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Timber sector answering call to support jobs in the regions

COVER STORY P6

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UK timber producers say time is right for government to ‘build back better’

THE UK Committee on Climate Change has advised the British government to use the coronavirus crisis as a catalyst for reducing the construction industry’s carbon emissions and called for ministers to seize the opportunity to make the industry greener.

“Engineered timber systems can help the UK construction industry to ‘build back better’ by delivering both quality and sustainability assurances,” responds Structural Timber Association CEO Andrew Carpenter.

“We are at a critical crossroads – the world has woken up to the detrimental impacts on the planet,” he says. “Now is the time to invest in building in timber for not only safeguarding the environment and reaching net-zero carbon targets but also to deliver predictability of quality and performance.”

Mr Carpenter said this was a

“NOW IS TIME TO BE INVESTING IN TIMBER”

massive opportunity for the UK to make a sizable step-change and opt for more sustainable building technologies.

He added: “There is a real positivity around our sector. Structural timber systems are now acknowledged as the optimum construction solution in the battle to reduce carbon emissions.”

The association says driven by intelligent and integrated construction solutions, from timber frame and structural insulated panel systems to glue laminated and CLT innovations, the structural timber product range has broadened the appeal. In addition to the sustainability, cost savings, speed of build, faster return on capital outlay, reduction in waste, improved health and safety are just some of the benefits of offsite timber construction.

Andrew Carpenter said the time was right for the construction industry to embrace innovative offsite timber technology to develop better buildings at a rapid rate to overcome the shortfall in housing stock, while delivering



Andrew Carpenter... massive opportunity for construction timbers.

energy efficient buildings in a cost-effective quality manner across all construction sectors.

“Modern structural timber systems are precision-engineered, strong and durable. The build method relies on factory-manufactured timber frame as a means of structural support – carrying the loads imposed by the floors and roofs, before transmitting them to the foundations, which can be built at a lower cost and less environmental impact due to the buildings being lightweight.”

Timber frames currently

account for around three-quarters of all new homes in Scotland, but England is lagging behind with a quarter of all new homes being built out of timber frame.

While other industries have made great strides to update and modernise, the construction industry has been a bit slower out of the starting blocks but now change is happening at pace.

“But constructing in timber is not only about sustainability,” says Mr Carpenter.

“With the messages from the Hackitt Review findings still ringing in our ears, the construction industry desperately needs more accountability surrounding the build process,” he said.

“We fully endorse the findings of Dame Judith Hackitt’s final report, Building a Safer Future, which outlines the ‘golden thread’ – a new vision for the building control process, with the aim of increasing productivity, reducing costs and ensuring quality developments.

Cont P 19



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Election promises long on rhetoric but short on detail for forestry, agriculture

Flaws and fragmentation create further uncertainty as Queenslanders vote

JIM BOWDEN

PEAK Queensland agriculture and forest industry bodies have been left with more questions than answers ahead of this weekend's state election, after political parties vying for public office have announced policies impacting the sector without providing sufficient details.

Concerned that agriculture has not featured strongly during the election campaign, the industry has been the subject of several commitments from political parties addressing high input costs such as water and new and much-needed infrastructure in the last week.

Queensland Farmers Federation president Allan Dingle said while these announcements were welcome, they might be too little too late and with flaws and fragmentation, creating further uncertainty for farmers' long-term productivity and profitability.

Timber Queensland CEO Mick Stephens said: "We have been monitoring the last week of the election with



1/ **Mick Stephens... most in Timber Queensland's regional poll want the next government to do more to grow the industry.**



2/ **Allan Dingle... agriculture is a blind spot rather than a bright spot for Queensland's political parties.**

kept interest, particularly given strong media uptake and interest in our recent regional polling in a number of forest and timber industry seats.

"This polling of 3000 voters in five electorates, undertaken by UComms, found that nine out of 10 people wanted the next government to do more to support and grow the industry."

Both major parties have announced large roading and water infrastructure projects, particularly in north Queensland, which will be a major factor in determining the election outcome with a handful of key marginal seats.

"We welcomed an earlier announcement from the LNP around cheaper energy prices via lower network charges for manufacturing which will assist timber processors and manufacturers," Mr Stephens said.

