

Foreword

The establishment of the Warra Long-Term Ecological Research Site is one of Australia's most significant recent forestry research projects.

From a policy perspective, it is always difficult to allocate resources to long-term research. Cost/benefit analysis generally dictates shorter term projects with shorter term pay-back. The Warra project involves a leap of faith. It involves a commitment to the value of ideas in the long-term. It involves a commitment to future generations. The Warra research project is about investing now so that future generations can make informed decisions on forest use.

An important feature of Warra has been the significant involvement of a range of organisations at the early planning stages. Joining this Forestry Tasmania initiative have been the Bureau of Rural Sciences, University of Tasmania, Department of Primary Industries, Water and Energy, CSIRO Forestry and Forest Products and the Forests and Forest Industry Council. The involvement of a cross-section of State and national organisations in the very early stages of designing the Warra project ensures the best minds and the best resources have been applied at the outset.

The cooperation between researchers will ensure that a network is developed and ownership of the Site is shared broadly. This network and wider ownership should ensure the longevity of the research commitments.

The results of the Warra studies will have implications for immediate questions on forest sustainability. The results will also provide a basis for longer term considerations and monitoring of trends at the forest landscape level.

The Warra Site, which is predominantly a *Eucalyptus obliqua* forest, will have implications for how wet eucalypt forests can be managed. However, the basic forest ecological knowledge that is gained should have wider application in a range of other forest types.

There is a strong focus in the research work on the biological sciences, on understanding ecological processes, and on understanding the economic implications of various forest management strategies. Importantly, Warra also embraces assessment of social perspectives. It is the integration of the biological sciences, economics and social assessment that can genuinely lead to holistic responses to the important public forestry issues.

It is pleasing to note that more than 60 individuals from over 20 organisations are conducting research on the Site. This volume of *Tasforests* is a window into the progress that has been made in the few short years since the Site was established. We hope that the Warra Long-Term Ecological Research Site will provide a focus for researchers around the world to share ideas, to develop perspectives on forest management and to help inform communities both today and in future generations.

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