
Socio-economic impacts of plantations

Two seminars will be hosted by the CRC for Forestry in Tasmania this week that highlight the results of a project, "Socio-economic impacts of plantations", which was undertaken by the Bureau of Rural Sciences and funded by the Forest and Wood Products Research and Development Corporation.

The study, launched by Australian Government Minister for Forestry Senator Ian Macdonald on 9 November, accessed and analysed independent data to answer key questions about the socio-economic impacts of plantations in two case study regions: one experiencing rapid expansion of plantation estate (the Great Southern region of Western Australia), and the second with a mature plantation industry where harvesting and processing activities have been expanding (the South West Slopes of New South Wales).

During the seminars in Tasmania this week, Ms Schirmer will address:

- What questions communities ask about impacts of plantations
- Challenges when embarking upon a study in this area
- Results about the impacts of plantation industry expansion on:
 - Population change
 - Service provision
 - Employment and spending
 - Rural land prices.

Since completing these studies for the Bureau of Rural Sciences, Ms Schirmer has taken up a new job co-ordinating the CRC for Forestry's Communities project. The CRC for Forestry, with head quarters in Hobart, is currently planning long-term social studies as part of its Communities project, with Tasmania planned to be a key case study region.

The Communities project aims to:

- Understand the costs and benefits of commercial forestry,
- Understand community attitudes in regard to commercial forestry, and how these change, and
- Develop feasible and effective strategies for industrial partners to engage local communities.

The Communities project will be undertaken by researchers based at the Australian National University, the University of Melbourne and the University of Tasmania.

The seminars will be held at the following times and places:

- Launceston on Tuesday 13 December from 5:30-7:00pm at the University of Tasmania campus (Lecture Theatre 7 [LT7], Environmental Science/Aquaculture Building)

- Hobart on Wednesday 14 December from 12:30-1:30pm at the CRC for Forestry seminar room, College Road, Sandy Bay.

The two case study reports, "Socio-economic impacts of plantation forestry in the Great Southern region" (144 pages) and "Socio-economic impacts of plantation forestry in the South West Slopes of New South Wales" (136 pages), plus three summary booklets, can be downloaded from <http://www.fwprdc.org.au/>

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