"We also had a general commitment from both the ALP and LNP to address the issue of rising private

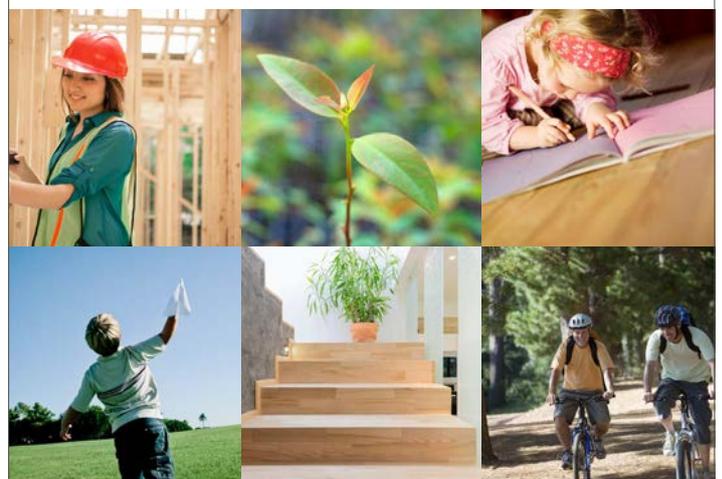
job creation," he said.

"We are only just now about to receive more specific policy positions for the timber industry from the major parties," Mr Stephens said. "These will be analysed and responded to in accordance with our priorities."

Another industry concern has been the absence of any pre-poll announcement by Labor on its acceptance of Timber Queensland's five-point plan for government to create greater resource security and a policy on the

Cont P 10

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“WHAT'S HAPPENING TO 5-POINT PLAN FOR INDUSTRY?”

Craig Taylor appointed new chair of FWPA, brings 30 years of experience

Virtual board meeting announces major refresh of strategic direction

INDUSTRY development strategist Craig Taylor has been elected as chair of the Forest and Wood Products Australia board, following the retirement of incumbent chair John Simon.

Under the FWPA constitution, the chair is elected by fellow directors at the first board meeting following the AGM, which took place on October 22.

Mr Taylor said he was delighted and humbled to be elected.

"I had the good fortune to serve on the board under the leadership of previous chairs Ron Adams and John



Craig Taylor



Christine Briggs



Nick Roberts

Simon, and plan to use that experience to help continue the important work of FWPA," he said.

"I look forward to working with fellow directors and industry stakeholders on the upcoming independent performance review and the review of our strategic plan,

so that we can continue to provide relevant and effective services to the industry and government."

Craig Taylor has more than 30 years of management and consulting experience across primary industries, sustainable resource management, supply chain management and sales and marketing, mostly in the plantation forestry sector.

As director and principal of The Fifth Estate Consultancy, he provides strategy, business development and investment advice to businesses in the resources and primary production sectors.

In addition, Mr Taylor has provided strategy development and investment advice to some of the largest forest and wood products companies in Australia and New Zealand. He is a member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors and the Institute of Foresters of Australia.

"Craig is a long-time supporter of FWPA and advocate for the forestry industry," FWPA managing director Ric Sinclair said.

"His passion and enthusiasm for the sector are admirable, and we are excited for Craig to lead the

board through FWPA's next chapter, as we undertake a major refresh of our strategic direction."

Mr Taylor's appointment comes following the retirement of John Simon, following five years in the role and eight more as director. Also departing the board following the AGM are Jim Henneberry, chair of the audit, finance and risk committee, and Brian Farmer, chair of the growers research advisory committee.

"I would like to acknowledge John, Jim and Brian for their long-standing commitment to FWPA and their contributions to the sector more broadly," Mr Sinclair said.

"Each has played an instrumental role in helping to drive countless FWPA successes and achievements," he said. "Their work has made a lasting, tangible and hugely positive impact on the forest and wood products industry, and we thank them for it."

During the AGM proceedings, members re-elected Christine Briggs, national marketing manager, AKD, to the board, and Nick Roberts, until recently CEO and executive director of the Forestry Corporation of NSW. Mr Roberts was an FWPA director from 2009 to 2012.

