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COVER STORY P17



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Forest fire professionals disheartened by findings of 2020 royal commission

JIM BOWDEN

FOREST fire experts have criticised the failure of the 2020 Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements to provide authoritative evidence on proven actions and promised improvements to prevent dangerous bushfires.

Dr Gary Bacon, a former head of Queensland Forestry, says the reaction by well-credentialed and experienced Australian forest fire authorities to the commission's 'interim observations' and 'council assisting's propositions' is one of extreme disappointment.

He says a submission to the royal commission by Victorian-based forestry and business consultant John Cameron, who has held senior positions in operational forestry and as a fire controller in the Country Fire Authority, was "a masterful overview – a model

critique which condemns the royal commission's findings outright.

In his submission, Mr Cameron asserts there has been no forensic examination; the focus has been on 'disaster response' rather than the more effective 'disaster mitigation'.

The commission published a draft proposition by the counsel assisting on September 4 and called for public comment. The emphasis wasn't on bushfire mitigation or fuel reduction. Despite the summer's conflagrations which prompted the commission's establishment, it basically stated that Australia's three levels of government should worry about ... climate change.

Mitigation finally gets a brief mention in the 18th section of the sixth part of the report (public and private land management): "Australian, state and territory governments should review their legislation and processes relating to



John Cameron... insufficient attention to proactive prevention of bushfires.

vegetation management, bushfire mitigation and hazard reduction to ensure there is clarity about the scope for landholders and land managers to undertake bushfire hazard reduction activities; and minimise the time taken to undertake relevant assessments and obtain relevant approvals."

John Cameron says here has been insufficient attention to proactive prevention of bushfires.

"The 2020 Royal Commission fails to deliver authoritative information on

proven actions and promising improvements to prevent dangerous bushfires."

Mr Cameron further asserts that Victoria's appalling bushfire record could have been prevented. His presentation shows that over the last 60 years the southwest Western Australia prescribed burnt area of ca. 9.2% pa contained wildfire losses to 0.9% pa with the loss of only two lives. Victoria prescribed burnt area was 1.6%, had 1.9% wildfire losses and lost 312 lives.

"Victoria's record has further deteriorated over the past 21 years, or roughly the life of the bushfire CRCs," Mr Cameron said.

"Fire is a function of fuel, oxygen and ignition, where fuel is the only variable controllable by forest land managers."

Mr Cameron illustrates that under high fire danger, it is vital to maintain low fuel loads to be able to effectively suppress fires with minimal

“LACK OF FORENSIC EVIDENCE

Cont P 5



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Industry concerned over government's long delay on Queensland timber plan

No decisions yet on an advisory panel ... just 31 days out from state poll

JIM BOWDEN

INDUSTRY in Queensland is concerned about "the delay in details" of the government's native timber action plan as the state prepares for election day on Saturday, October 31.

An advisory panel for the plan – announced in Maryborough nine months ago by the Premier Anna Palaszczuk alongside cabinet members and local MP Bruce Saunders – is yet to be established with the Agriculture Minister Mark Furner saying "the announcement will be made in due course".

Timber Queensland CEO Mick Stephens, who launched the peak industry body's election policy last week, said he was alarmed by the lack of progress on both the study and panel.

"We are currently negotiating with government on these matters," he said. "Native forest resource security is a key priority for industry."

Timber Queensland has advocated a five-point plan that can address the fundamental investment needs of the industry and the role government can take in unlocking this potential: resource security; regional industry development; building and construction sector procurement; environmental recognition; and research and innovation.

By focusing on these areas, government could create an investment environment for industry to generate an



At the launch of the Queensland Parliamentary Friends of the Forest and Timber Industry Network at Parliament House in Brisbane in February last year... James Hyne (then Timber Queensland chair), Bruce Saunders MP Maryborough, Tony Perrett MP Gympie, and Mick Stephens Timber Queensland CEO.

extra \$300 million in output and create more than 2000 additional jobs.

Timber Queensland calls on government to:

- Work with industry to resolve native hardwood resource security issues on state land arising from the South-East Queensland Forest Agreement through development of new long-term supply arrangements.
- Implement a clear plan for development of the industry in North Queensland, including wood supply from state-managed land, crown leasehold land and other private resources such as indigenous forestry opportunities.
- Commit \$6 million to a farm

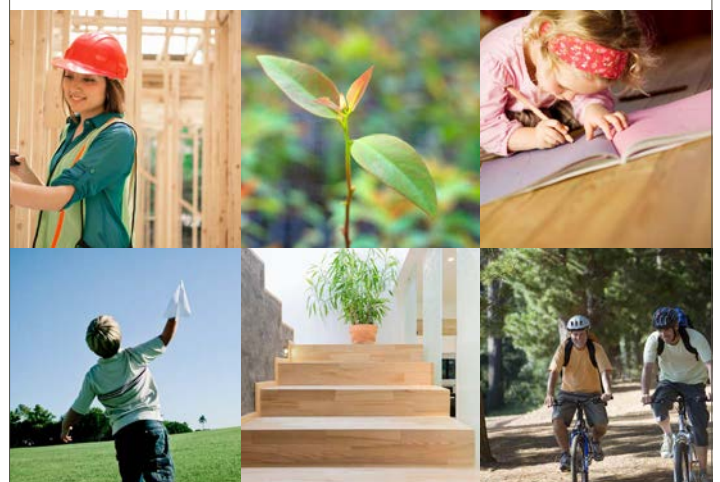
“ TQ 5-POINT PLAN TO ADDRESS INVESTMENT NEEDS

forestry program, to promote private native forestry and tree planting on farms through an education and extension program with landowners, which can generate additional wood supply and related agricultural and environmental benefits.

