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COVER STORY P16



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Republicans offer ‘fossil-friendly ‘fix’ on climate change: plant a trillion trees

Drones that fire seeds into soil at one per second could help

WHILE the Australian and New Zealand governments have each announced “ambitious” targets to plant a billion trees to combat climate change, the US is near to legislating the planting of a trillion trees by 2050.

Republican lawmakers say such a goal will address climate change by “sucking carbon out of the air instead of by cutting emissions”.

Last year, Prime Minister Scott Morrison talked up a project to plant a billion trees by 2050 as part of a new forestry plan the government says will help the country meet its Paris Agreement climate targets.

A sod-turning spree on that scale would contribute to the removal of 18 million tonnes of greenhouse gas a year by 2030.

PROGRAM TO ENCOURAGE USE OF WOOD PRODUCTS



Drones can plant hundreds of trees in a matter of minutes.

The New Zealand government has developed its One Billion Trees Program to increase tree plantings across the country with a goal to double the current planting rate to reach the program’s target by 2028.

The focus of the program is on making it easier to plant the right tree, in the right place, for the right purpose.

The proposed US legislation reflects an acknowledgement

in the Republican Party of rising voter demand for action on climate change, even as it seeks to preserve the economic benefits of an historic drilling boom that has made the US the world’s biggest oil and gas producer.

President Donald Trump, who has repeatedly cast doubt on the science of climate change, expressed support for the idea of a massive tree-planting campaign during a speech at the World Economic

Forum in Davos last month.

“I’m working on legislation that would do just this: plant one trillion trees by 2050, with the goal of sequestering carbon and encouraging the use of wood products,” said Arkansas congressman Bruce Westerman, a member of the House natural resources committee, which is expected to unveil the bill.

Other elements of the

Cont P 3



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From P 2

plan, which will be released in additional bills over the coming weeks, will focus on sequestering carbon from power plants, recycling plastics and boosting "clean" energy, including natural gas and nuclear, according to congressional staff.

Democrats, including all the top presidential hopefuls in this year's election, have made proposals for a rapid shift away from fossil fuels to help the US and other countries avoid the worst impacts of climate change.

Environmentalists argue that focusing on planting trees while ignoring emission cuts from fossil fuels is

“ TREE PLANTING HAS GAINED TRACTION ON A GLOBAL SCALE



Bruce Westerman... plantings to encourage use of wood products.

counterproductive. They believe emissions from the combustion of fossil fuels are the main driver of climate change.

But nature-based carbon removal measures such as tree planting have gained traction globally. Last July, for example, Ethiopia set a world record by planting more than 350 million trees in 12 hours as part of a green campaign by Prime Minister



Dr Lauren Fletcher... drones can carpet bomb 100,000 seeds a day.

Abiy Ahmed Ali.

James Mulligan, a senior associate at the World Resources Institute, said mass tree planting could reduce between 180 million and 360 million tonnes of carbon dioxide a year by 2040 if implemented correctly.

A drone that can carpet bomb 100,000 tree seeds a day is one likely answer to how these massive tree-planting targets are reached.

Developed by a former NASA engineer, it works with a sister drone to reforest areas that are difficult to reach. The first drone scans the landscape to make a 3D map and identify areas for planting, while the second follows this cartography and fires seeds into the soil at the rate of one per second.

Lauren Fletcher, who holds a PhD in physics and has worked on the International Space Station and Mars programs, is behind the drone technology at BioCarbon Engineering.

So far, the company has planted 38 tree species across Myanmar, Australia and the UK in temperate, tropical and sub-tropical environments. One of its uses is in mining restoration – replanting trees where massive quarries have finished extracting minerals and the environment can be rehabilitated with forests.

Women in industry forum ahead of members' dinner

A WOMEN in forest industries forum will be held at the Hotel Realm, Canberra, on Monday, March 23.

Organised by AFPA, this will build on the initial women in industry workshop which was held at Old Parliament House on March 8, 2019, International Women's Day.

This year's forum will run from 9 am to 1 pm and will include an update on actions and activities promoting women and diversity more broadly, at both an AFPA and company level, since the first event in 2019.

There will be a presentation by a communications expert, presentations by each sector of industries on work they are currently undertaking in this space followed by a question and answer session.

An update on the women in forestry network will be given with additional speakers to be confirmed closer to the event. There will also be a networking and lunch segment. Following lunch, AFPA encourages attendees to attend the chamber their organisation sits within to see the work AFPA undertakes on their behalf.

AFPA also invites industry to the AFPA members' dinner in Canberra on March 23, following the women's forum. The dinner, with special guest speaker, starts at 6 pm through to 10 pm and tickets are \$180 p.p. plus booking fee.

Details for both events, contact AFPA on (02) 6285 3833 or email enquiries@ausfpa.com.au

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Partnership will ‘open’ key bushfire standard to communities free of cost

A JOINT funding agreement for access to AS 3959:2018, construction of buildings in bushfire-prone areas, for all Australians has been announced by Standards Australia CEO Adrian O’Connell.

