

# Media Release

## Spotlight on Staff – Megan Graham

For forestry professional Megan Graham, the forestry and timber industry is not just about the trees, but also very much about the people who care about forests and timber.

“Working in forestry means working with people, because our forests are always going to be closely intertwined with peoples lives, either directly or indirectly,” Megan said.

As a young adult, Megan discovered forestry through a happy coincidence when she met a slew of tree planters whilst living in the Canadian ski fields.

“They looked like they were having a wow of a time” Megan said.

It was during this time that she saw the connection between tree planting and a globally important industry, which ultimately began her career in forestry.

On her return to Australia, Megan obtained a degree in Applied Science at Charles Sturt University and went on to further her skills in a number of forestry roles before completing her Masters in Forest Ecosystem Science at The University of Melbourne.

“I have worked in a range of forestry roles over the years which began with tree planting, then continued with establishing firewood plantations, agro-forestry, managing wetlands and wood production innovation,” Megan said

“But it was not until I began my Masters that I really started to understand the complexity of forest management both in Australia and abroad. One of the highlights of my Masters study was the opportunity to study in Asia and secure a forestry internship in Singapore. I then went on to work in Vietnam and Thailand” she said.

“The differences between forestry practices and standards in Australia and Asia became quickly apparent and they are significant,” Megan said.

“Through this experience it really hit home just how stark the differences between Australia and Asia are, with respect to cost structures, the scale and intensity of operations, worker safety, environmental impact and forest management standards” she said.

Megan said that Australia is held to some of the world’s highest standards in forest management.

“This is something we can really be proud of,” Megan said. “When abroad, I found it sad and confronting when I saw standards of forest management that were very clearly inadequate for both the local people and the health of the forest” she said.

Megan said she gained valuable career experience through her work in south-east Asia and it was an eclectic and fascinating place to live and work. “I was fortunate to be able to visit manufacturing facilities such as China’s largest paper mill, stunning landscapes and some really interesting forestry initiatives in the course of my work,” she said.

Now as the External Relations Manager for VicForests, Megan is at the forefront of this dynamic industry. She is able to apply her hands-on knowledge to work towards addressing the competing needs of VicForests many stakeholders.



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“A highlight of my career has been my work with Aboriginal groups, in order to better incorporate their values, knowledge, culture and beliefs into our forest management practices. I've been very privileged to have been shown some amazing Indigenous sites both in Australia and abroad,” she said.

Megan believes a focus on stakeholder relations is important for forestry world-wide. Working with communities, and other stakeholders, can improve our understanding of how forestry impacts them and how we can better contribute to the sustainable development for our growing global population.

“I am proud to work in an industry that provides so many benefits to Victoria. Forests are an integral part of our lives. I'm in a fortunate position if I can help VicForests deliver positive outcomes for Victoria's forests, and our communities,” she said.