

Environmental monitoring gets 'standard gauge' solution

An Australian Terrestrial Ecosystem Research Network (TERN), based at the University of Queensland and backed by \$55 million in Federal Government funding, will give researchers the tools they need to better understand Australia's terrestrial ecosystems and biodiversity, and how they adapt to challenges such as climate change.



Parliamentary Secretary for Innovation and Industry Richard Marles, TERN Board Chair Andrew Campbell and TERN Director Professor Stuart Phinn, launching TERN in Samford Valley, Brisbane, April 2010.

TERN will also enable Australian research agencies and universities with programs in ecosystem science to work together in a nationally coordinated way for the first time.

Andrew Campbell, TERN Board Chair and former CEO of Land & Water Australia, says TERN will do for ecosystem research what the standard gauge did for railway travel in Australia.

'Australia will be at the forefront of not only monitoring the environment but making rational eco-decisions based on a sound understanding of critical processes of terrestrial environmental change.'

One of the goals of TERN is to establish a 'community infrastructure' for ecosystem monitoring through a series of facilities across Australia that will allow different groups to access and compile quality, standard data. 'Such collaboration is a very different way of doing science in the terrestrial ecosystem field, but it will allow the scientists to do great science that was not conceivable before,' said Campbell.

Interim TERN Director, Professor Stuart Phinn from the University of Queensland, said that the network will include access to satellite earth observation data. 'The [Federal Government] funds will enable a consortium of talented ecosystem scientists from all states and territories to inform the people who are expected to sustainably manage and

protect Australia's natural resources.'

TERN partners include a number of Australian universities, various State and Federal Government departments (such as the Commonwealth Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry), the Australian Bureau of Meteorology and Geoscience Australia.

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