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COVER STORY P4



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Sawmillers scrape the barrel as log supply crisis worsens in north NSW

Bushfires, rain, environmental concerns ... and talk, talk, talk

JIM BOWDEN

NSW north coast hardwood sawmillers have reached the "bottom of the barrel" on log supply as a crisis brought on by bushfires and then flood rains worsens across timber communities in the region.

"It's a hand-to-mouth existence; the few logs we get today will be cut tomorrow. If there are no logs tomorrow we shut on Friday and that means loyal workers will be without a job," an exasperated Anthony Dorney of Newells Creek Sawmilling at Bulahdelah on the mid-north coast told us.

Troubles for the sawmill, like

SUPPLY RUNS OUT AND JOBS LOST ACROSS THE REGION



On the move... salvaging burnt timber as fast as possible.

many others, started when bushfires hit the state's north in mid-November, followed by a period of fire bans, and then bucketing rain.

Despite encouraging talk, the NSW government appears paralysed to support the industry. It's in a cleft stick awaiting advice from the Environment Protection Authority as to when or whether harvesting can re-

commence after the fires.

"And this is being crowded by a lot of other issues like ground cover and if and when we can access state and private forests," said Les White, production manager at Hurford Hardwood, Kyogle.

Hurfords has been helping other sawmills as best it can, drip-feeding logs to them from its own supply, but that stopped this week as one

of the state's biggest hardwood mills itself begins to run out of supply.

"We believe the Forestry Corporation is trying to deal with this at the moment – looking for way to access burnt areas, whether to log them or not, or go back into other areas," Mr White said.

"Of course, this is very tough on all country sawmillers.

We know the wood is there but what shape is it in?

"We have access to private forests but we have to get in and get out and the wet conditions don't help."

"For state forests it's a different issue – different departments, politics, and discussions back and forth."

Reports yesterday said Boral Timber's operations across the

Cont P 3



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From P 2

NSW north coast were down to only enough log supply for three days.

A fourth generation family sawmiller, Anthony Dorney says the Bulahdelah mill is in the worst predicament since it was founded more than a century ago.

He says he believes the NSW Forestry Corporation hasn't been able to keep up required log supply for at least the last three years – and in periods when there was no rain. "They've got to get the wood out quicker but they need greater harvesting capacity to do so," he said.

The Newells Creek mill operated on a log input of 40,000 to 45,000 cub m. "Today we will be lucky to find one log," Mr Dorney said.

"And there's another big problem – our ability to raise finance to tide us over."

NSW Deputy Premier John Barilaro is on record saying the government's priority was to help the forestry industry get back on its feet ... "so a secure, long-term future is where we are focusing our energy".

But the reality is NSW sawmills and harvesting operations are closing down and employees made redundant. Hardwood sawmills have not seen sufficient log supplies since before the bushfires, despite multiple promises.

In what should be an acute embarrassment to John Barilaro is the NSW Labor Opposition's repeated calls for the government to take immediate steps to support timber towns across the state.

Shadow Minister for Natural Resources Paul Scully said the timber industry faced enormous challenges as it recovered from the bushfires.

"Jobs are on the line and



John Barilaro... a secure and long-term future for the industry is our priority.



Paul Scully... we need to get funding and investment back into the communities.

the impacts on local timber-dependent communities will be felt for many, many years to come," 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."

Failure to support the north coast hardwood sawmilling industry by the Deputy Premier and the National Party will be a further black mark against their name and exacerbate the already apparent shift and support to the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party in regional NSW.

“ONLY ABOUT 12 MONTHS TO SALVAGE THE BURNT TIMBER

Meanwhile, Forestry Corporation district manager at Grafton Trent Froud says plantation softwood harvesting will take place at four times the normal annual rate to ensure burnt trees were salvaged while the timber was still good.

"This season's fires have had a significant impact on the local softwood timber industry, burning more than 60% of the pine plantations in the Grafton district and destroying the sawmill of our major customer at Rappville," Mr Froud said.

hopeful a proportion of the burnt plantations will survive."

At this early stage, the wood underneath the burnt bark has exactly the same structural properties as unburnt timber, so it can be harvested and processed into house frames, furniture and other essential renewable wood products.

"We only have about 12 months to salvage the burnt timber before it starts to deteriorate, so we will be working at about four times the normal rate to get this timber while it's still good," Mr Froud said.

"We have already brought on new contractors and customers and have started the enormous task of harvesting the burnt timber.

"There is a significant task ahead of us, creating a lot of local work to process this timber and re-establish state forest timber plantations for generations to come."