- Implement local procurement criteria and policies for state-

Cont P 6

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Dave Gover leaves EWPAA to take up new business development role at AKD

VALUED forestry engineer Dave Gover has resigned as CEO of the Engineered Wood Products Association of Australasia to take on the role of business development manager with AKD, Australia's largest softwood sawmiller.

Mr Gover leaves EWPAA on January 15 after five years with the association. From Gore in New Zealand's Southland, he has been involved in the timber industry most of his life.

He studied forestry engineering at the University of Canterbury and then worked as development engineer for Carter Holt Harvey Engineered Wood Products based at the Kinleith plywood mill.



Mr Gover helped commission the Marsden Point LVL plant in New Zealand where he was responsible for establishing process quality control systems,

product testing, and product certification. He moved across the Tasman to Heyfield, Vic, to take up the role of operations manager with ITC in the southern hemisphere's largest hardwood sawmill.

After ownership of the mill transferred to Australian Sustainable Hardwoods, he helped develop and commercialise a range of laminated hardwood products.

“ ENJOYED THE CHALLENGES OF PAST FIVE YEARS

Mr Gover will start with AKD in late January and will be based in Queensland.

AKD, which operates six sawmills processing in excess of 1 million cub m of sawlog a year, recently announced expansion at its Caboolture sawmill north of Brisbane, which will double capacity and see the installation of a new continuous drying kiln to lift drying capacity.

The Colac, Vic-based company owns more than 9000 ha of radiata pine plantations in Victoria and South Australia, three preservation businesses, a softwood chip export operation and multiple log export locations.

Mr Gover thanked the EWPAA, its members and those in the industry he worked with during his time as CEO for their support and encouragement and the challenges they provided over the past five years.

He says he will continue to interact with them, albeit in a modified way, and looks forward to the paths that might take.

Lending changes boost housing

THE federal government has given the rebuilding of the economy a big boost by removing overly restrictive lending requirements for finance lenders, including mortgage finance.

Master Builders Australia CEO Denita Wawn said winding back regulation to a more reasonable position allowed the market more flexibility to approve housing finance.

“We hope this means that banks will reconsider their loan-to-value ratios to help people overcome the deposit gap,” Mrs Wawn said.

“We expect that loan applications for borrowers should also become less cumbersome.”

The Reserve Bank has already flagged that the tighter regulatory provisions have been holding back credit growth.

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From P 2

loss (ie, high fuel loads deliver destructive wildfire).

The 'Sneeuwjagt curve' graph presented by Mr Cameron indicates that if you want to avoid large intense forest wildfires, you must prescribe burn or otherwise fuel reduce at least 8% of the forest estate each year.

"Victoria prescribed burnt about 1.5% on average, and while occasionally lucky, there have been far too many occasions where poor fuel management has resulted in mega wildfires, causing substantial damage to the environment, private property and considerable loss of

VITAL TO MAINTAIN LOW FUEL LOADS



Mitigation a 'must'... Country Fire Authority on duty in Victorian bushfires.

fauna, livestock and human life," he said.

Dr Gary Bacon joins a chorus of complaints about the royal commission from forest fire experts such as Neil Burrows, Rick Sneeuwjagt, Roger Underwood, Phil Cheney, David Packham, Mark Poynter and John Cameron.

"All have considerable gravitas in applied research and practical experience in fire behaviour and control, including developing the successful WA system, and should have been established as a panel of experts, called to give evidence and their submissions tabled as exhibits," he said.

"Instead the Royal Commission turned to academics and white collar hose managers whose knowledge of landscape-sized fires started and ended with the backyard barbecue."

At the conclusion of hearings, the royal commission will adjourn to finalise its report to present to the Governor-General by October 28.

- The Country Fire Authority is a volunteer fire service responsible for fire suppression, rescues and response to other accidents and hazards across most of Victoria. The authority comprises more than 1200 brigades organised in 21 districts, and shares responsibility for fire services with Fire Rescue Victoria, which employs full-time paid firefighters in major urban areas.

Penelope Wensley appointed national soils advocate

FORMER Governor of Queensland and distinguished Australian diplomat Penelope Wensley AC, has been announced as the next National Soils Advocate by Prime Minister Scott Morrison.

Ms Wensley replaces Major General Michael

Jeffery, who is unwell and has stepped aside from the role. She has a long-held interest and substantial experience in natural resource management, environmental and sustainable development matters. She has achieved national and

international recognition for her contribution to environmental policy development and for promoting environmental knowledge and awareness, including as Australia's Ambassador for the Environment.

"As an independent voice

for soil health I will be engaging with stakeholders, listening to a variety of views across Australia and contributing to the National Soils Strategy, which aims to set out the government's priorities for conserving and improving Australia's soils," Ms Wensley said.



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From P 3

led construction projects to support local timber suppliers and manufacturers.

- Commit \$2 million to support a training initiative, to address skills needs and implement recruitment and retention pathways, particularly for the harvest and haulage sector and wood product manufacturing.
- Provide greater recognition of the carbon benefits from forestry to encourage timber planting in state carbon and environmental programs such as the Land Restoration Fund and related schemes (e.g. Emissions Reduction Fund).
- Remove regulatory red tape that impedes timber manufacturing competitiveness, including measures to reduce energy and transmission costs from state-owned utilities as a major cost input.

Queensland represents the largest forested area in Australia, with 51 million ha of native forest representing 30% of total land in the state. The timber industry's footprint is minimal, with selective harvesting on crown forest land representing less than 1/10th of 1% of the total forest area (38,000 ha) and an approximate equal area accessed on private land.

Mick Stephens again emphasised: "Timber production on crown land and on private forest land within permitted forest ecosystems must be undertaken in accordance with regulated codes of forestry practice."



