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View of industry not so good from here ...

NEW ZEALAND FOREST SECTOR LOCKED OUT, P6



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RFA extensions in Victoria clouded by government plan to shut down industry

THE peak associations representing Victoria's sustainable native timber industries have cautiously welcomed yesterday's announcement of the Regional Forest Agreements extension.

But considerable uncertainty still surrounds the Andrews government's plan to close down the industry by 2030.

The Victorian Association of Forest Industries, Australian Forest Products Association, and Australian Forest Contractors Association say the announcement from the Victorian and commonwealth governments extending the state's five RFAs until 2030 provides some relief for the native timber industry, which has been hit hard by the recent bushfires and the Andrews government decision in November to phase out native forest harvesting from 2024, with a full shut down by 2030.

"The RFA extensions are welcome but they don't change the fact the Andrews government plans to shut



Tim Johnston



Stacey Gardiner



Ross Hampton

down the industry, despite it being sustainable and critical to so many communities in regional Victoria," VAFI CEO Tim Johnston said.

"These extensions may provide some medium-term security for our industry, but they must be accompanied by guaranteed timber volumes from the state government over the corresponding period to meet one of the key objectives of the RFAs," he said.

"We will study the detail of the agreements closely to ensure they deliver on their objectives."

AFCA general manager Stacey Gardiner said the RFA extensions enabled

harvesting to continue across the state for those businesses not impacted by other constraints at this time.

"Many forestry contractors who were on the frontline of Victoria's bushfire response this summer, and then worked tirelessly on the clean-up operation to make roads safe again, are working at reduced capacity and are almost out of work," Ms Gardiner said.

"The situation for many

“EXTENSIONS MEDIUM-TERM SECURITY FOR INDUSTRY”

has become untenable at a time we should be doing everything to retain businesses that can operate safely."

AFPA CEO Ross Hampton said the RFAs nationally had delivered on all the environmental objectives, striking the right balance between environmental, social and economic considerations in the management of Australia's state forests.

"It is disappointing that as a result of the Victorian government's plan, the state's RFAs are now out of sync with the rest of the country, with Tasmania, NSW and Western Australia all signing 20-year extensions with rolling five-year extensions upon successful completion of the statutory five-yearly reviews," Mr Hampton said.

"We will continue to oppose the Andrews government's plan to end native timber harvesting right up to the next Victorian election to have it overturned."



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People need houses: as confidence returns approvals will steadily rise

Building a bridge to the other side in COVID-19's uncertain timeline

IN more normal times in assessing economic news we would be commenting on the recent GDP results for the December 2019 quarter and associated measures important to the forest and wood products sectors.

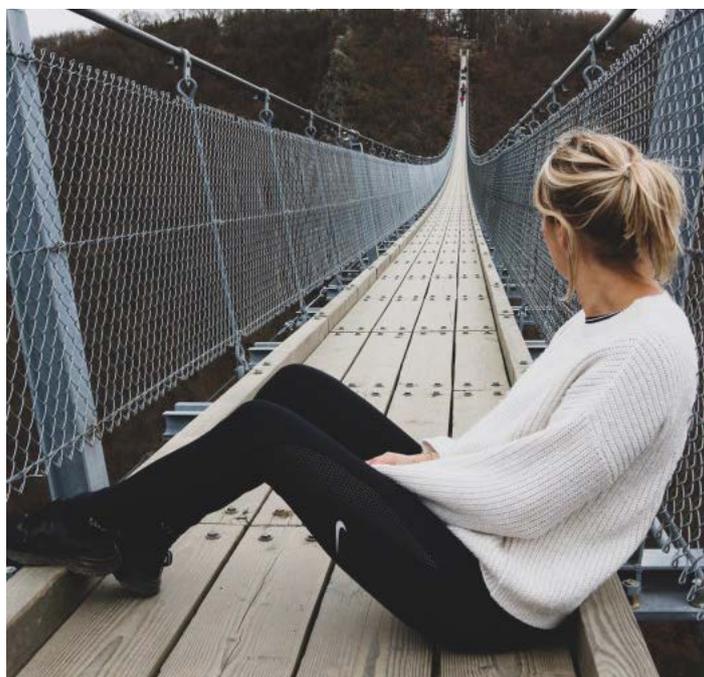
However, the escalating COVID 19 pandemic has made that somewhat academic as we move into uncharted social and economic territory.