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Successful ASH mass glulam fire resistant tests a 'first' for Australia

AUSTRALIA'S first 120-minute Fire Resistance Test (FRT) and Fire Resistance Level (FRL) has been successfully completed on exposed glue laminated timber members manufactured in Victoria by Australian Sustainable Hardwoods Pty Ltd.

The members, not encapsulated with a fire resistant board, are intended for 'seen structural' applications and manufactured under the brand name MASSLAM.

A number of different MASSLAM members were made using various species of plantation and regrowth hardwoods, which are designed for use as columns and beams in commercial



Thumbs up for mass glulam fire tests... Daniel Wright, national business development manager at Australian Sustainable Hardwoods.

buildings – up to and beyond nine storeys.

Some of the tested members offer a 40% reduction in size compared to imported mass-timber

products. MASSLAM columns and beams can be manufactured up to 1300 mm wide, 45 mm and 12 m long without block laminating.

The test followed FRT and FRL requirements in the Australian standards '1530.4 : 2014 - Methods for fire tests on building materials, components and structures fire resistance tests for elements of construction'.

Each MASSLAM member passed two hours of fire, reaching above 1000 deg. C, while still bearing the load expected in a commercial building.

"There are generally two concerns from authorities – fire and acoustics," says ASH's managing director Vince Hurley.

"There are sufficient design solutions available to easily overcome both and many use European fire data which, unlike Australia, is only required to meet 60 or 90 minutes," he said.

"We have questions about whether European tests would be relevant to Australian standards at 120

minutes. This test not only shows the performance of MASSLAM systems under prolonged fire, it also proves that timber performs much better than steel."

ASH is Australia's largest glulam producer by volume and has been producing glulam products for over 20 years.

The Heyfield-based company has invested another \$12 million in automated mass-timber equipment, advanced adhesive technology and state-of-the-art, robotic CNC equipment.

National business development manager Daniel Wright says this complements and extends the existing \$20 million glulam facility. ASH's wood engineers can develop shop drawings from 3D building plans and the advanced robotic equipment will prefabricate the members in accordance with the design.

Builders will receive MASSLAM with fixings attached and a coating to protect against weather during construction. MASSLAM can then be delivered to site in order of sequence where they will be connected as they go."

On the cover: Show of support... ASH CEO Vince Hurley (second from left) welcomes Shadow Minister for Agriculture Joel Fitzgibbon, Labor senator Raff Ciccone, and AFPA CEO Ross Hampton on a tour of the plant at Heyfield, Vic. The plant employs around 170 locals and is a major contributor to the local region. But like all timber businesses its future is uncertain in the face of the state government's decision to end native forest logging by 2030.



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Engineered wood ‘icing on the cake’ for Melbourne’s timber-adaptive hotel

A NEW hotel to open this year in Melbourne is set to be the tallest timber-adaptive reuse building in Australia.

Bates Smart designed a 10-storey structure made from engineered timber that sits at the top of an existing office building in Melbourne’s Southbank – the Adina Apartment Hotel on the city’s Southbank business district.

The existing concrete-framed building on Southbank Boulevard was designed to accommodate only six additional levels, also to be made from a concrete frame. By using a lighter, engineered timber structure, an extra four storeys became structurally feasible.

Julian Anderson, Bates Smart director, said the hotel was the world’s largest engineered timber extension, with around 5300 tonnes of cross-laminated timber sourced from suppliers with Forest Stewardship Council certification used in its construction.

“In addition to reduced carbon emissions, CLT incorporates several



1/ People's Choice... Intergrain technical manager Douglas Curr presents to the Bates Smart, Aurecon and LendLease DesignMake team for the 10-storey King Street commercial building in Brisbane at the 2019 Australian Timber Design Awards in Melbourne.



2/ Wood and glass... the Adina Apartment Hotel will be the world's largest engineered timber extension.

sustainability benefits, including lower transport costs and time saving advantages from off-site manufacturing,” Mr Anderson said.

“It also presents a more sustainable approach to increasing density within our cities.”

The timber structure is wrapped in a glass curved façade, inset with an oversized balcony. The interiors feature exposed timber and wooden furniture, referencing the building’s timber skeleton.

Bates Smart is among a number of Australian practices that are using engineered



Julian Anderson... sustainability benefits.

timber to build ever-taller buildings – or ‘plyscrapers’.

The Melbourne-based architectural firm was behind the design of a 52 m tall

engineered timber office tower in Brisbane – 5 King, part of a \$2.9 billion redevelopment of the Brisbane showgrounds in Bowen Hills.

Unveiled in 2017, the timber tower is the tallest engineered timber building in Australia, just one metre shy of the world’s tallest timber building Brock Commons in Vancouver.

