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Skilled foresters must have input into proposed royal commission

JIM BOWDEN

THE forest industry would support a royal commission into the bushfire crisis which has burned millions of hectares of land and many thousands of hectares of native and plantation forests.

Scott Morrison is working on a proposal for cabinet; he wants initial recommendations to be made before the next bushfire season. The royal commission will require signoff from the states.

This would dovetail with the announced \$2 billion National Bushfire Recovery Agency to be headed by former Australian Federal Police chief Andrew Colvin who will work with states and territories impacted to determine what funding was needed and where.

There are veteran foresters and rural fire wardens with a long history of fire research and bushfire experience who could make a major contribution to any inquiry.

There has been a strong decline in the average



A black harvest... Victorian logging contractor Malcom Beveridge harvests burnt trees in the Yalmy area of East Gippsland.

Photo: Pam Beveridge

prescribed burn area in all states when comparing 2000-2018 to 1990-2000.

Victoria is covering about 2.2% and NSW is burning around 2.4% of bushland in

any given year.

The use of various federal, state and local government vegetation management legislations and prescriptions has effectively introduced a bureaucratic obstacle to the core rationale of fuel reduction burning; they have overlaid the preservation of personal safety and infrastructure with environmental considerations.

“BIG DECLINE IN AVERAGE PRESCRIBED BURN AREAS

It is a scientifically verifiable fact that the Australian bush has evolved and developed in fired landscapes introduced by traditional aboriginal fire-stick burning and the vitality, health and sustainability of this ecosystem and the ecological processes therein need periodic fire.

Cont P 3



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From P 2

“We need to mimic the aboriginal approach to landscape vegetation and fire management using all the modern-day tools now available,” says Dr Gary Bacon AM (BSc for. Hon), a former executive director of Queensland Forestry.

“The conversion of large tracks of multiple-use native state forests into conservation/park reserves has resulted in loss of resource rental, reduced maintenance of access roads and fire trails, massive losses of on-site personnel and a passive approach to fuel management. Volunteers cannot fill the void.

Dr Bacon said the concept of ‘climate change’ as the ‘outlaw’ in the current emergency was flawed.

It ignored the documented histories of mega bushfires in Australia from Black Thursday 1851 onwards that had caused massive loss of life, houses and stock, and underscored the contribution of fuel to bushfire intensity.

“The Australian community must have political leadership to drive a refocus on landscape fire preparedness,” he said.

“Much of our grasslands and forests needs to be covered with a mosaic of burnt and unburnt zones (a spatial patch work quilt) determined by a prioritisation of risk and effectiveness.

“Fuel reduction burning at periodicities and intensity appropriate for the locality is at the core of future regional wild fire minimisation.

“PARKS CONTROL HAS CAUSED HIGHER FUEL LEVELS



1/ At the front... Prime Minister Scott Morrison and his wife Jenny with Rural Fire Service captain Mark Ayliffe at Cobargo in southeast NSW.



2/ Andrew Colvin... heading \$2 billion National Bushfire Recovery Agency.

“Federal and state legislation must have mandates that all adequately resourced land management agencies and the Rural Fire Service treat a minimum 5% of the fireable landscape each year.

“Useful collaboration is envisaged with traditional aboriginal expertise.”

There is evidence also that hazard reduction burning helps limit the spread of bushfires that burn in moderate weather, but has less effect on bushfires burning during extreme and catastrophic conditions. Yet most houses are destroyed during bushfires burning in extreme fire weather.

The single most effective hazard reduction measure during the 2009 Black Saturday bushfires was clearing native trees and shrubs within about 40 m of homes.

From the late 1980s, there has been an infiltration of various governments by the green element of society. In Queensland this started with the Goss government in 1989. Rod McInnes, then manager of Timber Queensland, summed up the situation in Timber&Forestry enews: “The previous government

had abrogated its forest policy responsibilities to the conservation movement; our industry is now considered yesterday’s industry”.

The Queensland Department of Forestry was dismembered, the plantations sold off in a fire sale and large areas were removed from state forests and placed under national

parks control which resulted in an increase in forest fuel levels and closure of roads, increasing the fire hazard and reducing the access needed for fire control.

These actions severely reduced the forest fire management capacity in Queensland and similar scenarios apply in other states.

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TREES | WOOD | PAPER

Timber supply hit, but first concerns are workers and putting out the fires

Full downstream consequences yet to be felt by wood processors

THE forest industry and the powerful CFMEU have called for fuel loads in national parks to be aggressively managed through hazard reduction burning and selective logging, to avoid a repeat of the bushfire crisis sweeping the nation.

The NSW government will consider stripping land management and hazard reduction responsibilities from “conservationist” environmental agencies.

Instead it would create a stand-alone hazard reduction body that would be solely devoted to reducing fuel loads and clearing more land to mitigate fire risks.



Prepared... new cloud-based image platform FireLens will help fire agencies in Victoria improve information sharing during planned burning and fire suppression events.

The proposal is one of two options being pushed strongly by Nationals MPs

ahead of an inquiry into bushfire management led by the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment.

Australia’s timber industry is facing tough times as wood supply from sawmills and processors in disaster areas dwindles or shuts off.

Industry sources in Victoria said they feared up to 40% of the state forest allocated to VicForests to harvest in East Gippsland had been destroyed in the fires, which have burnt through 1.2 million ha of the state.

The consequences of the plantation destruction will take years to play out for communities in the three states reliant on timber jobs. The fires are a fresh blow to Victoria’s timber industry, coming just weeks after the

Labor government announced the end of all native forest logging within 10 years.

Sawmills in the east of the state, which had already been struggling to secure enough logs to keep their machines running, said the government’s move would put thousands of workers out of their jobs and put the future of Victoria’s timber towns in doubt.

VicForests said it could not confirm numbers but that it had lost a significant amount of its logging coupes in the area, and would be unable to assess the damage while the fires were still burning.

“The East Gippsland fires have had a significant impact on VicForests’ coupes,” a spokesman said.

“While the fires are ongoing, we are unable to fully assess the impact.”

“Our current focus is on fully supporting the efforts to manage the bushfires



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“CONSEQUENCES WILL TAKE YEARS TO PLAY OUT FOR COMMUNITIES”

From P 4

and deploying all available staff and contractors to the region.”

AFPA says some of the plantation trees currently burning, those used for building products, would take 30 years to regrow.

“So, when the fires are finally contained, it will be like a slow-motion train crash as the full downstream consequences are felt,” CEO Ross Hampton said.

“Large areas of our plantation forest estate in key forestry regions in NSW, Victoria and South Australia are on fire and the downstream consequences for rural communities will be severe.”

The Victorian Association of Forest Industries says the full extent of the damage can't yet be assessed.

CEO Tim Johnston said the immediate concerns were with the individuals, families, communities and local businesses across Victoria that had been devastated by the bushfires.

“The full impact of the

“ FULL IMPACT OF BUSHFIRES IS UNKNOWN



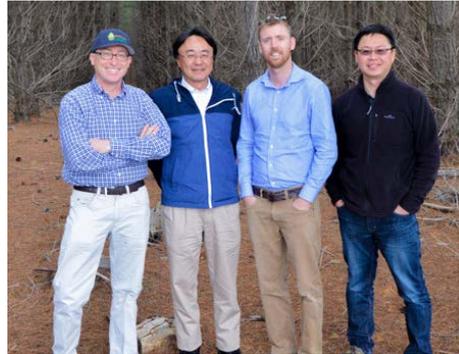
A yellow 'K' marks dangerous burnt 'killer trees' that must be felled.

bushfires is unknown at this stage, but the first step is to get the fires out,” he said.

“Many forest contractors and timber workers have been active in their communities, focusing on extinguishing the fires.

“This support will continue in the weeks and months ahead as they use their valuable skills, knowledge and equipment as part of the recovery and salvage process, including making areas and roads safe again for public access.

Mr Johnston said it was too early to estimate the possible impacts of the fires across



Kangaroo Island Plantation Timbers... executive director John Sergeant with Mitsui's Yasuhiro Yamano, director, Lachlan Cook, manager, plantation and woodchip projects, and William Chow, trading and new business analyst.

Victoria on the timber and forestry industry.

“The first step is for VicForests to make a thorough assessment on the full impact when it is safe to do so. When there is a better understanding of the impact, VAFI will work with its members and the wider industry to help those affected and work on the next steps for our industry as a whole.”

Kangaroo Island Plantation Timbers says about 90% of its plantations on the South Australian island have been damaged by fires. Salvage operations are under way.

Shares in the \$111 million grower of hardwood and softwood forestry plantations have been voluntarily suspended from trade on the Australian Securities Exchange.

Well in excess of \$100 million of tree crop has been impacted.