“This is a difficult time for many individuals and communities,” Mr O’Connell said.

“When the scale of the disaster became apparent, I wanted to make sure that Standards Australia was directly contributing to the broader Australian response.

By funding access to this standard together with the federal government, Standards Australia hopes that as



2



3

1/ **Setting the standard... free access to Australia’s construction code that deals with bushfire prone areas.**

1/ **Karen Andrews... government partnership through distribution and licensing framework.**

2/ **Adrian O’Connell... Standards Australia contributing to the broader Australian response.**

7

all involved,” Adrian O’Connell said.

“I would like to thank Minister Karen Andrews and her department for working with us over the last few weeks to make this happen.”

Standards Australia’s distribution and licensing framework policy launched last year and has been paramount in the company’s ability to fund and open access to this standard and is an important example of how the new

communities rebuild after these most recent bushfires, they do so with access to Australia’s construction standard that deals with bushfire prone areas.

The announcement comes just months after Standards Australia put in place a new distribution and licensing framework to provide more options for delivering access to Australian standards.

Standards Australia and the commonwealth, through the Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources, will jointly fund access until June 30 next year using the sponsored access pathway outlined in the distribution and licensing framework.

“When we announced our new distribution and licensing framework in November, being able to announce a partnership like this so quickly is a significant achievement for

framework can support communities.

AS 3959:2018 provides guidance to professionals in the building and construction industry and is primarily concerned with improving the ability of buildings in designated bushfire-prone areas to better withstand bushfires.

Regarding the bushfires more broadly, Mr O’Connell said it was too early to say what if any work needed to be done with technical standards following the bushfires.

“Everything that we’ve heard so far is telling us that houses built to the standard performed well,” he said. “We’re currently looking for data about how AS 3959:2018 homes held up and working with relevant committees to support their ongoing work to help in this rebuilding phase.”

Access the standard will be available as a pdf.





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Forest fire insurance a hot topic at Melbourne investment conference

AS Australia's insurance industry comes to grips with claims issuing from the summer bushfires – expected to top \$2 billion and still climbing – a presentation by a world expert on forest insurance at a Melbourne conference next month is timely.

Phil Cottle, head of forestry for ForestRe, the forest unit within London-based Globe Underwriting Ltd, will address the Asia Pacific Forest Investment, Woodchip and Biomass Trade Conference to run from March 15 to 19, with a field trip to the Green Triangle region.

The Lloyd-backed company provides specialist services to commercial plantation managers, individual forest owners and forest management organisations.

Mr Cottle has assessed forest and crop risk over 25 years focusing on worst-case scenario models and new insurance product design, including carbon and other eco-system services.

The conference and field trip was originally scheduled



for Shanghai, but the rapidly worsening coronavirus problem in China has forced DANA (NZ) Ltd and GingKo to relocate the event in Melbourne.

The conference program has been enhanced to include additional Australia-specific talks including updates on the impact of the recent bushfires on the future of woodchip and biomass exports from Australia.

"It still includes the original Shanghai topics and, hopefully, the speakers if they are able to travel to Melbourne," organiser Dennis Neilson said.

The head of economic analysis at SGS Economics and Planning Terry Rawnsley estimates the direct costs to fire-affected regions lies



between \$1.1 billion to \$1.9 billion this financial year.

Mr Rawnsley says additionally, the smoke haze shrouding major cities is likely to have reduced national economic output by a further \$500 million since the start of summer, including through lost productivity, spending and ill health.

"You're getting up to a \$1.5 to \$2.5 billion impact on the economy," he said.

The figures are based on previous modelling of the Tathra fires in 2018 and the link between the size of insurable losses and economic

output. As insurable losses rise, so, too, will economic costs.

Mr Rawnsley estimated a hit to national gross domestic product of 0.15% this financial year, mostly in the March quarter.

Meanwhile, forestry contractors alone estimate the bushfires have cost them more than \$15 million in revenue with more than 40 pieces of equipment valued at \$27 million damaged or lost.

Contractors in NSW and Victoria warn that unless there is urgent attention to their plight their businesses will not survive.

Businesses have also reported difficulties in accessing the bushfire relief programs such as the \$75,000 grants for primary producers, an amount also only a fraction of what many are losing each week.

VicForests, which manages the amount of timber available for logging and associated contracts, revoked timber orders in eastern Victoria last week leaving up to 100 people without a job.

1/ **Phil Cottle... confronting insurance costs after bushfires.**

2/ **Terry Rawnsley... bushfires big hit to national GDP.**

“DIRECT COSTS UP TO \$1.9 BN IN REGIONS FROM BUSHFIRES



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NSW Labor repeats call for state timber industry support plan

Abandon sell-off of forest estate

NSW Labor has repeated its call for the NSW Liberal and Nationals government to take immediate steps to support timber towns across the state ahead of a ministerial task force meeting called this week by the Deputy Premier John Barilaro.