"Both bring invaluable skills and knowledge to the table, which will support our ongoing mission of growing the market for forest and wood products, increasing productivity, and ensuring positive environmental and social outcomes."



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Coveted Richard Stanton Award won for carbon capture and fauna research

Record nominations, three finalist merits presented by Responsible Wood

SUSTAINABILITY manager for Tasmanian forestry company and land owner Forico Pty Ltd Simon Cook has won the 2020 Richard Stanton Memorial Award for Excellence in Forest Management.

The award and trophy, presented remotely during the Responsible Wood AGM on October 20, recognises the life of a man devoted to the forest industry in Australia and internationally. Richard Stanton was former CEO of Australian Forestry Standard (now Responsible Wood).

Simon Cook, leader of a five-member sustainability team, has worked tirelessly to initiate and drive sustainable forest management activities in areas of biodiversity, carbon and cultural values.

Mr Cook was nominated for the award by Ann La Sala, a member of the Forico sustainability team.



1/ **Tasmanian devil... disease research has attracted global attention.**

2/ **Simon Cook... commitment to sustainable forest management.**



Responsible Wood CEO Simon Dorries reflected on Mr Cook's sustained commitment to sustainable forest management and certification standards:

"Simon's involvement with the Tasmanian devil facial disease research, with CSIRO on natural carbon, and working in conjunction with Reconciliation Tasmania in developing a Reconciliation Action Plan received high acclaim from the judging panel."

Research on the Tasmanian devil tumour disease with potential implications for cancer treatment in humans has attracted global attention.

Working with CSIRO and other industry partners, Mr Cook has helped develop a framework and methodology for assessing and gathering data related to natural carbon. This developing area will have significant implications for forest sustainability globally as foresters seek to develop a common language

and understanding in this emerging area.

Also, Mr Cook is working with stakeholders to improve relationships with Tasmania's Aboriginal community, sharing knowledge on land management techniques, protection of cultural sites, access to natural forests and potential employment opportunities.

With the largest number of nominations since the award was established five years ago, Responsible Wood, for the first time, presented three finalist merits. These went to Richard Kirk of Kirk Architects for his commitment to certified timber on the acclaimed Mon Repos Turtle Centre in Queensland, the DAF Salisbury Research Facility for pioneering work in developing new product solutions using certified timber, and Anthonino Stonjek of AKS Forest Management Services for his commitment to the implementation of certification standards.



Hyne Timber Glue Laminated Structure at Mon Repos Turtle Centre, Queensland

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AKD answers call to support job creation in regional communities

REGIONAL employer AKD has answered the call to support Australian job creation announcing more than 20 new apprenticeship positions and new graduate positions in 2021.

The challenges of this year are well known and have impacted on many communities. AKD has always placed the development of its people as a high priority and this year believes it is even more important to create additional opportunities to support communities.

This commitment is consistent with the company's buy Australian made campaign, as customers are asked to support Australian jobs.

AKD human resources general manager Clark Rodger explains: "The introduction of these new apprentices is one way that we can do more, and we encourage other businesses to consider what opportunities they may be able to provide."

Mr Rodger added: "In addition to good quality people, we need trade and tertiary qualified people to drive our business forward. If we create or develop a pipeline of skills and capabilities into our organisation, at the same time as reinvesting in our existing people, then we are effectively investing in our future success



John Sugar... joining the apprenticeship team at AKD Colac.

as a whole organisation." AKD already employs 35 apprentices under its National Apprenticeship Program, with many past participants now holding trade, supervisor, and management positions throughout the company.

The 20-plus newly-created opportunities in 2020 complements AKD's existing Gap Year Program for school leavers. Offering trades in electrical, saw doctoring, wood machining and fitting and with sites across Victoria, NSW and Queensland, the company is offering career opportunities which will see some individuals gain experience across a number of sites and locations.

Clark Rodger says the opportunity to gain experience and exposure to multiple sites or functions is invaluable in anyone's career development.

"We want to continue to see our team build in its diversity, including in gender and culture," he said.

On the cover: Ready for work at AKD Tumut... apprentice fitter Tahlia Owers.