About 30,000 ha of pines have been burnt along with significant areas of eucalypts. This was seen as the next big log and woodchip export push if and when a wharf was built.

AKD Softwoods remains primarily concerned for the wellbeing of people and communities in the Snowy Mountains region. The immediate impact at AKD's Tumut and Gilmore sites will be a delayed re-start from the Christmas maintenance shut, with a re-start date difficult to confirm until the fires are contained, and log supply can re-commence.

However, timber products continue to be dispatched from both sites, to customers in Victoria and NSW, drawn

Cont P 6



Image courtesy of the _shoot_ project, the 2018 Responsible Wood Photo Competition Winner

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From P 5

from healthy finished goods stock levels at both sites.

AKD CEO Shane Vicary is confident supply can be maintained to all customers from existing stockpiles and available production capacity at AKD's other sawmills.

The Eden woodchip mill, the largest employer in the NSW coastal town, will remain closed for the foreseeable

future after bushfire embers set the 100,000-tonne woodchip pile alight.

Hyne Timber's thoughts remain with its Tumarumba NSW team members, their families, firefighters and volunteers, emergency

“ EDEN WOODCHIP MILL PILE GOES UP IN SMOKE

services and the broader community as the bushfire state of emergency continues.

The Tumarumba mill employs about 200 team members who are managing their personal response to the emergency as a priority.

Hyne Timber CEO Jon Kleinschmidt said conditions had made it challenging to communicate with

Tumarumba team members and the community more broadly.

“We are aware some team members have lost their homes,” he said. “We are available to assist if Hyne can help. With the state of emergency in place, it may take some time to understand the extent of impact on our people and the community.

Path to recovery: \$15m for rural counselling after fires

THE path to recovery from bushfires over the next two years will include 60 more rural financial counsellors and support workers, with an injection of \$15 million in additional funding to the Rural Financial Counselling Service.

“We’ve seen a massive scale of destruction from vineyards, orchards and forestry plantations to

livestock herds and abalone farms so we’re boosting the RFCS to help these sectors through the difficult financial decisions they may be facing,” the Minister for Agriculture Senator Bridget McKenzie said.

“Existing rural financial counsellors are already on the ground working with communities and

assessing needs.

“We expect demand for these services to grow as the situation unfolds and people return to their properties to evaluate the damage.”

Rural financial counsellors can help by identifying financial and business options; negotiating with lenders; identifying other

assistance schemes; and assistance in applying for the Farm Household Allowance.

Rural financial counsellors do not give family, emotional or social counselling or financial advice, but can refer clients to other professional services, including accountants, agricultural advisers, education, or mental health services.

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FEBRUARY 2020

16-21: Gottstein Understanding Wood Science Course – Albury & Canberra, Australia. New extended wood processing site visits based out of Albury, followed by lecture series at Canberra at the ANU Fenner School. Formal course dinner and other networking events. Book early at www.gottsteintrust.org Inquires gottsteinsecretary@gmail.com

APRIL 2020

7-8: MobileTECH Ag 2020 – Rotorua, NZ. International keynote Dr Mike Briers, CEO, Australian-based Food Agility. "We are on the cusp of the 4th agricultural revolution and unlike those that came before, this digital revolution will bring producers and consumers closer together," says Dr Briers. "The real question, however, is who will be the builders and who will be the bystanders?" Jamie Azzopardi, the Oceania head of IBM's The Weather Company, will also deliver an important

keynote. The company is one of the world's largest weather forecasters and has made significant advancements through IBM's Watson Machine learning platform. IBM has just launched a new weather modelling service that uses supercomputing and big data to provide global forecasts down to an area as little as 3 km. The system issues 12 trillion pieces of weather data every day and process forecasts every hour. Russell Craig, national technology officer, Microsoft NZ will return for the 2020 event. While artificial intelligence (AI) can be an overused buzzword, there is no argument that this will be a game-changer for the primary sector. MobileTECH Ag will be a great forum to understand how new technologies powered by data and AI are being adopted by agribusinesses. Cloud-based AI is the driving force behind Microsoft's FarmBeats initiative, which has already seen action within New Zealand's agricultural community. The system

captures large amounts of data from feeds throughout the farm and uses AI and machine learning to translate that data into real insights for the growers. Contact Ken Wilson, program manager on +61 4 5226 2337 or email ken.wilson@innovatek.co.nz Visit www.mobiletech.events

JUNE 2020

15-16: Timber & Technology. The Zero Carbon Future. Timber Offsite Construction 2020 Conference & Exhibition – Crown Promenade, Melbourne, Vic, Australia. The only national event exclusively devoted to design, manufacture and construction of offsite timber and mass wood buildings. The theme reflects the emerging marriage of timber and technology, and the need for future net zero carbon buildings with timber contributing through carbon storage benefits. Program sessions will include world leading experts with award-winning architects, international

and local engineers, major building companies, and prominent suppliers to offsite construction markets. Exhibition offers suppliers opportunity to access expanding construction markets with a booth display. Contact Kevin Ezard on 0419 538 638 or email kevin@timberoffsiteconstruction.com New website: www.timberoffsiteconstruction.com

NOVEMBER 2020

4-7: AusTimber 2020 – HVP plantation site, Traralgon, Gippsland region, Vic, Australia. Event and dinner ticket sales now live – and limited. Welcome dinner with guest speaker Dr Karl Kruszelnicki AM, Australian science communicator. Make sure you commemorate the event with some AUSTimber merchandise. Contact Dionne Olsen on +61 429 202 929 or email austimber2020@afca.asn.au Follow AUSTimber on www.austimber.org.au



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MARCH 2020

16-17: Asia Pacific Woodchip and Biomass Trade – Radisson Blu Shanghai New World Hotel, China.

Optional field trips: March 18-19 to Yangtze Basin region; March 19-22 (including travel) to Suifenhe on the Russia-China border in Heilongjiang province. Visit www.danaevents.co.nz/2020china or contact Julie Bell admin@dana.co.nz

APRIL 2020

3-5: FORESTlive, Forestry trade fair – Offenburg, Germany.

Leading fair covering forestry technology, wood energy and biomass for decision makers in the forestry and agriculture, construction and municipal economy, timber crafts and energy industry. For further information contact: +49 (0)781 922604 or www.messeoffenburg.de

MAY 2020

19-20: FastMarkets – RISI-DANA 7th annual Forest Investment Conference – Convene Conference Centre, New York City.

Register at www.events.risiinfo.com/investment-conference/ or contact conferences@risi.com

26-27: Inaugural DANA Russia Forest Industry Sector Conference and field trip – Hilton Helsinki Strand Hotel in

Helsinki, Finland. DANA joins with respected Russian information company Whatwood. Post-conference visits to harvesting and wood processing equipment manufacturers who sell to Russia (and in fact to the rest of the world); and to mills using some of this equipment. Visit www.danaevents.co.nz/2020russia or contact Julie Bell admin@dana.co.nz

JUNE 2020

1-3: International Forest Business Conference and Tour – Sopot, Poland.

A two-day conference on megatrends that shape forest and wood industry sectors. The event will highlight the transformation of forest-related businesses towards a low-carbon bioeconomy, discuss tensions between sustainability and cost competitiveness, and call attention to new green innovations. Field trip on June 3 to IKEA and Egger mills. The event will welcome institutional investors from across the globe to discuss investment opportunities in timber to diversify their portfolios and achieve healthy returns. Register at www.fba-events.com or contact karolina@forest-analytics.com

1-5: DANA Europe Spruce Damage Seminar and Tour – Hamburg, Germany.

One-day seminar in Hamburg on the impact of spruce forest damage on Germany, Austria, Czech Republic,

Poland, Sweden, Italy. Website and full details available soon. Register interest with Dennis Neilson dana@dana.co.nz

AUGUST 2020

24-27 : World Conference on Timber Engineering (WCTE Santiago 2020) – Santiago, Chile.

Topics include Sustainable Forests for timber production; wood products, connections: timber engineering' timber architecture; building and environmental impacts; policies, education and future trends. For further information see: www.wcte2020.com/

SEPTEMBER 2020

1-3: DANA New Zealand Forest Industry Status and Outlook Conference and field trip – Emerald Hotel, Gisborne, New Zealand.

For further information see: <https://danaevents.co.nz/2020gisborne/> or contact Julie Bell admin@dana.co.nz

NOVEMBER 2020

1-5: 3rd DANA African Forest Industry Investment Conference and field trip – Durban, South Africa.

Planning under way. Two day optional field trip (November 19-20). Register interest with Julie Bell admin@dana.co.nz

• Please send any events listings to John Halkett via email: johnh@timberandforestrynews.com

Beehives, honey production hit by forest fires

THE loss of extensive forest resources from bushfires will impact seriously on the honeybee industry “for decades to come”, says the Australian Honey Bee Industry Council.

