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Wood market outlook stacked in favour of timber merchants

Softwood sawlogs bridge hardwood supply gap

A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

AUSTRALIA'S timber merchants are sitting pretty, on a number of levels.

The outlook for the wood market is stacked in their favour.

Whether it's domestic production or imports that will make up the shortfall, demand for wood is strong.

That's the conclusion from two recent presentations to the Timber Merchants Association of Victoria by Forest and Wood Products Australia and Master Builders Australia.

FWPA's statistics and economics manager Jim Houghton says sawlog production has been increasing since the turn of the century, and trending upwards.

While native hardwood sawlogs have declined by 46% since 2000-01 (3.583 million cub m to 1.94 cub m), softwood has made up the decline.

Softwood sawlogs have



Driving sales... domestic softwood sawlog production is expected to fall short of demand by 3.4 million cub m by 2050.

Photo: Timber Queensland

gone from 7.458 million cub m to 10.858 million cub m, a rise of 46%.

To add spice to the situation, the maligned hardwood plantation sector has skyrocketed 488%, but off a low base of 82,000 cub m to

482,000 cub m.

Thus total sawlog production over the past 16 years has increased by 19%, from 11.1 million cub m to 13.3 million cub m.

Sawn timber production tells a similar story: hardwood down, softwood up. But overall sawn timber output rose by 24% to 5.24 million cub m.

Apparent consumption of sawn timber has increased by 18%. These increases have apparently been driven by

productivity and technology, as local softwood production, while at a peak, only rose by 1% this year from last year.

Packaging is the third most popular wood product, but structural timber by far dominates – mainly structural and treated structural less than 120 mm, but also these same products above 120 mm. Also quite strong are ungraded timber and outdoor domestic.

“MALIGNED HARDWOOD PLANTATION SECTOR HAS SKYROCKETED

Cont P 3



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From P 2

Demand is causing timber merchants to import more. From August last year to August this year, softwood imports rose by 43.8% from 570,000 cub m to 819,972 cub m.

Over the past year, North American lumber prices have also declined. Thus imports have responded as prices have firmed, says Jim Houghton.

Steel's share of the framing market has increased a little over the past three years, but timber still dominates in New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland – the three main housing states.

“MIGRATION DRIVING HOUSING UPLIFT ACROSS AUSTRALIA

Based on FWPA's log supply and demand projections, timber merchant will be flexing their import muscles. Domestic softwood sawlog production is expected to fall short of demand by 3.4 million cub m by 2050.

Local sawn timber production is at capacity, but the federal government's forestry plan promises to plant



Jim Houghton... sawlog production has been increasing since the turn of the century, and trending upwards.

another billion trees. Failing that, substitute products such as steel framing are a threat.

A key driver of demand for sawn timber products is residential housing construction.

Master Builders Australia chief economist Shane Garrett, says new home building in Australia has retreated from its record high – but is still very high.

Victorian housing, however, continues to go from strength to strength. Housing across Australia, and particularly in Victoria, is being driven by migration.

Victoria's biggest increase comes from overseas migration, followed by natural increase and interstate migration. Overseas migration



Shane Garrett... home building in Victoria will reach a peak in 2020 – driven by increased migration.

is also the key factor pushing up Australia's population.

Shane Garrett says the home building outlook in Victoria will reach a peak in 2020 and will slightly decline a year later. Apartments and other dwellings will start to decline earlier than that.

The new home building outlook for Australia will be above 110,000 homes a year by 2021, when it will decline fractionally. The fall in apartments and other dwellings will be worse.

However, as Jim Houghton says, housing construction is a cyclical business.

“So the holy grail in our industry is trying to understand what indicators may exist to identify these turning points,” he says.



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ON THE COVER:

Christmas cheer among forest friends

THE national Parliamentary Friends of Forestry and Forest Products group hosted Christmas drinks at Parliament House in Canberra on Tuesday evening.

Dozens of MPs, senators and staff from across the political spectrum attended the gathering in Parliament House's Senate Alcove.

Friends of Forestry group co-convenors Joel Fitzgibbon, Shadow Minister

for Agriculture Fisheries and Forestry, and Tony Pasin, MP Barker, SA, spoke about the importance of the forest industries along with Senator Richard Colbeck, the Assistant Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources, a portfolio that includes forestry.

The event was jointly organised by the Australian Forest Products Association and Forest and Wood Products Australia, under the

guidance of the Parliamentary Friends of Forestry and Forest Products.

Pictured are AFPA CEO Ross Hampton (left) and FWPA managing director Ric Sinclair with a cross-laminated radiata pine Christmas tree made by XLam especially for the event.

The Parliamentary Friends of Forestry and Forest Products was launched in October 2014.

Australian forest industry delegation visits Japan for high-level trade talks

A HIGH-LEVEL Australian forest industries delegation will be in Tokyo next week for site visits and meetings with Japanese industry leaders and government officials.

The mission from December 10 to 13 will include a reception with Japanese industry representatives.

