



Australian Government
Australian Research Council

2010 Australian
Laureate Fellows

Professor Mark Westoby

Evolutionary ecology of vegetation

Current Organisation:	Macquarie University
Administering Organisation:	Macquarie University
Primary research field:	Evolutionary Biology
National Research Priority:	An Environmentally Sustainable Australia

Professor Mark Westoby is Professor in the Department of Biological Sciences at Macquarie University and leads the Genes to Geoscience Research Centre. His research interests lie in the fields of ecology and evolution, mainly of plants. He is convenor of the ARC-NZ Research Network for Vegetation Function.

The aim of Professor Westoby's project is to understand and predict the physiognomy and traits of vegetation from evolutionary principles. The structure and chemistry of plant tissues has decisive influence on geochemical, hydrological and habitat functions in terrestrial ecosystems. A more fundamental understanding will be developed about the architecture and ecology of vegetation and why it varies around the world. This understanding will confer benefits for land management as well as having cultural value.

Professor Westoby was awarded his BSc Hons in Ecology at the University of Edinburgh, and received his PhD in Wildlife Ecology from Utah State University. He held a post doctoral fellowship at Cornell University, before moving to Macquarie University. He was appointed to a personal Chair at Macquarie University in 1990. He was awarded the Gold Medal of Ecological Society of Australia for research and postgraduate leadership, and received the Clarke Medal from Royal Society of NSW for distinguished research in the natural sciences. He has been elected a Fellow of the Australian Academy of Science.

Professor Westoby has served on the Science Advisory Board of the United States National Centre for Ecological Analysis and Synthesis and on the Board of Directors of iPLANT, a US National Science Foundation program for applying informatics to plant biology. He is a member of the Australian Academy of Sciences Committee on Plant and Animal Science, and previously served as President of Ecological Society of Australia and on editorial boards of several international journals.

Media contacts

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