At the time of writing, travel was being limited with some states closing their borders. In the case of Tasmania this was referenced in the Hobart Mercury with the simple front-page headline: "We have a moat and we are going to use it."

Australia's forest and wood products industries are on the front foot.

At this stage, building and construction is still occurring and our industry is working to support the supply chain with the materials needed.

Company safety leaders have been using collaborative forums to update each other on best practice work arrangements to tackle COVID 19 in the forest and in the sawmill. To state the obvious, working from home is not possible for a harvesting contractor or a sawmill operator. But maximising hygiene and practical social



Prepared to do whatever is necessary... we will get to the other side of this economic challenge.

"Building a bridge to the other side" is a good analogy while the timeframe is uncertain. If you are fan of Nordic crime noir you might also see similarities between Saga Norén the central character in The Bridge and Dr Philip Lowe, Governor of the Reserve Bank who is overseeing the Australian bridge. Both are prepared to do "whatever is necessary" to get a successful result.

Cont P 4

COMMENT



With **JIM HOUGHTON**

distancing measures are all part of maintaining a safe workplace.

At some stage we will get to the other side of this health and interconnected economic challenge.

The RBA and all governments have been very active in putting in place support mechanisms and funding to assist businesses and workers hang on as whole sections of the economy are shut down.

The united voice for Australia's forest industries



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“OUR FOREST INDUSTRIES ARE ON THE FRONT FOOT”

WE'RE WITH YOU ALL THE WAY

WE'RE with you all the way on this," was the message from enews co-publisher John Halkett as the Australasian community reels from the impact of the coronavirus pandemic.

"I think it is fair to say that we are all traumatised by the impact of the virus on society and the broader economy," he said.

"With so much commercial activity slowing, if not shutting down entirely, we here at enews believe we have a critical role to keep the timber and forestry industry informed and positive.

"In last week's edition, editor Jim Bowden commented on the increasing importance of online publications such as enews. In a self-isolation world, he said enews was an important

conduit for reliable industry news and opinion.

"So, during these tough times we will be redoubling our efforts to ensure that the industry is well informed and up-to-date on a weekly basis."

John added: "Like everyone else we are not able to get out-and-about as much as we would like, so we welcome any contribution about our industry – news and activities – to pass on to our many thousands of Australasian and global readers."

John said readers were more than welcome to send editorial contributions and



John Halkett... acknowledging the continuing support from advertisers, supporters, columnists and readers.

comments to Jim Bowden at: cancon@bigpond.net.au

He reinforced the fact that

during these unsettling, tough times continuing industry support was appreciated – and vital.

"We sincerely acknowledge the support we are continuing to receive from our advertisers, supporters, columnists and readers. We are truly thankful for this support, and trust that it will continue as we endeavour to keep the timber and forestry industry informed during the tough and challenging few months ahead.

"Stay well and healthy and with us look forward to better times in the future ... hopefully sooner than later."

“CRITICAL ROLE TO KEEP YOU INFORMED

From P 3

So what might the other side start to look like?

The good news is people need houses to live in and at some stage as confidence returns approvals will start to rise.

Other factors to look out for will be our international trade with China. In recent years we have exported record levels of chip for pulp and paper and logs for wood product manufacture. A pick-up in Australia's forest product exports would reflect the Chinese economy starting to move again.

Meanwhile, key messages on hygiene, social distancing and where necessary social isolation are being regularly communicated by our political leaders and health professionals.

This is where the value of quality data is proving so critical. The virus spreads exponentially which means a few cases can quickly spread.

The World Health Organisation has been

collecting data since January 23 when 574 cases were reported globally that day. Move forward two months to March 23 and the daily total had increased to 40,900 cases with 334,981 cumulative cases.

For decision makers, the rate of escalation in confirmed cases is the critical data point underpinning a proportionate response with the aim of "flattening the curve." This is why a whole range of social distancing protective measures have come to the fore. The requirement is to slow the spread of the virus throughout the community at a rate where the small percentage of total cases requiring hospitalisation doesn't exceed the capacity of the medical system (beds, staff and intensive care equipment) to look after them.

• *Jim Houghton is statistics and economics manager at Forest and Wood Products Australia.*



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Tributes for industry doyen Richard Neville-Smith, 82

A GIANT has fallen in the forest with the death in Melbourne of timber industry pioneer Richard Neville-Smith, aged 82.

