

## UTAS botanist wins prestigious science award

A UTAS botanist has been awarded the 2008 Clarke Medal for his long standing research on the evolutionary biology and breeding of eucalypts.

Prof. Potts, from the School of Plant Science and the Co-operative Research Centre for Forestry at UTAS, is a world leader in eucalypt biology.

The Clarke Medal has been awarded by the Royal Society of New South Wales since 1878 to honour distinguished research in the natural sciences in Australia.

Prof. Potts specialises in the genetics of the Tasmanian blue gum and has undertaken significant genetic research to back the breeding programs of eucalypts for both pulp and solid wood products.

He has contributed to ground-breaking work on understanding the evolutionary processes by which eucalypts respond to changing environments as well as their conservation genetics.

“Great advances in our understanding of our eucalypt gene pools have been possible through both DNA and statistical approaches over the last decade, with a eucalypt genome currently being sequenced by the US Department of Energy and to be released into the public domain,” Prof. Potts said.

“We are at the threshold of a new understanding of this iconic Australian tree.”

Prof. Potts said one of the challenges now for Australian forest geneticists is to work with the international groups exploring the eucalypt genome, to enhance the flow of information back to Australia for the benefit of the Australian industry, as well as the conservation and management of our native eucalypt genetic resources.

**Prof. Potts is available for interviews today, phone: (03) 6226 2641 or call CRC for Forestry communications on 0410 489 107.**

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