CEO Sarah Paradice said the full impact was yet to be fully assessed but it would be “enormous” as a significant number of hives and floral resources had been lost.

“Reports from one insurer alone confirmed claims for 6000 hives lost in the NSW south coast fires, and this does not include claims yet to be reported or uninsured hives.”

The knock-on effects will also be a significant reduction in honey production, an

increase in honey prices and a reduction in levies collected. Levies of 4.6c/kg are payable once a beekeeper produces >1,500 kg of honey per annum. Reduced levies will impact research and development programs administered through Agrifutures and other programs such as biosecurity (Plant Health Australia) and the National Residue Survey (Department of Agriculture).

AHBIC has been working with industry and government to help beekeepers through the crisis.

“We are seeking sugar and pollen subsidies so beekeepers can artificially feed bees and build new hives in time for next spring



Sarah Paradice... seeking subsidies so beekeepers can artificially feed bees.

and the pollination season,” Sarah Paradice said.

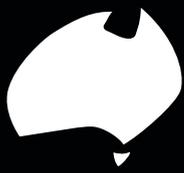
“But bees can only survive so long on artificial feeding regimes so it remains to be seen how effective this plan will be.”

Ms Paradice said in the coming months and years beekeepers would work closely with forestry.

An AHBIC workshop in March, part funded by Agrifutures, aimed to design a disaster recovery plan for the industry.

“In conjunction with Capilano, we’ve also established Hive Aid through Rural Aid, a fund designed to assist beekeepers with their specific needs,” Ms Paradice said.

Along with AFPA, AHBIC today (Thursday) is attending the Minister for Agriculture’s roundtable discussion in Canberra to contribute to the federal government’s response to the bushfires.



AUSTimber 2020

04-07 November

Important announcement

We have rescheduled... to November

The response and recovery efforts to the bushfire crisis are significant and many people from our timber industry have been directly affected or are working tirelessly to support impacted communities across Australia.

The decision to reschedule the show was the best way to support our timber industry and communities to continue the bushfire response, recovery and salvage efforts.

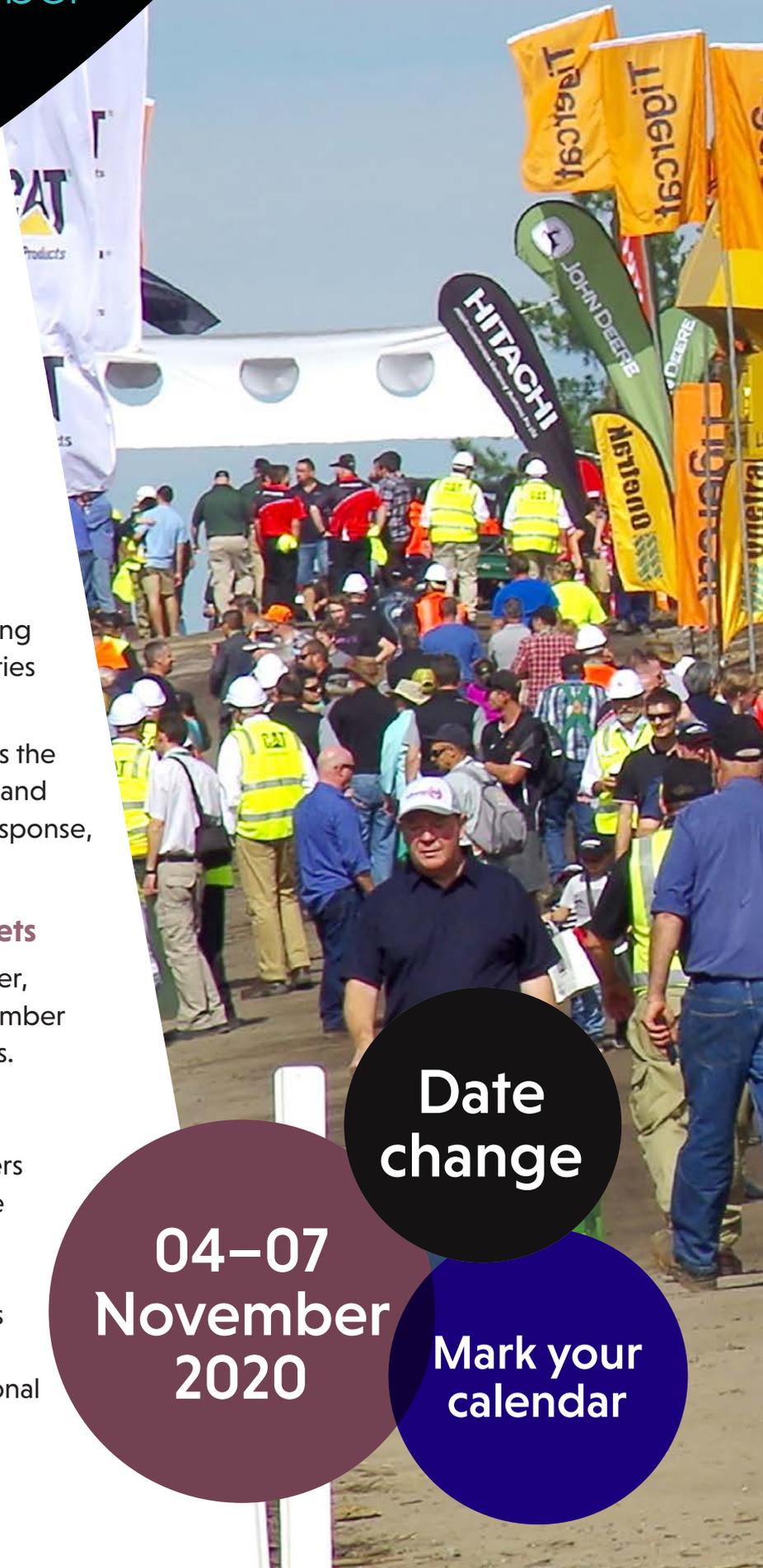
If you have already purchased tickets

All tickets will be honoured for November, the program remains unchanged. Remember to update any accommodation bookings.

Thank you

To our supporters, exhibitors and partners for their positive and proactive response to the decision to reschedule the show. It is their commitment to the success of the show that means our communities will still have the opportunity to benefit from over 10,000 national and international attendees visiting Gippsland.

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04-07
November
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47 deg. – remembering Black Saturday with 173 fatalities and 1900 homes lost

THE six deadliest bushfires on record (ranked according to number of fatalities):

1: Black Saturday (Vic) Feb 7-8 2009

Black Saturday resulted from some of the worst fire conditions ever recorded in Victoria. Record-high temperatures up to 47.78 deg. and strong winds after a season of intense drought set the bush alight across the state, causing widespread devastation, 173 fatalities and the destruction of more than 2000 homes.

2: Ash Wednesday (Vic, SA) Feb 16-18 1983

Widespread drought, gale-force winds, high temperatures and low relative humidity set the scene for a series of fires across Victoria and south-eastern South Australia. Accidents and arsonists started most of the fires, which spread rapidly through scenic residential regions near Melbourne and



Black Saturday fires... strong winds after a season of intense drought set the bush alight

Adelaide, resulting in the death of 75 people and the destruction of nearly 1900 homes.

3: Black Friday (Vic) Jan 13-10 1939

Drought conditions and water shortages also preceded Black Friday, but the usual combination of high temperatures, strong winds, and low humidity finally triggered fires throughout bush communities near Melbourne. In all, 71 people were killed and 650 houses

were destroyed. A Royal Commission investigation into the fires led to increased fire awareness and prevention efforts throughout Australia.

4: Black Tuesday (Tas) Feb 7 1967

An unusually abundant spring covered Tasmanian forest floors with litter, providing excess fuel for the bushfire season. Strong northerly winds and high temperatures coupled to help fuel at least 80 different

fires across southern Tasmania, which swept over the south-east coast of the state and came within 2 km of central Hobart. The fires killed 62 people and razed almost 1300 homes.

5: Gippsland fires and Black Sunday (Vic) Feb 1-March 10 1926

Large areas of Gippsland caught fire, culminating in the Black Sunday fires on February 14 that killed

31 people in Warburton, near Melbourne. Over the two-month period, a total of 60 people were killed.

6. Queensland, NSW, Victoria summer fires Dec 26-Jan 9 2020

About 3000 firefighters; five killed. 3000 army reserve forces and others. Total of 10.7 million ha burned across three states. The fires are still burning. More than 6000 buildings (including over 2204 homes) and 28 people killed as of January 14.



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If only the tears were rain: tough fire volunteers unite in the trenches

28 lives, 1300 homes lost and 10.7 million hectares burnt

JIM BOWDEN

WHEN the going gets tough the tough get tougher.

