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ISSUE 610 | May 28, 2020

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COVER STORY P10



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NSW bushfire recovery package gives much-needed relief for forest industries

THE NSW Government's \$140 million bushfire industry recovery package will provide urgently needed support for the state's forest industries severely impacted by the Black Summer bushfires.

Premier Gladys Berejiklian said the package would help industries significantly impacted by bushfires to rebuild, recover, regrow and remain the heartbeat of regional economies.

"This funding will support the recovery and resilience of key industries by backing projects that retain and create jobs, strengthen local supply chains and support a return to production," Ms Berejiklian said.

AFPA CEO Ross Hampton said he was pleased the government had taken on board several of the association's recommendations during consultation on the design of the program, which would ensure that it provided targeted support for forest products industries.

"Forest industries are significant regional employers



1/ Government assistance... funding for freight and storage of burnt logs.
2/ Ross Hampton... \$140 million bushfire industry recovery package welcome.

in NSW, supporting more than \$7 billion of economic activity and directly employing over 21,000 people," Mr Hampton said.

"The state has had a significant amount of the softwood plantation assets and sustainably-managed native forest estate damaged by the Black Summer bushfires, and now the COVID-19 pandemic means there will be long-term impacts on the supply chain, manufacturing businesses, and jobs.

"This program will provide immediate support across

the whole forest industry sector, softening the impact of the bushfires, and supporting employers as they address the long-term challenges of the coronavirus."

Mr Hampton said crucially, the first tranche of the program would allow mills and forest growers to receive support for significant costs they had already incurred recovering from the bushfires, combined now with a forecast economic downturn due to the pandemic.

He said the government was

providing up to \$10 million in matching funding for the federal government's \$15 million program to assist with the additional cost of freight and storage for burnt logs.

Mr Hampton has also urged the state government to extend the program to cover the increased cost of carting

green logs to mills from further away, to manage the log shortages caused by the fires.

"Timber workers continue the huge and urgent task of recovering fire damaged timber to

be processed into renewable timber products for Australia's housing and other markets," Mr Hampton said.

"The window of opportunity to effectively recover usable timber from the burnt plantations is only about a year, and we need flexibility in managing the available resource to ensure our mills can continue to operate."

• **Royal Bushfire Commission commences public hearings, P4.**



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Federal government works to build multi-billion-dollar housing scheme

THE federal government is working up a multi-billion-dollar scheme to construct residential housing as part of its strategy to stimulate the economy and prop up the building industry as the nation emerges from the coronavirus crisis.

The scheme, confirmed on Tuesday by Prime Minister Scott Morrison, is being developed by Treasurer Josh Frydenberg and Assistant Treasurer Michael Sukkar.

"It's an issue that has been a key topic of discussion amongst the premiers and chief ministers and myself," Mr Morrison said.

Mr Morrison's confirmation builds on various calls in recent weeks from Labor, the Greens, builder associations, the unions, and property and industry groups for a national construction initiative.

A government source said while the scheme would act as an economic stimulus, its principal aim was to ward off a crash in the construction centre and prop it up until the economy recovered and demand returned.

Mr Morrison again raised the issue of an extreme drop in migrant intake, estimated by Treasury at 85%.

BUILDERS PROPOSE NEW \$40,000 HOME GRANT



Path to recovery... PM Scott Morrison and Assistant Treasurer Michael Sukkar visit a building site.

"We're looking at net overseas migration falling to 34,000-odd next year."

Master Builders Australia chief executive Denita Wawn said one of the key proposals it had put to the national cabinet was a new home grant of \$40,000 that would ensure up to 130,000 homes were built in the 2021 financial year.

"We are facing a decline in residential construction in 2021 of 30% and a significant reduction in jobs," Mrs Wawn said.

"There is no doubt there will be a drop in demand with lower migration and tourism but we are not concerned about the long term," she said.

"Building and construction is shaping up to be one of the industries worst hit in the long term by the COVID-19 economic crisis. We know from previous downturns that it takes four times longer for our industry to recover than the rest of the economy."

Earlier this month, the CFMEU and Master Builders called for the establishment

of a \$10 billion fund to build 30,000 new social housing units to head off the anticipated investment slump.