The delegation is led by Responsible Wood, the Australian Forest Products Association and the co-convenor of the Parliamentary Friends of Forestry and Forest Products Tony Pasin MP, and includes representatives from some of the biggest forestry and forest product companies.

The delegation has been supported by the Department



Tony Pasin... opportunity to discuss market trends.

of Agriculture and Water Resources and through its Tokyo post.

The visit is an opportunity to celebrate and reinforce the Australia-Japan trade relationship and update trade partners on exciting



Ross Hampton... strengthening market access.

innovations and emerging opportunities in Australia's sustainable forest industries.

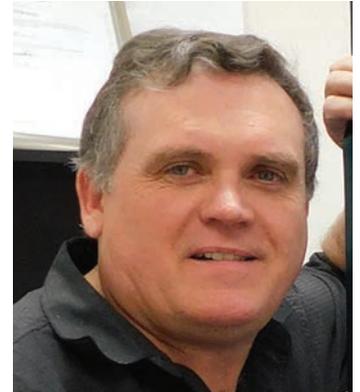
The visit will also highlight the high standards of Australia's forest sector and the strong guarantee of best practice forest management that Responsible Wood certification provides.

The reception on December 11 is the key event with one-to-one meetings with Japanese customers and trading partners and representatives from the Japanese government.

Tony Pasin will deliver a message from Senator Richard Colbeck, the minister responsible for forestry.

He said the reception was an opportunity to introduce Australian forestry and forest products companies that have significant trade with Japan who will discuss market trends, innovation and emerging opportunities in Australia's forest products industries relevant to Japan's business interests.

The delegation includes most of Australia's woodchip processors, plantation owners, and state government forestry agencies



Simon Dorries... Responsible Wood certification guarantee.

that manage much of Australia's public native forest estate.

The forest, wood and paper products industry is one of Australia's largest manufacturing industries with an annual turnover of about \$24 billion. Around 120,000 people are directly employed along the industry value chain with a further 180,000 jobs supported through flow-on economic activity.

“MISSION WILL STRENGTHEN MARKET ACCESS”

“The delegation's visit is a timely opportunity to promote Australia's forest industries and highlight new market opportunities with our valued trading partner Japan,” AFPA CEO Ross Hampton said.

“The mission includes meetings with the Japan's government and key trading partners to highlight the sustainability and innovation of Australia's forest industries, with a focus on hardwood woodchip exporters to Japan's mature pulp and paper market and growing biomass market.”



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Sustainability earns security

20-year extension announced for RFAs in NSW

THE Australian and NSW governments have released a modernised approach to forest management through the renewal of three NSW Regional Forest Agreements.

In joint statements, the Minister for Agriculture David Littleproud, minister responsible for forests Senator Richard Colbeck and NSW Minister for Lands and Forestry Paul Toole said the improvements and the 20-year extension to the agreements, better known as RFAs, provided long-term confidence and sustainability for the future of the state's \$2.4 billion wood product manufacturing industry.

"We're pleased to deliver our commitment on these RFAs," Mr Littleproud said. "We understand certainty matters to business and that's what we delivered."

Senator Colbeck said the forest industry was the backbone of many regional communities and was set to provide even more opportunities under the renewed management scheme, which included the opportunity to intensify silviculture on the NSW north coast in state forest managed areas.

"Timber is the building material of the 21st century, with global demand expected to quadruple by 2050, so it is important we give regional communities the confidence to invest in their forest industries," Senator Colbeck said.

"Australia has a recognised world-class forest management system, one covered by multiple internationally recognised sustainability certifications, which give assurance to consumers that their beautiful native species floors, furniture and feature pieces are sourced with the highest ethical standards."

Paul Toole said as a result of the NSW RFAs, the native forest timber industry operated with some of the highest levels of sustainability in the world.

"The renewed agreements pave the way for the continued sustainable management of the state's forests, while providing critical protection of the environment and threatened species," he said.

"The renewed RFAs bring together extensive community and stakeholder input, as well as key recommendations from a detailed independent review of our past performance.

Mr Toole said the state was committed to maintaining

Cont P 6



- 1/ All agree... RFAs pave the way for continued sustainable management of NSW forests. Photo: NSW Forestry Corporation
- 2/ David Littleproud... certainty matters to business and that's what we delivered
- 3/ Richard Colbeck... forest industry the backbone of regional communities.
- 4/ Paul Toole... native forest industry operates with highest levels of sustainability.

industries," Senator Colbeck said.

"Australia has a

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Indonesia set to lift timber exports

INDONESIA has forecast an 8% increase in forest products exports next year which would lift export earnings from the sector to around \$US13 billion.

Behind this positive assessment is the introduction of the Indonesia Timber Exchange (ITE) an online marketing and trading system for forest products all of which are certified under the Indonesia Timber Legality Verification System (SVLK).

The International Tropical Timber Organisation says there is optimism that investment in the forestry sector will continue to grow as the issue of forest fires is being addressed seriously and the management of peat lands, frequently subject to fires, has improved.