Bates Smart has studios in Melbourne and Sydney and was founded in 1853 by Joseph Reed. One of Australia’s oldest architectural firms, it has been responsible for numerous landmark buildings.



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Guess what? Fuel loads main cause of bushfires: poll vote for hazard reduction

A NEWSPOLL published in The Australian this week has found was countless royal commissions were told by forestry professionals over the past 80 years – that insufficient hazard reduction is the main reason for the severity of bushfires.

The Newspoll asked the question: “Which do you think was the main cause of the severity of the recent bushfires?”

Of the more than 1500 people polled, 56% cent cited inadequate hazard reduction.

AFPA chief executive Ross Hampton said the Newspoll showed the community clearly understood Australia must do more to reduce bushfire risk and take a whole-of-landscape approach which incorporated mechanical fuel reduction to complement hazard reduction burns.

“This fire season has shown that the multiple approaches by multiple land managers and agencies when it comes to fuel load reduction isn’t working,” Mr Hampton said.

“In many fire-prone countries the use of



1/ Hazard reduction... burns have proven highly effective in keeping communities safe while helping preserve forest areas.

2/ Scott Morrison... royal commission prioritises hazard reduction in terms of reference.

mechanical fuel reduction alongside hazard reduction burns has proven highly effective in keeping communities safe and helping preserve forests areas.”

“We are urging the commission to investigate mechanical fuel reduction as part of its review.”

Mr Hampton said the results of this Newspoll showed Australians understood that reducing fuel loads in forests was a priority.”

AFPA recently released a

report, Using Fire and Machines to Better Fire-Proof Our Country Towns, which makes the case for mechanical fuel reduction, showing its effectiveness overseas, and providing examples where it could have reduced bushfire risk in Australia.

Hazard reduction is one of the priorities in the terms of reference in the royal commission into bushfires announced by the Prime



Minister Scott Morrison.

The terms of reference include; “preparedness and resilience responsibilities, which includes land management and hazard reduction measures.”

VAFI CEO Tim Johnston says it doesn’t make sense to allow communities to continue to be threatened by high fuel loads.

“The timber industry stands ready to do its part in protecting our community through sustainable forest management practices,” he said.

“Reducing the density of trees in forest stands can also encourage the remaining trees to grow to a fire-resilient size in shorter times than in unmanaged forests. Therefore, applying an appropriate thinning program in state forests could protect our timber resource and reduce bushfire impacts across the landscape.”

•**The Institute of Foresters Australia and Australian Forest Growers have welcomed the terms of reference of the royal commission. See Page 15.**



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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@afcaasn.au Follow AUSTimber on www.austimber.org.au

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MARCH 2020

3-5: National Conference on Climate Change NCCC-2020 – Utkal University, Bhubaneswar, Odisha, India. Conference aims to promote the outstanding research, latest innovations and trending technologies Climate Change and Environmental Science. Enquiries to: conference.nccc@gmail.com

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

13-14: Quebec Forest Industry Council 2018 Convention – Quebec City, Canada. Covering the interests of softwood and hardwood sawing, peeling, pulp, paper, cardboard and panels and manufacturers of engineered wood products. For additional information visit www.cifq.qc.ca

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/

SEPTEMBER 2020

27-30: Council on Forest Engineering Annual Meeting – Corvallis, Oregon, USA. Following a successful 2019 meeting in Hungary and Austria, this conference will be the second part of the two-year joint annual meeting collaboration. For additional information see: www.cofe.org

OCTOBER 2020

21-23: Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) Annual Conference – Vancouver, BC, Canada. The 2020 SFI Annual Conference will be focused on how forests can make a difference when it comes to so many of the most important sustainability challenges faced in the forest sector and communities. For additional information see: sficonference.org

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

Atlassian to build \$1 billion timber tower in Sydney

SOFTWARE multinational Atlassian will build a \$1 billion-plus timber-and-concrete tower next to Sydney's Central Station – the flagship project in a NSW government-backed technology precinct.

The tech giant has chosen, but not publicly announced, a design by New York-based SHoP Architects and Australia's BVN for the 180-m tower that will be the highest timber structure in Australia and will form a key part of Atlassian's plan to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2050.



Much remains unknown about the 40-storey tower that would combine concrete platforms with structural timber to achieve a far higher building than could currently be achieved by timber alone. Ownership of the asset – whether Atlassian would

develop the building itself, or make an agreement with a commercial developer to deliver it – is unclear.

The planning documents for Atlassian's tower show the building would have an estimated 60,000 sq m of office space – most of it taken

up by Atlassian staff, but with about six floors occupied by other tenants.