The CFMEU and the

MBA, which ceased hostilities over a month ago to keep the construction industry operating, said investment in residential and business construction was expected to fall by 40% to 50%.

The call for 30,000 new social houses was made separately by the Australian Council for Social Services.

Property industry groups are calling for a \$50,000 new home buyer incentive to drive construction.

(With comment from the Financial Review)

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Climate change spooks submissions at start of black summer bushfires inquiry

Fuel reduction programs must be expanded across all public land

JIM BOWDEN

AS Australia navigates its way out of the coronavirus crisis, the pandemic has not over-shadowed an event, only a few months ago, that left 33 people dead, more than 7000 homes and buildings destroyed and 10 million ha of land burnt.

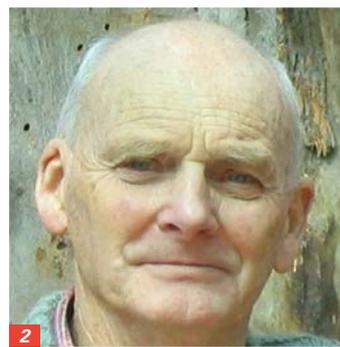
The Royal Commission into National Disaster Arrangements, formed in the wake of the 2019-2020 Black Summer bushfires, commenced public hearings on Monday and will continue over the course of two weeks

The commissioners, former Federal Court judge Annabelle



Bennett, environmental lawyer Andrew Macintosh and Australian Defence Force

1/ Managing bushfires... rapid and determined initial attack, using all available resources, must be applied to every outbreak.
2/ Barrie Dexter... clearly the scale of the fires and the time taken to control them, initially under fairly benign conditions, are unacceptable.



As it has been repeated many times, “those who do not learn from history are destined to repeat it” – and that has been happening since the 1939 bushfire inquiry and the 30 or more inquiries since.

Forest fire management experts this week dismissed as alarmist submissions to the royal commission by CSIRO. Government scientists claimed gas-driven climate change will bring more horrific fire seasons, floods and deadly weather events to Australia over the next century.

“The only silver lining in the coming century of brutal extremes is that cold parts of the nation could see fewer deaths,” said CSIRO’s Dr Helen Cleugh.

[Sub-tropical Brisbane this week experienced its coldest temperatures in 103 years].

“The combination of extreme heat and lower rainfall both contribute to the

chief Mark Binskin, are due to deliver their findings to the government by the end of August.

In a nutshell, the commission wants to find out what can be done better to prevent as much devastation in the future, and what can be done now to help communities still trying to get back on their feet.

Although hazard reduction forms a key part of the inquiry, after Prime Minister Scott Morrison demanded an investigation into whether controlled burns and land clearing operations had been hampered across the country, climate change still spooks the royal commission.

Cont P 5

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From P 4

risk of extreme fire weather especially in southern Australia," Dr Cleugh said. "These dangerous weather conditions for bushfires are likely to occur, at least in part, due to increasing greenhouse gas emissions."

All the more reason for a large increase in hazard reduction, I hear forest professionals say.

Forest Fire Victoria – a group of forestry professionals who share more than 250 years of fire experience – in a submission to an independent inquiry into the 2019-2020 Victorian fires (conducted by the Inspector-General for Emergency Management) have demanded changes to the state's fire management "so this can never be repeated again."

"Clearly the scale of the fires and the time taken to control them, initially under fairly benign conditions, are unacceptable," chairman Barrie Dexter said.

Among 13 demands, Forest Fire Victoria submitted four key points:

- Fuel reduction programs must be expanded across all public land to manage fuel levels so fires never have long, unbroken runs in heavy fuel loads. The failure to meet



Annabelle Bennett...
former federal court judge.



Andrew Macintosh...
environmental lawyer.



Martin Binskin...
Australian Defence Force chief.

the targets set by the royal commission following the 2009 fires has cost the state dearly.

- Rapid and determined initial attack, using all available resources, must be applied to every outbreak of bushfire in order to contain it within the smallest possible area. When forest fuels are dry and the fire danger index is rising, fires in conservation areas must be accorded the highest priority for attack. As an old fire fighter once said, "you may not be successful, but you have to give it a red-hot go!"

