

MEDIA RELEASE

NEWS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA

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ATTENTION: Chiefs of Staff, News Directors



Researchers aim to improve drought-tolerance of eucalypt plantations

The challenge to drought-proof Australia's eucalypt plantations has received Federal Government funding as part of a \$1.3m research windfall awarded to the University of Tasmania.

The Australian Research Council has provided \$315,000 to University researchers investigating the breeding of genetically superior plantation stock under the influence of climate change.

The funding for geneticists Professor Brad Potts and Associate Professor René Vaillancourt, from the School of Plant Science, is supported by the Southern Tree Breeding Association, seedEnergy Pty Ltd and PlantPlan Genetics Pty Ltd.

The project aims to provide genetic research to improve eucalypt plantations in Australia for both pulp and solid wood products.

Prof. Potts said while plantations in Australia had rapidly expanded in the last decade, there was increasing international market competition and environmental challenges facing the nation's forests.

“Part of the solution is to improve plantation productivity and adaptation of our plantation species to traditional as well as drier environments through breeding,” he said.

The Plant Science allocation is one of four successful UTAS projects to receive funding for linkage projects involving academics and industry.

Other projects are:

- The National Centre for Marine Conservation and Resource Sustainability - based at the University's Australian Maritime College - in partnership with the Tasmanian Salmonoid Growers Association and Ridley Aqua-Feed, which has received \$328,275 to improve vaccine performance for the economic and environmental sustainability of the Australian salmon industry.
- The School of Engineering, with partners Incat and Revolution Design, have been allocated \$290,000 to develop computer and model testing for improved prediction of structural loads for freight and military transport vessels exposed to recent severe wave conditions.

- The Australian Centre for Research on Separation Science (within the School of Chemistry), with support of industry partner Pfizer, has received \$384,275 to explore new ways to analyse pharmaceuticals during the production and quality control stages of drug development. These studies will assist the development and production of safer drugs.

For more Information:

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