Timber sector exporters



PT Kutai Timber Indonesia... planting and re-planting programs are managed not only for harvesting, but also for rehabilitation purpose.

performed well this year despite global uncertainties. The value of processed timber exports in 2017 was \$US10.94 billion but that by

October this year that figure had been overtaken.

Indonesia's log production from plantations is around six times more than from the natural forest and was 38 million cub m in 2017.

Meanwhile, the certification debate progresses in Gabon, a heavily-timbered country on the west coast of Central Africa

Discussions are continuing on a plan that would require all concession holders to be FSC certified.

A recent forum in Gabon, chaired by the Minister of

Water and Forests who is responsible for Environment and Sustainable Development, discussed proposals for the implementation of an action plan to prepare the way towards certification for the forest wood sector in Gabon.

Industry sources say currently there are only three companies with FSC certification whose combined concession area extends to around 3 million ha. In addition, another five companies are said to be under audit for certification.

“ PLANTATIONS DOMINATE TIMBER SECTOR ”

From P 5

support for the long-term RFAs and the ongoing certainty of a truly renewable industry.

The agreements will be underpinned by the NSW government's \$7.2 million forest monitoring program that focuses on adaptive management and fine-tuning in the management of the forest estate.

General manager of Timber NSW Maree McCaskill said the RFA release spelled out certainty for an industry struggling to “survive in a red tape world” while imports of unprotected old growth timbers exceeded managed stands harvested domestically.

“It has been a long time coming,” she said.

“We are pleased that there is some form of resource security but we will wait on the outcome of the state election early next year.”

Ms McCaskill said Labor's plan to establish a koala park across the best blackbutt forests from Taree to Tweed would cruel 40-50% of sawmilling practice, mostly on the mid-north coast.

More than 22,200 employees rely on the state's forest and wood products manufacturing sectors. Valued at \$2.4 billion, the industry makes a large contribution to both the Australia and regional and rural economies.

The united voice for Australia's forest industries



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FEBRUARY 2019

27: Launch of Queensland Parliamentary Friends of Forest & Timber Network – Brisbane, Australia. 6.30-8 pm. Open to all of industry – a landmark event demonstrating to MPs the strength and diversity of the entire industry supply chain. Lock it in! Industry associations will send out invitations to their members. Anyone interested should email admin@timberqueensland.com.au for more detailed information.

MARCH

1: Top of the South Forestry Awards – Nelson and Marlborough, New Zealand. Inaugural awards

in fourteen categories to be awarded across individual and companies, with the ultimate award being the Skilled Professional of the Year. The awards will culminate to an evening of celebration, presentations and dinner in Nelson on Friday, June 14 at the Trafalgar Event Centre. For further information see: www.totsforestry.co.nz or call Prue Younger, Event Manager +64 (21) 2765484

2: AFPA board meeting and members’ dinner – Canberra. 6pm.

8: AFPA members’ forum and chamber meetings – Canberra.

17: Women in Forest Industries workshop – Canberra, Australia. More information and registration inquiries to Natalie Heazlewood. Email: natalie.heazlewood@ausfpa.com.au

26-29: AUSPACK Packaging and Processing Week – Melbourne, Australia.

APRIL

1-2: National Sustainability Conference – Brisbane, Australia

JUNE

17-18: Frame Australia – Crown Promenade Melbourne, Australia. A dedicated conference and exhibition will allow delegates

to fully understand the exciting developments in the Timber Offsite Construction space. The conference will feature prominent local and global experts, with topics exclusively devoted to timber and mass wood building construction. It will be the only event that will enable delegates to appreciate the world-wide transformation that is taking place and how building costs are being lowered. At the Frame Australia exhibition, booth sizes will be larger at no extra cost, with booths two to three times the previous floor area without any change in pricing from 2018. Visit www.frameaustralia.com

Call for papers: communicating forestry in the connected age

THE Institute of Foresters of Australia and New Zealand Institute of Forestry (ANZIF) are calling for papers for their joint conference in Christchurch from August 25-28 next year.

The conference theme – The Forest Newsfeed: Communicating Forestry in the Connected Age – focuses on the arrival of the ‘connected age’, which is exposing the forestry sector to public scrutiny.

In this new era, forestry appears to be thrust into the

limelight with effects on the environment that provoke public concern.

While the trees we plant sequester carbon, droughts and bushfires increasingly undermine our work.

A conference brief adds: “Forests protect soil and water, but when super-storms wash harvest residues into the public arena, we must reconsider how our forests influence others.

“We need to share our vision of where forestry is going, and promote all the



benefits forestry can provide. As a sector, we need to manage the forest newsfeed by communicating forestry in the connected age. This conference will consider how forests interact with society,

explore ways we can best promote the merits of our sector, and discuss changes needed to meet society’s expectations.”

