

FABI POSTDOCTORAL FELLOW HUNTING BIOCONTROL AGENTS DOWN UNDER

Dr. Michelle Schroder, a postdoctoral fellow at FABI is spending two months collaborating with researchers at the University of the Sunshine Coast's (USC) Forest Industries Research Centre. This visit, funded by an Australian Award Fellowship, will see Michelle undertake an extensive field survey of the Eucalyptus snout-beetle, *Gonipterus* spp. and search for matching wasps that parasitise this weevil's eggs or larvae along Australia's east coast.



This research project is part of a global collaboration that includes Brazilian, Chilean, Portuguese and South African (FABI) partners, led by USC, which is aimed at targeting Australian-origin eucalypt pests.

This native Australian weevil is a serious pest of *Eucalyptus* trees and weevil outbreaks have increased in South Africa in recent decades, after almost a century of seemingly acceptable biological control by a parasitoid wasp *Anaphes nitens* Girault.

The aim of Dr. Schroder's work with USC is to find a parasitoid wasp species that is a better match to combat the weevil, and is also better adapted to certain South African climate conditions.

Until recently, *Gonipterus* was thought to be just one species, but it is now known that it is actually eight (or more) different species and Dr. Schroder hopes that the project will give South Africa a better matched biocontrol agent.

