

Rt Hon Jacinda Ardern

Prime Minister



Wednesday 31 March

SPEECH NOTES

Speech to opening of Te Whare Nui o Tuteata - Scion's Innovation Hub at Rotorua

Tu-a-tea tū mai rā

Hei whetū mārama ki te ao

Hei ōranga mō te iwi

E te mana whenua, Tena koutou

Ka mihi hoki ki te kaupapa o te ra,

Tātou ngā kanohi ora e hui mai nei

Tena koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā tātou katoa

[Raise the Wharenuī of Tūteata, as a star that enlightens the world and enhances the wellbeing of all who enter. Be creative, be innovative, be mindful of our responsibilities to protect our taonga for generations to come.]

Thank you to everyone for your words this afternoon.

It's a real pleasure to be here today – congratulations to everyone who's been involved in bringing this project to life.

I won't keep you much longer, largely because I can't wait to cut the ribbon on this incredible building.

Te Whare Nui o Tuteata is one of the most striking and unique structures I've seen in a long time, and really shows what's possible with timber.

Traditionally in New Zealand, we've built large commercial buildings out of steel and concrete.

This building showcases what can be done with trees.

Minister Woods outlined the building's impressive carbon storage capacity, but what's just as amazing is that New Zealand's radiata pine forests can regrow this amount of wood in just 35 minutes – making it truly sustainable.

Today's event touches on a number of priority work areas for our Government - collaboration with mana whenua, science and innovation, climate action, regional development, and jobs and wellbeing.

Te Whare Nui o Tuteata building symbolises the strong connection between Scion, mana whenua Ngā Hapū e Toru and their ancestral land.

Scion has actively built on this relationship with local iwi over the years – this building will be a space to strengthen collaboration and pioneer new ways of working together.

Minister Wood's has touched on the importance of science, research and innovation.

Meanwhile investment in forestry has been, and continues to be, a big focus for our Government.

Our one billion trees programme has been operating successfully since 2018 and is well on track to meet the one billion target by 2028.

Our forestry industry is a rich strategic resource and we see it playing a key part in growing and transforming our economy, especially once you value-add and innovate.

Making greater use of wood for new materials and products, such as high tech timber, biofuels, bioplastics and biochemicals, creates new businesses in the regions, and skilled jobs over and above traditional forestry roles.

Of course I'm also speaking to you at a particularly interesting time for the sector, with supply chain issues in the domestic market.

The Government shares concerns about this, and the distorting effects of international trade disputes. The issue is complex and requires a long-term solution, which we'll work alongside industry on.

This issue comes on the heels of a highly challenging and disruptive year.

What we've seen in the past is that the forestry industry is vital to New Zealand during difficult times – vital to our communities, vital in providing high-value jobs and security, and therefore vital to the wellbeing of our people.

Having Scion here in Rotorua is perfect in terms of leveraging the local forestry industry and working with local communities.

Scion remains one of largest employers in the area, and the expanding Te Papa Tipu campus is now bringing greater employment and economic benefits for locals.

Forestry also has a big part to play in helping New Zealand meet its climate change commitments.

In fact, some of the Climate Change Commission's key recommendations draw on the innovation research done here at Scion, so thank you for your contribution to what is effectively New Zealand's road-map to a cleaner, smarter future.

I look forward to seeing how Te Papa Tipu Innovation Park evolves in years to come, bringing together as I say, so many important strands of policy and progress.

Ngā mihi nui