Queensland Premier Annastacia Palaszczuk in Maryborough in November last year commits to establishing a timber industry advisory panel alongside Mick Stephens, CEO, Timber Queensland, and Maryborough MP Bruce Saunders.

In 1999, the state government committed to the South-East Queensland Forest Agreement to promote long-term supply of hardwood resources from plantations and sustainably managed native forests in the region. The government acknowledged the plantation hardwood program was unsuccessful. There has also been inadequate development of the private native forest resource.

As a consequence, the government announced a new 'timber action plan' to extend the continuation of hardwood timber harvesting in Wide Bay Burnett for an additional two years, guaranteeing access up to 2026; establish a timber advisory panel responsible for overseeing and making plans with the industry for the future; and conduct a comprehensive two-year study to identify sustainable future options for timber supply, including on private land, to be completed in 2021.

Timber Queensland

estimates the industry could double in mill door value to more than \$410 million by 2034, and generate an additional 1000 direct jobs in regional areas. Without implementation of these actions, there is a significant risk of industry collapse, mill closures and job losses across the region.

“INDUSTRY COULD DOUBLE MILL DOOR VALUE BY \$410M BY 2034

There is a way forward to provide the resource certainty needed to grow this important regional industry into the future and avert this crisis and Timber Queensland is advocating three key actions:

- Extend state-owned supply arrangements on a long-term basis in consultation with industry. This state supply is necessary to guarantee investment confidence and financing security in new mill plant and associated value

adding and job creation.

- Accelerate government support for private native forestry management incentives and extension activities, to develop a more financially secure and long-term private timber resource.
- Ensure the 'Managing a Native Forest Practice' regulatory code remains a practical and cost-effective tool for landowners to implement good forest management. This code should also be broadened to ensure the full suite of relevant commercial forest types is included.

The Timber Queensland election policy statement noted there was no clear state government plan for further development of the forest and timber industry in north Queensland.

"With the right plan in place, this region has considerable potential to grow and build on the established plantation softwood processing industry and native hardwood resources on leasehold land and other opportunities including indigenous forestry development," Mick Stephens said.

A recent study by the Cooperative Research Centre for Northern Australia found the Top End could contribute a large proportion of the industry's growth through lifting the productivity of the plantation softwood resource and better utilisation of native hardwood resources for domestic processing and value adding.

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SEPT/OCT

Timber Queensland 4-part webinar training program – Understanding AS1684.2.

September 15, 10am-12pm;
September 22, 10-11.30 am;
September 29, 10-11.30 am;
October 6, 10 am-12 pm.
Cost \$200 (inc. gst) \$200, non-members \$250 (inc. gst).
Course must be booked as a whole; sessions are not separately bookable. CPD points available. This is a ticketed course. Register at

www.timberqueensland.com.au

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

16–19: DANA New Zealand Forest Industry Status and Outlook Conference and Field Trip – Napier Conference Centre,

Marine Parade, Napier, New Zealand. Website under construction, for further information contact Conference Organiser Julie Bell admin@dana.co.nz

17-19: Doing Timber Business in Queensland – Marriott Hotel, Brisbane, QLD, Australia.

State conference, workshops and innovation tour organised by Timber Queensland. Visit www.doingtimberbusinessinql.com

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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

POSTPONED – Durban, South Africa.

Possible 2021 conference and field trip - Dates and venue TBA. To register interest as delegate or presenter please email admin@danaevents.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.wcte2021.com/

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

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Supporters and local heroes for ‘Buy Aussie’ coming out of the woodwork

Demand holding up given work in the pipeline and building stimulus programs

THE people and faces supporting the Buy Aussie Timber First framing campaign come from across Australia and all along the supply chain from foresters to carpenters.

Campaign spokesperson Gavin Matthew from the Australian Forest Products Association says showing support for Aussie timber products and local manufacturing really matters right now.

“It makes a real difference and is such a positive for Aussie timber processing employees, the majority who live in regional Australia, to see the support of customers all along the supply chain, from fabrication plants, wholesalers, timber merchants to our newest supporters – apprentice carpenters.”

The campaign has been running for three months and is planned to run another three months. Both digital and print advertising have been very successful to date in building support and getting the message out there.

So far, the campaign has achieved more than 500,000 online advertising impressions across a broad range of internet sites. The campaign now enters its next phase of thanking supporters who have registered on the website www.buyaussietimberfirst.com.au and uploaded



1

- 1/ **Brad Jones... nothing beats home-grown timber.**
- 2/ **Nick White... you've got to support the work and jobs in this country.**
- 3/ **Mark Hull... we've supported Aussie-grown for years.**

positive messages. These supporters, mainly builders and carpenters, are going in a draw to win Buy Aussie Timber First merchandise to wear at their worksites.

Supporting ‘Buy Local’ is an increasingly strong Australian community sentiment and is viewed by the majority of every-day Aussies as a practical way to limit, and recover from, the negative impacts Covid-19 and bushfires have placed on businesses and livelihoods.

“Pleasingly, the demand for timber products in Australia have held up to this point given the existing work in the pipeline, the positive impact of government residential building stimulus programs, and also the support for Aussie sourced and made timber products,” Gavin



2



3

with its associated benefits of prefabrication and flexibility in building for renovations being widely understood by builders.

Campaign partners AKD, Boral, Hyne, OneFortyOne, Wespine and Timberlink are sharing the campaign’s messages of support.

- Brad Jones, builder and carpenter: “We need Aussie Timber because ... nothing beats home-grown timber. Supporting Aussie business keeps Australia strong, and

Matthew said.

“However, it’s not a time for complacency as we still confront major economic challenges in the coming year.”

The campaign acknowledges the ongoing role of timber product imports but realises the customer support Aussie timber need during these unprecedented times.