- Land management across all public land must complement fire management. Track building and maintenance for access, multiple use management to build knowledge and skills and constant on-the-job training are all essential and must be in place. Locking up vast areas with no management

is a recipe for disaster, as evidenced nationally by the 2019-2020 fires.

- Strong local decision-making and action must be an essential part of fire attack, backed up by larger organisational support when required. Centralisation of emergency management in the early stages of fires is counterproductive.

Vic Jurskis, B.Sc. (Forestry) Australian National University, who was a silviculturist with the native forests division of Forests New South Wales, reflects:

"Climate change and megafires exacerbated by logging are now supposedly driving the forests and their dependent fauna, such as the Leadbeater's possum, to

“ WILDERNESS BETWEEN THEIR EARS

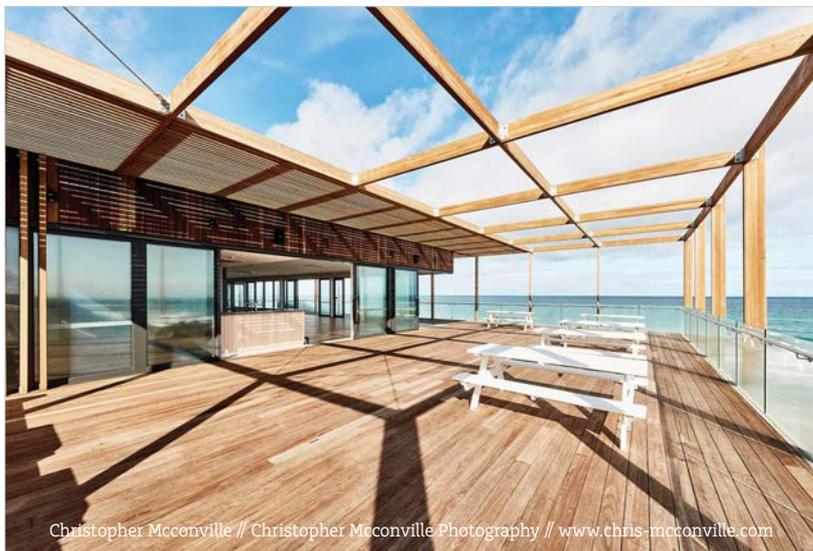
extinction.

"Extensive harvesting has allegedly diminished old growth forests and promoted high-intensity fires. In fact, megafires consequent to disruption of Aboriginal burning, have converted resilient, open, mixed-aged forests to dense young stands that are sensitive to fire and drought.

"Harvested areas have been miniscule in proportion. But there's little hope of resolving the acrimonious debate about forest management while the opposing sides each argue from the same false premises — either for the active management of forests, or exclusion of humanity from them. Only an appreciation of ecological history and the critical role of mild burning can guide restoration of healthy, safe and biodiverse landscapes.

"Black Friday 1939 clearly demonstrated that megafires are driven by accumulation of fuel, not climate change. Despite the extreme weather conditions, many fires in east Gippsland caused little damage.

But history clearly shows us that catastrophic fires are a direct consequence of suppression of mild burning by authorities with wilderness between their ears.



Christopher Mcconville // Christopher Mcconville Photography // www.chris-mcconville.com

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Savage European, US competition seals fate of New Zealand's LVL production

DENNIS NEILSON

IN yet another unfortunate announcement, Carter Holt HarveyWoodProducts last week reported it would likely have to lay off half of its 323 workers at its LVL plant at Whangarei, the regional capital of the Northland.

CHH, a privately-owned company controlled by the Rank Group, says the decision is because "the export part of the LVL business, which accounts for about 70% of our production and sales volume, is unprofitable and the business as it operates today can't continue."

Sadly this is the 57th solid wood processing plant in New Zealand to 'throw in the towel' in the last 16 years.

Of these, 55 were sawmills, which failed. The cause of these failures was a combination of decisions – not always the right decisions – by owners, managers and advisers, coupled with the ever-increasing velociraptor-vicious export competition from more and more huge new automated and low-cost wood processing mills being built in Russia, Western Europe and Latin America.