The former chief executive of Neville Smith Forest Products will be farewelled at a funeral today.

The Neville Smith business was started in 1924 by Mr Neville Smith's father Neville Smith, and branched into the forest products industry with timber mills in Victoria and Tasmania. Mr Neville-Smith joined the family business in 1964 at the age of 27.

AFPA chairman Greg McCormack has passed on his condolences to the family on

behalf of the whole industry.

"Richard was a doyen of the industry and we will miss his counsel, experience and enthusiasm," Mr McCormack said.

"Richard was there when one of AFPA's predecessors, the National Association of Forest Industries, was formed, and he remained a supporter of the association and its representative role to the end.

"He loved the forest industry but was also passionate about the communities where the family's businesses operated and made sure they were part of its success. On top of that



Richard Neville-Smith... passionate about timber community.

he remained a truly generous person who was happy to help anyone in need."

With the restrictions on social gathering due to the COVID-19 crisis, just six

members of Mr Neville-Smith's family can attend today's service, with his overseas-based daughter unable to fly home due to the travel bans.

"It's a real pity his industry colleagues, mates and extended family can't be there to celebrate his life," Mr McCormack said.

"The family is organising a memorial and wake in the future, so we'll get the chance then to give him a proper goodbye."

Mr Neville-Smith is survived by three children – Jane (who lives in France), Chris and James – and eight grandchildren.

Builders, CFMEU join forces in coronavirus battle

THE Master Builders Australia and the CFMEU national construction division have joined forces to ensure the construction industry remains the backbone of the Australian economy and able to sustain the millions of people dependent upon it throughout the coronavirus crisis.

The principle union and employer group are working

cooperatively to keep people safe at work while calling on governments and the banks to support the industry and all its people through the uncertainty of the months ahead.

The construction industry accounts for around 10% of GDP and employs 1.2 million people – 9.1% of the entire Australian workforce.

The industry provides more full-time jobs than any other sector of the economy and is made up of 395,000 businesses, 388,800 of which are small to medium enterprises.

"If coronavirus forces the shutdown of the industry it will have a devastating impact on the economy generally and upon the lives of construction workers

and business operators and all their families," the organisations said in a joint statement this week.

"The health and wellbeing of everyone in the building and construction industry is our priority. This also means ensuring that the building and construction industry is kept as strong as possible through these difficult times."



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Is closure of ‘non-essential’ forest sector a ‘political’ decision by PM?

Stay-at-home NZ timber workers face financial ruin

DENNIS NEILSON

‘UTU’ is the Maori name for revenge, and some New Zealand forest industry leaders and observers are increasingly suspicious that utu may be playing a role in the seemingly irrational almost total closure of the forestry sector, and are asking why this should continue.

Two utu possibilities have been reported to the author. One is the ongoing political scrap between the Prime Minister and her Forestry Minister Shane Jones.

Jones is a rebellious politician from the minor but powerful NZ First Party in the Coalition, who often ‘shoots from the hip’. He has recently upset the PM with various statements, including most recently about the Indian community.

The PM followed with: “On many occasions I’ve witnessed Minister Jones be both loose with his language and also be wrong, and on this occasion he was both.”

Jacinda Ardern said if Jones was a member of her party, he would have been demoted.

Has she punished the entire NZ forestry sector because of her displeasure of its political leader?

A second suspicion is the regularly played out missive



Friend of forestry... NZ Minister Shane Jones (left) with Red Stag Group CEO Marty Verry on the site of Red Stag’s \$20 million CLT plant in Rotorua.

by some politicians, and especially the powerful farming lobby, that New Zealand forests and rural land have been and continue to be bought up by “evil” foreign investors.

This controversy was especially played out in a major protest to parliament in 2019, led by the infamous 50 Shades of Green cult which has used fear, misleading information and blatant lies to denigrate the forestry sector, and has focused on trying to block all overseas investors.

Too many politicians have fallen for it.

Has the NZ government decided to throw rocks in the eye of the whole sector to punish a few foreign ‘rich-pick’ buyers of NZ forests and land?

Why the suspicion?

Most of New Zealand, including the forestry sector, has applauded the Prime

Minister for imposing tough restrictions. However, until very recently, it allowed unfettered free passage of arriving passengers from overseas. The author was appalled at the lack of interest of border control when he flew into Auckland from Melbourne on March 17. He was refused a COVID-19 test because, “the nursing staff were on a tea break.”

