



Senator the Hon. Richard Colbeck
Assistant Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources
Senator for Tasmania

MEDIA RELEASE

Growing forestry education on International Day of Forests

The Australian Liberal National Government is delivering \$200,000 for two new education initiatives in partnership with Forest and Wood Products Australia (FWPA) to educate the next generation to help the industry thrive into the future.

Assistant Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources, Senator Richard Colbeck, said the new National University Challenge for timber products and a virtual reality (VR) tool for forestry education would grow opportunities for students and the industry.

“Today is International Day of Forests, with the theme for 2019 being Forests and Education, so it is fitting that today the Australian Liberal National Government is bringing forestry to the fore in the classroom and university laboratories.

“Education is key part of our new \$20 million National Forest Industries Plan to deliver a billion new trees over the next decade.

“This is through tertiary education and more broadly through our schools and communities.

“Firstly, the Australian Liberal National Government is delivering a new National University Challenge, in partnership with Forest and Wood Products Australia (FWPA).

“The Challenge will offer financial prizes totalling \$100,000 for researchers under 35 developing new timber-based products.

“Wood is the ultimate renewable and we are already seeing it used as a sustainable alternative to concrete, steel and petroleum in a number of applications.

“The Challenge will offer an incentive for our blue-sky thinkers to make the next big breakthrough in developing new renewable timber-based products.

“Secondly, the Australian Liberal National Government is delivering a new virtual reality education tool to bring the opportunities of the forest economy into our classrooms.

“One of the key competitive advantages of the new initial Regional Forestry Hubs is their people – maintaining and developing a skilled forestry workforce is key to the future of the industry.

“The ForestVR project will bring the scope of the opportunities available in forestry to students in classrooms in North/North West Tasmania, South West Western Australia, the Green Triangle and North East New South Wales.

“We need to encourage more young people to study forestry and the related skills that will be needed in the industry in the future.

“The National University Challenge and the ForestVR will encourage the next crop of bright minds to discover the breakthrough ideas to create jobs and economic opportunities in Australia’s forest industry.”

More information on the UN International Day of Forests:

www.un.org/en/events/forestsday

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