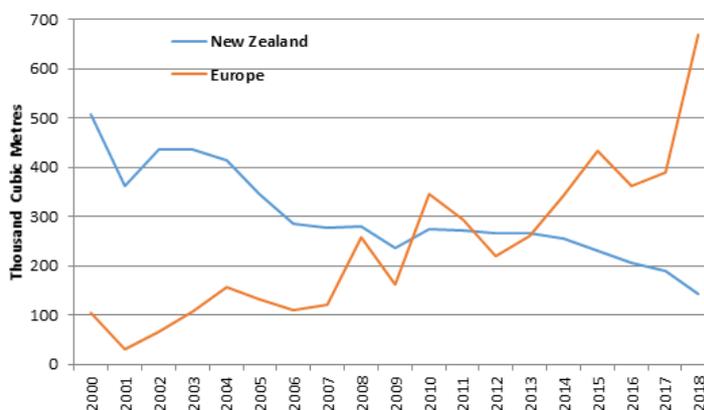
Sawn timber competition to NZ wood exports has also increased in Australia, with the recent opening of the huge new USNR sawmilling line of AKD in Colac Vic,

“ FIERCE COMPETITORS IN RUSSIA, THE US AND FINLAND



Improved productivity and recovery... AKD's new USNR sawmilling line at the Colac, Vic, factory.

TIMBER IMPORTS INTO AUSTRALIA



and with continual sawmill upgrading by Hyne Timber, NF McDonnell & Sons and other Australian domestic producers.

It is no coincidence that sawn timber imports from New Zealand to Australia have fallen to only 25% of what they were in 2000, while imports from Europe have skyrocketed.

One LVL and plywood mill closed in Gisborne in 2018 with a loss of 100 jobs. This 'ancient (in competitive

terms) mill', built in 1994, was the victim of Chilean plywood import competition into the Australian and New Zealand markets after the major Chilean plywood producer Arauco opened its huge new automated plywood mill at Nueva Aldea in 2014, with other new mills opened since.

It is sad, but not surprising, that the 'ancient' 20-year-old CHH LVL mill has also fallen victim to overseas competitors with ultra-modern mills, and who possibly marginally cost their products into Australia.

This LVL competition has been increasingly savage recently from competitors in Russia, Finland and the US.

The writer recently visited the St Petersburg headquarters of a major new Russian LVL producer, Modern Lumber Technology (MLT) in Torzhok. The subsidies provided by the Russian government to new wood processors are eye-watering; and in addition they can produce extremely high quality, superior LVL above what New Zealand can produce from radiata.



Supply problems... Australia faces an acute shortage of LVL as Carter Holt Harvey decides to end exports.

JUNE

11: Innovation in Action Conference – Wellington, NZ. Virtual conference online. Register interest at www.colabprefabnz.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: www.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

30: Green Triangle Timber Industry Awards POSTPONED – Barn Palais, Mount Gambier, SA, Australia. Nominations open 1 June 2020 and close 14 August 2020. For more information visit:

www.gttia.com/

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

EVENTS LISTS MAY HAVE BEEN, OR ARE LIKELY TO BE CANCELLED OR POSTPONED DUE TO CORONAVIRUS TRAVEL, SOCIAL DISTANCING AND OTHER RESTRICTIONS. PLEASE CHECK THE RELEVANT WEBSITES.

SEPTEMBER

27-30: Council on Forest Engineering Annual Meeting – POSTPONED. Visit www.cofe.org for update.

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

DECEMBER

7-9: 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 December 7 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

JANUARY 2021

11-14 : 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/

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



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NZ rugby enthusiast to tackle forestry

OTAGO Rugby Union board member Hamish Walker, 36, will tackle forestry and land information after being elevated through National ranks in new leader Todd Muller's shake-up of portfolios ahead of New Zealand's general election on September 19.

The former agriculture spokesman, Mr Muller, 51, heads the country's main opposition party after Simon Bridges was dumped in a leadership spill as opinion polls showed he was no match for the rising popularity of Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern.

Dunedin-born Hamish Walker, MP for Clutha-Southland, this month called out the government's Billion Trees Scheme as "a disaster waiting to happen for rural communities in Southland".



Todd Muller



Hamish Walker



David Bennett

"This government policy will see the destruction of rural areas, as farms are sold and planted to trees," he said.