“TOO MANY POLITICANS HAVE FALLEN FOR IT”

But as importantly, it has allowed “essential” industries to operate while closing “non-essential” industries. It had deemed forestry non-essential – the only primary sector industry to be so identified.

So we see all food

producing industries continue, including dairy with its thousands of milking and processing workers encouraged to turn up to work every day; the kiwi fruit-picking and packing industry with its thousands of often migrant workers working cheek by jowl in orchards and massive pack-houses and who live in crowded hostels; the horticulture

industries to continue (including TV news shots this week of broccoli workers rubbing shoulders as they picked and packed), the wine industry with its often migrant workers allowed to pick and process grapes and live in crowded hostels, and the massively electricity price subsidized Tiwai Point aluminium smelter, when the world is flooded with too much aluminium.

The world is awash with food; it does not need produce from New Zealand. And anyway, more than 90% of dairy products and kiwi fruit are exported, so feeding New Zealanders is not relevant – although all forest industry people welcome those sectors being allowed to work.

But what many object to is that all the while the government prevents a

JUNE

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

SEPTEMBER

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

OCTOBER

21st Australian Timber Design Awards – Sydney, NSW, Australia (date and venue to be advised). Entries close June 1. Voting for the People’s Choice Award is open from August to September.

Visit the new awards website for information and registration instructions. www.timberdesignawards.com.au

NOVEMBER

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

MARCH 2021

17-19: Doing Timber Business in Queensland – Hotel Marriott and Howard Smith Wharves, Brisbane, QLD, Australia. State conference, workshops, innovation tour and gala dinner organised by Timber Queensland. Visit www.doingtimberbusinessinql.com

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Malaysian industry in lock-down as COVID-19 takes hold

MALAYSIA is in lock-down at least until April 14 with a movement control order enforced as part of the government’s efforts to manage the coronavirus epidemic.

Almost all industries and businesses have stopped and only essential services such as banks, communications

and medical and food suppliers are operating, says ITTO.

Malaysian soldiers will assist the police in enforcing a government order for people to stay at home amid confirmations that COVID-19 infections have surged past 1000.

Last week the government announced additional initiatives to help Malaysians cope financially with the virus outbreak and the resulting movement control order. These new measures are on top of the government’s \$US\$4.7 billion economic stimulus package announced in February. Further measures

will be announced this week.

Dr Mahathir Mohamad, the previous Prime Minister, called Malaysia’s situation “a terrible catastrophe”. He said in particular small enterprises would suffer enormously so the government should arrange financial support for them.

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MAY

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.risiinfo.com/events/ or contact conferences@risi.com

JUNE

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

AUGUST

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

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

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

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

Mass timber brings decency, dignity to Skid Row

NON-PROFIT developer Skid Row Housing Trust and Michael Maltzan Architecture have unveiled plans for a mass timber high-rise in downtown Los Angeles.

Unlike most high-rise buildings in LA, which are built from concrete and steel, the Alvidrez will be 12 storeys of mass timber above a two-level podium – one of, if not the first, examples of this construction type in southern California.

The name Skid Row has been immortalised in myth and music as both a place and a state of being. It is the address associated with the bottom rung of life's ladder, the dead-end destination for the hopeless.

The original Skid Row was probably in Seattle and it got its name from the corduroy



Modular mass-timber... Skid Row transformed.

wooden tracks used to haul heavy lumber to the timber yards.

In an area of LA infamous for its homeless population, three social housing projects by Michael Maltzan bring a sense of decency and dignity to a fractured urban realm

The proposed LA construction will incorporate modular building blocks made

of cross-laminated timber columns, beams, and gravity framing deck members that contain the basic dwelling unit types.

"Mass timber systems are typically more fire-resistant, provide strong structural integrity but are lighter in weight, are sustainable, and can provide time-saving efficiency benefits during construction,"

the architects said.

Plans for the mass timber building emerged as the City of Los Angeles explores more cost-effective methods for building permanent supportive housing, including prefabricated modular construction.

The high cost of construction has been blamed for the slow pace of construction of projects financed with 'Measure HHH' dollars that will raise property taxes in order to issue a bond for \$1.2 billion dollars to help the homeless in Los Angeles. The tax hike would last for 29 years and the bonds would build about 10,000 units of housing.