The forest industry and its communities, savaged by flame, are fighting in the trenches with a toughness matched only by the firefighting services, Army reserves and volunteers – men and women – who are waging a ferocious battle at the front.

Two volunteer firefighters died six days before Christmas when their fire truck hit a tree before rolling over.

A veteran firefighter, Bill Slade, was killed at the weekend while battling a bushfire in Victoria, bringing the toll from the bushfires to 28 nationwide. A veteran of the 2009 Black Saturday fires, Bill, 60, was struck by a falling tree while on duty fighting a blaze in East Gippsland.

War time conditions ... as thousands in our industry prepare to count the cost and casualties – and reasons – for one of the nation's worst natural disasters.

Five weeks after early fires started on Christmas Day and worsened across three states, an accurate assessment of the damage is still impossible as they continue to engulf communities on all fronts.

Fires to date have burned

“THOUSANDS COUNT THE COST AND CASUALTIES”



At the front... women volunteers discuss firefighting strategies in NSW.

more than 10.7 million ha of land, including 1.6 million ha of productive forests and plantations, destroyed an estimated 500 million animals – including the loss of 25,000 koalas on Kangaroo Island with 50% of the island burned to ashes – and ravaged an eco-system that will take decades to recover. And Australia's summer is only just beginning.

In an email from Buenos Aires, Australian forester

Evan Shield said smoke haze from the bushfires had been seen on the border between Argentina and Uruguay and was visible out into the Atlantic.

The Australian Forest Products Association has commended all fire-fighting services and coordinators at a local, state and federal level, but with many more weeks of the fire season still to run, is appealing for a clear national consensus that

the priority for deployment of resources should be to save lives first followed closely by livelihoods and jobs.

The revived Friends of Forestry network, initiated by Healesville-based Kersten Gentle, former Victorian manager and national coordinator of Timber Communities Australia, is providing a united 'grassroots' response to the state's fires working within the industry to coordinate volunteers and their forest machinery and equipment.

As an example, Kersten said Brett Robin, a fifth-generation logger from Gippsland, and Powelltown contractor Peter McConachy, were hand falling and working in the fire areas in Mallacoota. Also, Colin Robin, Grant McConachy, Sam Wilson, Peter Barker and Brett Robin contributed to emergency measures at Mallacoota Beach in the east Gippsland.

Colin and Brett Robin and Peter Barker of Robin Logging and Grant McConachy and Sam Wilson of McConachy Logging were ready to load their machinery aboard HMAS Choules to transport forest contractors and machinery to Mallacoota in east Gippsland.

Kersten said Friends of Forestry was designed to support and empower timber workers, their families and timber communities.

Cont P 12



Forest contractors at the ready... Colin Robin, Grant McConachy, Sam Wilson, Peter Barker, and Brett Robin confer with Sgt Frank Parsons (third from left) on emergency measures at Mallacoota Beach in the east Gippsland.

From P 11

timber communities.

“It’s vital to have a voice at the grassroots level so governments at all levels understand the importance of rural industries such as the timber industry to rural and regional communities,” she said. “This is for the whole timber and wood products sectors. We want to educate across the full supply chain to unite this wonderful industry.”

Kersten said one aim was to grow the volunteer network ... “to have representatives as a voice in various areas such as the wonderful David Endacott, who is a long-time advocate and retired forester in the Midlands region, and Garry Squires in East Gippsland, an experienced forest management planner.

Meanwhile, a crew of 20 veteran firefighters based in California are in Australia to help fight the fires and

“OUR HEARTS GO OUT TO THOSE WHO HAVE LOST SO MUCH

replace a group of personnel sent to Australia in early December. They include hot-shot and helicopter crew members with experience attacking fires early before they grow into large infernos. Australia and New Zealand have been sending firefighters to the US for more than 15 years, most recently in August 2018 when 138 helped battle fires in northern California.

Business Council CEO Jennifer Westacott said it had been a devastating, frightening and shocking time for Australia.

“Our hearts go out to all of those who have lost so much,” she said. “We are so grateful for the efforts of our brave volunteers and emergency services personnel, just as we are proud of the efforts of the entire Australian community to support those in need,” she said.

The council will establish a five-year community rebuilding program that will work with the federal government’s \$2 billion Bushfire Recovery Agency to create employment for



Sir Peter Cosgrove... former Chief of Defence to lead \$2 billion Bushfire Recovery Agency.

volunteers and victims who have lost their livelihoods, as well as help with the reconstruction and provide financial relief. It will be chaired by former governor-general and chief of defence Sir Peter Cosgrove.

The Australian Volunteer Support Trust will be permanent and will focus on funding the education of children of volunteers who have died in the fires and in future disasters. It will be backdated to be effective from the start of the last financial year and administered by a board of independent trustees.

Former Victorian Premier Jeff Kennett will oversee the advisory panel comprising

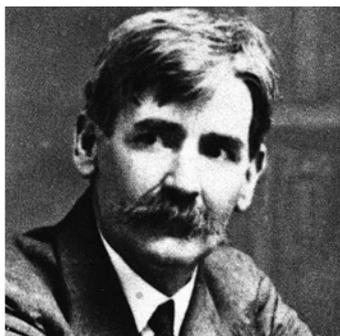
Jennifer Westacott, former governor-general Dame Quentin Bryce and businessman David Gonski. The recovery fund will assist with lost income, rebuilding infrastructure, wildlife care and mental health support, which will be administered by the new

National Bushfire Recovery Agency.

Volunteer firefighters in NSW who work for private businesses will be eligible for up to \$6000 in compensation under a federal-funded scheme, following weeks of debate about paying those on the front lines. Other states and territories have been invited to enter similar programs to compensate volunteers who have spent weeks or months at various fire fronts over summer.

If only the tears were rain.

On the cover: Volunteer Brett Robin, a fifth-generation logging contractor from Gippsland, Vic, breaks from fire-fighting duty to comfort a baby koala.



A Bush Fire ... by Henry Lawson

HENRY Lawson is one of Australia's best known bush poets and writers. He was

born on June 17, 1867, at Grenfell Goldfields, NSW.

This poem is just as relevant today as our country battles destructive bushfires.

*One Christmas-time, when months of drought
Had parched the western creeks,
The bush-fires started in the north
And travelled south for weeks.*

*At night, along the river side,
The scene was grand and strange;
The hill-fires looked like lighted streets
Of cities in the range.*

*Tho cattle tracks between the trees
Were like long, dusty aisles.
And, on a sudden breeze, the fire
Would sweep along for miles.*

*Like sounds of distant musketry
It crackled through the brakes,
And o'er the flat of silvery grass
It hissed like angry snakes.*

*It leapt across the flowing streams,
And raced o'er pastures broad.
It climbed the trees and lit the boughs,
And through the scrub it roared.*

*The bees fell stifled in the smoke
Or perished in their hives,
And, with the stock, the kangaroos
Went flying for their lives.*



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High-tech classifieds section for enews

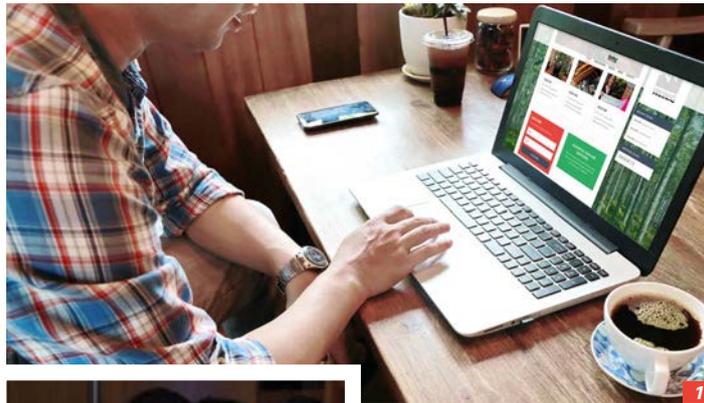
THE weekly industry digital journal Timber&Forestry enews this week launches a new classifieds online advertising facility for the Australasian timber and forestry industry.

Co-publisher John Halkett said until now such a facility did not exist for the industry in Australia.

"We have been aware that such a classifieds capacity has been flagged as an essential industry tool for the past year or so," John said. "With that in mind, we have worked over the second half of 2019 on the development of a high-tech, sophisticated, yet easy-to-use online classifieds tool."

John said the classifieds tool would be a real commercial benefit to the industry

"So, the classified service is exciting news to kick off



1/ **New service... 2020 sees the launch of an upgraded enews website and a 'self-drive' classifieds facility.**
2/ **John Halkett ... valuable industry communications tool.**

equipment for sale, and so on," he said.

To access the classifieds advertising facility, click here.

