



KINDNESS OF STRANGERS: Kareena Aspinall (left) had an emotional reunion with her dog Bootlace this week after parting ways seven months ago when she relocated to Mount Gambier after ending up homeless in Adelaide. Unable to secure a rental property in the Blue Lake city that would allow pets, Bootlace spent months in foster care in the Adelaide Hills. However, generous Mount Gambier residents Leanne and Sharon Dunn have now offered to foster the gentle-natured dog at their home, giving the two more opportunity to spend time together. **Story page 6.**

Picture: JOCELYN NICKELS

Forest research win

National institute funds expected for Mount Gambier in state budget

EXCLUSIVE



SANDRA MORELLO

sandra@tbw.com.au

THE proposed multi-million-dollar national Mount Gambier forestry research centre is starting to gain momentum with State Government funding expected to be announced in the state budget next week.

It is understood the government has confirmed the windfall at a federal departmental level, but Forestry

Minister Leon Bignell yesterday remained tight-lipped on the matter.

If the speculation is correct, the decision is a major backflip by Mr Bignell, who ruled out funding the project just three months ago.

The Mount Gambier centre of the National Institute for Forest Products Innovation was a key

election commitment by Member for Barker Tony Pasin.

The research centre - one of two proposed in Australia - is expected to drive cutting edge research into softwood plantations and processing.

Mr Bignell's office yesterday told *The Border Watch* the minister could not comment on "budget initiatives".

According to Mr Pasin yesterday, the project - which has received \$2m from Federal Government coffers - was steadily progressing with an agreement brokered to house the institute in the University of SA Mount Gambier campus.

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