Titles and abstracts no more than 500 words are invited by February 28, 2019. Send to Euan Mason’s email euan.mason@canterbury.ac.nz

The title should be in Calibri 14 point font, the abstract should be in Calibri 12 point font, and the document should be in MS Word format.

Suggested topics:

Cont P 8

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JANUARY 2019

24: Mapping the Course: Timberland, Forest Products Processing, and Fiber Issues for 2019 – Vancouver, Washington, USA. The conference and optional workshop will provide an in-depth analysis on forest products market challenges, opportunities, and threats for 2019 in the North American West Coast timberland region. For further information see: <https://westernforestry.org/upcoming-conferences/mapping-the-course-timberland-forest-products-processing-and-fiber-issues-for-2019>

MARCH

19-21: International Mass Timber Conference – Portland, Oregon. The largest gathering of cross-laminated timber and other mass timber experts in the world, with a special focus on manufacturing and mid-

to high-rise construction. Over 1,200 experts from 22 countries attended in 2018. The conference will explore the supply chain for cross-laminated timber (CLT), nail-laminated timber, glulam beams and panels, mass plywood panels, dowel-laminated timber, and laminated veneer lumber; and the opportunities and obstacles for mass timber in global manufacturing and construction. See: www.masstimberconference.com/

APRIL

10-12: Focus on Forestry 2019 – Mpumalanga, South Africa. For further information see: www.cmo.co.za

MAY

7-9: RISI's Sixth Annual Forest Investment Conference – London, UK. A key two day conference that will take an in-depth look at timberland investments around the globe and how

these opportunities will unfold in the near future. For further information see: www.risi.com/invest

8-11: World Conference on forests for Public Health – Athens, Greece. For further information see: www.fph2019.org

20-23: A Century of National Forest Inventories: Informing Past, Present and Future Decisions – Oslo, Norway. For further information see: www.nibio.pameldingssystem.no/nfi100years

JULY

8-18: IUFRO Small-scale Forestry Conference – Lake Superior in Duluth, Minnesota, USA. Presentations and field sessions will explore a mix of family-owned, tribal, industrial, and public ownerships with a focus on small-scale forest management. For further information see: <http://iufrossf.umn.edu/>

SEPTEMBER

16-17: ICATEA 2019: 21st International Conference on Advanced Timber Engineering and Applications – Zurich, Switzerland. The conference aims to bring together leading academic scientists, researchers and research scholars to exchange and share their experiences and research results on all aspects of advanced timber engineering and applications. For further information see: <https://waset.org/conference/2019/09/zurich/ICATEA>

SEPT/OCT

29 SEPT-25 OCT: XXV IUFRO World Congress – Curitiba, Brazil. For further information see: www.iufro2019.com

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From P 7

- Benefits of forestry that don't impact directly on the bottom line, such as erosion control, habitat, carbon storage, and recreation.
- Adverse effects of forestry, such as sedimentation, slash management, health and safety.
- Public perceptions of

- forestry, GMOs, pesticides, what the public wants from our sector.
- Fire risk, management and control.
 - Multiple bottom-line accounting: How do we do it, and what are the units?
 - Small scale forestry.
 - How do we establish relationships and engage

- with communities? This may include impacts of corporate-style forestry on local communities, and community forestry.
- National environmental standards.
 - Forests of the future.
 - Submissions from early career professionals from all industries (not only forestry)

that would be interested in presenting during a 'future foresters' session aimed to encourage forward thinking and address the changes necessary as we look towards the future of forestry and those who will shape this pathway.

Further information: IFA on 61 2 6153 3044 or NZIFA on 64 4 974 8421

Furniture maker ‘turns the tables’ on flat-packs that just don’t make the cut

IN the Brisbane suburb of Yeerongpilly flat-pack furniture is being re-imagined.

Here, joiner Ben McGreevy launched Oak and Hide, a furniture company using Queensland hoop pine (*Araucaria cunninghamii*) to craft furniture that will be ingeniously flat-packed for delivery but guaranteed to outlive its cheaper flat-pack rivals by decades.

Ben has abolished the need for Allen keys, dowels, fasteners and bolts, which are often discarded anyway. A desktop computer numerical control (CNC) machine has allowed Ben to design and create timber joinery with pin-point accuracy, including many complicated joints that are not possible to achieve by hand.

The Oak and Hide coffee table is Ben’s flagship product, borne out of his frustration with flat-pack furniture. It features a clean, simple design, with strong joints that don’t require any tools to assemble.

“Even though I have probably assembled and disassembled this piece more than 50 times, I still enjoy slotting the pieces together,” Ben said.

Despite studying mechanical engineering, Ben McGreevy was drawn to wood work.

“It’s fair to say I caught the woodworking bug,” he said “There’s something special about making products from timber – every piece has a unique grain, different texture, smells and behaviour. It’s just a great feeling when you make something that looks great and also has a purpose.”