Buy Aussie Timber First clearly links back to the original ‘Timber Framing, The Ultimate Renewable’ messaging campaign. Compared to other alternate building materials, renewable timber framing’s advantages are clearly recognised across the Australian supply chain,

Aussie timber is the ultimate renewable resource.”

- Bailee Major, builder and carpenter: “We care for the environment and want to reduce our environmental impact in the building industry, and we know Aussie timber is grown and manufactured sustainably.”

- Nick White, timber fabricator, Footers Structural Timber, Adelaide: “You’ve got to support the work and jobs in the country.”

- Mark Hull, timber fabricator, MCM Frame & Truss, Sydney: “We’ve been a supporter of Australian-grown for years.”

Senator key speaker at Responsible Wood meeting in Brisbane

NEW federal government forestry initiatives will be outlined by the Assistant Minister for Forestry Senator Jonno Duniam at the Responsible Wood annual general meeting on October 20.

The AGM will be presented via zoom conferencing or in person at Timber House in Brisbane.

Colloquially termed the 'Timber Hub,' the office is a knowledge centre for the timber industry in Queensland, with Timber Queensland and Responsible Wood co-located in a collaborative space.

The 'hub' is undergoing Responsible Wood project certification with SCS Global Services proceeding to the final stage of project certification.

Responsible Wood will be awarding the coveted Richard Stanton Memorial Award for Excellence in Forest Management or Chain of Custody during the course of the AGM. Always a highlight, 2020 marks the sixth year of the award, paying tribute to the late Richard Stanton, a previous CEO and national secretary of the Australian Forestry Standard Ltd (now Responsible Wood).

Jonathon Duniam, a Liberal Party member of the Australian senate representing Tasmania, was former Tasmanian Premier Will Hodgman's deputy chief of staff, before leaving in 2016 to campaign in the federal election. The son of



Senator Jonno Duniam...update on federal forestry initiatives.

Waratah-Wynyard deputy mayor Mary Duniam, the senator has a long history with the Liberal Party and was formerly president of the Tasmanian division of the Young Liberals.

Attendance at the Responsible Wood AGM will be managed in accordance with Covid-19 social distance guidelines and requirements.

The meeting will be streamed using zoom conferencing technology for those members unable to attend in person. For login details visit www.responsiblewood.org.au

AGM details: Tuesday, October 20. Time: 12 pm (AWST), 2 pm (AEST), 2.30 pm (ACDT) 3 pm (AEDT).

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Major industry shakeup has changed the order of scale for New Zealand log exports

DENNIS NEILSON

FOR several years there has been some stability at the top of New Zealand exporting companies, with Trans Pacific Trading (TPT) and the PFP Group both at or close to being the world's largest log exporters, handling up to 5 million JAS cubic metres of log trade a year.

There were other medium-sized exporters, and a changing group of smaller exporters, but TPT and PFP dominated the trade.

Central to their respective strengths were that TPT had the exclusive log export contract for giant NZ forest owner Hancock Natural Resources Group, with around 165,000 ha of pine plantations under management, and that PFP has the exclusive log export contract for the other giant NZ forest manager Kaingaroa Timberlands with around



1/ Seachange... changing landscape for New Zealand log exporters.
2/ Forest growers filling NZ log export basket.

190,000 ha of pine plantations under management.

Both are in the Central North Island as well as Hancock with assets in Northland, along with other New Zealand forest owners.

TPT also acted as log export

agent for the two HNRG Australian forestry companies in Australia – Hancock Victoria Plantations (HVP) and Hancock Queensland Plantations (HQP) and also for other New Zealand forest owners.

However, a major change has occurred this year which will change the landscape of New Zealand log trading in future.

HNRG has recently terminated its contract with


TPT, and instead has formed a new joint venture company with Rayonier-Matariki Forests, the third largest forest owner in New Zealand with about 120,000 ha of forest under management. This company is mostly owned by US-based Rayonier Inc. We understand that Hancock and Rayonier have had a long standing and close association on forestry matters in the US.

The new JV company is called AVA, and from late August was acting as log export agent of the three Hancock-managed entities in New Zealand – Te Aki, Taumata and OTPP – as well as for HVP and HQP in Australia.


TPT continues to be an important player in the NZ log export market, continuing to act as agent for servicing a number of other forest owners, but with a lower annual log export volume.

With this major shakeup, the possible order of scale of NZ log exporters has changed.