"Afforestation most definitely has its part to play in our communities, but it is about right tree, right place, not blanket plantings of those which will grow the fastest."

He said he was honoured to take on his new role in forestry, "the third-largest exporter in our primary sector".

The Clutha-Southland

electorate has been held by the National Party since its creation in 1996.

Todd Muller is a largely unknown figure at the national level and is not publicly perceived as a potential leader. Speaking after the party ballot, he emphasised his strong ties to the rural farming community, "the backbone of New Zealand's economy".

"I come from New Zealand communities that define this country," he said.

The Bay of Plenty MP is a lifelong member of the National Party, graduating from student politics to work for former Prime Minister Jim Bolger in the 1990s.

He declined to immediately follow his mentor into politics, instead turning to agribusiness, carving out a successful career in two iconic New Zealand industries – kiwifruit and dairy. He held roles at both dairy giant Fonterra and kiwifruit growers cooperative Zespri.

Mr Muller takes up Small Business and National Security while Agriculture goes to Hamilton East MP David Bennett, 49.

Nikki Kaye, 40, was elected as National's deputy leader.

• *National forestry policy next issue.*

– JIM BOWDEN

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Bosch Manufacturing deal fast tracks ‘smartwood’ technology from residues

Conversion looks and performs like 100-year-old tropical hardwood

BOSCH Manufacturing Solutions will supply digital production units to 3RT for the global manufacture of sustainable hardwood.

Based in Melbourne and Adelaide, 3RT has developed ‘world-first’ technology in collaboration with Flinders University that converts wood residues into timber that looks and performs like 100-year-old tropical hardwood.

A leader in the design and development of special purpose machinery, Bosch will deliver fully automated production cells to enable its production of Designer Hardwood™ around the world.

The developers say the licensing units would be ideally suited to LVL and plywood producers that use plantation resources and generate a lot of wood waste suitable for use in the units

The cooperative effort provides great opportunities to leverage Bosch know-how in manufacturing, sensor



Smart wood technology... 3RT's potential market in wood transformation worth \$1.2 billion globally.

technology and software around the Internet of Things (IoT) for the wood manufacturing industry.

3RTs commercial products have only been sold in Australia so far and include indoor furnishings such as flooring, stairs, doors and panelling.

The final product is comparable to the highest quality hardwood but is sustainable as it was made from waste timber residues that would otherwise be wood chipped. .

“We are producing the maximum that we can make at the moment and that’s why we need this capability with Bosch, which has the capacity to scale very fast and wherever we want in the world,” 3RT general manager Peter Torreele said.

Flinders University Institute of Nanoscale Science and Development director Professor David Lewis says the sustainability of their designer hardwood product and a resurgence in the popularity of wooden products were attractive selling points.

“It really is an exciting development and the commitment from Bosch has been wonderful and is a pathway to expansion,” he said.

With a potential project market size of \$1.2 billion globally, Bosch Manufacturing Solutions was selected for its unique Industry 4.0 automation and manufacturing systems that support the entire value stream of connected manufacturing.

3RT’s innovation centre in Adelaide develops and manufactures custom Designer Hardwood™ products, transforming plantation wood residues into a sustainable, low-impact substitute for tropical hardwood.

On the cover: Flinders University Professor David Lewis (left) with Associate Professor Jonathan Campbell and 3RT CEO Peter Torreele (centre) with samples of the wood products at the university’s Institute for NanoScale Science and Technology.



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Virtual investment conference a 'first'



Connected... global experts for DANA-FMR virtual conference in June.

THE world's first 'virtual forest investment conference' will be held by live webinar over three separate part-days from June 8 to 10.

For the last six years, New Zealand forest industry adviser DANA has teamed up with the world's largest forest industry information company Boston-based Fast Markets RISI (FMR) to offer annual international forest investment conferences.

Four have been held in New York and two in London.

All planning had been completed for the seventh annual meeting in New York in May, with more than 25 of the world's most eminent presenters due to speak. But COVID-19 put paid to that.

Instead, the virtual forest investment conference in June offers subscribers the option to either join speaker presentations and panel sessions live to partake in Q&A, or to watch them later at their leisure.

"Running a virtual conference is more time-demanding than a live event, especially with speakers from all over the world,"

says DANA director Dennis Neilson.

