

In the 21st century, Forestry Tasmania employs botanists and ecologists, surveyors and forest managers, adventure tourism operators and educators, zoologists and silviculturalists, economists and business planners, machine operators and firefighters.

But it all started with one man.

European Settlement

Soon after European settlement, Tasmania's forests began to be cleared – the settlers needed timber for building and land for farming. The island's high-quality hardwood was soon in demand – Tasmanian eucalypt timber was exported to the other Australian colonies and as far away as Britain.

With steam power to run timber tramways and drive sawmills, the rate of clearing increased – and with farmers still cutting forests to create new agricultural land, by the late 1800s the forests were falling fast.

In 1885, the colonial government appointed a Conservator of Forests, but the position soon lapsed.

Federation

Early in the new century, after Federation of the colonies to form the Commonwealth of Australia, Interstate Forestry Conferences in 1911 and 1912 called for new plans to preserve timber resources and manage the young nation's forests for the future.



World War I

With World War I looming, Britain needed to secure the availability of timber resources for the Empire. There had been no Conservator of Forests in Tasmania since before 1890 – but in 1919, Llewellyn Irby got the job and a year later, the Forestry Act 1920 created Tasmania's Forestry Department.

Conservator of forests Llewellyn Irby in stringybark forest, east coast of Tasmania, 1923