Shadow Minister for Natural Resources Paul Scully said the shadow cabinet signed off on the principles for a timber industry assistance package last week in Tumut, which the government should adopt, including:

- Appoint a forestry recovery commissioner, along with a timber industry recovery advisory taskforce to guide the implementation of a recovery plan.
- Abandon the sell-off of Forestry Corporation, now and for good.
- Guarantee the replanting and re-establishment of plantation areas.
- Deliver financial support for mill operators to accommodate the additional capital expenditure needed and help to support cash flows during the years of recovery facing the industry.
- Contribute to the cost of fencing repair for properties adjoining Forestry Corporation property.
- Repair damaged roads,



Paul Scully... we must help the industry get back on its feet.

fire trails, bridges, power and communications infrastructure in forestry estates.

- Eradicate weeds and pests, especially blackberries which are a substantial contributor to high fuel loads.
- Establish a workforce plan for mill workers as the industry runs at lower capacity, which is expected in the next two to three years.

Paul Scully said the timber industry faced enormous challenges as it recovered from the devastating fires which have burnt soft and hardwood plantations along the state's east coast.

"There are jobs on the line and the impacts on local timber-dependent communities will be felt for many, many years ahead," he said.

"We need to get funding and investment back into these communities so jobs are supported and the industry can get back on its feet."

“GUIDING RECOVERY”

MARCH 2020

15-19: Asia Pacific Woodchip and Biomass Conference and Field Trip – Radisson Flagstaff Gardens Hotel, Melbourne, Vic, Australia. Optional Pre Conference Field Trip March 15-17 to Green Triangle. Conference 18-19 with enhanced programme to include Australia specific talks including the impact of recent bushfires on the future of the woodchip and biomass exports from Australia. Visit website www.danaevents.co.nz/2020melbourne or contact Julie Bell admin@dana.co.nz

APRIL 2020

7-8: MobileTECH Ag 2020 – Rotorua, NZ. International keynote Dr Mike Briers, CEO, Australian-based Food Agility. MobileTECH Ag will be a great forum to understand how new technologies powered by data and AI are being adopted by agribusinesses. Contact Ken Wilson, program manager on +61 4 5226 2337 or email ken.wilson@innovatek.co.nz

Visit www.mobiletech.events

JUNE 2020

11: Innovation in Action Conference – Wellington, NZ. Showcasing latest trends and innovations in the offsite sector in New Zealand and internationally, covering residential, commercial and infrastructure. Speakers will present an overview of the economic, regulatory, skills and sustainability landscape shaping the sector. Contact Jessica on jessica@prefabnz.com

15-16: Timber & Technology. The Zero Carbon Future. Timber Offsite Construction 2020 Conference & Exhibition – Crown Promenade, Melbourne, Vic. Australia. Exclusively devoted to design, manufacture and construction of offsite timber and mass wood buildings. Program sessions include world leading experts with award-winning architects, international and local engineers, major building companies, and

prominent suppliers to offsite construction markets. Contact Kevin Ezard on 0419 538 638 or email kevin@timberoffsiteconstruction.com New website: www.timberoffsiteconstruction.com

21-26: 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

JULY 2020

23-24: Doing Timber Business in Queensland: Regional Opportunity. – Brisbane, Queensland. Third biennial event is Queensland's forest and timber industry's leading 2020 networking opportunity comprising one day conference, gala dinner, workshops and site tours. Full website and program will

be released shortly contact admin@timberqueensland.com.au

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

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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- Special systems

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. Visit www.danaevents.co.nz/2020europe, or contact 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/

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@timberandforestryenews.com

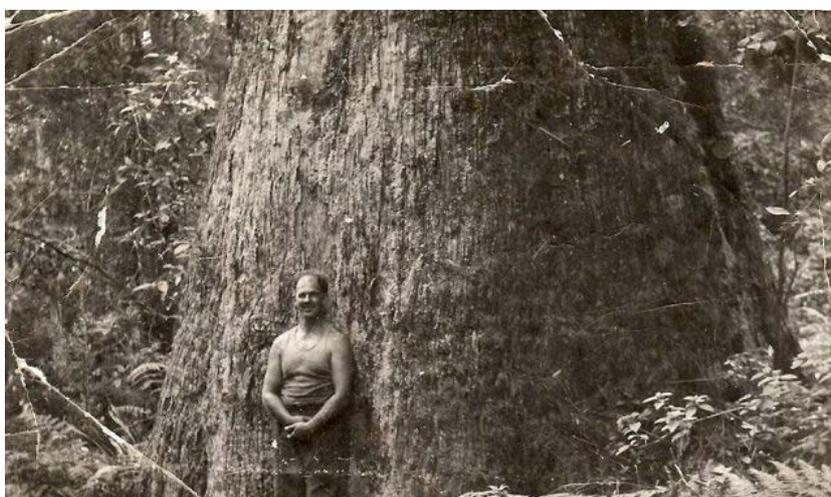
Book review: An era of sawdust and steam at Flaxton

SAWDUST and Steam records the history of the Flaxton Sawmill from its establishment on Queensland's Sunshine Coast in 1936 to its demise in 1963.