"The virtual conference is limited to eight presenters, but they are an excellent selection from the earlier full program," he said.

With a conference registration of \$US299, compared with the full conference rate of \$1600, the June 8-10 event will be a good chance for Australian and New Zealand T&F enews readers to catch up with three wood product market outlooks – US and Asian log market and US sawn timber and a global pulp outlook.

Also included is a session on forest investment trends in the US and Europe.

In addition, a speaker from Stora Enso in Finland will talk on a topic which has direct relevance for both Australia and New Zealand: 'European forest products companies: why they are expanding forest ownership rather than divesting'.

Readers can register at <https://events.risiinfo.com/investment-conference/registration>

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HYNE TIMBER

Passionate forest scientist is driving the new trans-Tasman certification standard

Meets rigorous requirements of a fully-fledged JAS-ANZ accredited system

THIS month marks the first anniversary of the formation of the strategic trans-Tasman sustainable forest management standard reference committee, the first of its kind – and no one is more passionate about AS/NZS 4708 than its chair Dr Gordon Duff, a Tasmanian-based scientist, professor and researcher.

The new standard will be audited for acceptance by PEFC International to meet the rigorous requirements of a fully-fledged JAS-ANZ accredited sustainable forest management system and to meet current and future expectations for forest management in both countries.

With more than 25 years' experience in forest management, Dr Duff understands how important it is for stakeholders in the forest products industry to have a standard they can trust, one that balances expectations for social, environmental and economic outcomes.

"The committee is doing a great job of balancing the interests of all stakeholders, taking into account key differences in sustainable forest management between the two countries," Dr Duff said.

One example, he said, was fire management which, in the Australian context, was a key tool for protection and maintenance of forest biodiversity and ecosystem function.

"The focus in New Zealand



1/ Sustainability... trans-Tasman standard meets current and future expectations for forest management in both countries.

2/ Dr Gordon Duff... a standard that can be trusted and one that balances expectations for social, environmental and economic outcomes.

is more on fire suppression or exclusion," he said.

Dr Duff, who edits the Australian Forestry Journal, is well versed in corporate governance and has chaired the Tasmanian Forest Practices Authority, the Forest Education Foundation and the Northern Territory Environmental Protection Authority.

With a focus on producing a standard that balances stakeholder expectations, as well as one that is clear, unambiguous and auditable, the committee is working towards a release of the draft standard for public comment in August-September this year. Once released, the public will have more than nine weeks

to review the draft and provide public comment.

"Drawing on the combined experience of the committee, the standard will use wording that is transparent and easily understood and interpreted by all involved in the certification process," Dr Duff said.

Following the expiration of the public comment period, the committee will give serious consideration to all comments and determine which proposed changes will be incorporated into the standard.

The draft standards are freely available on the Standards Australia and Responsible Wood websites.

The reference committee has been meeting on a weekly basis through video conferencing.

"While there is no doubt

that meeting and engaging via video conference present some unique challenges, members of the committee have adapted well and are able to make meaningful contributions," Dr Duff said.

For more information about sustainable forest management or the standard development process, visit www.responsiblewood.org.au

responsiblewood.org.au

Standard reference committee nominating bodies –

In Australia:

Association of Accredited Certification Bodies, Australian Forest Growers, Australian Forest

Products Association, CFFMEU, CSIRO, Environmental Farmers Association, Institute of Foresters of Australia, Independent biodiversity/conservation expert, National Retailers Association, National Timber Council Association, South East Timber Association (community group), University of Melbourne, University of Sunshine Coast.

In New Zealand:

Federation of Maori Authorities, First Union- NZ, Forest Certification Association, Forest Contractors Association, Farm Forestry Association, Forest Owners Association, Institute of Forestry, Ministry of Primary Industries, Timber Industry Federation, Wood Product and Manufacturers Association, Wood Product and Manufacturers Association.



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TIMBER & FORESTRY EQUIPMENT ISSUE 110 | May 2020

13

Buy wood first: industry impatient for game-changing policy in New Zealand

Coalition urged to make good on its 'zero carbon goal' promise

MICHAEL SMITH

IT'S been 13 long years, and counting, since the Labour-Progressive Coalition government announced its intention to introduce a 'wood first' procurement policy.