The international design competition pitted SHoP and BVN against rivals including Japan's Shigeru Ban and PTW, Dutch firm MVRDV and Cox Architecture, Danish firm 3XN as well as John Wardle Architects.

The first five floors of the building – some 7500 sq m – would be dedicated to YHA hostel accommodation and there would be about 2500 sq m of retail and lobby space. (Australian Financial Review)

Entries affirm PEFC certification approval

THE votes are in for entries in the New Zealand Wood Resene Timber Design Awards to be announced in Auckland on March 26.

Fifty-four finalists are vying for awards across 10 categories from residential to interior design, from engineering to sustainability.

PEFC New Zealand, a first-time sponsor, is behind the new Wood and Fibre Products and Technology Innovation Award, reinforcing the growing awareness and recognition of forest certification in the building and design sector.

Speaking ahead of the

“GREATER USAGE OF PRE-FAB TECHNIQUES”



Tim Melville



David Carradine



Andy van Houtte

David Carradine, sustainable architect at Scion Andrea Stocchero, and NZ Wood Design Guides manager Andy van Houtte.

Award organisers noted that this year's entries feature a greater usage of prefabrication techniques and panelised designs as well as growing desire to use environmentally friendly products.

Debbie Fergie, promotions manager at the Wood Products Manufacturers Association, explains: “These technologies are opening up new opportunities for designers. Timber buildings are once again coming into their own.”

Visit www.nzwood.co.nz/category/timber-design-awards/nzwood-resene-timber

gala awards function, to be held at Auckland's Grand Millennium Hotel, PEFC New Zealand marketing and communications officer Jason Ross was buoyed by the number of entries using timber sourced from sustainably managed forests.

“Whether it's New Zealand-grown or imported from overseas, a number of entries have consciously selected timber materials that originate from forests participating in

the PEFC forest certification scheme,” Jason said.

“Increasingly, the building community has been emboldened to select timber that carries forest certification, from the source in the forest through to the supply chain.”

The jury for this year's program includes the New Zealand Institute of Architects president Tim Melville, New Zealand Timber Design Society president

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Three strikes and you're out? Concern over windfarm project in state forests

Location chosen to minimise impacts on the community

THE idea of building one of the world's biggest and highest wind farms on state forest land between Maryborough and Gympie in the Wide Bay region of Queensland has introduced new concerns about lightning strikes and their contribution to bushfires.

The \$2 billion project put forward by Forest Wind Holdings, a joint venture between Queensland-based renewables firm CleanSight and Siemens Financial Services, would see 226 wind turbines across pine plantations managed by HQ Plantations on land under licence from the state.

The location has been chosen to minimise the impacts on the community, with pine plantations acting as a buffer between the turbines and residents.

State Development Minister Cameron Dick says this would be one of the largest and tallest grid-connected wind farms in the southern



Windfarms... big project proposed for Wide Bay forest region.

hemisphere. If approved, work on the project farm could begin in the final quarter of 2020.

The Governor-General David Hurley AC has signed off on a royal commission into this summer's devastating bushfires, with specific focus on preparedness for future bushfires and the causes, including how large fires occur when dry lightning strikes in very dry environments that are full of fuel ready to burn.

Hazard reduction against lightning strikes and other forms of ignition will form a key part of the inquiry after Prime Minister Scott Morrison demanded an investigation into whether controlled burns and land clearing operations

“FEDERAL GOVT INTERVENTION POSER IN TERMS OF REFERENCE

had been hampered across the country.

The windfarm project is being advanced as an exclusive transaction and part of the Queensland government's investment facilitation services.

Forestry experts interviewed this week said they assumed and hoped the wind turbines would be built with adequate strike protection and that

Cont P 11



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From P 10

the exact locations of the windfarm would be provided.

Any lightning damage to turbines is often attributed to inadequate strike protection, incorrect or insufficient bonding and earthing (grounding), and insufficient transient protection.

The renewable sector's respected magazine Windpower Engineering & Development says one of the most significant hazards wind turbines face is damage from lightning strikes.

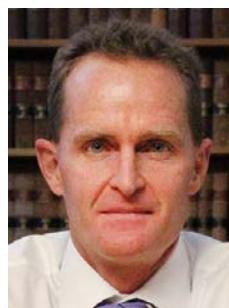
Damage claims caused by strikes are one of the top payouts from insurance companies. A recent German study found that up to 80% of insurance claims relating to turbine downtime were from lightning-related damage. In fact, lightning accounted for nearly 85% of one commercial wind farm's downtime in the US, costing the owner an



Mark Binskin



Annabelle Bennett



Andrew Macintosh

extra \$250,000 in the project's first year of operation. .