OCTOBER

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

OCTOBER 2021

11-14: IFA/AFG national conference 'Your Forests, Our Future' – *Country Club Tasmania, Launceston,*

TAS, Australia. Open to forest scientists, forestry professionals and forest growers. Call for abstracts and sponsorship opportunities will be released in coming months. Contact Institute of Foresters of Australia. Visit www.forestry.org.au or phone (03) 9695 8940.

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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 more information see: www.wcte2021.com/

25-29 : B C Wood Global Buyers Mission – *VIRTUAL EVENT.* Live virtual event to meet and interact with pre-qualified international buyers from around the world. The event to find new sources of high quality, competitively priced Canadian wood products, while letting you reconnect with current suppliers. For more information go to: <https://bcwood.com/events/global-buyers-mission/>

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

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Bushfires: why not simply implement findings of the previous 58 inquiries?

Focus on response rather than prevention won't solve the problem

THE professional association representing some 1000 forest scientists, researchers and forest professional managers has called on the Bush Fire Royal Commission to simply audit and implement the last 58 inquiries, reviews and royal commissions on the issue if it wants to see meaningful forest management in Australia.

On the eve of the Bush Fire Royal Commission bringing down its findings to address the causes of the tragic Black Summer 2019-20 fire season, the Institute of Foresters (IFA/AFG) says the root cause of the issue was the need to address appropriate land and fire management techniques.

The royal commission report has been presented to the Governor-General David John Hurley and is now

“LARGER SUPPRESSION AIRCRAFT NOT THE ANSWER



“Calls for investment in more and bigger aerial water bombers rather than in effective pre-emption of bushfire damage is the classic “demonstration of misinformed people making foolish proposals. Every experienced fire fighter in Australia (and in the USA and Canada) knows that water bombers can never control an intense forest wildfire.” – Roger Underwood, historian and author who was recognised for decades of service to forestry and bushfire management in Western Australia with a Member of the Order of Australia.

with the federal and state governments for review, and is expected to be tabled on Friday.

IFA/AFG president Bob Gordon said while climate change was a factor influencing fire weather, it was not the sole reason why Australia's Black Summer wildfires burnt across multiple

states and territories, burning nearly double the area of any previous major wildfires in a fire season.

“Arrangements that continue to focus on bushfire response rather than bushfire prevention accept that Australia will continue to have major wildfires, needing to spend more taxpayer funds with

little difference in outcomes,” Mr Gordon said.

“Thus, this continues to threaten our communities and devastate our ecosystems,” he said.

“The IFA/AFG hopes the royal commission recommends arrangements that protect our ecological values, particularly the vegetation which supports our unique wildlife.”

Mr Gordon said wildfires involved an interaction between fuel, weather, terrain, and climate. The state of the fuel was largely a product of land management. Fuel was also a critical environmental factor, and much of Australia's natural environment was adapted and

Cont P 9

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From P 8

reliant on the appropriate type of fire.

“Changing the state of fuel across the landscape, in a way that sustains biodiversity, also reduces the severity of wildfires,” Mr Gordon said.

“Achieving this requires well-trained and locally knowledgeable land managers. Indigenous Australians did this for at least 60,000 years and we need to work with them to reintroduce large scale landscape fire management regimes.

Mr Gordon said the ecological disaster of the 2019-20 wildfires was widely acknowledged.

The IFA/AFG says better land management across tenures, prescribed burning to reduce forest fuel levels across the landscape, supported with rapid first attack fire suppression, could have reduced the ecological disaster.

“Aircraft are important in fire suppression for intelligence gathering, transport and suppression,” Mr Gordon said. “However, employing larger fire suppression aircraft was not the answer.

“Globally we see greater use of very large aircraft in fire suppression. They look wonderful on television but are not always cost effective.

“We are hoping the royal commission will recommend independent cost-effective analysis of aircraft in comparison while increasing the investment in qualified ground base firefighters, and mitigation measures such as fire line maintenance.”

The Victorian IGEM recognised the importance of the timber industry in the provision of fire suppression machinery and skilled operators. It is expected that the royal commission will do similarly.

Mr Gordon said in 2005, the Council of Australian Government released its report on the National Inquiry on Bushfire Mitigation and Management which investigated the 2003 wildfires.