Essentially, all government-funded proposals for new buildings up to four storeys high would have required a build-in-wood option... to be included at the initial concept stage.

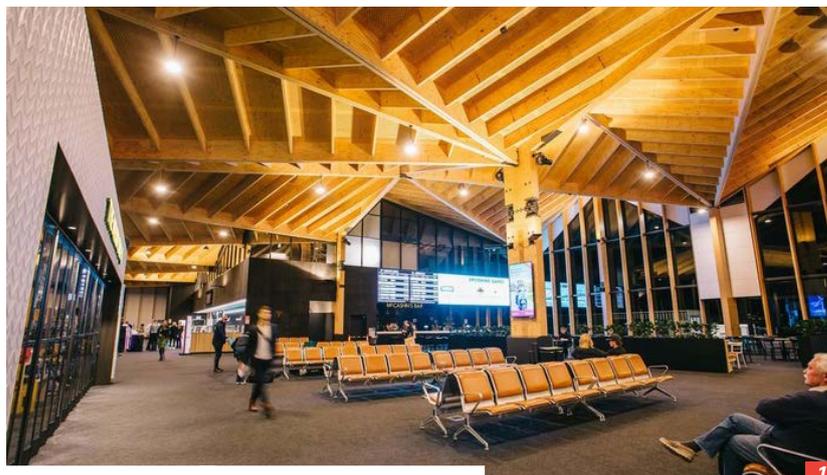
Unfortunately, the 2008 election and the incoming National government put paid to the likely game-changer for the wood processing industry. And for the next nine years, National did little to endear itself to the sector – at one stage even absorbing forestry into the all-encompassing Ministry for Primary Industries, where agriculture held sway.

Meantime, the Labour Party in opposition refined its initial proposal, so that any procuring department choosing not to select a wood option (which proved as cost effective as alternative options) would have to justify its decision.

Labour was keen to promote its pro-wood strategy as encouraging "a broader cultural shift towards viewing wood as the first choice for construction..."

It talked of promoting a

“ COST GAINS FROM MASS WOOD SOLUTIONS



- 1/ **The Nelson Airport terminal... a great example of timber construction with engineered wood products that are storing carbon long-term.** Photo: Luke Marshall Images and Nelson Airport Ltd
- 2/ **Shane Jones... New Zealand First urging Labour to implement a procurement policy.**
- 3/ **Phil Twyford... responsible for progressing 'promised' wood procurement policy.**

strong domestic footing to reduce the business risk associated with international markets. And it received strong backing from wood champion Marty Verry, Red Stag Group chief executive, who said the industry was keen to end the sector's cyclical nature by focusing government procurement on wood construction.

Come the 2017 election, Labour extended its build-in-wood option from four storeys to 10, in recognition of technological advances. Its eventual coalition partners – New Zealand First and the Greens – both broadly supported Labour's approach.

But nearly three years on, the prioritisation plan has stalled, prompting

chief executives from more than 50 forestry and wood processing companies to sign an open letter to the Coalition government to make good on its promise ... "consistent with its zero carbon goal".

The industry's prominent players noted that New Zealand "has the forests, wood processors, manufacturers, design professionals and construction firms to implement the policy". They talked of Housing New Zealand's cost gains from mass wood solutions, which should give confidence to implement a wider government roll-out. And that greater demand for wood products could play a vital role in regional growth and job creation.

Further, they pointed out that for each steel or concrete building constructed, its emissions could be absorbed by constructing two wooden buildings of the same size. "If we make that 2:1 ratio our national target, New Zealand can achieve 'carbon zero' in building structures by 2030."

Responsibility for progressing a 'promised' wood procurement policy is currently in the hands of Phil Twyford, the Minister for

Economic Development.

According to a spokesperson for the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, "officials are in the process of establishing an industry advisory group to input into the development of an industry transformation plan for the forestry and wood processing industry".

Any deliberations about a government-level procurement policy will be part of that work ... supposedly happening later this year. But with an election set for September – and the likelihood of hard times ahead for processors – the 'open letter' is a reminder to the government that it needs to act quickly to retain industry goodwill by "embracing green construction."