“IMPORTANT PLAYERS IN THE NZ LOG MARKET



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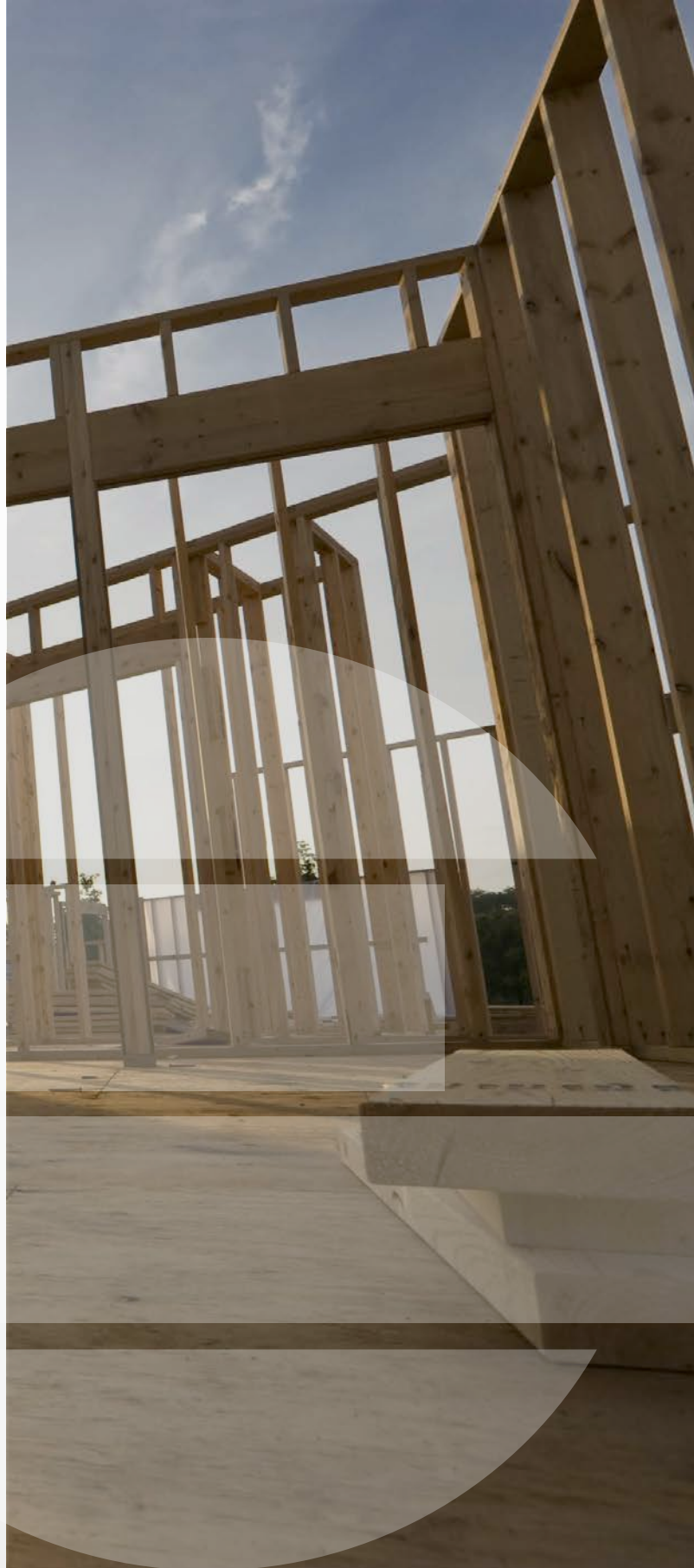
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Video series tells fascinating stories of forestry, design and build supply chains

Captivating imagery and insights into the diverse world of wood

AS the WoodSolutions program continues to embrace innovative ways of communicating, we are pleased to share details of an exciting new series of videos.

For 10 years, our commitment to trying new approaches for engagement has played a vital role in helping to demystify timber, and educate those involved in building-material specification about how it can most effectively be used.

One recent example of this commitment is, of course, our ongoing series of free weekly webinars, which continue to enjoy huge popularity. Now entering the seventh month, the regular 11am AEST Tuesday slot has now firmly cemented its place in the diaries of design and build professionals looking for reliable ways to improve their knowledge.

Meanwhile, our Timber Talks podcast series continues to add new episodes, each with important insights from

“HELPING TO DEMYSTIFY TIMBER FOR ALL THOSE INVOLVED



leading figures from the forestry industry, and the world of construction.

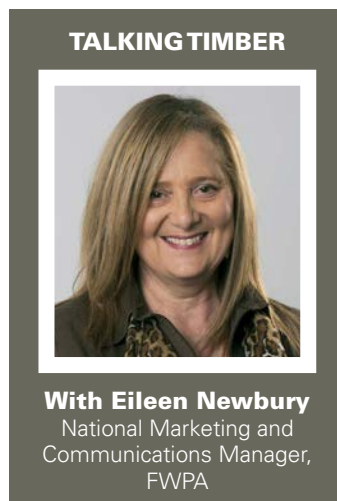
Never content to rest on our laurels however, we recently launched a new suite of communications materials in the form of INFOCUS – a series of digestible videos ranging from eight to 13 minutes in length. The videos, created and hosted by Laurence Ritchie, cost and program estimator with WoodSolutions, feature industry experts translating complex information about the various stages of the forestry, design and build supply chains into easy-to-understand language.

Our sector is filled with wonderful stories, and by telling them in this way we can demonstrate the many advantages of forestry and timber, and ensure viewers understand their importance to Australia. The goal is to create genuine engagement by telling these stories in a personal, relatable and accessible way.

We're so proud of the



Laurence Ritchie... ensuring viewers understand the many advantages of forestry and timber.



With Eileen Newbury
National Marketing and Communications Manager, FWPA

results! They look amazing, with captivating imagery, and fascinating insights into the diverse and complex world that is the forest and wood products industry.

There are currently five videos in the series, the first of which provides insights into the art and science of

growing wood. Viewers will discover how growing trees and producing timber is a complex, finely-tuned process, involving everything from genetics to the latest sensor technology.

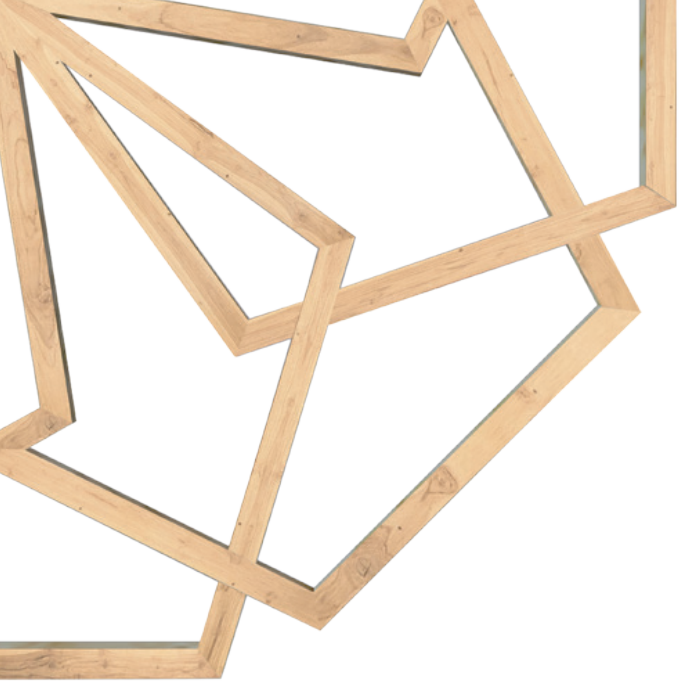
Further videos cover the production of laminated veneer lumber (LVL) and cross laminated timber (CLT), from forest to factory. Viewers are also invited to take a virtual trip to a softwood plantation and sawmill to learn about the creation of structural softwood and to join us as we discuss effective acoustic performance and design.

