

The Institute of Foresters of Australia

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Critical shortage of foresters

The Institute of Foresters of Australia (IFA) will be staging a Tertiary Forestry Education Summit at the Australian National University in Canberra on Tuesday 20 May.

The Institute is holding the Summit to bring together key stakeholders to address the critical shortage of professional foresters caused by the lack of students enrolling for tertiary forestry education courses.

Representatives of the forestry industry, governments, academia, students, forestry organisations and IFA members will attend the Summit.

Members of the IFA and University providers of tertiary forestry education observed a diminishing number of students entering tertiary forestry education courses despite high demand for professional foresters in the industry and government agencies.

Forestry requires a high level of specialization and diversity among course providers. Unfortunately current University funding models in Australia have made it extremely difficult for any one University to provide this, without adequate student numbers.

It is estimated that an intake of about 50 to 80 students will be required each year to justify the continued existence of forestry courses at Australian Universities and to supply the demand.

“This is another example of a critical skills shortages facing Australia in the near future” said IFA President Dr Peter Volker. “Foresters receive specialised training which enables them to manage Australia’s unique forests for production and conservation outcomes. Australia needs well –trained foresters to tackle head on, the issues of climate change, fire, water availability and sustainable forestry” he said.

The IFA has taken the lead role in holding the Summit and addressing the problem and believes that positive and urgent action needs to be taken to rectify the current critical situation.

For further information contact:



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(The venue is the Fenner School of Environment and Society, Linnaeus Way, Australian National University on Tuesday 20 May 2008 from 10.30am to 5.30pm. The media is most welcome. Lunch time at 1.00pm might be the most appropriate time for interviews/photos)