The author, Gordon Plowman, is the son of Ray Plowman who built the mill in partnership with Horrie Hingston.

Gordon personalises this 27-year history in a way that will capture the interest of the general reader. He covers the mill's transformation from case mill to hardwood mill and from steam power to electric power.

He describes the technical changes in the operation of the mill and also covers the development of the timber industry on the central Blackall Range from axe and crosscut



Ray Plowman beside a giant blackbutt tree at Flaxton in 1947.

saw to chainsaw.

The author highlights the impact of World War 1, the Great Depression and World War 2 on the small rural community of Flaxton. He deals sensitively with the struggles against poverty and isolation that built a resilient community, and he records

some of the national and international contracts the mill won and filled.

Through this history the reader will meet some of the characters of the timber industry and the early Flaxton community.

The township is named after Flaxton Hall Farm in the

fens of eastern England. Joseph Dixon, who originally grew sugarcane at Buderim, selected land at Flaxton in 1882. From 1892 the land was cleared so bananas and citrus fruit could be farmed.

A fruit-packing shed which could process the district's entire harvest was opened 1931.

A box sawmill (cases for pineapples) was operated by the Hornibrook family for more than 20 years before being burned down in 1956.

Orders for the book can be placed by email to cate.patterson@jayb.com.au. Cost is \$15, plus \$5 for postage and handling.

This is social history at its best.

Free seedlings, subsidies help recovery

FREE seedlings and subsidies for fuel and freight were among recovery measures under consideration to help the state's forestry industry at the first meeting of the hardwoods ministerial taskforce on Tuesday.

The initiatives were offered by Nationals leader and taskforce chair John Barilaro.

The move follows a delegation of forestry contractors from Victoria and NSW meeting in Canberra last week to appeal for assistance. Forestry contractors estimate the fires have cost them more than \$10 million in work and at least \$25 million worth of equipment since hitting the north coast of NSW in November.

The proposed recovery measures were discussed during a separate phone hook-



Contractors' delegation visit... MP Darren Chester and Senator Jonathon Duniam pay tribute to Hi-Viz heroes Reece Reynolds and Adam Campbell from East Gippsland.

up between Mr Barilaro and federal Assistant Minister for Forests Jonathon Duniam.

More than 850,000 ha of state forests are estimated to have been impacted by fire. Harvesting of burnt timber is under way in some parts of the state following an in-principle agreement with the government.

Mr Barilaro said the taskforce would allow mill operators and other stakeholders to raise their concerns with the government.

In Eden on the state's far south coast, a multi-agency effort saved the fire-affected woodchip mill, which is the town's biggest employer.

"The work by the RFS to save the Eden mill was a shining light at a dark time," Mr Barilaro said.

"It was critical for the community and the local economy that the mill was able to complete this order."

A delegation of forestry contractors from Victoria and NSW held a series of productive meetings with federal government and Opposition ministers, shadow ministers and local MPs in Canberra last week to highlight the crisis they are facing as a result of the bushfires.

With a force majeure in place and the injunctions against a number of coupes contractors are feeling shattered and families and communities are concerned about their future.

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China virus begs a classic question: is the glass half full or half empty?

Reports suggest log ships are loading with new contracts signed

NEW Zealand (and indeed Australian) pine forest owners, harvesting, transport and export port services contractors have been buffeted over the past month with daily changing news and information – and predictions – of what impact the COVID-19 crisis will have on the post-Lunar New Year restart of China's sawmilling and veneer production and construction activity.

Last month we were saying it will all depend on what happens "next week".

Unfortunately, today that is about the same answer.

Two weeks ago it was all gloom and gloom, with one major exporter stopping all purchases of logs, and with no China sawmills working and not likely to for a while.

Then news filtered through that this same exporter was repurchasing, and other news of log ships not only being loaded and sailing, but new shipping contracts being negotiated for March sailing.



**China trade...
what now after
Lunar New Year?**

All thoroughly confusing. And it still is.

Chinese sawmills employing 'out-of-province' workers are still faced with 14-day 'voluntary' self-quarantines before workers can go back to work. Many Chinese sawmillers are 'day traders' and make decisions on a daily basis. Strategic planning is what you do in the Great Hall of the People and not at the coal face in Lanshan or Xinminzhou.

Our take as of today is:

- There will be continued movement of logs from NZ (and maybe Australian) forests to ports and onto ships. Several log ships are being loaded at several NZ ports this week.

- Optimism and pessimism about this continuing without hiccups is evenly divided, with a range of 80/20 each way, depending on the expert's source.

- But expect a slow build-

up to a 'back-to-normal state', and with much lower prices on offer for many weeks yet (for instance CFR China port at \$US100-105 per JAS m3, down from >\$120 pre-virus).

- Low shipping costs (for a short time) and lower FX can help NZD (and AUD) returns to forest owners.