“This COAG inquiry had a vision for 2020 which is still relevant today but unfortunately still a vision and not a reality,” Mr Gordon said.

The COAG inquiry recommended that national principles for wildfire



Bob Gordon... poor bushfire management continues to threaten our communities and devastate our ecosystems.

mitigation and management were needed; and agreed set of wildfire indicators of good practice, together with an assessment against the national principles would provide a consistent framework for review and reporting.

As a consequence, National Bushfire Policy Statement for Forests and Rangelands was produced by the Forest Fire

Management Group (FFMG which included IFA members) and was endorsed by COAG in 2011.

The IFA's Position Statement for the Role of Fire and its Management in Australian Forests and Woodlands is consistent with this national policy statement.

IFA and AFG look towards this royal commission being as strategic as the COAG review, promoting ways for the federal government to hold states and territories to account for their progress towards meeting the 14 goals within the National Bushfire Policy Statement for forests and rangelands.

“We need to prepare current and future generations to do a better job of protecting land and water resources, biodiversity and our livelihoods,” Mr Gordon said.

Small grants applications open

COORDINATOR of the Responsible Wood small grants program Megan Graham has been encouraged by the response of community groups connected to certified forests.

Launched in August, the program is aimed at supporting local communities connected to Responsible Wood certified forests around Australia.

According to Ms Graham, community groups will need to apply before November 15.

Following the application process an announcement of successful applicants is expected in late November with projects to be completed by the end of May 2021.

Applications will only be accepted from local community groups, not-for-profit organisations, registered charities or schools or education institutions.

For more information visit smallgrants@responsiblewood.org.au



Request for Proposals (Proposal No. FC2003)

FCNSW Softwood Plantations Division

Bathurst, Bombala, Grafton, Tumut and Walcha Management Areas

Provision of Plantation Services: Planting, Silviculture, Fire Services, Fire Tower Observers and Ground-Based Herbicide Application

This Request for Proposals for provision of Plantation Services involves 20 work parcels across FCNSW Plantation management areas at Bathurst, Bombala, Grafton, Tumut (including Moss Vale and Tallaganda) and Walcha. The services offered are Planting, Silviculture, Fire Services, Fire Tower operation and Ground Based Spraying. Proponents are encouraged to submit proposals that span services within a management area and across management areas. Work will be awarded for commencement from 1 April 2021. Term is 3 years (with extension option of +2 years).

To obtain the RFP document and lodge submissions, visit the NSW Government eTender website <https://www.tenders.nsw.gov.au/> **Submissions close 18 November 2020.** For further information, contact Julie Lucato on 0429 546 520 or Julie.Lucato@fcnsw.com.au

From P 3

environment to generate new investment in the regions.

Allan Dingle said water was a key enabler for Queensland's agriculture sector. This includes farm forestry on private land.

He said the agriculture sector had been reaching out over the past year to engage with all sides of politics, with the industry preparing detailed election platform documents, policy position papers, scientific reports and roadmaps, but the contents of many of these documents remained unanswered.

"Instead, agriculture is a blind spot rather than a bright spot for Queensland's political parties, with piecemeal approaches and policy holes that could have been shored up and left watertight with greater industry consultation," Mr Dingle said.

QFF council members and Timber Queensland have echoed similar concerns regarding the need for a more comprehensive policy approach to both agriculture and forestry.

Timber Queensland has welcomed the LNP election policy commitment for cheaper energy for manufacturing.



Annastacia Palaszczuk and Deb Frecklington ... elbowing their way through to Saturday's election. Photo: Sky News

A plan to supercharge Queensland's manufacturing industry by delivering cheaper electricity is high on the LNP policy platform, a move Opposition Leader Deb Frecklington says will secure the jobs of 163,000 Queenslanders.

Ms Frecklington said more than 16,000 Queensland manufacturing businesses would save around 20% cent on their electricity costs under the LNP scheme.

Premier Annastacia Palaszczuk has boasted her

record on coronavirus claiming hard border closures saved Queensland lives and thus the state's economy, while the opposition leader laid the blame of more than 200,000 unemployed at the feet of the premier.