And we're only just getting started! More videos are in production with topics ranging from future technologies, to wood science, the importance of timber in rural economies, and much more.

They really are an entertaining and informative watch. But don't just take our word for it, as all five videos can be found at the WoodSolutions YouTube channel. If you have any feedback or ideas for future topics, we'd love to hear from you. And please feel free to share the videos among your own networks. Happy viewing!



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More trees, please, to keep momentum of Buy Aussie Made campaign on track

Encouraging investment in long rotation pine plantations a battle we're not winning

IT goes without saying that being in the forest contracting game is being in business.

Okay, yes simple, but why am I saying that? We know that in business you spend money, hopefully, to make a profit, but at the very least to pay your debts, otherwise it's out the door backwards!

Governments are different and spend money to achieve more than economic outcomes, such as social and welfare goals – not tied to business endeavours. Why am I going on about this you may ask? I will come to that.

But first, I have been heartened by the recent Buy Aussie Made campaign run by the Australian Forest Products Association that, as I understand it, has been masterminded by AKD marketing guru Christine Briggs. So well done Christine.

Certainly, here at the sharp end of the timber business, we have seen increased confidence in harvesting trees killed by the summer bushfires. Hyne Timber and AKD have been working extra shifts processing salvage logs. The Buy Aussie Made campaign has assisted in prioritising the sale of this timber into the marketplace. But having salvaged timber from the thousands of hectares of fire-killed plantations, and selling it to building and construction

“INVESTING IN PLANTATIONS MAKES A LOT OF SENSE”



It will be essential that plantation areas lost to the summer bushfires are replanted and new plantations established.

industries ... where to next?

This takes me back to government spending. Are you keeping up? As indicated, governments mostly spend money on other than commercial projects. For example, to assist with employment during the trauma of the coronavirus, a big push has been accelerated on expenditure on infrastructure. So, it's more roads, tunnels, buildings, bridges and so on, facilitated by a federal and state government cash 'splash'.

We have known for some time that encouraging investment in long rotation pine plantations has been a battle the industry just isn't winning. This challenge has only got greater in the wake of the bushfires. So perhaps, as they have done in the past, governments should look at supporting tree planting initiatives to achieve social objectives, and to ensure a long-term supply of softwood timber.

TRUNK LINES



With **CHERYL FORREST**

The alternative is likely to be that all the good work on good wood carried out by the Aussie Made campaign won't count for much.

The clever Forestry Corporation guys who turn up here from time-to-time have tried to explain to me the challenges of investing in pine plantations, saying that most of the money is spent in the first few years, and then you have to wait a couple of decades before any cash appears. Something about discount rates that means making a return on the initial

investment over a rotation length of 25 years is almost impossible.

My point here – if you are still with me – is that, as in the past, government financial input into plantation investment makes a lot of sense from social, regional development and self-sufficiency perspectives. Call it infrastructure development, if you like. Otherwise

plantation rotation lengths will need to be shortened, or intermediate financial returns needed. This isn't out of the question either with a strong appetite around here for additional wood fibre for the Visy mill at Tumut, and an emerging market for wood fibre for biomass to energy production.

It will be essential that plantation areas lost to the summer bushfires are replanted and new plantations established. This will require serious financial inputs from governments, or elsewhere, if we are going to see the continued supply of domestically produced softwood timber into the Australian market.

What do you reckon? I would be interested to hear your views.

Catch up next month ... with perhaps something less intellectually challenging. I need a lie down.

Cheryl

The MARKET Leader...



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Industry experts call for certification of all Australian forests and reserves

LEADING forestry experts have called for the certification of all Australian forests to find out how well forests, including national parks and reserves, are managed.

Consultant Rob de Fégely AM and Ric Sinclair, managing director of Forest and Wood Products Australia, said all forest management in Australia, including conservation reserves and small forest holdings, should be independently certified under internationally recognised sustainability criteria.

Currently, only production forests are certified.

Mr de Fégely is co-chair of the Forest Industry Advisory Council, which has urged the federal government to push for full certification.

Ric Sinclair, who spoke in a personal capacity and not as FWPA chief, reiterated what he said at a major forestry conference eight years ago. Mr de Fégely said the FIAC supported the global independent certification bodies, PEFC, whose Australian body is Responsible Wood, and the Forest Stewardship Council, which had already certified production in native forests and plantations.

Mr Sinclair said during the past 30 years, large areas of forest had been set aside in reserves, with no mechanism to assess whether reserves were achieving the desired conservation outcome.

“FSC and Responsible Wood (previously Australian Forestry Standard) have the potential to certify forest reserve management practices and provide



Rob de Fégely



Ric Sinclair



Gary Featherston



Certification will assist management of National Parks.

confidence that the reserves are being appropriately managed,” he said.

Mr de Fégely said more was known about production forestry than forest area outside production. Certification would inform a whole-of-landscape approach that would include water quality and catchment, biodiversity, invasive pests, weed and disease risk, and the potential effects of future climate and fire regimes.

