



MEDIA RELEASE

Researchers urge targeted allocation of forest industry assistance

Decision makers have been urged to use the findings of new research to inform distribution of financial and other assistance as part of implementing Tasmania's 'forests peace deal'.

New research from the Cooperative Research Centre (CRC) for Forestry found that job losses are accelerating in the industry. Job losses to the end of May bring to 3500—or 50 per cent—the total number of jobs lost since the start of the downturn affecting the industry, in 2008.

A number of communities highly dependent on the forest industry are already exposed to negative consequences, such as loss of population as people leave to find work elsewhere, or high unemployment rates for those who stay, but cannot find alternative employment.

"To ensure a viable future for Tasmania's new forest industry, and the resilience of communities that rely on the forest industry, it's vital to provide appropriate levels and types of support, appropriately targeted," said report author Dr Jacki Schirmer*.

"Our research found that most businesses feel able to adapt to change, if given the time and resources to do so. A clear and adequate timeframe to implement change is needed to ensure the industry can adapt to a fundamentally different operating environment."

Dr Schirmer said that until the implementation of the agreement signed this week, uncertainty will continue to affect the industry, with implications for business confidence, and flow-on effects to regional communities.

"The lack of certainty associated with ongoing negotiations about the future of the forest industry has in recent months exacerbated the impacts of the downturn and contributed to the decline in employment and business activity in the industry, with many businesses putting investment and planning on hold," Dr Schirmer said.

The research was part-funded by the Federal Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF), to enable the study to form part of the due diligence assessment of the Principles Statement. The research findings will be presented at a free public seminar in Hobart today.

Ends, 27 July 2011

The report author, Dr Jacki Schirmer, is available to discuss key findings in Hobart TODAY (27 July).

More...

The CRC for Forestry is established and supported under the Australian Government's Cooperative Research Centres Program. www.crcforestry.com.au

Dr Jacki Schirmer leads the CRC for Forestry's 'Communities' project, and is a Research Fellow at the Australian National University.

For more information, contact:

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Public seminar details:

Date: Wednesday 27 July
Time: 5.30–6.30 pm
Venue: [Dechaineux Theatre \(School of Art\) \(click to view map\)](#)
Hunter Street, Hobart