The 'self-drive' classifieds facility will allow industry companies and other entities to place classified ads online

at prices and technology that will be much superior to overseas alternatives.

The first enews edition for 2020 also sees the launch of a new upgraded enews website. To access the new website, click here.

To get things rolling, Timber&Forestry enews is offering a 20% discount in the first two months for those early to take advantage of the new service.

This year will also see enews further consolidating editorial and distribution relationships with key industry entities in Australia, New Zealand and other countries.

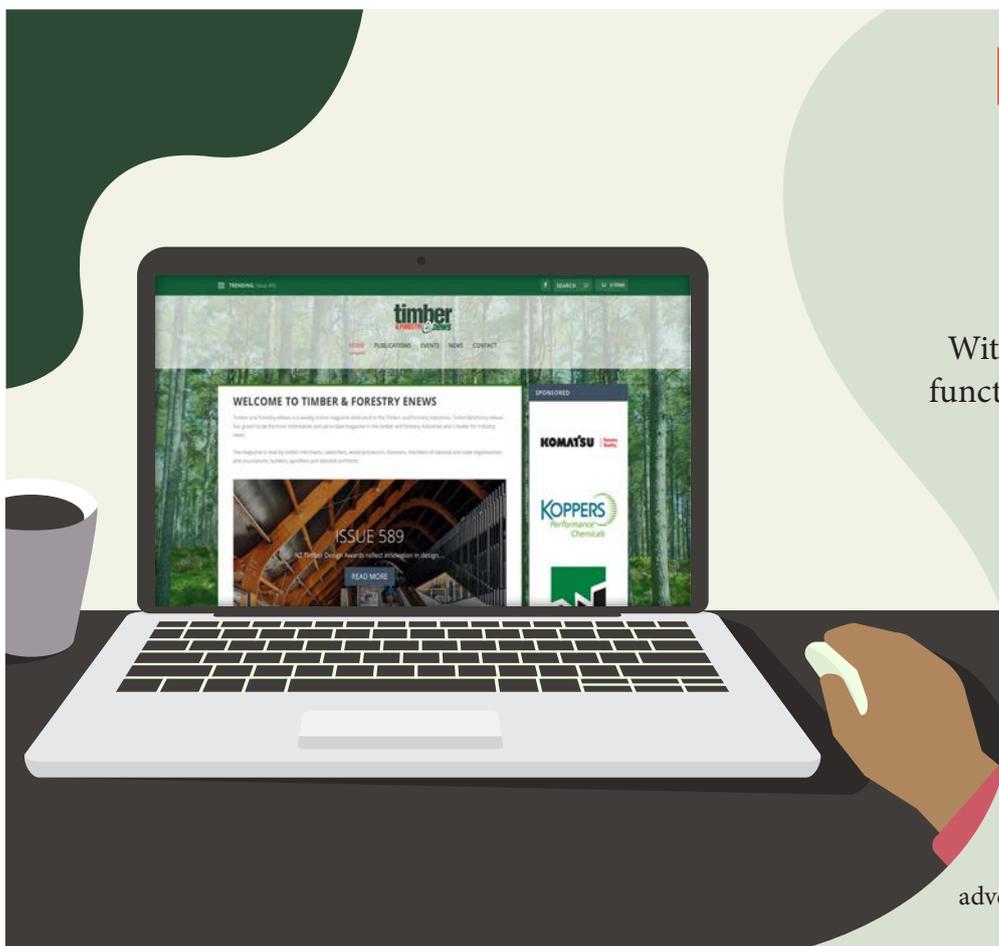
"This, along with our new classifieds advertising capacity, will strengthen our position as the premier weekly intelligence magazine for industry.

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Hundegger TURBO-Drive “PRINT”

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 Text, part numbers, job ID etc



Hundegger TURBO-Drive “MILL”

All the above features, plus tool carrier, soft starter for infeed system, and powerful 7.5kW vertical milling head and dedicated double mitre tool



Hundegger TURBO-Drive “PLUS”

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Whatever your requirements, the Hundegger TURBO-Drive has a package to suit, all with localised Technical Support. All machines can be upgraded at a later date to ensure your investment returns full value. For detailed specifications, contact Sam Rowe on +61 418 561 023 sam.rowe@hundegger.com.au

Put foresters back in the forests

Urban greens have had their moment in the sun

VIV FORBES

THERE was a time when Australian foresters kept Australian forests safe and productive.

They maintained access tracks bridges and fire breaks, undertook prescribed burning, cleared flammable litter from the forest floor, cut suckers, manned fire lookouts and maintained their own fire-fighting crews in decentralised districts. University-trained professional foresters were supported by tough experienced rangers who learned their job in the bush.

Almost every advance in bushfire management in Australia, from the science of fire behaviour to aerial burning, was thanks to our foresters. Into the 1980s they were regarded as international leaders.

To pay for good forest management, sections of the forest were logged, allowing ground space and sunlight for the swift re-growth of new trees.

And those fading die-hards still beating alarm drums about man-made global warming should be reassured – the use of hardwood and softwood timber in power poles, telephone poles, bridges, wharves, posts, sleepers, haysheds and houses provided long-term sequestration of the dreaded carbon. Moreover, growing trees extract CO₂ more quickly than mature trees. Win, win, win.

**CUT THE LOCKS
OPEN THE TRACKS
AND REMOVE THE
TRASH**



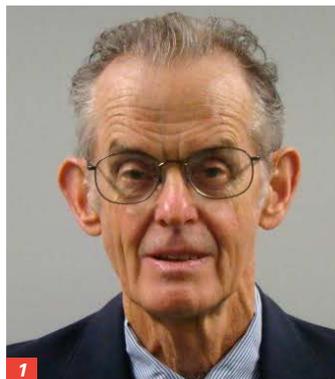
1/ Viv Forbes... anyone without green blinkers can see the evidence daily.

Then we entered the Green Era. Foresters and timber-getters were demonised by urban greens, their tame bureaucrats and academics, and their ABC mates. State forests were converted to national parks and wilderness areas and John Howard created the hated Kyoto Protocol Forests on private land. Timber imports rose.

Every locked-up, un-managed, un-burnt forest inevitably breeds disastrous wildfires. The combination of heavy fuel load, poor access for fire fighters, drought, hot winds, arsonists and dry lightning has only one assured outcome – a bushfire tragedy for the forest and the neighbours. (Why are no greens chaining themselves to trees now?)

This must change. No inquiries are needed. Anyone without green blinkers can see the evidence daily.

So, cut the locks, open the tracks and remove the trash. Then call tenders from local



people to use recreation, tourism, timber getting or hunting feral animals to fund proper care and maintenance of our forests. A well-managed forest can pay for its own management and also keep the community safe and happy.

Control must be local. Local foresters and local fire wardens must call the shots on when and how to reduce flammable litter, weeds and suckers. Everyone should have the right (maybe the obligation) to fire-proof their own properties and boundaries. There should be no more national parks – just local parks. And arson should be treated as terrorism.

The state governments can

provide weather forecasts, bushfire warnings, radar information, aerial support and TV performances.

The feds should return some of their tax receipts to help us to restore the forests we have lost, but otherwise they should keep out of the way.

The urban greens have had their moment in the sun. They seized management of Australian forests from Australian foresters, and have had every opportunity over the last 25 years to apply their evergreen theories on bushfire management. The result is there for everyone to observe – total and tragic failure.

Far too many bushfires start in national parks. Few stay in the parks.

It's time to get sensible forest policies and professional forest managers back on the job.

Get rid of the Red Bull and the Green Fairies – bring back the White Knights.

•Viv Forbes was raised at Wheatvale near Warwick in Queensland, and is from a long line of pioneering dairy farmers. He won an open scholarship to the University of Queensland and obtained a degree in Applied Science. Since graduation he has studied economics, politics, climatology and financial analysis. He completed National Service training and spent several years in the Australian Citizen Military Forces.

Soft spot for Agathis species and the evergreen monkey puzzle tree

I HAVE always had a soft spot for Agathis trees. A magnificent planted Queensland kauri (*Agathis robusta*), adjacent to the beach at Blackburn Cove in eastern Sydney where I occasionally go for a quick swim before work, has to be well over a 100 years old – perhaps 200.

Together, Agathis and Araucaria form the southern hemisphere conifer family of trees Araucariaceae. Agathis – a genus of 13 species is generally known as kauri, after the Maori name for the New Zealand species *Agathis australis*.

In the southern hemisphere it is generally accepted that the Araucariaceae family of conifers is one of the oldest, if not the most ancient conifer groupings.

The existing species of the group – the Araucaria and Agathis – are remnants of a group of conifers that once flourished north of the equator. These trees have retreated south from their former dominant position in the world's flora as the climate has fluctuated. Today they have essentially a southern distribution.