In Victoria, consultant Gary Featherston of Forest Strategy, who is a qualified forester with extensive experience as a senior public sector manager and is registered to assess both PEFC and FSC certification, said the state government's policy was for VicForests to get FSC certification. “But then they did the analysis (and

found) they couldn't because a lot of the requirements for the standard are provided by the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, not VicForests,” he said in a recent interview.

“LARGE AREAS OF FORESTS HAVE BEEN SET ASIDE IN RESERVES

He said VicForests still could not be FSC certified because it was not an integrated body, not responsible for weed control, recreation or native title ... “all the other things you have to do and DELWP is responsible for all that.”

He said ideally it should be Victoria that gets certified because the state is the owner of the land.

“The other irony is that national parks are not certified,” he said. “A Victorian parliamentary inquiry three years ago found that invasive animals were expanding in number and distribution

across the state,” Mr Featherston said.

Parks Victoria manages a system of more than 100 parks totalling about 3.4 million ha. The inquiry said invasive animals – feral cats, foxes, dogs, horses, rabbits, goats and pigs – were damaging the environment, hurting agriculture and reducing liveability.

“In many cases, invasive animals spread from Crown land onto private land, where they can damage property, kill livestock and consume pasture and crops,” the report said.

“Evidence suggests that these problems are becoming worse in many parts of Victoria.”

Victoria's Legislative Council Environment and Planning Committee is now conducting an inquiry into ecosystem decline in Victoria. It is looking at the decline of the state's biodiversity and ways to restore habitats and populations of threatened and endangered species.

Submissions have now closed, and the report date has been extended from October 30 until April 30 next year.

(Gippsland Times)

Fundings boost for eucalypts increases prospects for viable hardwood industry

Project to develop genetically-improved species for drought-prone regions

MICHAEL SMITH

SIGNIFICANT among a number of endeavours promoting diversification of the 'traditional' forestry sector is the New Zealand Dryland Forests Initiative (NZDFI).

Project manager Paul Millen says the NZDFI (founded in 2008) is a commercially oriented R&D initiative that aims to develop genetically improved, ground-durable eucalypt species suited to the drought-prone, mainly eastern regions of both islands. "Our vision is for New Zealand to be home to a valuable and sustainable hardwood industry based on 100,000 ha of eucalypt forests by 2050," Mr Millen said.

His interest in eucalypts began as a youth when he lived in Canberra for three years. He would go on to study forestry science at the University of Canterbury's School of Forestry, completing his undergraduate degree with honours in 1980.

"I then worked as an environmental and landscape consultant, and had a senior management role with the Marlborough District Council.

"In 1984, my brother [business partner Ash] and I bought a 27-ha property



E. globoidea breeding population on dryland east coast site (planted in 2011). Photo: NZDFI

on Queen Charlotte Drive in the Marlborough Sounds. We spent 25 years planting and regenerating the property, which included small plantations of several eucalypt species. Some of these we now saw on site and sell via our web-based company, Marlborough Timbers."

By the early 2000s, the Millen brothers had identified a potential for naturally durable eucalypts as an alternative to treated radiata pine vineyard posts. Various eucalypt trials in the Marlborough region would follow – together with public and private funding initiatives.

Multi-regional and industry support would later enable the NZDFI to extend the breeding program and demonstration trials to east coast regions of the North Island, with a number of

landowners providing diverse growing sites.

Paul Millen adds that Juken NZ Ltd was the first of the larger forestry corporates to support the NZDFI's R&D program (from around 2010).

"There are trials planted in the company's forests in Gisborne and Wairarapa," he said. "And it's a significant financial supporter of the Specialty Wood Products [SWP] partnership" – which seeks to develop the supply chain and markets for a number of alternative timbers to pine."

The NZDFI became an SWP partner in 2015 and currently contracts the University of Canterbury and the Marlborough Research Centre Trust (MRCT) to undertake much of its durable eucalypt tree improvement work.

Perhaps the most notable advancement of the NZDFI's vision came with the recent announcement of a grant awarded by Te Uru Rakau's One Billion Trees partnership Fund. The aim is to improve the availability of elite nursery stock, with the focus on *E. bosistoana* and *E. globoidea*, selected for their consistent growing performance across a range of sites.

The NZDFI is hoping to produce around 320,000 elite plants in combination with Proseed – the country's leading producer of tree seed – ready for planting in 2021.

Mr Millen says the project will include developing best practice for clonal propagation of *E. bosistoana*; research into mycorrhizal inoculation of nursery stock (to enhance productivity

POTENTIAL FOR DURABLE EUCALYPTS AS ALTERNATIVE TO TREATED RADIATA PINE

Cont P 18

From P 17

and sustainability); and the establishment of new clonal/silvicultural trials and demonstration blocks in targeted regions.

“Plant sales will be launched under the ‘Xylogene’ brand, ensuring their genetics and quality are known, and the breeding program is recognized,” he says. “Growers will, for the

“**DEVELOPING BEST PRACTICE FOR CLONAL PROPAGATION**”



PhD student Yanjie Li uses a coring drill... part of research into predicting wood traits in durable eucalypts. Photo: NZDFI

first time in New Zealand, be able to plant genetically improved durable eucalypts.”

• Next week we talk further with Paul Millen about market prospects for durable eucalypts, biodiversity values, links with Australian researchers, and more.

On the cover: NZDFI project manager Paul Millen with a two-year-old eucalypt tree in Rotoehu Forest, Bay of Plenty. Photo: NZDFI

Answer on crates out of the box

IN the September 17 issue of Timber&Forestry enews we asked readers to identify the purpose of a stack of boxes photographed by co-publisher John Halkett at the CMTF

factory in Campbellton, Sydney.

