

FORESTER WINS VICTORIA FELLOWSHIP

Dr David Forrester is on a mission to find a way to grow high value wood products from Australia's *Eucalyptus* plantations.

Australia has a \$2 billion trade deficit in forest products. The last 10 years has seen a 23% decline in hardwood sawlog production from native forests. The majority of the country's *Eucalyptus* plantations are used to produce wood chips for paper products.

The postdoctoral research fellow based at the University of Melbourne's Department of Forest and Ecosystem Science is investigating how to improve the sustainability and value of the country's native timber plantations. He is internationally recognised as an expert on mixed species plantations with eucalypts and wattles.

Now 30, Dr Forrester is one of six young Victorian scientists to win a prestigious 2008 Victoria Fellowship. He received the Fellowship on Wednesday 13 August at a gala function at Government House from the Governor of Victoria, Professor David de Kretser, AC.

The Victoria Fellowships, worth \$18,000 each, were first awarded by the Victorian Government in 1998 to recognise young researchers with leadership potential and to enhance their future careers, while developing new ideas which could offer commercial benefit to Victoria.

Dr Forrester will use his Fellowship to travel to Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Uruguay – all of which boast an international reputation for advanced *Eucalyptus* plantation management.

"These countries are world leaders in managing eucalypt plantations to produce high quality timber, which can be used for many purposes other than woodchips. These countries are also investigating novel techniques to reduce energy costs and carbon emissions," he said.

"This is crucial for the timber industry that supports one of Australia's largest manufacturing sectors employing over 80,000 people. Demand for wood products is growing in Australia and globally."

Dr Forrester has wanted to work in forestry since he was young, when he developed an interest in growing plants and understanding how they respond to their environment. He now aims to use this knowledge to work out how to improve the way we manage the trees in our landscape.

Dr Forrester will share his Fellowship findings with the forest and forest product industry, other forest scientists and undergraduate and postgraduate students at the University of Melbourne.

He went to school in Canberra where he also studied at the Australian National University for his Bachelor of Science (Forestry) and postgraduate studies. He is a member of the CRC for Forestry, the Institute of Foresters of Australia and was a member of the now completed CRC for Greenhouse Accounting. He lives in Ivanhoe, Melbourne.

MEDIA INQUIRIES: PENNY UNDERWOOD 03 9818 8540.