The Agathis genus prefers warmer locations, although the genus extends as far south as the temperature

- 1/ **Century or more of growth... a magnificent planted Queensland kauri (*Agathis robusta*) tree at Blackburn Cove in eastern Sydney.**
 2/ **A living fossil... the monkey puzzle tree is native to central and southern Chile.**



moist evergreen forests of northern New Zealand. However, the main range of the now remnant population is the tropical moist evergreen forests of the southwest Pacific – Peninsula Malaysia, the Malay Archipelago, the Bismarck, Santa Cruz New Hebrides and Fiji archipelago, New Caledonia and Queensland.

The genus Araucaria has a long and noble ancestry, and

associated with the time of the dinosaurs. The trees radiate whorls of branches stiffer and spiker than those of any other conifers. Four species *Araucaria* (*A. excelsa*, *A. bidwillii*, *A. columnaris* and *A. cunninghamii*) originate from the southern Pacific, including the rainforests of Queensland and Norfolk Island.

A famous member of the Araucariaceae family is the monkey puzzle tree, or Chilean pine (*Araucaria araucana*). This tree is native to central and southern Chile and western Argentina. Because of its longevity this tree is often described as a living fossil. It is also the national tree of Chile.

This evergreen tree is a distinguishing feature of many South American landscapes and is commonly called the monkey puzzle tree. It is native to central and southern Chile and western Argentina and is the hardest species in the genus *Araucaria*. Its natural habitat is the lower slopes of the Chilean and Argentinean south-central Andes Mountains, typically above 1000 m.

Juvenile trees exhibit a broadly pyramidal or conical habit which develops into the distinctive umbrella form as trees mature.

TALKING TREES



With **JOHN HALKETT**

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still consists of 25 species, all in the southern hemisphere. Palaeobotanists have traced the ancestors of the genus back to prehistoric times. Common to all 25 species is the regimented geometry



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Proud to work on the front line

Forest contractors are doing an amazing job

KERSTEN GENTLE

It's hard to believe the fires are still causing so much havoc.

It's times like this that I am so proud of our industry – out there working on the front line, helping with logistics, supporting their local communities and doing whatever they can to help people and communities affected by the fires.

Graham Walker of Corryong Sawmill, for example, laid his workers off on full pay to help volunteer in firefighting efforts.

And contractors are doing an amazing job.

McConachy Logging and Robin Logging prepared machinery for loading aboard HMAS Choules to transport



In the face of fire... volunteers do what comes naturally.

forest contractors and machinery to Mallacoota. They were ready to begin fighting fires and clearing roads so other emergency services can access areas devastated by these horrendous fires.

It should be noted that Brett Robin, his family and friends have not only lost a house in Buchan but have organised truckloads of donated hay to the fire affected farming

communities.

Melina Bath shared a great story with photo on the work being done by harvesting contractor Rob Brunt who was working with Telstra to clear a pathway so telecommunications could be restored. Thanks Melina for sharing this story and Robbie for the outstanding work you have been doing.

Timber families are the salt of the earth and I honestly do not know how Victoria will cope in future if the Andrews government continues with plans to close down our industry.

It was terrible news about the fire at the Eden chip mill, the biggest employer in Eden by far. This will have a huge impact on the local community and the wider industry. Again our thoughts are with the owners, all the employees and contractors that depend on the mill for their livelihoods.

It was extremely sad to hear that Fred Becker from Maramingo sawmill who spent his life in the industry died fighting the fires. I met Fred on a number of occasions during my time with TCA.

Kelly Williamson, a supporter of our industry, has compiled images into a beautiful tribute clip. Her post stated:

"To our forgotten heroes, working tirelessly to fight

these fires. From putting in containment lines to making it possible for the fires to access otherwise inaccessible areas. Without the logging and earthmoving industries and their machines there would be so much more devastation and destruction.

"Your knowledge and love for the bush is second to none. You have sacrificed time with your families and placed yourself quite literally in the face of fire. In my eyes you will and forever be iron clad heroes. And for that I thank you from the bottom of my heart."

It is important to take photos to ensure people do not forget what role the industry plays.

I know the fires are still going and there is still a lot of work to do. Once the fires are over, everyone must be prepared to fight for our industry. This may be the only chance to get our voices heard and for Andrews to reconsider his decision.

As far as I've heard we have already lost well over 400 coupes and hundreds of thousands of hectares of production forests. We have also lost some plantations which will have a big impact on my sector, the frame and truss sector, down the track so the industry needs to rally. We need to communicate more effectively and ensure that we are all sharing the stories and having a loud voice.

• Kersten Gentle wears two hard hats – as a member of Friends of Forestry and as executive officer of the Frame & Truss Manufacturers Association of Australia.

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‘Bubbles’ was linked to industry’s ‘heyday’

VALENTINE Crooke, a much-loved member of a pioneer sawmilling family forever linked to the ‘heyday’ of the Queensland timber industry, passed away in Brisbane on Christmas Day surrounded by her family.

Valentine, 80, was the wife of John Crooke, who died in August this year, and daughter-in-law of Eric Crooke, who built the third-generation sawmill at Allies Creek in the South Burnett.

With business partner Frank Straker, Eric carved the business from the wilderness more than 70 years ago.

Valentine Crooke, like her sobriquet ‘Bubbles’, will be remembered as a lively, humorous, entertaining and capable driver of the family unit. She supported many community causes and was



Ship mates... Valentine Crooke with her husband John Crooke and father-in-law Eric aboard the family’s South Passage during Timber Week in 1982. Photo: Jim Bowden

a fine tactician in the game of bridge.

Crookie and Bubbles were well known and warmly welcomed at timber industry conferences and events around the world.

They were a familiar couple at Hoo-Hoo International

conventions in the US, Canada, New Zealand and Malaysia.

John was a foundation member of Brisbane Hoo-Hoo Club 218 attending the first meeting in 1963.

As a family, they supported many children’s charities

donating cash and building materials for special projects.

Valentine was a capable ‘first mate’ on the family’s beloved South Passage, a familiar craft on Moreton Bay and the Reef, and hosted many charity functions, welcoming aboard entrants and judges in the industry’s Timber Queen Quest through the 1970s-80s.

In bridge or any other game in life, Valentine came up trumps.

She is survived by children Peter, Eric, Rose and Genevieve and six grandchildren.

A service to celebrate Valentine’s life will be held at St Augustine’s Church, 56 Racecourse Road, Hamilton, on Thursday, January 23 at 2 pm.

– JIM BOWDEN



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Option 2 - to Suifenhe on the Russia/China border, March 19-22

STOP PRESS: Most field trip visits now confirmed



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Best quarter in 10 years for housing

AUSTRALIA'S housing market has recorded its best quarter of growth in 10 years, following a 4% gain to the end of December.

Research group CoreLogic says the quarterly gain was the strongest since November 2009, and was led by a 6.2% rise for Sydney homes.

However, the 1.1% rate of growth during December was the weakest month of the quarter, following rises of 1.2% and 1.7% in October and November respectively.

"This would suggest that the pace of capital gains may have been dampened by higher advertised stock levels or worsening affordability pressures through early summer," CoreLogic's head of research Tim Lawless said.

Like Sydney, homes in

Melbourne had strong growth; their values climbed 6.1% for the quarter.

Brisbane and Adelaide had gains of 2.4% and 1.4% respectively, while there were also increases for Hobart, up 3.4%, and Canberra, up 2.3%.

There were losses for Perth, down 0.1% and Darwin, down 1.4%.

For areas outside capital cities, the biggest gain for the quarter was in regional Queensland at 1.8%

There were also gains for the regional areas of Victoria, up 1.7%, NSW, up 1.6% and South Australia, up 0.4%.

There were losses for the regional areas of Western Australia, down 1.9%, Tasmania, down 3% and the Northern Territory, down 1.9%.



1/ **Tim Lawless**
2/ **Tim Reardon**

Australian homes climbed 2.3% in value in 2019, courtesy of a strong rebound in the second half of the year.

Mr Lawless said lower mortgage rates, a relaxation in borrower serviceability assessments, improved housing affordability and certainty around property tax policy were reasons for the rebound.

Meanwhile, HIA chief economist Tim Reardon says a declining population risks adverse impacts on

intergenerational equity.

Latest ABS data shows Australia's annualised population growth rate fell from 1.55% in the March quarter to 1.53% during the June 2019 quarter.

"The decline is due to a decline in net overseas migration," Mr Reardon said.

Population growth slowed in all states, with the exception of Western Australia and South Australia.

"Given our aging population, there is a significant risk that a sustained drop in the rate of overseas migration will see Australia's age dependency ratio continue to climb," Mr Reardon said. "This would put pressure on the ability of government to provide health and social services for future generations."