Skid Row in Los Angeles is a downtown 50-block section bounded by the Historic Core and Little Tokyo.

Awards, conferences, workshops and tours will go ahead ... later

AS industry closely monitors developments during the COVID-19 crisis, the Timber Development Association has announced it will go ahead with the 21st Australian Timber Design Awards – conducted on an online meeting platform if necessary.

“At present, our main priorities are ensuring the health and well-being of our staff and supporting efforts to slow the spread of the virus,” TDA CEO Andrew Dunn said.

“Judging period for the awards commences in July and a decision on the awards presentation evening, currently scheduled for mid-October, will be made closer to the date.”

“**DESIGN CONTEST SET FOR LATE 2020**”

Voting for the People’s Choice Award is open from August to September.

Visit the new awards website for information and registration instructions. www.timberdesignawards.com.au

In Brisbane, Timber Queensland has postponed its Doing Business in Queensland state conference.

“We decided it was prudent to delay the conference until early 2021 to allow our members and supporters plenty of time to get back on their feet and re-establish

their business processes and supply chains beyond COVID-19,” said strategic relations and communications manager Clarissa Brandt.

“Despite these current circumstances, Queensland’s forest and timber industry has a bright future,” she said.

The new dates for the conference – to be held at the Marriott Hotel and Howard Smith Wharves in Brisbane – are: Wednesday, March 17, pre-conference workshop and innovation tour; Thursday, March 18, conference and gala dinner; Friday, March 29, post conference workshop. Visit www.doingtimberbusinessinql.com

In Melbourne, Kevin Ezard, founder of the Timber Offsite Construction Conference, says the 2020 event, scheduled for June 15-16, will now be moved to later in the year.

“We are investigating alternate dates with our venue Crown Promenade while keeping a watch on the impacts of the coronavirus,” he said.

“Speakers and the project panel session program will remain unchanged and all registered delegates will be advised with updates on the new timing as soon as it is available.”

Inquires can be directed to Kevin 0419 538 638 or email kevin@timberoffsiteconstruction.com Visit the new website at www.timberoffsiteconstruction.com



Traders fear increase in illegal logging as Indonesia shunts timber legality rule

THE Australian Timber Importers Federation has strongly opposed the removal or any relaxation of the Indonesian SVLK legality assurance scheme.

Under a new regulation issued in Jakarta by the Ministry of Trade, timber companies won't have to obtain export licenses that certify the wood comes from legal sources.

The policy scrapping the so-called v-legal ('verified legal') licenses takes effect from May 27 and timber traders have warned of a resurgence in illegal logging in Indonesia.

"If this decision occurs, it will make it very challenging for Australian timber importers to continue to have confidence on Indonesian timber exporters," ATIF general manager John Halkett said.

"The SVLK scheme has worked well to date, and is recognised under Australian illegal logging regulations as passing muster in terms of legality verification. Any move to reduce the confidence Australian timber importers have in the legally-sourcing



1/ Indonesia's decision follows years of lobbying by furniture producers.
2/ Joko Widodo... soft spot for Indonesian furniture manufacturers.



had been developed over the course of a decade as the integral part of Indonesia's timber legality verification system, or SVLK, which was first rolled out in 2009. The SVLK system was meant to ensure all

credentials of Indonesian timber would be a very serious backward step."

Mr Halkett noted that the recent decision between Prime Minister Scott Morrison and Indonesian President Joko Widodo to jointly endorse the Indonesia-Australia Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement was seen as a mechanism to enhance the prospects that Indonesia may have some additional capacity to help fill the timber product supply gap, particularly for high quality hardwoods.

"Diminishing the SVLK scheme in any way will greatly damage these improved

supply prospects," he said.

Indonesia's decision follows years of lobbying by furniture producers, who complained that obtaining the v-legal license was costly and time-consuming, and hurt their business.

The president has a soft spot for furniture makers. He started working in his father's furniture workshop at the age of 12.

The licensing requirement

“CHALLENGE FOR TIMBER IMPORTERS IN AUSTRALIA

parties in the timber supply chain obtain their wood and timber products from sustainably managed forests and conduct their trading operations in accordance with existing laws and regulations.

Today, 100% of timber from both natural forest concessions and plantation forest concessions are SVLK-certified, although a small amount of timber from illegally logged areas still enters the supply chain.