- The latest COVID-19 data of 1869 deaths from 72,436 infected, or a death rate of 2.6% equates very closely to the chances of Tauranga, NZ, residents driving on their way to work getting gunned down or shot at by patched gang thugs. Coincidentally Tauranga is the location of the world's largest log export port.

But that could all change tomorrow.

You can experience important and timely presentations and updates on all of this at the DANA-GingKo Melbourne Conference on March 18 and 19. Visit www.danaevents.co.nz/2020melbourne

– DENNIS NEILSON



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Loans to first home buyers surge: ABS

DECEMBER saw the volume of first home buyer home loans surge to their highest level since late 2009 according to ABS data this week.

Master Builders chief economist Shane Garrett says the volume of home loans increased by 6.2% in seasonally-adjusted terms to record a monthly total of 9606. The last time a higher monthly total was recorded was 10 years ago.

"The good news is that first home buyer activity has stepped up even further since the start of this year," Mr Garrett said.

"The new First Home Loan Deposit Scheme is already a big success and the official data will show more big gains for first-home buyers once they are released."



Moving in... home loans at highest level in 10 years.

Apart from first home buyers, ABS figures show that other areas of the housing market are also recovering well. Housing investor loans expanded for the third consecutive month and hit a 14-month high during December.

"There is a great

opportunity for people to buy or build their first home at the moment," Mr Garrett said.

"Apart from the assistance offered by the new First Home Loan Deposit Scheme, interest rates are at their lowest in many decades and house prices have stabilised after dropping back from the

highs reached in recent years.

Despite the housing market cooling during 2019, the Housing Industry Association says demand for skilled trade workers remains strong, with demand in Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane exceeding availability.

The HIA trades availability index shows that for the December 2019 quarter, skilled trades remained in short supply with an Index level of -0.10. This is a slight improvement on the -0.13 recorded in the September 2019 quarter but still indicates a small shortage in skilled labour across the industry.

As the next upcycle in home building commences, more construction work will enter the pipeline, albeit nowhere near the levels seen in the previous cycle.

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We salute firefighters for bravery and courage this dreadful summer

WELL this month I was going to say something more about of AUSTimber.

But, yes, the event has been postponed until November 4-7.

As we know all too well, the response and recovery efforts to the bushfire crisis have been huge and are ongoing. Many in the industry have been directly affected and have been working to support impacted communities. So, understandably, the decision to reschedule AUSTimber in the face of recovery and salvage efforts is completely understandable.

However, down here talk continues about the bushfires. After helping clearing and cleaning up after fires, a good number of forest contractors have now been redeployed into salvage operations in pine plantations.

While the damage is extensive – tens of thousands of hectares of plantations burnt – it is surprising that more plantations weren't lost. Top marks to the firefighting efforts of Forestry Corporation staff and others who supported them. A sterling effort.

“DEVASTATED BY LOSS OF BOMBER CREW FIGHTING OUR BUSHFIRES



Risky business... water bombers face real danger in fighting fires.



Thirsty work... firefighter takes a break while fighting fires in NSW.

In the full knowledge that we live in a climate changed environment – finally acknowledged by the federal government in January – talk has turned to what we can and should do better in terms of fire suppression and prevention.

We have all seen it – the pictures on TV and commentary about the courage and bravado of the wonderful efforts of firefighters in saving lives and property. However, it shouldn't have come to this, and those on the ground are not so enthusiastic and bullish, citing inadequate resources and support.

Amazing when you think about it, that in a country that is spending billions and billions of dollars on joint strike fighter aircraft and submarines that we have to go cap-in-hand to beg and borrow firefighting aircraft from overseas.

How completely devastated must we feel that in fighting our fires three supremely experienced American firefighters – Captain Ian MacBeth, first officer Paul

TRUNK LINES



With **CHERYL FORREST**

Hudson and flight engineer Rick DeMorgan – died when their C130 Hercules water bomber crashed while fighting yet another out-of-control blaze in the Snowy Monaro region.

I don't pretend to be an expert, but lots of talk around here among forestry folk makes it very clear. Basically, they say that there are four main variables that cause bushfires – temperature, wind, moisture and fuel. There is nothing we can do about the first three, but we can, and should do something about fuel.

No one for a minute thinks that less fuel on the ground in forests would have stopped

the fires, but it is very clear that less fuel correlates – if that's the right word – to fewer intensive fires, less energy, less damage to life and property and improved prospects of fire suppression.

Seems the penny may already have dropped for the NSW government; there is already talk about the establishment of an entity with responsibility for competent forest fuel reduction. This is indeed a step in the right direction. Perhaps let's consider, and believe, what has been done across the continent for tens of thousands of years!

You may have noticed that here at enews there has been considerable commentary published from a wide range of fire experts. Our editor Jimbo says he is pleased to continue to receive this information and to publish some of the commentary. So, we appreciate your thoughts and expertise.

Catch up again next month. We will talk about AUSTimber then.