Lightning faults are unlike typical electrical faults and cause a greater loss in wind-turbine availability and production. The number of failures due to lightning strikes is known to increase with tower height, and a number of studies indicate that rotating wind turbines may be more susceptible to lightning strikes than stationary structures.

Given that turbine heights are expected to increase – as is the case in the Queensland project – and the industry

is growing, the number of turbine failures is likely to rise as well, says the magazine.

The royal commission's terms of reference cover a range of matters across commonwealth, state, territory and local governments.

They include preparedness and recovery, natural disasters, hazard reduction, wildlife conservation, development approvals, and the debate over when the federal government can step in to offer assistance.

That latter point was highlighted as a concern

for the Prime Minister in an interview with the ABC in January. Mr Morrison argued the commonwealth's hands were tied when responding to the unfolding emergency because it had to wait for formal requests for help from the states.

Two more commissioners, former Federal Court judge Dr Annabelle Bennett AC and leading environmental lawyer Professor Andrew Macintosh, have joined former Australian Defence Force chief Mark Binskin AC. They are due to deliver their findings to the federal government by the end of August.

The commissioners will also investigate whether the findings of previous royal commissions and inquiries have ever been acted on.

Traditional land management techniques used by indigenous Australians will form part of the inquiry.



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Russia biggest timber supplier to China

DANA statistics released this week show Russia remains the largest supplier of softwood sawn timber to China – 17 million cub m last year or 62% of the republic's imports.

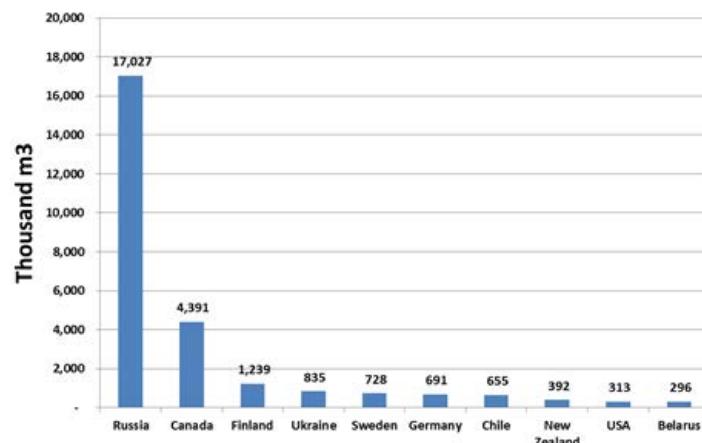
China imported a total of 27.7 million cub m in 2019 from 29 different countries. This would equate to around 46 million cub m of 'roundwood log equivalent' volume, more than the 44 million cub m of softwood logs imported in 2019.

Although a large supplier to China, Canada is well behind at 4.4 million cub m or 16%. But it's a fading force, as log supply shortages in British Columbia curtail timber production, and rapidly increasing Russian supplies of very high quality timber compete in the traditional Canadian-Chinese timber market niches.

European suppliers follow – Finland at 1.2 million cub m and Germany 700,000 cub m.

“ CANADA FADING FORCE AS LOG SUPPLY DWINDLES

2019 CHINA SW SAWN TIMBER IMPORTS: TOP 10 SUPPLIERS



Chile is best represented from the southern hemisphere at 650,000 cub m, followed by New Zealand with only 400,000 cub m or just 1.4%.

It was not always this way. In 2000, Russia imported around 400,000 cub m of timber, with about 25% coming each from Russia and New Zealand.

Various actions taken by the governments and industries in both countries since then, and especially since 2010, have changed the dynamics dramatically.

The New Zealand forest

owning and sawmilling industries have been vigorously debating why timber exports are so small. The Kiwis were the largest supplier of logs to China at 17.4 million cub m (39% of Chinas total timber imports last year.) In contrast, Russia supplied 5.8 million cub m (13%).

The NZ sawmilling industry largely "blames" (alleged) unfair Chinese government subsidies for artificially rising NZ domestic log prices. This is disputed by some forest owners/log exporting companies; and

commentators in both NZ and in China.

The debate rages on – and on – and even into this week, when the CEO of NZ Red Stag, the largest sawmill company, was featured in a media article using the looming virus-caused crisis in the log exporting sector to call for diversifying markets and increasing domestic processing over log exporting.

The debate may only be 'resolved' if either the government bans/restricts log exports (which will likely devastate the forest owning sector); or other NZ sawmilling companies emulate the competitiveness of Red Stag, which is currently owns the only NZ sawmill specifically designed to be internationally competitive.