The SVLK system also helped improve the reputation of Indonesian timber, for decades widely considered illegal.



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From P 6

mostly totally domestic NZ workforce in the forest and forest products sector to languish at home. This will likely result in dozens of contractors going bankrupt, and thousands of forestry workers struggling (or failing) to pay the rent or put food on the table.

And, incidentally, it has stopped more than \$6 billion of desperately needed annual foreign exchange to be earned.

In (some) highly automated sawmills it is harder to find even a single worker at a work station than to find two or more standing in any close space, and the same

“ DANGEROUS WORK ARGUMENT IS NOT VALID ”



Struggle ahead... jobs in the balance for New Zealand forestry workers.

applies for highly automated wood panels and pulp and paper mills.

More and more inconsistencies are identified every day

And while log prices in China are rapidly increasing, this translates back to almost record 'NZ\$-at-wharf-gate prices in New Zealand.

The industry hopes that logic will prevail and the government will soon

reverse this most irrational closure decision.

In the meantime, in Australia, both the forestry and construction sectors are going gangbusters.

Australians must not allow irrational political ideology to restrict these vital economic activities.

[Latest available ABARES data (2018-19) shows New Zealand was Australia's second-largest wood

products source with imports worth \$556 million, including paper, paperboard and sawnwood].

• *Dennis Neilson, a director of Rotorua-based DANA Ltd, has wide experience in managing*

land acquisition, forest management, harvesting, log transport, shipping, log and woodchip export sales and marketing forest financing and strategic planning. His career included 20 years with Fletcher Challenge, spanning the full gambit of forestry activities. He is a director of Timber&Forestry enews.

Cover photo: Red Stag Group.



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2/ Tigercat’s LogOn... on-site access to machine information and diagnostics.

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The LogOn system collects

Sandalwood dreaming becomes a reality for Bobby

FOR Bobby Pepper (pictured), getting a dead sandalwood collection licence was a decade of dreaming finally becoming reality.

Bobby says his involvement in the West Australian sandalwood industry continues his connection to the timber that goes back decades. His father’s involvement with sandalwood spurred him on and with

the help of Ben Sawyer, Aboriginal engagement manager at the Forest Products Commission, he got his own deadwood and seed collection contract with the FPC.



“My father and my brothers collected sandalwood, and I’m very proud to be able to

continue that tradition today,” Bobby said.

“It’s wonderful to be on Nhunda land, the land of my ancestors, and harvest sandalwood and I hope to continue it on with our next generation.”

Ben Sawyer said Bobby’s involvement is part of a larger push to get more Aboriginal people engaged in the sandalwood industry.



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Forest certification schemes support PM

AN open letter to the Prime Minister Scott Morrison from Simon Dorries, CEO, Responsible Wood, and Damian Paull, CEO, FSC Australia and New Zealand:

This is clearly a uniquely challenging moment for our country as we face the unprecedented health, social and economic impact of COVID-19. You and the National Cabinet have the full support of Australia's two forest certification schemes, Responsible Wood and the Forest Stewardship Council, in leading our proud nation through this crisis.

While we recognise and fully support the strong suite of measures introduced by the National Cabinet to curtail the spread of COVID-19, we urge you to identify the wood products industries



Simon Dorries

as essential services in the nation's response to the coronavirus pandemic should further restrictions be placed on Australia's businesses.

The wood products industries supply a raft of

“INDUSTRIES SUPPLY A RAFT OF CRITICAL PRODUCTS



Damian Paul

critical products required to ensure the security and resilience of the nation's critical infrastructure during the response to the pandemic. With products ranging from toilet paper and face masks to high-quality wood products to aid in the construction of potential emergency housing and healthcare facilities, the wood products industries are really the glue that holds the

nation together.

The consequences of a perceived shortage of critical products has been abundantly clear recently in Australia's supermarkets. We implore you to avoid further turmoil by exempting the forest product supply chain from future mitigation efforts.

Finally, shutting down the wood products industries will significantly delay the economic recovery in the wake of the crisis as many of the sectors that will drive the rebounding economy are reliant on Australian forest products.

With your support, the nation's wood products industries can continue their steady supply of critical products needed by the Australian public during and after this crisis.

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VicForests rejects ‘illegal logging’ accusations by Wilderness Society

JIM BOWDEN

CLAIMS of “illegal logging” of state forests in Victoria made by the Wilderness Society have been strongly rejected by state-owned VicForests.

