

Future Timber Hub tour highlights commitment to research investment

Driving the uptake of mass timber construction systems

THE ARFC Future Timber Hub at the University of Queensland is helping bridge the gap between tall and residential buildings, with development of mid-rise systems that blend mass timber with stick frame construction.

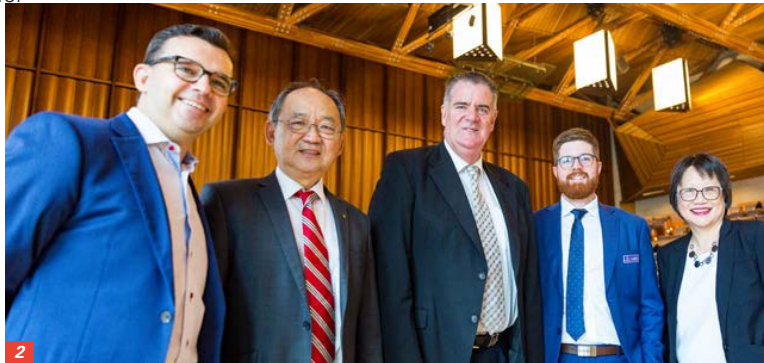
A 'refresher' tour of the hub last month by Queensland Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries Mark Furner and senior DAF managers highlighted the research investment in the facility since it was launched in 2017.

Mr Furner said innovation and creativity would be drivers of a sustainable timber manufacturing industry.

"This is the sort of ingenuity we need to see to make sure the timber industry continues to be a significant driver of employment in Queensland," he said.

"The industry knows that evolution is necessary if it is to thrive, and the Queensland government continues to stand shoulder to shoulder with industry to make those outcomes a reality."

Dr Joe Gattas, chief investigator of the Future Timber Hub and senior lecturer at UQ, led the presentation and tour along with Professor Sritawat Kitipornchai, director of the hub, members of the board, and other chief investigators and partner investigators of research projects within the



1/ Talking Timber Hub... Dr Joe Gattas, UQ, Mark Furner MP, and Dr Rob McGavin, DAF Salisbury Research Facility.

2/ Research tour... Professor Carlo Prato, acting head, UQ's school of civil engineering, Professor Sritawat Kitipornchai, director, ARC Future Timber Hub, Mark Furner, Minister for Agricultural Industry Development, Dr Joe Gattas, chief investigator, Future Timber Hub, and Professor Vicki Chen, executive dean of the faculty of engineering, architecture and information technology.

3/ Inspecting 'tiny house' 3ePanels... DAF deputy director-general Greame Bolton, Mark Furner MP, and associate professor Dilum Fernando, UQ.

hub.

"The hub's direction aligns with other initiatives by DAF to equip Queensland's forestry and timber manufacturing industries with the next generation of construction technology," Mr Gattas said.

The tour also highlighted the strong collaboration between

Dr Gattas said the hub was a unique research partnership that brought together experts from across the entire timber supply chain, from primary producer to construction regulator, and across industry, government, and academia.

"We have built an ecosystem where experts share their expertise to help solve problems in other disciplines and drive the uptake of mass timber construction systems," Dr Gattas said.

The future now is encouraging the adoption of wood encouragement policies to ensure wood is at least considered as the primary structural component in these buildings. The Western Australia and Tasmania governments plus

18 local government authorities and councils around Australia have already adopted the policy. Many other countries have adopted a similar policy which encourages the use of natural, timber-based products in construction.

Dr Gattas said Australia's timber and bio-resources were a major contributor to regional economic development.

"The minister was interested to hear how the hub is creating new and improved timber products, and markets for those products, through close integration of building design, manufacturing and construction expertise," he said.



UQ and DAF research; it focused on projects managed at UQ along with the projects being completed at Griffith University, the University of Canterbury and the DAF Salisbury Research Facility. The tour showcased the excellent facilities available to the Future Timber Hub, including structural engineering, fire safety and architecture laboratories.