Cheryl

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Komatsu Forest have added a complete new model the Komatsu 875 (16 tonne) forwarder filling the vacancy left by the old 890. This addition compliments the 895 (20 tonne) by extending the Komatsu range to cover all the contractors' extraction requirements. These New Generation models have been refined with the latest developments in the key areas.

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Vida Wood sets ‘globalisation’ trend in wholesale and distribution sector

Developing new opportunities for top quality, structural timbers

A ‘GLOBALISATION’ trend has been a recent feature of the timber wholesaling and distribution industry in Australia.

The strengthened international interest in the Australian market is evidenced by the acquisition of the Swedish Vida Wood group by Canadian mega company Canfor, and their now physical presence in Australia, plus the recent acquisition of the long-standing and respected Gunnersen company by Singapore-based global timber products company Forest1.

Leading this global push in Australia are Vida Wood’s managing director Kurt Schrammel and national sales director Jacinta Colley.

In November 2018, the Canada-based company Canfor announced that it was purchasing a majority shareholding in the Swedish timber company Vida Wood. Coupled with that news, Vida Wood has announced it is revving up its business activity in Australia, and developing new markets and opportunities.

“Clearly, larger international companies are sitting up and looking hard at the Australian market,” Kurt Schrammel said. “The Vida Wood



1/ Canfor has real capacity in spruce, pine, larch and Douglas fir continuous supply, particularly in 5 to 6 m metre lengths.

2/ Kurt Schrammel... Vida Wood acquisition by Canfor gives the Australia building industry access to a wider range of top quality, structural timber products.

3/ Jacinta Colley... the Vida Wood-Canfor combo has very strong Australian credentials.



“I think a challenge for us to date is that we have limited to specific lengths coming out

of Sweden.”

acquisition by Canfor affords the Australia building industry with access to a wider range of top quality, structural timber products.”

Jacinta Colley, a recognised stand-out industry performer, well known for a number of senior roles in the timber industry and also recently appointed to the board of the Australian Timber Importers Federation, is a key player in the Vida Wood-Canfor Australian initiative.

Mr Schrammel said Jacinta would have a critical task helping to bring truly national coverage to the Vida Wood operation in Australia, assisting resellers and retailers to understand the benefits the company could offer to its supply chain.

Jacinta asserts that what is important to Vida Wood and the market right now is the ability to provide continuity of supply at competitive prices with high quality, compliant and a strong customer focused attributes.

She is adamant that the Vida Wood-Canfor combo has very strong Australian credentials, and an increasingly strong, dominance in the market.

“With our head office in Narangba, north of Brisbane, and a third-party logistics operation out of Melbourne, combined with wholesale distribution, we are well positioned in Victoria,” Jacinta said.

“We are yet to really tap into New South Wales and improve our market reach in Queensland. These are priority tasks for us right now.

Jacinta said Canfor had real capacity in long length products, in spruce, pine, larch and Douglas fir, particularly in 5.4 to 6 metres in continuous supply.

She endorsed wider industry advice that there is likely to be some tough times immediately ahead for timber suppliers, although there are also signs of real improvements in some markets.

“I think it’s likely to be a tough 12 months, going forward,” Jacinta said. “However, housing starts are still reasonable and interest rates are low. The end note is that, like most people in the timber industry, we see things improving, and continuing to improve over the next five to 10 years.”

“VIDA WOOD, CANFOR COMBO HAS STRONG AUSTRALIAN CREDENTIALS”

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NZFFA: promoting wise use of trees

Farm foresters major contributors to NZ's forestry estate

MICHAEL SMITH

WHY do farmers plant trees? It's an obvious question and the reasons are surprisingly numerous and varied, according to Hamish Levack, president of the New Zealand Farm Forestry Association.

The vision of NZFFA, which is included in the strapline of every issue of Tree Grower (the association's official publication), is to promote the wise use of trees for profit, amenity, sustainability and the environment.

“THE RURAL UNEASE IS LARGELY ILLOGICAL



Hamish Levack... exciting, commercially viable opportunities for wood utilisation beckon.

“What is not mentioned specifically – but which is very much part of the raisons d’être of farmers – is growing trees for shelter, animal fodder, firewood, bee nutrition, farm construction work [such as fence posts, poles, railings], soil conservation, water quality, drought and flood mitigation, and carbon fixation,” says Mr Levack.

“Of course, many NZFFA members are lifestylers, small-scale forest investors, or just people interested in trees, rather than farmers. And they all have different drives and priorities. They may or may not farm a few animals.”

Cont P 17



New Zealand Forest Industry - Status and Outlook 2020 Conference and Field Trip












1-3 September 2020. Emerald Hotel - Gisborne, New Zealand

1½ day conference and 1½ day field trip

With high profile international and domestic conference presenters. Most topics and speakers identified and now detailed on website. As well as forestry and wood processing topics, new medicinal cannabis and horticultural industries will also be profiled in presentations. Being held 3 weeks before NZ general election will ensure that political party forestry policies will be to the fore.

