFWI Board is chaired by Bob Gordon and includes nine other members with industry and forestry research experience, an understanding of workersâ?? needs, First Nations perspectives and from the Commonwealth. AFWI will create opportunities for innovation and support the development of researchers to support the sectorsâ?? future, building on the work the existing regional National Institute for Forest Products Innovation centres have already delivered.