

# The Institute of Foresters of Australia

ABN 48 083 197 586

## Media Release

### Time for a tree change (28-04-2010)



The Forestry Scholarship Fund has been officially launched with the awarding of two scholarships for 2010. The Forestry Scholarship Fund is an initiative of the Institute of Foresters of Australia (IFA) in response to declining enrolments in University forestry programs.

IFA President Dr Peter Volker commented 'Universities are facing immediate challenges in sustaining forestry education in Australia due to low student numbers in undergraduate degree courses. The Forestry Scholarship Fund is the first step in increasing the attractiveness of studying forest science.'

It is estimated that Australia requires more than 50 forestry graduates per year to sustain current work force requirements and to sustain a viable research capacity in future. The current number of forestry graduates Australia-wide is less than 20. Dr Volker says "The forestry skill shortage applies across the range of specialist disciplines in forest related occupations including ecology, production, fire management, forest hydrology and wood processing."

The Forestry Scholarship Fund has awarded two inaugural undergraduate scholarships with a total value of \$10,000. The recipients of the A3P and IFA funded scholarships are Andrew Egan and Nicholas Rudder, 1<sup>st</sup> year forestry science students at Southern Cross University.

The Forestry Scholarship Fund has been established with donations from A3P, Forests NSW, CRC Forestry and The Institute of Foresters of Australia. Further donations are being sought from industry and individuals with an interest in sustaining forestry education in Australia.

More scholarships are being offered for 2011. Applications will be open to all new and existing students enrolled or intending to enrol in undergraduate or post graduate forestry programs.

The Forestry Scholarship Fund follows the establishment of the National Forestry Masters Program as a means to attract forestry students. The National Forestry Masters Program is aimed at graduates who are looking for a career change; these could be described as genuine tree-changers.

Dr Volker says 'A forestry degree offers many opportunities to work throughout Australia and overseas managing native and plantation forests. The face of forestry is changing and a professional forester will be involved in implementing ecologically sustainable forest management across all forest tenures. With the advent of the carbon economy, forests have a very important role and professional foresters will be at the forefront of new opportunities. Career advisers, science teachers and parents should be letting students know what a great opportunity is out there for them.'

The Forestry Scholarship Fund, which has tax-deductible status, receives, manages and disburses scholarship funds on behalf of donors. Further information on the Forestry Scholarship Fund and forestry careers is available from the Institute of Foresters of Australia <http://www.forestry.org.au>.



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