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Harvesting for small-scale growers is significant ‘business transaction’

‘Never forget the impact of tax – it can be the biggest cost’

MICHAEL SMITH

IN a follow-up to last week’s look at farm forestry in New Zealand, we delve further into the sector’s contribution to the industry.

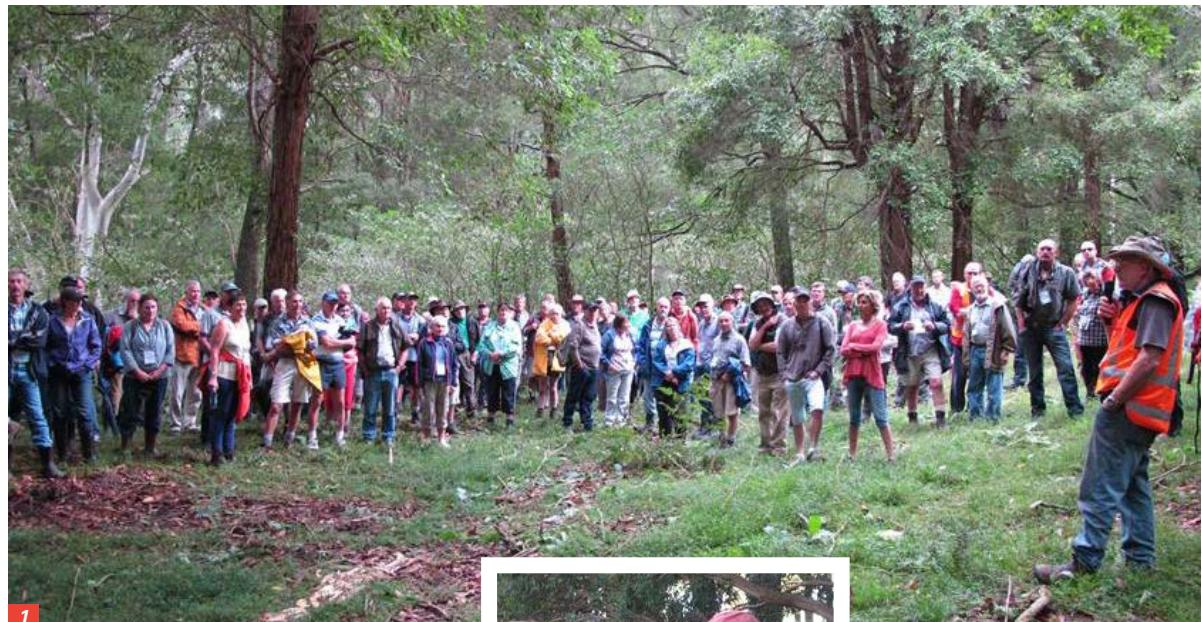
According to Hamish Levack, president of the New Zealand Farm Forestry Association, the introduction of the forest growers’ levy in 2013 brought about significant changes to the ‘forestry landscape’.

“A total levy of around \$10 million is now collected annually – up to half of it from small-scale forest-owning entities [SSFOEs] – and is spent on a variety of forestry good projects,” Mr Levack said.

“For instance, there is now more money to protect all forests from fire and disease, to strengthen systems which reduce accidents and injuries, to train and expand the forestry workforce, and to carry out forest research.

“The levy has also helped to lever greater amounts of additional funds from the government and other sources.”

“MORE MONEY TO PROTECT FORESTS FROM FIRE, DISEASE”



1

1/ NZFFA field trip... harvesting for small-scale foresters is often a once-in-a-lifetime experience.

2/ Hamish Levack, president of the New Zealand Farm Forestry Association, confers with a NZFFA member during a forestry field trip.

Mr Levack says small-scale entities have benefitted directly from funds channelled via the NZFFA, notably through the association’s efforts to communicate relevant information (e.g. best practice regarding small-scale forest harvesting) to facilitate research for special-purpose species, and to contribute amendments to building codes for the use of timber species other than pine.

He adds: “A minor component of the 27-cents-a-tonne levy was spent on research into improving the safety and efficiency of steep land harvesting [where the majority of



2

small-scale harvesting takes place]. The result has been new mechanised systems, which are estimated to save up to \$8 a tonne of wood harvested. That’s just one of many examples that demonstrate the levy’s effectiveness.”

SSFOEs still face a host of uncertainties over the long growing period of a woodlot – most notably, the change in policy emphasis that often results from a change in government.

There are also moves under way to establish a robust

and relatively simple system to certify that wood sold by SSFOEs has not been obtained illegally.