Sponsorship packages are available -- see details [here](#)

FOR WEBSITE [CLICK HERE](#) OR CONTACT JULIE BELL admin@dana.co.nz

From P 16

Mr Levack says farm foresters are significant contributors to the country's forestry estate. "There are more than 14,000 small-scale forest-owning entities [SSFOEs] – defined as owning plantation forests of between five and 1000 ha. Altogether they own around 500,000 ha, which is a third of the national estate. Roughly 200 large forest owners hold the balance."

The association currently has more than 1400 fully paid-up members, whose forest ownership amounts to as much as 100,000 ha. It is the only organisation in New Zealand that represents small-scale owners and as such feels duty bound to comment on the 'misinformation' being spread by 50 Shades of Green, a lobby group dedicated to opposing a perceived 'rapid conversion' of hill country farmland to forestry.

Mr Levack says the NZFFA sympathises with the feelings of insecurity in the rural community at a time of probable land use



Mixed land use... eucalypts and blackwoods.

change – but the modest amount of land likely to be converted needs to be put into perspective.

"The rural unease is largely illogical because economic studies show that most hill country properties are unable to compete with forestry in the long term. Export returns/ha/year from forestry are twice those of the average of all types of farms. Furthermore, most hill country farmers have had substantial tax free increases in their land value because of anticipated changes to the Emissions Trading Scheme."

He adds that the 50 Shades of Green petition to demand the government prevent farmers planting trees is effectively denying the onset

of climate change.

"Forestry's potential as an expanding carbon sink will substantially ameliorate climate change – and will also play a major role in helping New Zealand transition to a low carbon future," Mr Levack says.

"Beyond carbon sequestration, major economic, technological and lifestyle changes will be needed to permanently lower carbon emissions. Wood's potential to contribute to this transition is immense.

"Exciting, commercially viable opportunities for wood utilisation beckon. They include solid and liquid biofuels, biodegradable wood-based plastics and textiles for use

in everything from car parts to clothing, biochemicals, and carbon nanofibres capable of carrying currents."

Mr Levack says the NZFFA supports the Coalition government's attempts to reverse the previous neglect of the forestry sector – notably through its re-establishment of the forestry service (Te Uru Rakau), and the introduction of the One Billion Trees Program, which focuses on complementing and diversifying existing land uses.

"The association would now like to see Te Uru Rakau evolve into something more than an organisation that just encourages afforestation ... to provide ecosystem services," he says.

"We would like it to help direct new planting so the current regional 'walls of wood' are converted to higher levels of sustainable wood supplies in appropriate catchments – this being necessary before any significant increase in the processing of wood can be contemplated."

•The first of two articles by Michael Smith on farm forestry in New Zealand.

“FORESTRY'S POTENTIAL AS AN EXPANDING CARBON SINK

On the cover: NZFFA conference attendees observe cypress trees grown by an association member.

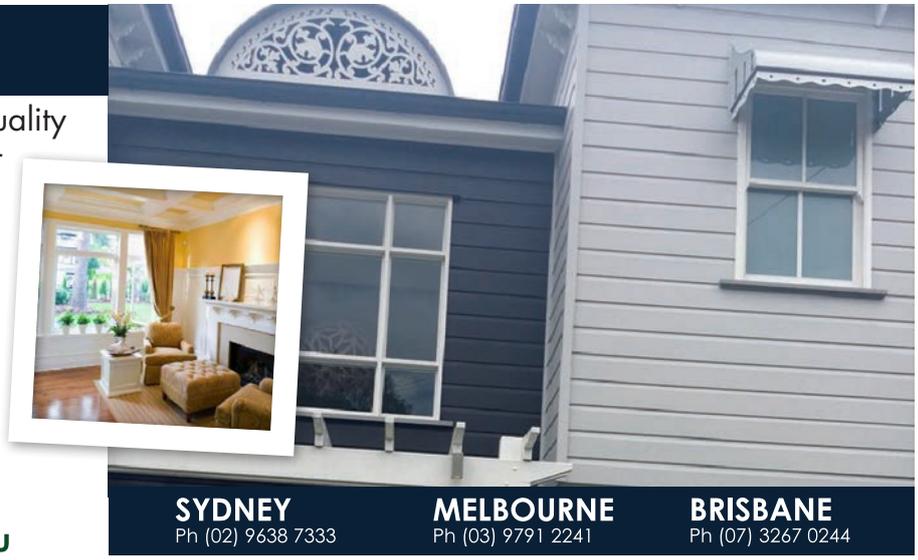
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A 2 ½ DAY GREEN TRIANGLE FIELD TRIP *Sunday March 15 to Tuesday March 17*

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- Major woodchipping complex of South West Fibre at Myamyn
- N.F. McDonnell & Sons softwood sawmill at Mount Gambier
- Softwood and hardwood plantations, harvesting & hardwood in-field chipping
- New AKD Sawmill at Colac

2 DAY ASIA PACIFIC: FOREST INVESTMENT, PULP WOOD CHIP & BIOMASS TRADE TRENDS CONFERENCE *Wednesday March 18 and Thursday*

March 19 at Radisson Flagstaff Gardens Hotel in Melbourne

With additional presentations on:

- The impact of Australian bushfires on wood production and export trade in 2020
- The impact of coronavirus on China woodchip and wood imports in 2020

**Keynote: Largest global
forest plantation fire
insurer to talk tree
insurance - before and
after 2019-2020 USA &
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admin@dana.co.nz

Riding the Colorado up a dry gully: circling wagons in a last ditch stand

THE car pool for reporters at that august rural broadsheet Queensland Country Life in the 1960s were Holdens – one in particular I remember was an EK ute that a cheeky moonlighting dairy writer used on weekends to carry pigs to his small farm outside Brisbane.

