

## Media Release

15 June 2022

### University of Sunshine Coast researcher wins national forest industries award

The Australian Forest Products Association (AFPA) congratulates Dr Sam Van Holsbeeck of the University of the Sunshine Coast's Forest Research Institute on winning the [Blue-Sky Young Researcher Innovation Award](#), becoming Australia's national competition winner.

Organised by AFPA, the Australian national competition is the first stage of the highly prestigious international competition sponsored by the International Council of Forest and Paper Associations (ICFPA). Dr Van Holsbeeck will progress to the international round, where three winners from around the world will be chosen and have the opportunity to share their projects at the ICFPA CEO Global Roundtable in April/May 2023.

Dr Van Holsbeeck's project investigates the potential availability and market feasibility of utilising currently unused woody biomass from Australian sandalwood plantations to supply local business with biomass feedstock. Sandalwood plantations contain multiple species of plants, that are used as hosts for the hemiparasitic sandalwood, which is considered a waste product when the sandalwood is harvested. This creates a potential source of biomass that is currently not utilised.

"As we have seen from the COVID-pandemic and the tragedy in Ukraine, supply chain shock waves have reverberated around the world, meaning local timber resource supply is incredibly important, not just for sustainability but for economic resilience. Sam's research will ultimately help local Australian suppliers get more out of their plantations and open up exciting opportunities for local manufacturing of forest products," AFPA CEO Ross Hampton said.

"This is pioneering forest industries research that's much needed in Australia, which is why AFPA worked so hard to secure \$100 million in government funding for the new National Institute for Forest Products Innovation (NIFPI) during the federal election campaign.

"On behalf of Australia's forest industries, I congratulate Dr Sam Van Holsbeeck on winning the national competition and progressing to the world stage. We'll be cheering for him at the ICFPA Global Roundtable!"

Dr Van Holsbeeck was awarded the Australian leg of the competition at the AFPA-Timber Queensland June Forest Industries Dinner in Brisbane in front of hundreds of national forest industries representatives and stakeholders.

**ENDS**