Mr Levack says small-scale owners have not become certified because of the associated costs, and because certification does not provide any greater income from log sales.

“It is likely that, in future, wood vendors will need to provide compliance certificates authorised by the Ministry for Primary Industries,” he said.

“The focus will be on the legal right to harvest; harvesting activities consistent with resource management requirements; and social and cultural safeguards – including health and safety, employment law, and Māori/iwi/hapā rights established in legislation.”

Cont P 14

From P 13

And the NZFFA is working hard to ensure small-scale operators and their contractors have the training and knowledge to undertake forestry operations in a safe and efficient manner. This includes conducting research into the relationship between safety and economics and the training needs of SSFOEs, and participating in the small-scale forestry pilot that Worksafe is carrying out in the Wairarapa.

Mr Levack says the first challenge faced by SSFOEs wanting to harvest their trees is trying to find somebody willing to do the job. That goes hand in hand with a lack of experience in undertaking



Poplars and willows in the Wairarapa... for farm fodder and land protection.

what is usually a significant business transaction – and, often, a once-in-a-lifetime experience.

"A 20 ha woodlot can involve gross revenues in excess of \$1 million and costs exceeding \$800,000. Most woodlots are sold under a 'managed sale' process

provided by a harvesting consultant for a fee," he said.

"While the NZFFA

“ OWNERS MUST BE PREPARED TO NEGOTIATE COSTS, PRICES

provides supporting advice, small-scale owners should seek independent help – for instance, where they stand with health and safety, and whether they are getting a good deal. They must be prepared to ask questions and negotiate costs and prices."

Mr Levack said woodlot growers often felt pressure to utilise harvesting equipment when it was available or in the locality. Better coordination among

local growers and taking time to understand the people and the business processes involved would stand growers in good stead.

"And they should never forget the impact of tax ... it can be their biggest cost," he pointed out.

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Bushfire royal commission welcome, but action must be sooner than later

Devastation unprecedented, but not unforeseen, say foresters

THE Institute of Foresters Australia and Australian Forest Growers have welcomed the terms of reference of the royal commission into bushfires but say action must be taken sooner rather than later to ensure the nation is better placed to withstand future challenges of a changing climate.

IFA and AFG spokesmen Dr Kevin Tolhurst and Gary Morgan said the organisations were delighted to see hazard reduction measures and traditional land and fire management practices of indigenous Australians specifically cited in the terms of the commission.

"We have long advocated for common national standards and reporting in terms of hazard reduction measures and it is encouraging to see prescribed government action on this front," they said.

"But the reality is that we need to act now to ensure the devastating loss of life, property, flora and fauna experienced across Australia over the past months does not become the norm."

"Countless inquiries have taken place before and we are still where we are now – looking back at a devastating bushfire season which was unprecedented, but not unforeseen."

“WIDE GAP IN KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS TO HANDLE FIRES”



Mechanical fuel reduction... heavy machinery is used to 'rake' forest floors in Finland reducing fuel loads and greatly reducing fire risks.

"We encourage governments not to wait to act on the recommendations of this royal commission, but to start acting on the recommendations of previous commissions and inquiries."

They noted that for Australia to respond to the key findings and recommendations from the commission – if the findings of past commissions and inquiries were anything to go by – there is a gap in the necessary skills and knowledge to deal with the solutions.

Tolhurst and Morgan said this skills gap of appropriately trained and resourced forest and land management experts would need to be addressed along with proper resourcing of organisations involved in land management.

The Australian Forest Products Association has noted the results of a news poll published in the

"This fire season has shown that the multiple approaches by multiple land managers and agencies when it comes to fuel load reduction isn't working," Mr Hampton said.

"In many fire-prone countries, the use of mechanical fuel



Kevin Tolhurst



Gary Morgan



Ross Hampton

Australian this week which found a majority of those surveyed believed insufficient hazard reduction was the main reason for the severity of the summer bushfires.

The poll asked the question: "Which do you think was the main cause of the severity of the recent bushfires?" Of more than 1500 people polled, 56% cited inadequate hazard reduction.

CEO Ross Hampton said the news poll showed the community clearly understood Australia must do more to reduce bushfire risk, and that should take a whole-of-landscape approach which incorporated mechanical fuel reduction to complement hazard reduction burns.

reduction alongside hazard reduction burns has proven highly effective in keeping communities safe and helping preserve forests areas."

The terms of reference for the Royal Commission into the bushfires include "preparedness and resilience responsibilities, which includes land management and hazard reduction measures."

Mr Hampton said industry was urging the commission to investigate mechanical fuel reduction as part of its review.