New guide for occupational safety and health in forest harvesting, silviculture

THE Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations has produced a guide primarily for forestry companies, trade unions, vocational training institutes and relevant public bodies.

The guide is a first of its kind and aims to bring much relevant content together for users.

It addresses the forest as a work place, safety culture, workplace assessment, accident prevention and management, gender issues and selected health and safety factors.

Data available confirms forestry is a high-risk occupation; workplace conditions in forestry are a function of site conditions, climate, weather, terrain and tree characteristics.

The guide brings together literature and experience to assist forestry practitioners and trainers in the safety and health of operations.

The fundamentals of accident prevention are reduced hazard exposure and worker safety training. The first is achieved through risk assessments to identify



hazards. Workers should be prepared for accidents at all times. Accident analysis is done to identify what occurred, the causes of the accident and how similar accidents might be avoided in future.

1/ Forestry a high-risk occupation... new guide brings together literature and experience to assist forestry practitioners and trainers in the safety and health of operations.

2/ New AFO guide... Occupational Safety and Health in Forest Harvesting and Silviculture.

A sound safety culture recognises that accidents will likely occur. The challenge is to reduce or avoid the consequences of such accidents, and much must be done to establish a safety

“ESTABLISHING A SAFETY CULTURE IN FORESTRY OPERATIONS”

culture in forestry.

Women in forestry can be exposed more often than men to musculoskeletal disorders, respiratory diseases and reproductive disorders due to chemical exposure. The guide indicates that women generally have a working capacity one-third lower than men.

Risks and hazards associated with the management of non-wood forest products derive from activities such as climbing, cutting with sharp tools, digging and gathering, picking, and long and/or heavy manual transport.

Safety issues focus on working with chainsaws; salvage logging; small-scale sawmilling; nurseries and tree planting; and non-wood forest products.

The guide, 'Occupational Safety and Health in Forest Harvesting and Silviculture: A compendium for practitioners and instructors', is published by the Food and Agricultural Organisation as Forestry Working Paper No. 14 (2020). It is free to download, and is aimed at practitioners and instructors.

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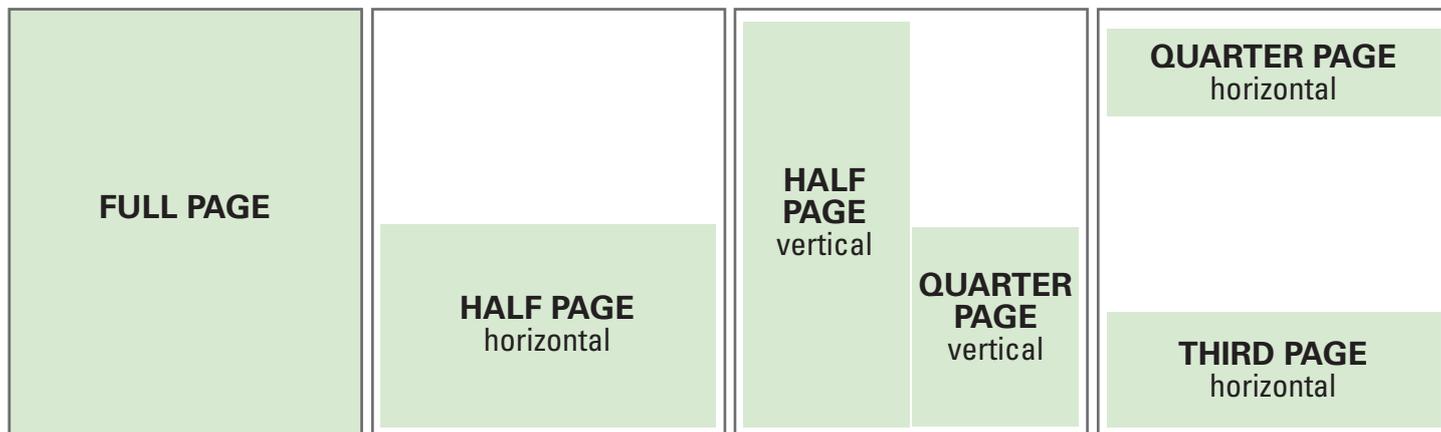
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