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We must deal with our 132 million ha of native forest as a connected landscape that must be actively managed

Fires expose the hard truth

ROSS HAMPTON

THE crisis engulfing the east coast of Australia — the heartbreaking deaths, the devastating loss of homes, communities and livelihoods — demands some very plain speaking.

Like thousands of Australians who live in the bush, I am a volunteer firefighter.

We don't look for thanks. It is just what most of us who live on farms and in villages do, as we know that our only defence against fire is to train together and band together to help each other in an emergency.

So I speak from experience when I say the only thing most firefighters are discussing as we race in our trucks towards a blaze is what the fuel load is on the fire ground.

And yet the sad truth is this is the one thing in Australia we have been making worse for decades.

Yes, climate change is drying some areas and reducing the window for burning off, but whatever Australian policymakers do in this area will have no immediate impact on bushfires or firefighting.

The only thing that can make a difference by next summer, and the summers after that, is to start to deal with our 132 million ha of native forest as a connected landscape that must be actively managed.

And that means the small areas of state forests that are



Helping hand... Ross Hampton joins in fire suppression activities.

used for sustainable forest management as well as the much larger national parks, reserves and other set-aside areas.

This means a combination of legislated targets for hazard-reduction burns (and not letting complaints about intermittent smoke haze stop them), as well as using machinery to thin the forest in key areas such as around communities and assets such as water storage, communications and power infrastructure.

The US aggressively uses these machine-based approaches to transform

important sections of forest into much more open, fire-resilient landscapes.

But despite the fact that it avoids the issue of creating smoke and can be done in a much larger weather window, in Australia we just don't do it.

We also have a significant disparity between our

“NEW
'PROTECTED
AREAS' ARE
PRECISELY THE
OPPOSITE OF
PROTECTED

multiple-use state forests (which are actively managed by state government forest agencies for recreational use, biodiversity and timber production) and national parks in managing fuel loads, maintaining access roads and firefighting resources.

Since November, millions of hectares of native forest across the nation have burnt, and much more will burn before the summer is over. Much of this is in national parks, where access for firefighters is notoriously difficult, and fuel loads are high.

For 20 years, successive state governments have significantly reduced the multiple use forest area to declare new national parks. This has meant the closure of forestry and timber industries around the country and, with them, the departure of significant firefighting resources.

Right now, around NSW and Victoria, forestry workers are risking their lives and their equipment to create fire breaks and to clear roads of burnt logs and debris to allow safe passage for fire crews. Who will do that when the native timber industry is gone?

The Victorian government has already announced plans to shut down the timber industry by the end of the decade. And yet no one even asks the question: will another national park

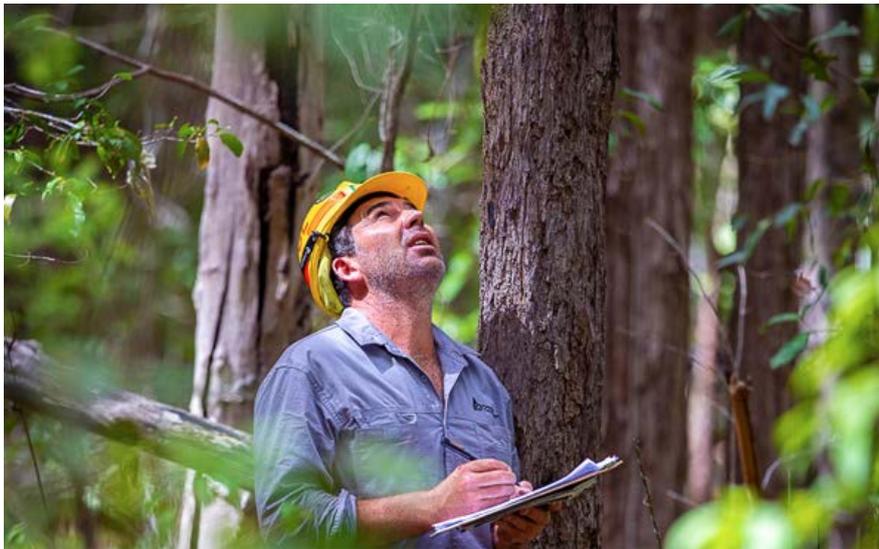
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From P 21

or reserve make this area, and the communities around it, more or less fireprone in decades to come?

New “protected areas” are precisely the opposite of protected. It means the removal of the men and women and machinery that in the past were on the spot to put out fires when they were still small. It means the removal of the secondary and tertiary roads that give fire crews access to work on backburning operations keeping fires from joining together.

I predict that as soon as the rains come there will be renewed calls to shut down the native timber industry in NSW, and an even swifter shutdown of the Victorian industry, and to declare more national parks. The proponents of



Multiple-use state forests... managed recreational use, biodiversity and timber production.
Photo NSW Forestry Corporation

these will ignore the fact that half a billion native animals have perished so far and the equivalent of two-thirds of our annual national greenhouse emissions have been pumped into the atmosphere.

This national disaster should be a wake-up call that business as usual cannot continue. The arbitrary divide between how we manage our multiple-use

public forests, privately owned forests, and national parks cannot continue. We urgently need a whole-of-landscape approach to land management with a focus on

“NEW ‘PROTECTED AREAS’ ARE PRECISELY THE OPPOSITE OF PROTECTED

bushfire mitigation. A more aggressive approach to fuel load management must be considered.

The bushfire royal commission that followed the terrible Black Saturday fires in Victoria was rightly focused on uncovering how 173 Australians lost their lives and what measures could be taken to avoid such a monumental tragedy happening again.

It didn’t delve deeply into the broader, deeper truths underlying landscape management, be it in Victorian or any other state.

A national bushfire royal commission is the right body to expose the hard truth that our pursuit of “lock up and leave it” is a recipe for disaster and a prescription of much more of the same.

• *Ross Hampton is CEO, Australian Forest Products Association in Canberra.*

Fuel load reduction greatly outweighs costs

A DELOITTE Access Economics report produced for the Australian Forest Products Association shows that the economic benefit of aggressive fuel load reduction massively outweighs the costs.

The report commissioned by AFPA in 2014, will help inform the current debate and provides factual information about the cost of undertaking preventative

“UNDER MANY FOREST POLICIES ‘PROTECTED’ CLEARLY MEANS THE OPPOSITE

bushfire mitigation activities.

The report provides the background for undertaking a full cost-benefit analysis of a policy of greater use of fuel reduction burning in combination with the mechanical removal of trees and understorey biomass.

AFPA CEO Ross Hampton said: “The magnitude of the bushfire tragedy including lost life, livelihoods and homes that is still unfolding on our east coast absolutely demands that when the rains finally come, we do not revert to business as usual.

“Surely we must no longer listen to those who say ‘protect’ the bush by locking

it up and removing roads, people and machinery and instead look at ways to better manage our valuable forest assets,” Mr Hampton said.

“It’s clear that under many current forest policies, protected clearly means the opposite. A drying climate is making things worse but whatever policy makers do it this space will have no effect next summer or the one after.

“The only meaningful action we can take to make our communities safer is reduce fuel load especially around towns and key strategic locations.”

Mr Hampton said many

experts have said this action is unaffordable but this report proves that assertion wrong.

“It is important to note that this report also doesn’t take into account the fact that the by-product of using machines to thin forest is biomass which has a value. The operation could effectively pay for itself,” Mr Hampton said.

“But such work is meaningless if it is not done at a landscape scale. Those who say such activities must not occur in national parks or other reserves are turning their back on one of the only tools at our disposal to actually make a difference to their fire resilience.”

Burnt offerings: buyers cautious after fires raze 40,000 ha of state plantations

THE NSW government, set to privatise the state's plantation forests early in the New Year as part of a fresh round of sale and lease arrangements to fund ambitious infrastructure projects, may find likely buyers have disappeared in the smoke.

The long-term lease of Forestry Corporation's 230,000 ha of softwood plantation, as well as other state-owned assets, would look to raise about \$1 billion, but the bushfire crisis – with more than 40,000 ha of plantations burnt and more areas under threat – has changed the scenario.

The state's forests produce about 14% of Australia's timber, including much of the supply for the housing industry.

The transaction, touted last month, aimed to involve a long-term lease of land and the right to grow timber, rather than the sale of land. The bank and financial services company UBS has undertaken a scoping study in the past three months while the accountancy firm KPMG has worked on the tax implications and the law firm Minter Ellison on the legal structures.

Labor's spokesman on natural resources Paul Scully said Labor remained opposed to the sale. He warned that privatisation would result in significant regional job losses and the



Ready and able... NSW Forestry Corporation firefighters prepare for the worst.

loss of important assets such as the nursery at Blowering and firefighting expertise. He also raised questions about what would happen to the thousands of kilometres of roads maintained by the Forestry Corporation.

