



VIC EVENT OPTIMISM & EXPANSION: FOREST RESEARCH REPOSITIONING AUSTRALIAN FORESTRY

5 JUNE 2025

On 5 June, 14 members welcomed **Professor Mark Brown** at The Last Jar Hotel, where he outlined the expansion of the University of the Sunshine Coast (UniSC) and their focus on applied research through the Forest Research Institute, which has five centres:

1. Tropical Forests and People.
2. Nature-based Solutions (NBS, looking at carbon, biodiversity, water, and people).
3. Forest Industries Research Centre.
4. Timber Durability.
5. AFWI Centre for Sustainable Forestry and Wood Products.

Professor Brown spoke about the impacts of UniSC's research and gave some examples:

- Biosecurity and forest health research on processes for Australia, Laos, Ethiopia, and others (*Madeleine Healy & Simon Lawson*).

(cont.)



Gordon Davis & Professor Mark Brown



Jocelyn Pohl & Claudia Giraldo



Karl Kny & Jo Lewis



Pia Angelike & Liam Costello

- Reforestation in the Philippines at a watershed level using tropical silviculture systems and carbon sequestration.
- Integrated Pest Management (IPM) approaches for plantation forestry, including the use of drones (*Sam van Holsbeeck*).
- Novel resi-tool data processing to predict timber quality at an early stage of tree growth (*David Lee & Vilis Gervilas*).
- Forest Operations Research Alliance (AFORA) – an industry alliance guiding and funding research activities in forest operations, transport, and logistics (e.g. real-time LIDAR in harvesting machines; mechanical planting to be cost-effective and linking the nursery supply chain, plus individual tree mapping).
- Beef & tree silvopastoral systems with mixed hardwoods, Caribbean pine, and private native forest with Meat & Livestock Australia (*David Lee*), achieving equivalent meat production, carbon sequestration, and longer-term timber outcomes.
- Bringing treated timber into the circular economy – a cooperative project with the Centre for Durability and Design Life, FWPA, and timber producers and users.

Professor Brown also spoke about other major collaborations, including:

- International Energy Agency Bioenergy Technology Collaboration Program to understand the role of bioenergy systems in the energy transition.
- AFWI partnership, where the UniSC Forest Research Institute will have a budget of \$24.5M from 2023/24 to 2026/27, with a focus on sustainably growing the national timber supply and developing timber products for carbon-friendly buildings.

After the presentation, members and friends enjoyed a relaxed meal and further discussion.