Ben sets his work apart



1/ Ben McGreevy... committed to a sustainable craft.
2/ Flagship product... the Oak and Hide coffee table.



from many competitors by remaining staunchly committed to using sustainable timber. For his coffee table, he chose hoop pine after initial trials with Australian hardwoods such as blackbutt proved they were too heavy to meet his flat-pack delivery requirements.

“For me, it’s an ethical choice but other people take an interest in the fact that I only use sustainable timber and fully support its use,” Ben said.

The hoop pine is sourced from certified HQPlantations assuring sustainability credentials. It was sourced from both a forest and processor with Responsible Wood certification.

The hoop pine plywood is manufactured by Brisbane-based Austral Plywoods, which prides itself on Responsible Wood accreditation (to AS 4707, relating to chain of custody) and recognises the advantage this certification provides over competitors.

HQ Plantations states these internationally recognised certification standards provide “customers, stakeholders, neighbours and other forest visitors with the assurance

that our forest assets are managed sustainably to economic, environmental, social and cultural requirements”.

The advantages for companies such as Oak and Hide making informed, responsible choices when

selecting materials is self-evident.

Ben added: “Certification gives Australia’s timber industry and its end users peace of mind about its origins and the way in which this precious resource has been managed.”

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Tall timber to grow state's economy

AUSTRALIA'S tallest engineered timber office building situated in Brisbane's King Street at Bowen Hills and comprising 3097 individual timber elements was officially opened last week.

The Lendlease development heralds opportunities for the Queensland's forest and timber industry, given the demand for timber as a renewable and carbon friendly material in the emerging markets of mid-rise and high-rise construction.

During a recent tour of the nine-storey development, which is built from 4824 cub m of CLT and 1415 cub m of glue laminated timber, Linus Power, State Member for Logan and chair of the Queensland government's economics and governance committee, said he was impressed to hear Lendlease's commitment to timber as a genuine alternative to traditional concrete and steel options in the commercial construction space.

"CLT and GLT products open up new possibilities with building renewable



New heights for timber... Mick Stephens, CEO, Timber Queensland, Linus Power MP for Logan, and Matthew Miller, regional manager Queensland, commercial, Lendlease, at 25 King.

wood and it is great that we are making and using these products here," Mr Power said.

"Just last month, the Palaszczuk government's Jobs and Regional Growth Fund contributed to the upgrade of Hyne Timber's GLT plant," he said. "This investment will help create 42 new jobs and greatly enhance the capacity of the industry to meet the growing demand and interest for engineered timber products in the building and construction sector."

Lendlease has also

incorporated CLT into its information office at Yarrabilba – just another example of the innovative use of timber.

Lendlease Building CEO Dale Connor said 25 King was Lendlease's fifth engineered timber building in Australia and the time savings was just one of the key benefits of working

with timber on large-scale developments.

The building has 52 timber beams and 33 timber columns on each floor.

"The sustainability, noise, aesthetic, productivity and lighting by products of these exposed features is changing the face of how we design and construct commercial buildings," Mr Connor said.

Timber Queensland CEO Mick Stephens said property developer Shane Munday, Raw Property Studio, had approval to start construction on a 120-place child care centre in Brisbane's Wynnum West, soon to be followed by a 10-storey timber retirement living building in South Brisbane.

"Tall timber buildings are gaining popularity worldwide because timber is a cleaner construction material than steel or concrete," Mr Stephens said.

"It is also renewable, making it an important part of the circular economy and move toward low carbon emission building materials. Using more timber in building construction can help meet the state's emission reduction agenda."

“TIMBER A CLEANER BUILDING MATERIAL



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Home renovations hit 14-year high

AUSTRALIA'S home renovations sector enjoyed its busiest quarter in 14 years during the three months to September.

Master Builders Australia's chief economist Shane Garrett says while GDP grew by a fairly disappointing 0.3% during the September 2018 quarter, home renovations activity provided more cheer.

"The volume of renovations work rose by 4.5% during the quarter alone and was 11.0% higher than a year ago," Mr Garrett said.

"Times have often been tough for the home renovations market over the

MARKET NOW BIGGER THAN AT ANY TIME SINCE 2004



Cheerful news... housing renovations on the rise.

past decade, but this week's figures show that the market is now bigger than at any time since mid-2004.

"While new home building scaled new records over recent years, the performance of renovations activity has been quite puzzling and has failed to replicate this strong performance," he said.

"The stronger position of

the renovations market during the September quarter is linked to the fact that interest rates are very low and remarkably stable at this time."

With housing finance increasingly difficult to access and home prices in Sydney and Melbourne continuing to decline, the flow of new homes approvals for

construction continues to recede.

The Housing Industry Association says the ABS data shows a total of 17,070 homes (seasonally adjusted) were approved for construction in October, 1.5% fewer than in the previous month and 13.2% fewer than in October 2017.

The monthly decline in total approvals was driven by multi-unit homes, which declined by 5.4%, while detached house approvals increased by 1.7%.

HIA says while the Australian Prudential Regulatory Authority's restrictions were designed to curb high-risk lending practices, ordinary home buyers are now also experiencing delays and constraints in accessing finance.