A few readers were close, but not entirely correct. The boxes are manufactured from solid radiata pine from

Dongwha Australia in Bombala and from AKD sawmills, plus non-structural plywood supplied by Hurford Wholesale.

They are export compliant crates used to transport dogs

on international flights. CMTF also manufactures crates and boxes for other live animal transport, both domestically and international, including racehorses.

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Kia Sportage could scare the opposition

A FEW years ago in Seoul, we were invited to a scarecrow festival and picnic at the Oeam Folk Village in Asan, about 90 km from the capital Seoul.

“You can take a subway train,” offered our host Benjamin Kim. (If all the people named Kim in Korea gathered together they would fill the 340 km subway line many times over).

With 600 people on board, the hourly passenger traffic on the subway, which runs every two minutes, is 18,000 people.

“We’ll take a taxi,” we apologised, knowing this would put a huge dent in our supply of won.

Just a few minutes later it swerved into view – the ‘My Taxi’, a Ray EV, Kia’s flagship city car and a predecessor to the South Korean motor company’s all-electric battery crossover SUV.

With boxy dimensions, the Ray has a unique door layout – the passenger side has sliding door for the rear seats, while the driver’s side has a swing-out door.

The scarecrow picnic was in full swing when we arrived four hours later, in time to enjoy a rice wine, rice cakes and a fresh carrot plucked



Kia Sportage SX...some very smart revisions and a bundle of standard extras.

from the head of a scarecrow.

All this may sound interesting – and it is leading somewhere.

Two weeks ago we drove the winding road to Tamborine Mountain in the Gold Coast Hinterland to visit the annual Scarecrow and Sculpture Festival which celebrates the great lifestyle enjoyed by the residents ... and pays homage to the creative minds behind hundreds of fantastic and frightening stuffed figures. Boogie, boogie!

Our ‘taxi’ this time? The new Kia MY21 Sportage SX complete with a fiery red paint job and aggressive look to fit the occasion, one that sets it apart from the conservative Hyundai Tucson, with which it shares

a chassis.

The 2020 Sportage design has aged well since this generation was first launched in 2016. As such, Sportage is still offered in four grades – the entry-level S, mid-range SX and SX+ and the flagship GT-line.

The SX, the lower mid-grade in the range (once known as the Si Premium) is listed at \$32,990, excluding optional extras. This undercuts the Subaru Forester 2.5i and Honda CR-VTi-S, but is about \$1350 above the Toyota RAV4.

The SX is driven by a 114 kW (6200 rpm) 2-litre naturally aspirated four-cylinder petrol engine with a six-speed manual or torque-converter automatic. Maximum torque is 192 Nm (at 4000 rpm).

Powertrains on both the SX and SX+ are fitted exclusively to a six-speed automatic transmission. Either way, front-wheel drive is standard.

The updated Sportage gets revised front and rear treatments and a unique front bumper incorporating a skid plate, inspired by a chance of some off-road activity.

Besides the visual upgrades, the 2020 Sportage has a number of new driver-assist systems that weren’t available on the previous model, including autonomous emergency braking with pedestrian detection, adaptive cruise control with stop-and-go function, driver attention warning, lane-keep assist, and high-beam assist.

Standard specs are impressive, even on entry-level models. Included are 17-in. alloy wheels, LED DRLs (but halogen headlights), leather-trimmed wheel and shift-lever, hard-wearing cloth seat trim.

Extensive use of high strength steel has given birth to the safest, quietest and most economical Sportage to date – 7.9 L/100km, and, of course, there’s Kia’s seven-year warranty.

Now that might scare off the opposition.

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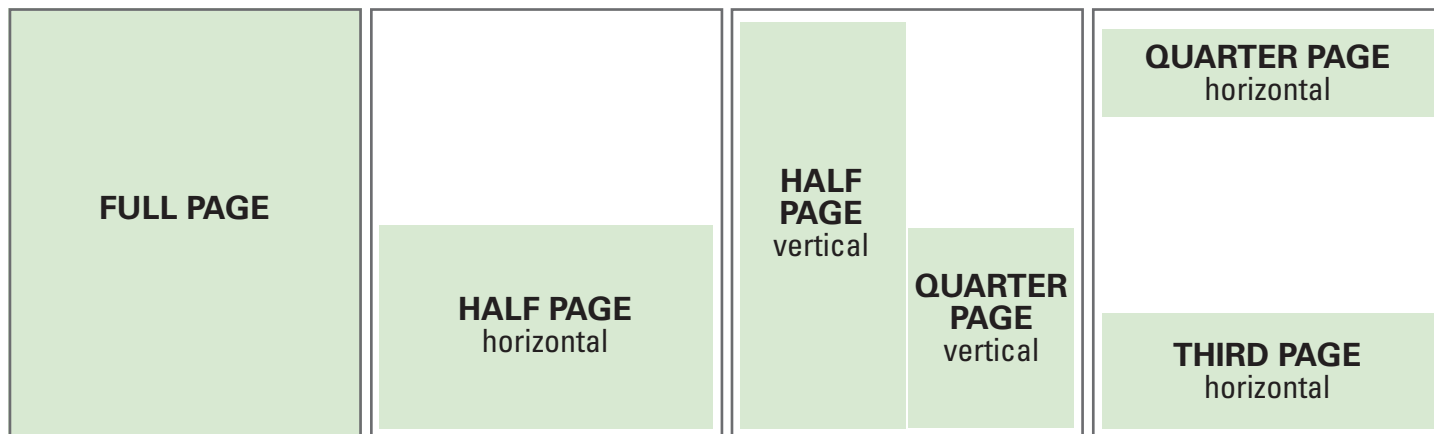
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