The Hobart-based conservation group said VicForests’ assertion (Timber & Forestry enews, March 19) that its operations complied with “timber legality frameworks and guidelines in the Illegal Logging Prohibition Regulations” revealed it may be exposing VicForests customers to higher levels of risk of breaching their legal obligations.

The group has filed a formal complaint with the federal Department of Agriculture requesting it investigate the due diligence system deployed by Australian Paper, VicForests’ largest customer.

VicForests says there have been no findings by authorities of the claimed “illegalities” and that it complies with the legislative and regulatory framework for timber harvesting in Victoria.

Contrary to an online article by the Wilderness Society – ‘Illegal logging in Australia – are you buying it?’ – paper products that Australians are printing on are not sourced from illegally harvested wood in Victoria, VicForest says.

The Wilderness Society claims paper companies don’t comply with the Illegal Logging Prohibition Act when buying VicForests’ timber.

“This is wrong,” a VicForests spokesperson said. “Further, VicForests is certified under the Australian Responsible Wood standard,



Craig Dunn... committed to legal and regulatory obligations.

endorsed by the Program for the Endorsement of Forest Certification – the largest such standard in the world.

“Under that standard, which we have maintained since 2007, we are independently audited every nine months. Beyond that, we are regularly and rigorously monitored by Victoria’s Office of the Conservation Regulator, including through the Victorian Government Forest Audit Program.”

VicForests said the Wilderness Society article appeared to have been sourced from a previous report in Melbourne’s *The Age*, which was also unfounded:

- That report wrongly stated that breaches had been recorded and reported by the Victorian Auditor-General. In fact, the Auditor General has never done so.

- Data about roading cited by *The Age* related to a four-year-old Forest Audit Program

report, and those issues have been addressed.

- In the latest 2017-18 FAP report, VicForests achieved 81% compliance on roading construction, with overall operational compliance of 84%.

Supporting VicForests, the Victorian

Association of Forest Industries also rejects the claims by the Wilderness Society.

CEO Tim Johnston said businesses that sourced certified, sustainably-managed timber from Victoria’s state forests could do so with full confidence that their hardwood met all the stringent requirements of Victorian law, and was certified by Responsible Wood, which was globally endorsed by the PEFC.

“FORESTS MEET ALL THE REQUIREMENTS OF STATE LAW

VicForests operated in less than 6% of Victoria’s 7.6 million ha of native forests and regenerated areas after harvest to ensure long-term biodiversity was maintained, Mr Johnston said.

Craig Dunn, general manager of Australian Paper,

which employs more than 850 staff at its Maryvale mill in Victoria’s Latrobe Valley and supports over 5500 direct and flow-own Victorian jobs, says the company is committed to meeting its legal and regulatory obligations.

“This includes the requirements of the Illegal Logging Prohibition Act,” Mr Dunn said.

“We work closely with VicForests in ensuring our commitment is met.”

VicForests says it is sometimes scrutinised by the Victorian Auditor-General.

“There has been no report by the Auditor-General making findings against VicForests about Illegal Logging Prohibition Act breaches.”

VicForests categorically states that it is compliant with the Illegal Logging Prohibition Regulations. Reports to the contrary are incorrect, misleading and disappointing.

“The public rely on accurate information being provided by all parties about native forestry – including the Wilderness Society,” VicForests said.

The Victorian native timber industry is highly regulated and environmentally responsible with only 3000 ha harvested each year and replanted, in an overall forest estate of nearly 8 million ha.

To put this in perspective, only four trees out of every 10,000 are harvested annually and every tree is replaced as the areas are regenerated by law.



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Mitsubishi unfolds strapping SUV with exceed-ingly high and wide cargo room

“OCH, away wi ye! Go figure” was the impolite response to my question – how many books have you boxed for the shift?

Although, to be fair, this was Jock’s third apartment move in the last 12 months as he faced the shock of packing and unpacking once again. Shock Jock? Thankfully, this was ahead of the virus PANdemic and will be his last for some time.

The Glaswegian had cannily noted I was testing a Mitsubishi Pajero Sport Exceed with enough room in the back for 20 bagpipes. No heavy stuff I insisted ... but I contemplated a forklift when confronted with some 20 boxes of, in Jock’s opinion, priceless first editions.

We loaded and we did figure. In fact, with the configuration of the seats and the storage options we could have tossed in a caber or two as well.