Hot or not, we kept the windows up!

But the Holden EK sedan was our favourite. This was the darling of the GM fleet in Australia in the 60s, preceding the Monaro and Kingswood, and it introduced Holden's first automatic transmission, marketed as the Hydra-Matic, an optional three-speed unit fully imported from the US. Other options (or Holden Specials) included a bonnet lock, locking tank cap, a car heater, external rear-view mirrors, or a sunshade.

Alas, the 2020 Z71 Colorado 4x4 Crew Cab Pickup I returned on Monday might be one of the last Holdens I get for a test run.



Making a valiant last stand... Holden's Colorado 4x4 Crew Cab Pickup.

18 in. Arsenal Grey alloys, new Sailplane sports bar and side rails, gloss black exterior door handles, mirrors and tailgate handle.

Then add stylish fender flares, a new front fascia,

roof rails, hood decals and underbody protection – and also an 8 in. touchscreen with standard nav and a seven-speaker stereo, dual-zone climate control, push-button start and leather seats that are heated in the front.

A 2.8-litre Duramax turbo-diesel good for 147kW and 500Nm provides the power, paired with a six-speed automatic or a manual gear box.

So it's all over ... Holden interim chair and MD Kristian Aquilina says the shutdown decision was "agonising"; GM had chased down "every conceivable option" to keep the brand afloat, he said.

RIP Holden.



Icon... the EK Holden ute in 1962.

As I turned into the holding yard and parked the 'burnt orange' ute alongside a row of Japanese and Korean European-style cars, the radio was reading the eulogy: "Holden's US parent General Motors has announced it will retire the iconic Holden brand and close down its Australian operations at a cost of about 600 jobs."

We knew Holden had been sitting on death row

since GM closed its Australian manufacturing operations in 2017. But like the loss of an old friend, you're never prepared for it..

But with Holden's

inexorable slide down the national sales chart, one lone ranger stood its ground – the Colorado. Last year, the one-tonne off-roader was wooing buyers and represented more than 10% of the 4x4 ute segment.

The Z71 sits at the top of the Colorado range at \$54,990 for the manual and \$57,190 for the auto. But what a collection in the kit – soft-drop tailgate,

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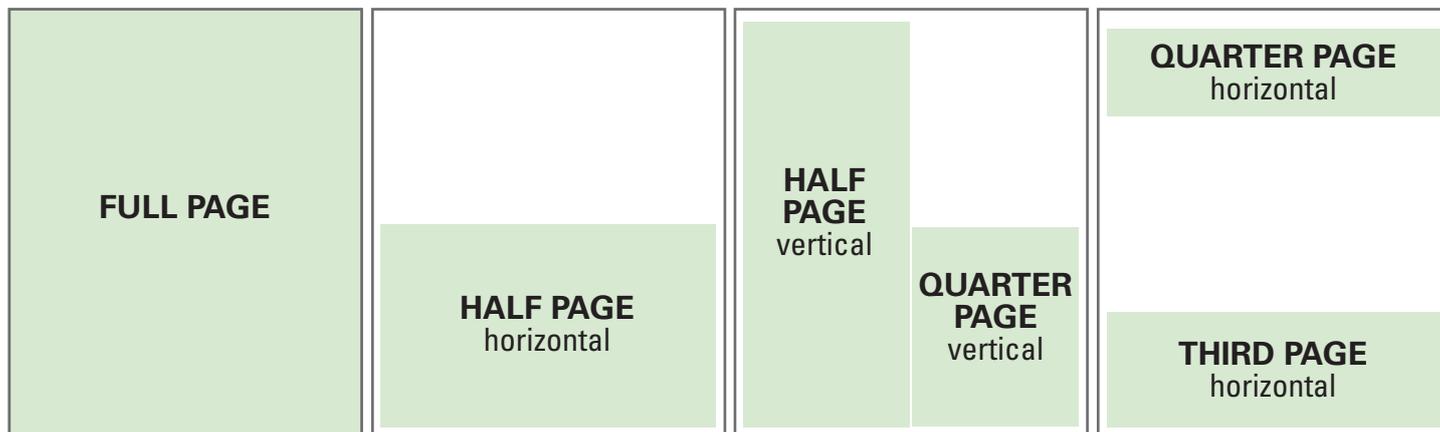
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