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He's our own Lord of the Rings

Study opens window to trees that grew centuries ago

CANBERRA-based forester Dr Matthew Brookhouse loves to peer back through time by examining the growth rings from trees.

Yes, he's a dendrochronologist. And he's made an amazing discovery about a Henry VIII portrait.

He was approached out of the blue by the Art Gallery of NSW to examine a 16th-century portrait painted on an oak panel. The gallery had an approximate date of production for the portrait, which had been in storage since its purchase in 1961, but asked Dr Brookhouse to use dendrochronology to confirm that date.

There is very little documentation associated with the panel – it wasn't known when or where it was painted.

Dr Brookhouse naturally felt nervous about handling a 500-year-old artefact. Using a microscope attached to a camera, he examined the growth rings visible on the edge of the panel, but the wood was rough-sawn and had been contaminated in places by glue and surface treatments.

He was unable to achieve sufficient accuracy so he used a high-resolution image of the panel's wood grain generated by the Australian Synchrotron, a research facility in Melbourne, which allowed him to measure tree-ring widths across the entire panel.

The panel was made from a single quarter-sawn section



Peeking into the past... Dr Matthew Brookhouse holds a sample of the same kind of oak used for a Henry VIII painting. Photo: Jack Fox.

of an English oak. The cutting method produces a highly stable piece of timber as well as a continuous tree-ring series running through the panel. The latter is essential for tree-ring dating.

It's obviously also important that the timber bears clear, annual tree rings. For English oak – and many other northern hemisphere tree species – each year of growth produces one ring.

"While the synchrotron image allowed tree-ring counting and measurement, I didn't know what years they corresponded to – where in time the chronology sat," Dr Brookhouse said.

Working with an undergraduate honours-pathway student, he downloaded tree-ring chronologies from European tree-ring databases and successfully dated the panel against a composite UK chronology.

"It was a wonderful and surprising outcome and was the first time synchrotron imagery had been used for panel dating," Dr Brookhouse said.

"Using our data, we can date the last measurable ring to 1480 – that was the last year of growth. While we can say that definitely, we must add on estimates of 20 to 40 years to account for the sapwood rings that were removed when the panel was created. This means the earliest possible felling date for the tree that provided the panel was 1500 to 1520.

“500-YEAR-OLD TREE MOST LIKELY GREW IN SUSSEX IN THE SOUTH-EAST OF ENGLAND

"And what's truly amazing about the dendrochronology libraries available in the UK is that they allow dendro-provenancing. We established that the tree most likely grew in the Sussex region in the southeast corner of England."

Dr Brookhouse completed his forestry degree at ANU when Dr John Banks was a lecturer. After the second year of his degree, he worked for Forestry Tasmania. When he

came back, he began concurrent honours and worked with Dr Banks on eucalypts.

Tree-ring data is useful for developing growth models for commercial forestry, so after honours Dr Brookhouse worked for the Victorian government using eucalypt tree-ring analysis in forest inventory and modelling. At that time, the use of eucalypt tree-rings was

rare because of difficulties associated with poor tree-ring formation in the genus.

Dr Brookhouse worked in that field for seven years and then came back to ANU to do a PhD.

"The reason I came back was that it became clear to me the trees we were sampling from across all of Victoria were showing very similar year-to-year variations in tree-ring width," he said.

Dr Brookhouse is senior lecturer at the Fenner School of Environment and Society. His office adjoins part of the excellent wood library in the Forestry Building. Known as a xylarium, the library contains some 8400 samples. One of the oldest is from a Tasmanian King William pine that contains about 200 years of growth.

The university's xylarium dates back to the establishment of the Australian Forestry School in Canberra in 1927 and is now a vital part of wood identification studies.

(Extracts from an article by Ross Peake).

Legal eagle, 39, takes on forestry

'Political continuity an opportunity for industry in Victoria'

VICTORIAN Premier Daniel Andrews has appointed Benalla-born Jaclyn Symes, 39, the new Minister for Agriculture, Regional Development and Resources, along with responsibility for forests.

Ms Symes replaces Jaala Pulford who shifts to the Roads, Road Safety and Fishing and Boating ministry.

Lily D'Ambrosio retains the Energy, Environment and Climate Change, and is also responsible for solar homes.

Jaclyn Symes grew up in Benalla, studied law in Melbourne and worked as a disabilities carer before joining the Australian Services Union as an industrial officer.

She was an adviser to the



Jaclyn Symes... new Victorian Minister for Agriculture, Regional Development and Resources with responsibility for forests.

former Bracks-Brumby Labor government, working for the then deputy premier and attorney-general Rob Hulls.

After Labor's 2010 defeat, she worked as senior legal and justice adviser to the



Peter Walsh... giving communities a strong voice in parliament and putting regional issues on government agenda.

then opposition leader Daniel Andrews.

At the November 2014 election, Ms Symes was elected to parliament as a member for Northern Victoria and became government

whip in the Upper House.

