

Australia announces \$5 Million national open call for forest research

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Australia is aiming at establishing new high-value wood products with the launch of forestry research projects. The first of four \$5 million national open calls began on 17th May.

The annual national open calls are open to applications from all Australian-based researchers supporting the forest and wood product industries, and is not limited to the AFWI research centres. Project applications close on 12 July, 2024. For further details on this funding scheme, including eligibility requirements, refer to the relevant Grant Guidelines and Application form template on the AFWI website.

The funding is part of Governments grant agreement with the University of Tasmania (UTAS) to establish and manage the \$100 million Australian Forest and Wood Innovations (AFWI). Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Murray Watt said the open call will allow industry and researchers to undertake projects that will make a positive impact on Australia's forest and wood product industries.

"We've cast the net wide to ensure a broad range of Australians get the chance to share their ideas on how to propel the industry forward. Establishing AFWI was an election commitment which we are proud to deliver and forms part of our record \$300 million investment in the industry. This program will help to deliver a sustainable future for the industry, by helping to unlock the full potential of wood as the ultimate renewable material, while also supporting a future made in Australia," Minister Watt said.

University of Tasmania Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) Professor Anthony Koutoulis said this funding presents an

opportunity for researchers to develop novel and impactful ideas that support the sustainable production of wood products.

"AFWI is committed to fostering innovation and empowering researchers to enhance the research capacity and capability in the forest and wood products sector now and into the future. Encouraging collaboration between researchers and industry is vital for impactful projects. With robust industry support and anchoring research on what really matters, research outcomes become readily applicable, ensuring lasting benefits for Australian communities." Professor Koutoulis said.