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Guy Barnett, Minister for Resources

Renewed Confidence Sees More Investment in Native Forest Sector

Further evidence today of renewed confidence in forestry as the State's largest native forest sawmiller backed the Government's plan to grow the industry.

A key part of the Liberal Government's Plan to end the subsidies to Forestry Tasmania is to better utilise the private sector to invest in and grow our vital forestry industry.

Neville Smith Forest Products operates a green sawmill in the Huon, a finishing plant at Mowbray, and a woodchip export plant at Bell Bay through subsidiary company SmartFibre.

Executive chairman James Neville Smith says the Government's plan for sustainable forestry offers significant opportunity for private sector investment in the transition to a new higher-value industry of the future.

"We need to move forward and the Government is opening the way. It will be up to industry to take up the opportunities and run with them," Mr Smith said.

The SmartFibre partnership with SFM Forest Products is leading the way.

SmartFibre is investing \$3 million in expansion at Bell Bay as it gears up for its latest value-adding venture – a ground-breaking partnership with SFM to deliver Tasmania's first native forest exports carrying full FSC certification.

The SmartFibre PureForest project is aiming for initial market volume of 250,000 tonnes – 12,500 tonnes of sawlog, 37,500 tonnes of peelers and 200,000 tonnes of woodchips – all from private land and all carrying full FSC Forest Management certification through SFM's group certification scheme.

The SmartFibre PureForest project is on top of a \$1.3 million investment by Neville Smith Forest Products in a new pellet plant at Mowbray, as well as a garden stake line at Southwood, to extract higher values from native forest residues.

The value-adding and expansion program is expected to create more than 30 additional jobs across the company and in associated forest management and harvesting operations.

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