Sky News debate yesterday between both leaders revealed 53% of undecided voters said they were more likely to vote for Labor after the debate. Both Palaszczuk and Frecklington have declared they are fighting for majority government and would not engage in any deals should either face a minority.

Robbie Katter, leader of Katter's Australian Party, and Greens MP Michael Berkman, hold the key to who will be the next premier. Both know

if power is in the balance they will have the numbers to get either party over the line.

But few industry analysts we know will make a definite call on Saturday's outcome.

As a peanut farmer and Nationals premier once said: "We do things differently in Queensland. Don't you worry about that".

And, referring to the silent majority in the regions, former long-standing Labor Premier Peter Beattie – who has been severely critical of Palaszczuk's border closures – says don't underestimate a swing at the polls: "When Queensland electors make a combined swing, it's a bloody huge and unexpected one."

“WHEN QUEENSLAND SWINGS IT SWINGS BIG

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Log shortages? Why not ship out the logs we've got? Yes, idiocy abounds

And we're busting a boiler down here salvaging fire-killed timber

CAN someone help me out here, please? Really what is going on?

We have all been working like Trojans down here to salvage as much of the fire-killed pine plantations in southern NSW that we can. Plus, I know that at the Hyne Tumbarumba sawmill and at AKD Softwoods they have been working extra shifts to process the salvaged logs into sawn timber.

The sawmills have done a sterling job, now coming to an end as I understand it. Some logs are showing a significant amount of blue stain in the sapwood ... spring has arrived.

So, we are coming to the conclusion of the massive salvaging operation to harvest and process the tens of thousands of hectares of radiata pine plantation killed during the summer bushfires. Sure, some of these plantations will be replanted, and already the Forestry Corporation boys and girls are on the job. However, the hard reality is, as we are all well aware, over recent years new plantation establishment has well and truly stalled,

“PLANTINGS WELL AND TRULY STALLED”



Can you believe it? Logs destined for export at Portland, Victoria... logs that could be redirected to domestic sawmills.

and even if some burnt areas are replanted there will be a substantial gap in log supplies to sawmills for years to come.

Tough enough being a forest contractor I reckon, but I wouldn't want to own a sawmill. So, in the face of impending log shortages, it is completely staggering to me that substantial quantities of pine logs outside the southern NSW supply zone are going offshore.

Hyne Timber in particular is seeking government support for an initiative to see logs earmarked for export processed at its Tumbarumba sawmill. Exporting these logs in the face of imminent local log shortages could risk hundreds of jobs along the timber supply chain that are vital to help the Australian economy recover from the summer bushfires and the Covid-19 pandemic.

It has been reported that more than 400,000 cub m

NSW from distant plantations is the challenge ... too expensive to freight to Tumbarumba as the additional cost cannot be passed on to customers who then most likely will turn to imported timber or alternative materials.

We understand Hyne Timber has applied through the NSW Government Bushfire Industry

Recovery Package for freight subsidy assistance. We hope that this application is successful.

Again, to my mind, it makes little sense to export pine logs when the local industry, having worked successfully through the salvaging of fire-killed plantations, may well be looking down the barrel of a limited future log supplies, and the prospect of serious job losses.

So, yes, replant fire-killed plantations – absolutely, but please also continue to support the sawmilling industry in southern NSW by redirecting logs from export markets to domestic processing. Doing so will maintain regional businesses and critically a substantial number of jobs.

Hard to disagree with this argument I say, what do you think? Catch you again next month.

Cheryl

TRUNK LINES



With **CHERYL FORREST**

of plantation pine logs could be made available to Hyne at Tumbarumba in coming years. So why are these logs being exported when they could be processed in Australia? Baffling indeed!

Hyne Timber believes that redirecting logs from export markets into the Australian economy will maintain job security for hundreds of people. I would've thought that it is a compelling case for support from state and federal governments.

Freight costs into southern

The MARKET Leader...



Komatsu 875 & 895

Komatsu Forest have maintained a very strong market position with their two most popular forwarders being the Komatsu 875 (16 tonne) which really compliments the 895 (20 tonne).

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Woodchat: new business models to inspire investment in trees on farms

Business models show mutual financial, social and environmental benefits

THE latest episode of the Forest and Wood Products Australia podcast series WoodChat focuses on the development of new business models that could see areas of Australian farmland utilised for planting trees.

