

MEDIA RELEASE

NEWS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA

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ATTENTION: Chiefs of Staff, News Directors



Joint UTAS and Greening Australia media release

Partnership project aims for a greener future

The University of Tasmania and Greening Australia, Tasmania, have secured an Australian Research Council (ARC) grant totalling \$530,000 to create more resilient landscapes and a greener future for the State.

Academics from the UTAS School of Plant Science, Prof. David Bowman, Prof. Brad Potts and Assoc. Prof. Mark Hovenden and Dr Anthony O'Grady (now working with CSIRO) will work with Greening Australia to conduct research to provide an urgently needed scientific framework for proposed large-scale restoration of degraded Tasmanian rural landscapes.

The project will involve landscape scale restoration in strategic habitats involving 100ha of biodiverse plantings of native species and engaging state-of-the-art restoration techniques.

The ARC grant along with matching State Government funding provides a \$1 million platform funding for Stage 1 of Greening Australia's biodiverse carbon sink project in Tasmania, a \$20 million environmental infrastructure project.

CEO of Greening Australia, Jonathan Duddles, said concern about tree decline in the rural landscape is widespread and climate change is predicted to exacerbate the problem.

This research will provide much needed evidence to devise ecologically sustainable tree plantings in southern Australia." Mr Duddles said.

The research leader Prof. Bowman says the project is highly innovative and relevant to tackling rural tree decline throughout Southern Australia.

"We are using Tasmania as a natural laboratory to determine how seedling establishment, tree growth, carbon storage and water use are influenced by landscape setting, management history, climate change, species type and local varieties,"

Specifically the research program will:

- identify priority areas for tree plantings
- determine what tree species can establish in degraded landscapes and which have the capacity to grow in the predicted hotter and drier climates of the late 21st century
- evaluate whether local species are necessarily better than non-local types
- understand the trade-off between tree growth, carbon storage and water use

“Restoration of degraded landscapes is set to play an increasingly important role in tackling climate change,” Prof. Bowman said.

“Our research program is a key step in building capacity in this nationally important form of land management.”

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