She lives with her husband Gerard and their two children at Broadford, the base for local paper recycler Sugarloaf Timber Products.

Philip Dalidakis, a former CEO of the Victorian Association of Forest Industries, was not returned to Cabinet. His portfolios of Small Business, Innovation and Trade go to former Small Business Minister Adem Somyurek and former Attorney-General Martin Pakula respectively.

Mr Dalidakis was appointed to the ministry in July 2015, replacing Adem Somyurek, who had resigned over a bullying issue. Mr Dalidakis,

Cont P 14

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\$238m carrot on NZ tree planting

THE New Zealand government is offering \$238 million in grants to encourage new tree planting, especially of natives, as it tries to get one billion new trees in the ground by 2028.

Cabinet ministers Shane Jones and Damien O'Connor have announced the opening of two grants, funded through the Provincial Growth Fund and allocated by the Ministry for Primary Industries' forest unit.

The first scheme will offer direct grants to landowners to help cover the cost of planting and establishing trees and indigenous regeneration, with \$118 million available over three years. Indigenous trees will get preferential treatment, with the scheme supporting the planting of 60 million trees in that time, of which



Shane Jones... monitoring roll out of new grants scheme.

two-thirds are hoped to be native.

A second scheme will offer \$120 million to co-fund projects that reduce barriers to planting. The idea is that the applicants for commercial projects will fund at least half, but applications with strong social and environmental benefits may be able to negotiate better terms.

The scheme expects to support workforce development, improving information for landowners,

environmental restoration, science and research, and seedling and nursery production.

"Officials will monitor the roll-out of the new grant scheme to ensure our focus remains on putting the right tree in the right place for the right purpose," Shane Jones said in a statement.

The new grants account for more than half the \$480 million available to support

the one billion trees program, which is a key element of the government's efforts to tilt the economy towards action on climate change, land erosion, water quality and regional unemployment.

Separately, state-owned commercial farmer Landcorp Farming, which trades as Pāmu, this week put out a tender document seeking an afforestation partner.

(Scoop Media)

From P 13

a first-time MP elected in the 2014 state election, was selected by Labor's Right faction over Jaclyn Symes and Shaun Leane in a meeting prior to caucus.

Murray Plains MP Peter Walsh has been re-elected leader of the Victorian Nationals and Deputy Opposition Leader and is expected to keep his agriculture and forestry portfolio that may include water. The full Opposition front bench will be decided on December 11.

Mr Walsh said the Nationals would continue to work with communities to give them a strong voice in parliament and put regional issues onto the government's agenda.

"With Daniel Andrews' Labor government now even more dominated by city-based MPs, the Nationals will be working even harder to make sure the interests of country Victorians are heard,"

Mr Walsh said.

So what does the return of the Labour government mean for Victoria's timber and forest industry?

"Political continuity will offer us the opportunity to continue to pressure the government to remember its commitment to jobs and to stand behind Victoria's economically important timber and forest industry," VAFI CEO Tim Johnston said.

"Victoria is the engine room of the Australian timber and forest industry, employing both directly and indirectly some 40,000 to 50,000 people and contributing more than \$7 billion to the state economy in sales and service income," he said.

"We are not a cottage industry. We are an integral and critical part of the Victorian economy. And even more importantly, we are an essential part of the economy in regional Victoria."

VAFI has been working closely with the government on a suite of critical policy issues that are important to membership, and the local industry more broadly.

This collaboration will continue.

“PUTTING THE RIGHT TREE IN THE RIGHT PLACE

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Award-winning architect vows to fight UK government's stance on tall timber

LONDON-based CLT specialist Waugh Thistleton Architects has vowed to fight the British government's new combustibles ban after it emerged that engineered timber would not be exempt from the policy

The government confirmed on November 29 it was prohibiting combustible materials in the external walls of new buildings over 18 m tall and containing housing.

The government's impact assessment of the policy, which will come into effect on December 21, stated it 'prohibits the use of timber materials in the external wall of buildings within the scope'.

Reacting to the ban, Waugh Thistleton Architects, which has pioneered the use of the CLT construction method in the UK, said the decision was "disappointing".

The Stirling Prize-shortlisted practice accused the government of "overreaching its aims" and vowed to fight for an exemption from the ban.

In a statement, Waugh Thistleton said: "In the wake of the tragic events at Grenfell Tower, changes were



Dalston Works... the world's largest CLT building, and a landmark project in high-density urban housing, across London and beyond.

needed to the construction industry and particularly in the way that external façades are designed, engineered and delivered.

"On the whole, the new legislation should be welcomed from that perspective. However, we are clear that mass timber construction is not a valid target for this change and will continue to advocate for its exemption."

Ministers first announced in June that they intended to stop combustibles being used following pressure from campaigners including Grenfell United, a group representing survivors and bereaved families of those

who died in the fire last year.