An estimated 500,000 ha of new softwood plantations are required to meet the increased demand forecast for domestic timber-housing markets by 2045. Local and export demand for hardwood timber has also been growing strongly. However, a lack of new investment in plantations could see Australia relying on an increasing amount of timber imports in the future.

Now, a team of researchers has developed and tested a number of new business models for commercial tree plantations, which could yield mutual financial, social and environmental benefits for the timber industry, rural landowners and investors.

“INVESTMENT NEEDS TO BE BASED ON SOUND REGIONAL PLANNING



Professor Rodney Keenan... research leader.

The models were designed in collaboration with industry and rural landowners after analysing landowner needs and their past experiences with tree investment, and they consider the positive impacts of trees on carbon, biodiversity and water.

Listeners will hear from Professor Rodney Keenan of the University of Melbourne, School of Ecosystem and Forest Sciences, who led the research.

Professor Keenan said the project found tree investment needs to be based on sound regional planning to ensure the right tree species were planted in the right places, to generate the desired benefits.

“Models need to be built on mutual understanding, trust and



Dr Nerida Anderson... landholder assessment.

During this episode, hosts Georgia and Sam also speak to Dr Nerida Anderson, research fellow at The University of Melbourne School of Ecosystem and Forest Sciences, who conducted a landowner assessment involving interviews and surveys as part of the project. In addition, listeners will hear from Tony Price, CEO of major industry sponsor Midway Ltd, about his involvement with the initiative.

The project was funded by the forestry industry and the federal government and managed by FWPA.

This episode is the latest in the WoodChat podcast series, and follows topics including building safely with timber in bushfire-prone areas, and new technology that’s supporting the prediction of wood quality in standing trees.

WoodChat represents FWPA’s ongoing commitment to engaging ways of communicating news and innovations to the industry and beyond. Each episode includes in-depth conversations with experts on recent discoveries and current initiatives.

You can listen to WoodChat on SoundCloud and iTunes.

TALKING TIMBER

With Eileen Newbury
National Marketing and Communications Manager, FWPA

long-term commitment among landowners, the timber industry and other stakeholders,” Professor Keenan says.

It is hoped outlining these benefits will inspire and enable new partnerships between forest growers and the agricultural sector.



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Timber technology goes 'hybrid' at Frame

JUST as technology has revolutionised the use of timber in construction, it is revolutionising the way attendees can participate in the most important global timber and mass wood event on the calendar.

'Timber Offsite Construction' organised by Frame Australia, has made a vital contribution to the evolution of engineered wood in construction for 22 years.

Next year, in June 2021, more people than ever before will have access to this unique industry event through an innovative 'hybrid' format.

Combining 'in-person' local presentations and 'live streaming' international speakers, the event will deliver the best of both worlds to local attendees and

global participants alike.

"We are using the latest in communications technology to present the latest in timber technology," says conference founder Kevin Ezard.

"In 2021 we will look to the future – a net zero carbon future for the built environment – with the conference theme Timber & Technology: The Zero Carbon Future.

This aligns with the World Green Building Council statement this month that "the built environment sector can provide powerful solutions to the climate crisis".

The council noted that buildings are responsible for 39% of global energy-related carbon emissions and that building stock is expected to double by 2050.



Kevin Ezard... latest communications technology.

"The time to act is now," the council said. "To achieve net zero targets by mid-century and sustain predicted growth and urbanisation, we must decarbonise the whole lifecycle of our built assets – buildings and infrastructure."

Speaker session topics will cover building design influences,

construction productivity, and manufacturing and technology, featuring global specialists in their fields.

A popular feature of previous events, the building project panels will adapt to the new format to facilitate lively interaction. Comprising developers, architects, engineers, builders and suppliers, the panels will discuss 'real-life' challenges and solutions across a range of innovative timber and mass wood projects.

Timber Offsite Construction 2021 will be hosted at Crown Promenade, Melbourne, on June 22 and 23.

