



Media release

'Foresters Without Borders' - Australian Foresters assisting Vanuatu forestry recovery

Australia's professional foresters are assisting the Pacific Island nation of Vanuatu to rebuild its forestry sector after the devastation of Cyclone Pam earlier this year.

The Institute of Foresters of Australia has raised more than \$16,000 through crowd funding to assist Vanuatu as part of its 'Foresters without Borders' initiative.

The Institute is the peak national body for professional foresters and other professionals operating in associated sectors and is committed to the principles of responsible and sustainable forest management.

At its April national conference the Institute established 'Foresters Without Borders' as a priority program to provide assistance to countries in the Asia Pacific region, based on the view that sound forest management transcended national borders.

The Institute's President, Rob de Fégely said Australia's professional foresters had much to offer in the form of technical and scientific expertise, as well as an ability to raise funds.

"Following endorsement of the initiative at the conference in April, Institute members had contributed to the crowd funding and the money was now being handed over the Vanuatu Forestry Department," Mr de Fegely said.

"The funds would be used for the repair and reconstruction of buildings and nurseries and provide nursery materials to help growers produce additional trees to reforest areas damaged by the severe cyclone.

"The funding will enable the Department of Forests and members of the Vanuatu Foresters' Association to re-build and support growers whose livelihoods had been affected by the cyclone.

"This with other professional assistance will help Vanuatu in its quest to become self-sufficient in agriculture and forestry."

Mr de Fégely said Vanuatu's Director of Forests, Hannington Tate, had written to the Australian Institute, thanking members for their assistance and inviting a delegation to the island nation to discuss further assistance.

Mr Tate said the initial funding would be of great assistance as the country commenced the rebuilding process.

The IFA is Australia's professional body for foresters and other forestry professionals



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IFA member and Fellow David Wood has recently returned from Vanuatu where he discussed the Foresters Without Borders initiative with the country's Department of Forestry and senior forestry personnel. He has made a number of recommendations regarding the funding and these will now be considered and developed.

Mr de Fégely said the assistance was just one example of how the Institute and its members could contribute to effective forestry and forest land management in the Asia Pacific region.

"The Institute of Foresters of Australia is committed to the principles of responsible and sustainable forest management and the processes and practices that translate these principles into real outcomes.

"We are determined to pursue these principles throughout Australia and internationally through our 'Foresters Without Borders' initiative," he said.

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