"Now the results of the news poll show Australians understand that reducing fuel loads in our forests is a priority," he said.



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- Softwood and hardwood plantations, harvesting & hardwood in-field chipping
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- 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: Woodchip and biomass trade shipping specialist speaker confirmed



Structural timber innocent casualty of knee-jerk fears on fire safety: architect ‘Strange contradictions in UK choice of building materials’

STRUCTURAL timbers have become an innocent casualty from the UK ban on all combustible materials in external walls of residential buildings above 18 m since the Grenfell Tower fire tragedy in 2017, says Maribel Mantecon a renowned project designer at London-based CZWG Architects.

“Mass timber can help us tackle the climate emergency safely and we cannot afford to ignore it,” says Ms Mantecon

“In the midst of a climate emergency, structural timber can play a key role in the removal of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and give us a chance to avoid catastrophic and irreversible climate impacts.

“We must radically cut carbon emissions and cannot afford knee-jerk reactions that may undermine our efforts to do all we can to secure a future for our children. What we need are carefully considered strategies and regulations.”

Since the Great Fire of London in 1666, timber has been generally perceived in

**1**

- 1/ Google's planned new HQ in London... boasting the largest wooden façade in the world.
2/ Maribel Mantecon... engineered timber can exceed the performance of concrete and steel.*

the UK as unsafe, especially compared to the two most common structural frame materials, concrete and steel.

However, says Ms Mantecon, concrete and steel represent a staggering 11% of global carbon emissions and we really need to look elsewhere moving forward.

To put it into context, concrete's carbon emissions are 550 kgCO₂/m³, steel's 12,000 kgCO₂/m³ while, in comparison, cross-laminated timber has a negative

**2**

emission of -600 kgCO₂/m³.

Ms Mantecon says mass or engineered timber can match or exceed the performance of concrete and steel. In the UK, structural elements over 18 m require two hours of fire protection. Under test conditions, 180 mm cross-laminated timber lasts over three hours.

Performance-based fire engineering needs to be taken into consideration to meet building regulations.



Laminated glass balustrades, also included in the combustible ban, are being considered for exception. Yet, although the Royal Institute of British Architects has called for structural timber to be exempt, this has not been taken up by the government.

“How can it be that there is the time and appetite to reconsider glass balconies, but not to review structural timber, which could make a significant shift towards zero-carbon buildings?” Ms Mantecon asks.

“By using off-site manufactured structural timber with non-combustible insulation and cladding, we can design buildings that are safe, better for the environment and for our wellbeing.”

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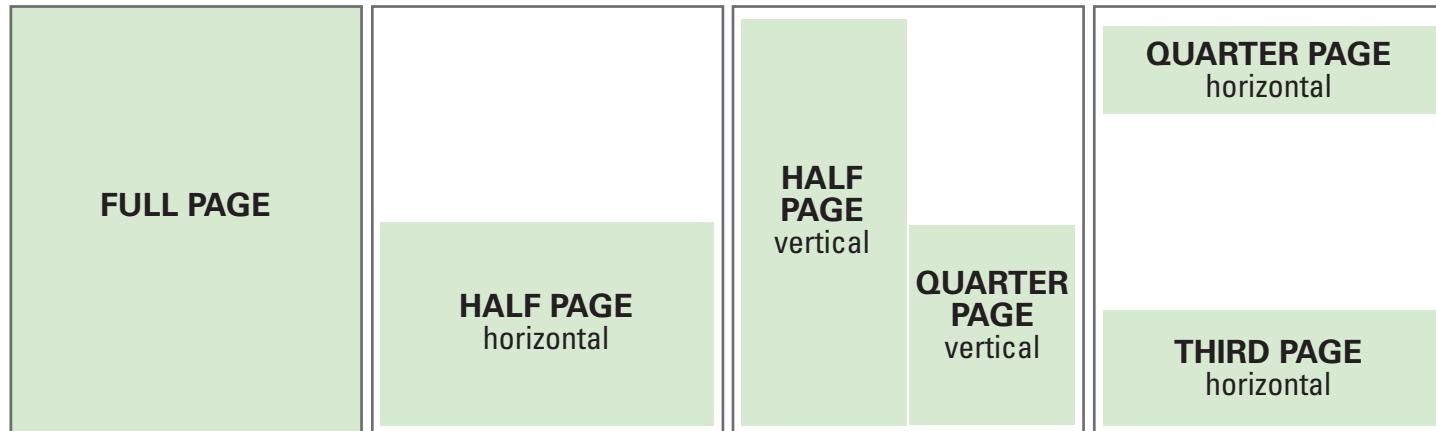
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