

Media Release

Chiefs of Staff, News Directors

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\$14 million in funding flows for national forest industry research training centre

Tasmania's reputation as a leading national centre of research excellence has been further reinforced with the official opening of a new Training Centre for Forest Value, partly funded by a \$3.6 million grant from the Australian Research Council (ARC).

Located at the University of Tasmania and industrial sites such as Electrona, the Industrial Transformation Training Centre for Forest Value will investigate the state of the industry, and help facilitate its shift from a traditional, resource-driven, low-technology base sector to one that is innovative, market-driven and future-focused.

It is a collaboration between the University and seven industry partners. The capacity-building framework created through three new postdoctoral research positions and 10 PhD projects will allow researchers and industry specialists to work closely to secure innovative added value across the supply chain.

The Centre will be led by Professor Jim Reid who said that though Tasmanian-based it would have an impact on a national scale and internationally.

"We are committed to developing innovative ideas and creating tangible change that benefits the Australian economy," he said. "Tasmania is well placed to lead the world in this field."

University of Tasmania Vice-Chancellor Professor Peter Rathjen said the partnership further highlighted the close working relationships which exist between the University and industries, with the ARC grant demonstrating the University's success in leading ground-breaking research and its translation to effective economic benefit.

"This is further proof of the significant research being initiated by the University of Tasmania with our institution by far the most successful in the industrial transformation schemes from the Australian Research Council," he said.

"The value of our income from research keeps us placed in the top 10 of Australia's universities."

Deputy Director of the Centre Professor Mark Hunt said the focus of research and training will be on new forest industries, approaches and products, not the industry which Tasmania historically understands.

The Centre will produce industry-ready PhD students and postdoctoral research fellows with a broad perspective of the forest industry, who will work directly with industry specialists to ensure effective knowledge-sharing and translation to help shape the future of the sector.

Last year the University secured the \$3.6 million grant from the ARC against strong competition from other higher education institutions trying to establish ARC Training Centres, with funds matched by industry, the University and other contributions to reach the \$14 million figure.

Information released by:

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