In terms of cargo room, there are 170 litres (with all seats in use), 846 litres (with third-row seats folded away), 1429-litres (with second and



Inside Mitsubishi Pajero Sport Exceed... seven seats and 7th heaven comfort.

thirds-row seats folded) and a whopping 1789-litres if the second and third-row seats are folded away and you pack to the ceiling – which we did.

Just pull a few straps and all the seats collapse and configure like autobots in a Transformers movie.

Mitsubishi has refined the cabin ambience by adding more padded leatherette surfaces and refreshing the centre console, while there’s a new AC power outlet alongside the USB port in the second row.

The 20MY Pajero Sport range maintains the same variants with base GLX and optional five or seven seats for the range-topper Exceed.

More stylish and more rugged, the Exceed combines

refinement and true off-road SUV capabilities. A four-cylinder turbo diesel is the only engine in a Pajero Sport and although it seems less powerful than its rivals it is channelled through a selectable 4x4 system via an eight-speed automatic transmission.

On the street, the Pajero Sport is a nifty performer carrying its two-tonne weight well. Off-roading is easy going using the SuperSelect II 4WD system that splits torque between the wheels. Mitsubishi claims 8 litres/100

“COMBINES REFINEMENT AND TRUE OFF-ROAD SUV FLAIR

km and offers a five-year/10,000 km warranty.

With bonuses such as autonomous emergency braking, adaptive cruise control and eight-speed automatic transmission, Mitsubishi is laying down the gauntlet to competitors and signalling its intent to provide unrivalled value with its 3.1 tonne towing capacity leading the field.

And there’s the safety of seven airbags – two directly in front of the driver and front-seat passenger, one alongside each front occupant to protect the upper body, and curtain airbags down each side of the car to protect the heads of those sitting next to a window, including those in the third-row.

At a price from \$53,990 drive away – a wee bit hefty for Jock’s purse – it represents great value.

Also of great value, I guess, is Jock’s first edition of Scott Rea’s Making Haggis Made Simple. In these coronavirus times it might be a useful stay-at-home eating option. Och, away wi ye!

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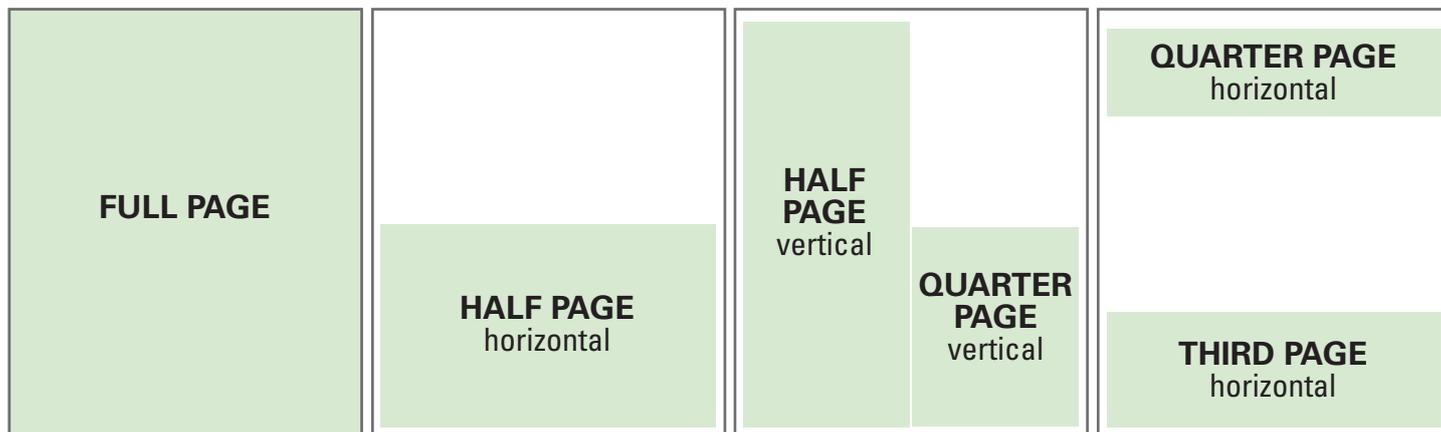
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THIRD PAGE: \$215

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PAGE 1 Front cover strip: Contract booking

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PAGE 1 Front cover module: Contract booking

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