The sale proposal presented real concerns for regional areas such as Bathurst, Oberon, Bega, Tumut and the north-west, where large softwood plantations are important employers.

James Tremain of the Nature Conservation Council warns of negative environmental impacts from privatisation.

In a media report, Mr Tremain said "privatisation will most likely result in worse environmental outcomes for forests because a private company will always seek to maximise its profit by fully exploiting the resource."

He said the NSW EPA had failed to make Forestry Corporation comply with

environmental laws.

"What hope would it have of making a private company abide by the law?" he said.

"If the government proceeds with the sale, it should remove first the native forest logging division and use the money from the transaction to fund a just transition for affected communities and workers."

“PROPOSAL A REAL CONCERN FOR FOREST MANAGEMENT”

The Forestry Corporation also manages 34,000 ha of hardwood timber plantations and has stewardship of about 2 million ha of coastal native forests, cypress and red gum, which are not proposed to be part of the deal.

The Victorian government sold its softwood plantations in 1998, while the Queensland Labor government in 2010

accepted \$603 million from Hancock Plantations, well below 'book value'.

Forestry Corporation of NSW has been managing environmental sustainability, tourism and renewable timber production in state-owned commercial native and plantation forests for more than a century.

It has balanced environmental conservation and community recreation with timber

production and access for other primary industries such as grazing and beekeeping to ensure forests sustainably deliver multiple benefits to the community for the long term.

The corporation is independently certified to Responsible Wood's Australian standard for sustainable forest management and, as a state-owned corporation, has an independent board of directors delivering annual financial return to NSW taxpayers.

Forestry Corporation produces around 14% of the timber produced in Australia annually and is a major player in the Australian wood products industry, which employs 22,000 people in NSW and adds \$2.4 billion a year to the economy.

FCNSW manages Australia's largest softwood

Cont P 24

From P 23

plantation estate, responsible for more than 230,000 ha of pine plantations in the north, south and central west.

Millions of trees have been harvested from the state's forests since the Forestry Act 1916 was passed and formal forest management began.

The first attempt at a commercial pine plantation was made at Tuncurry state forest on the mid-north coast in 1912. Eucalypt plantations followed in 1939-40 at Walaroo and Whian Whian state forests on the north coast. By 1971, 85,000 ha of pine plantation had been established.

The Act was aimed at protecting forests from

further unmanaged clearing to ensure long-term sustainable management of the timber reserve.

The forest industry has evolved over the past 100 years and today is an industry with a future – using the latest technology

to ensure the forest environment is maintained.

“THE FOREST INDUSTRY HAS EVOLVED OVER THE PAST 100 YEARS

Today, state forests are a mixture of native and plantation forests. Forest management techniques include the use of cutting-edge technology to map forests and model the volume of timber available ensuring the timber resources continues to be managed sustainably.



Forestry Corporation staff... managing environmental sustainability, tourism and renewable timber production in state forests..

In 1871, as settlement advanced through the state, with land cleared for cultivation, trees ringbarked for grazing and timber used for the development of the colony, the first forest reserves were proclaimed in NSW with the aim of preserving the timber resource of the colony. By 1905, more than 3 million ha of land was in timber reserves.



Some standards enforced in Australia originate from international certifying bodies

Think Global (not just Local)

Always purchase appropriately certified imported timber products



Stupid laws add fuel to bushland fires while many overlook historic records

Extracts of a post by LES CROWE, insurance loss management consultant

I AM appalled at the amount of near-hysterical reaction to the recent NSW and Queensland bushfires.

My reasoning is not so much about the fires or the people affected, but about whether "man-made" climate change is the underlying cause.

For some 40 years, my work as a loss adjuster was involved with natural disasters, ranging from Cyclone Tracey through to a lesser involvement in 2009. I was appointed as national chief loss adjuster, an advisory role, to the Insurance Council of Australia on all-natural disasters but particularly bushfires.

I was heavily involved in the 1983 Victorian fires.

I acknowledge the advice of the Bureau of Meteorology and the Climate Council is a reality to the effect the projected changes to climate

“ I PREFER TO LISTEN TO OUR INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY

were derived from modelling, which strongly suggested change would occur unless man-made contribution was reduced.

Somehow or other, sections of our communities have taken control of the scientific argument about the future and have interpreted it to mean the change has already occurred. Not so. Records actually show that the slight upward trend in temperatures on a global scale seems to be in direct line with the Earth's ever-occurring 'natural' climatic change patterns.

The true position, despite all the comments about what the current fires mean in a climate change scenario, is nobody can tell [with any certainty] if there is any connection.

What I can tell you, with absolute certainty, is that these fires, as bad as they were, are no more intense, widespread, dangerous or unexpected in outcome to many previous and historic events.

This is the first time such fires have been rated as



Les Crowe... ember spread from dry undergrowth.

catastrophic. True, but not because they were rated any worse than many previous fires. In 2009, following the bushfire inquiry, the defined categories of fire were renamed. Catastrophic was introduced as the most severe warning. So this description was never intended to make people think they were the worst fires ever. I have heard many media reports entrench this mistake.

"The fires were started as a result of climate changed conditions." Clearly wrong as 80% of fires were started by people either deliberately or accidentally lighting them.

Dry lightning strikes have been long recorded and are nothing new.

One of the clearest data-based facts from the 2009 Inquiry was the finding that fire intensity is proportional to and severely aggravated by fire loads created by undergrowth and forest floor debris accumulation.

Winter back burning, firewood removal and general debris clearance have been widely restricted by stupid laws. Go into a forest and try setting fire to a living gum tree with a match. Now stoop down and see if you get any better results from the dead and therefore dry undergrowth at your feet. This is the effect ember spread has on adjoining bushland.

I prefer to listen to our indigenous community who talk of bushfire management over thousands of years ... oops, before any hint of an industrial age, meat production or mining.

• *Les Crowe has a Diploma of Business Studies and is a fellow of both the British and Australian Institute of Loss Adjusters Insurance.*

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HEAD OFFICE

Timber & Forestry e-news
PO Box 69, Potts Point, NSW 1335,
Australia
Phone | +61 (0) 417 421 187

PUBLISHERS

John Halkett | +61 (0) 417 421 187
johnh@timberandforestryenews.com
Dennis Neilson | +64 (0) 7 349 2764
dennisn@timberandforestryenews.com

MANAGING EDITOR

Jim Bowden | +61 (0) 401 312 087

ADVERTISING

John Halkett | +61 (0) 417 421 187
johnh@timberandforestryenews.com
advertising@timberandforestryenews.com

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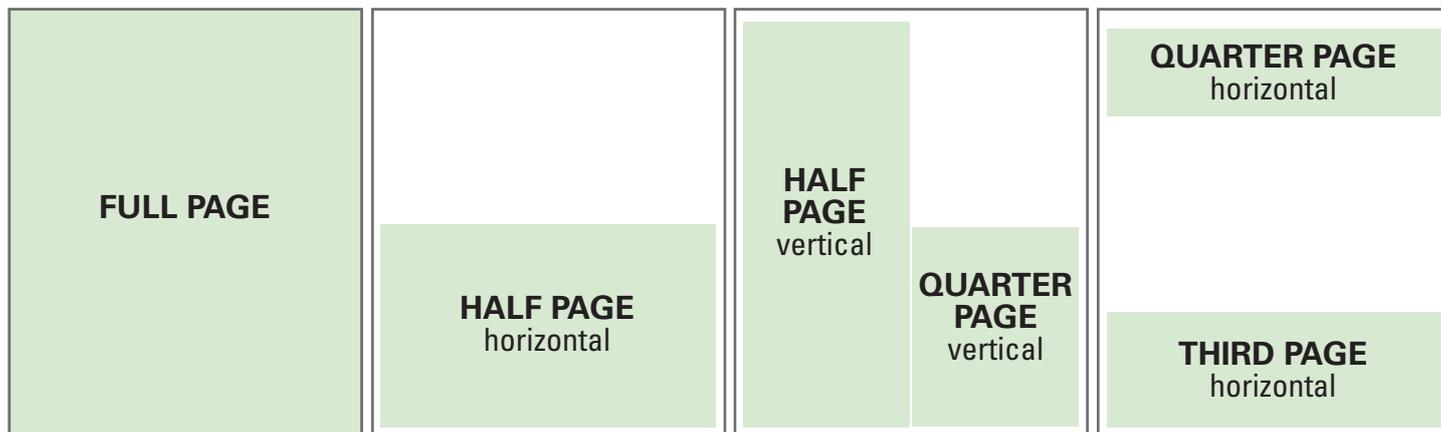
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