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FORESTRY EDUCATION AT THE AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL
UNIVERSITY

Statement by the Prime Minister, the Rt. Hon. Sir Robert Menzies

The Prime Minister, Sir Robert Menzies, announced today that the Government, following agreement with the Australian National University, has approved that the functions of the Australian Forestry School will be carried out by the Australian National University.

The Australian National University will establish a Department of Forestry in the Faculty of Science or the School of General Studies. The Department will teach all years of a four-year forestry degree course for its own students and will, by arrangement with State universities, accept students for the final two years of the course who have completed the first two years of an approved course in any of those universities. It will also engage in research and post-graduate training. The Australian National University will establish a body to advise the Faculty of Science on the professional aspects of forestry education which will include in its membership the heads of forest services of the participating States and other persons knowledgeable of forestry education and the forestry profession.

The University has advertised for a professor who will be head of a department of forestry. It is hoped that an appointment can be made before the beginning of the 1965 University session.

Arrangements for the University to take over the functions of the School will be put in hand immediately, but the University does not wish to make firm decisions on the development of forestry education before a professor of forestry has been appointed.

The existing teaching and supporting technical and clerical staff of the Australian Forestry School will be offered appointments at the appropriate level in the School of General Studies at the University. The physical plant and equipment of the Forestry School will be transferred to the University, and for the period of three years at least the University will use the teaching and residential buildings at present used by the Forestry School at Yarralumla, Canberra.

CANBERRA,
2nd August, 1964.

BACKGROUND

The Australian Forestry School is a branch of the Forestry and Timber Bureau, which is now a Division of the Department of National Development. It was founded by the Commonwealth Government in 1925 at the request of the Premiers of the States to provide a National centre for higher forestry education. It replaced the Forestry School at the University of Adelaide, which University provided the only Australian degree course in forestry from 1911 to 1925. The University of Adelaide generously consented to transfer this function to the Commonwealth Government.

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The Forestry School gives the third and fourth years of a four-year course in forestry. Students accepted at the School must have completed at least two years of basic science training at one of the State universities, or have an equivalent background. Each of the older State Universities makes use of the School to give the third and fourth years of their four-year degree course in forestry. Students who complete the course are awarded a degree in forestry from their home university and also a Diploma in Forestry by the Commonwealth Government.

Since the establishment of the School of General Studies within the Australian National University, Commonwealth and State Governments have thought it appropriate that the functions of School should be associated with the University. The Australian Forestry School has gained a significant reputation throughout the world and forestry is widely accepted as a suitable academic subject in many of the world universities. Discussions with the State Governments have shown that all of them except Victoria are prepared to make use of the Department of Forestry in the Australian National University to meet their needs for a basic degree in forestry for their Forest Service officers at least until 1969. It is understood that in Victoria the practice will continue that some officers of the State Forest Service will complete a forestry degree by a course at the University of Melbourne after completing their course at the Victorian School of Forestry, Creswick.