The new policy – which also applies to new hospitals, residential care premises, dormitories in boarding schools and student accommodation – limits the use of materials to those with a European fire rating of Class A1 or A2.

Waugh Thistleton, which designed Dalston Works in Hackney, the largest CLT 'plyscraper' in Europe, said while the measure would not

mean an outright ban on the use of timber in high rises, it would change the way they were designed.

"As the government acknowledges, this change in regulations will have an impact on the continued innovation and development of low-carbon construction, and hence on the rate at which the construction industry can tackle climate change," the architectural firm asserted.

Announcing the ban, Housing Secretary James Brokenshire said it would allow all tall buildings to be made permanently safe "without delay".

“CHANGING THE WAY BUILDINGS ARE DESIGNED”

Funding Round 2

Growing the future of South Australian forestry

\$2.5 million research funding investment to boost sustainability, jobs and economic benefits in partnership with industry

With the support of the Australian and South Australian governments, the Mt Gambier Centre of the National Institute for Forest Products Innovation has up to \$2.5 million available for research grants to grow the future of forestry. Individual research grants will range from \$50,000-\$500,000 and will be for periods of up to three years in duration. Funding proposals close on Friday 15 February 2019 and should be lodged via email to funding.sa@nifpi.org.au. For further information, including a proposal template and briefing document, see www.nifpi.org.au

About us The Mt Gambier Centre of the National Institute for Forest Products Innovation is a joint venture between the Australian Government, the South Australian Government and the forest and wood products industry with the goal of growing forestry into the future.





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2018 a SPACE Odyssey: and lots of it in Honda's Vti-L seven-seater

WHAT a spacious and comfortable way to ride road-safe towards Christmas. The top-flight Honda Odyssey VTI-L carried a bunch of us on a festive food mission.

Odyssey... a long, wandering voyage marked by many changes of fortune.

Well, the Vti-L was certainly good fortune. As the flagship of the Odyssey range it prioritises cabin comfort over outright carrying capacity – a seven-seat cabin in place of the eight-seat layout of the cheaper VTi.

So for four adults, three children and a 5 kg Bichon Frise that disappeared somewhere in the boot space – or was it the glove-box? – the Odyssey was under-crowded as the crew, festooned with food and a small Christmas tree, were returned to various homes.

Stanley Kubrick's epic 1968 movie 2001: A Space Odyssey floated into the conversation. Space was certainly the operative word.

Honda has created a good blend of a wagon and people mover; all eight (VTi) or seven (VTi-L) occupants enjoy versatile seating, ample storage and



Space and comfort... the Honda Odyssey Vti-L

excellent ventilation.

For the driver there's the joy of deep windows, thin pillars and a low dash giving sweeping clear views.

In the cabin, the middle row seats are more like armchairs and can be slid back and forth and outward to create a centre access aisle. Row three is set up to take three passengers with individually reclining and folding backrests. When not in use, the entire rear row can be flipped and folded beneath the boot floor. With the third row in use, a deep boot measuring 330 litres appears.

A lofty driving position puts a T-bar transmission lever within easy reach. Every Odyssey drives through

of artificial ratio steps built into the CVT. Changing down gives a robust response for overtaking and with the CVT there's no over-revving.

Only one engine is available in both Odysseys, a 2.4 litre, four-cylinder petrol, which Honda asserts consumes under 7.8 litres/100km.

Odyssey has mandatory stability control, six airbags, auto-on headlights, LED daytime running lights and a multi-angle reversing camera.

The Odyssey VTI-L's blind-spot information system uses radar sensors to scan the road for adjacent or overtaking vehicles.

Adaptive cruise control sticks to a certain speed but then slows to match the speed of a vehicle in front. The Odyssey comes with tri-zone air-conditioning; rear passengers can set their own temperature from a control panel located in the ceiling above the middle row.

Priced from \$46,490, it's at the premium end of the two variants – a price bracket that puts it soundly into seven-seat SUV territory.

And more space than Discovery-1, HAL.

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- The CEO is responsible for managing the PFSQ budget (currently about \$1.8 million). Income is primarily sourced from grants, consultancies, contracts and commercial operations.
- PFSQ routinely undertakes the development and delivery of extension programs in all aspects of forest management

- The current organisational scale and structure requires the CEO to work in both office and field on an approximately 50/50 basis. However, this balance fluctuates and is subject to change according to operational and other requirements.

PFSQ is a well-respected, independent and leading Not for Profit Forestry Business involved in developing, coordinating and delivering Forestry projects of all types. It also manages, on behalf of Gympie Regional Council (GRC), the Elgin Vale heritage listed sawmill and the Wood Works Museum and Interpretive Centre at Fraser Road, Gympie where PFSQ's office is located.

Salary per annum: \$90,000 - \$120,000 p.a. (to be negotiated)

To discuss the position further, please call Sean Ryan, 07 5483 6535

Please go to <https://pfsq.net> for the Key Selection Criteria and Job Description.

Expressions of Interest to be received no later than Friday , 7 December 2018

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