Registrations for in-person and virtual participation open in February 2021. Visit www.timberoffsiteconstruction.com

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Slowbalisation: industry must advance technologically to weather Covid storm

Malaysian timber industry needs to transform its business operations

ECONOMIES around the world are no longer operating in a benign environment where global trade was somewhat predictable.

“Since the Covid-19 pandemic, business-related uncertainties have been hurting profit margins as globalisation gives way to slowbalisation,” said Malaysian Timber Council deputy CEO Wong Kah Cane at an Economic Affairs webinar in Kuala Lumpur this month.

Wong says the Malaysian timber industry, which benefited immensely from globalisation over three decades, needs to transform its business operations to one that centres on digitalisation, technology, innovation, and branding, if it is to maintain its stake in the nation’s economic pie.

The webinar, organised by the MTC, also featured award-winning economist Lee Heng Guie as guest speaker. Lee is the executive director of the Socio-Economic Research Centre, the think tank of the Associated Chinese Chambers of Commerce and Industry of Malaysia.

Lee said Malaysia’s economy was moving towards the early stages of the recovery phase after having stabilised from the initial “demand and supply shocks” on the onset of the pandemic.

Lee, in his presentation titled ‘How the Timber Industry Survives The Covid-19 Crisis?’, said though



Lee Heng Guie... Malaysia’s economy has stabilised from the initial demand and supply shocks, on the onset of the pandemic.

global economic recovery was under way, the strength of recovery was critically dependent on the future path of the virus, how well it is being contained and the availability of a vaccine.

“Though global recovery was under way, it is uneven as there are uncertainties surrounding the phase and strength of recovery,” Lee said.

“The downside risks continue to outweigh the upside risks. When we track high frequency indicators like Global PMI for the manufacturing and services sectors, retail spending and labour market conditions, there are signs of stabilisation and early recovery but the rising numbers of Covid-19 cases are a cause for concern.”

In terms of global inflation and interest rates, Lee said central banks all over the world would keep interest rates ultra-low or even at a negative until the economy got back on track. He also

outlined major risks that may dampen global recovery – the US Presidential Election on November 3; renewed lockdown measures worldwide; premature withdrawal of fiscal stimulus and the accommodative mode of central banks; sudden reversal of investors’ positive optimism towards the stock market; the US-China trade tensions; and geopolitical upheavals.

“MALAYSIAN INDUSTRY AT EARLY STAGES OF RECOVERY

He also added that it was crucial to watch the path of the US dollar as the currency has a major impact on global financial markets and industries. He said central banks around the world had a substantial amount of the Greenback in their foreign exchange which would influence financial flows and asset returns.

Lee added that ASEAN will continue to consolidate its economy though many member countries have slumped due to the pandemic.

“However, there are rising stars as Vietnam, Indonesia and the Philippines are showing great economic potential,” he said.

“Malaysia’s GDP will decline by -4% this year with an anticipated rebound in growth of 5% in 2021. However, should the number of Covid-19 cases spike and lead to a wide-scale targeted Conditional/Enhanced Movement Control Order, the GDP is expected to further decline between -4.5% and -5% this year.”

Lee said the pace and strength of economic recovery would also depend on the confidence of consumers, households, and businesses as to how well the Covid-19 virus was being contained and how soon a vaccine would be available.

Lee said the timber industry, which was operating even during the MCO, had benefited from the increase in demand for home improvement-based products. However, he says it was more important for the timber-based manufacturers to focus on long-term gains rather than the short-term demands. Lee added that it was vital for industry players to produce more sustainable products and incentives should be provided to

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encourage the manufacturing of such products.

He also highlighted the need to promote the adoption of digital technologies that focus on improving data access and using Big Data analytics to strengthen business operations.

Wong said timber industry players were not ready to embrace IR4.0 or digitalisation as much as they should which prompted MTC to conduct a study on ICT readiness among timber-based companies.

MTC had commissioned SERC to conduct the study and preliminary findings showed that only 22% had placed digital technology as a top priority for growing their business while 57% considered innovation and digital technology as important but not urgent. Though these manufacturers agreed on the benefits of e-commerce, only 25% had integrated it into their business model.

It was also found that there was a digital gap between the founder and successor as most of these timber-based companies were family-owned. Wong said the lack of a succession plan that involved technological advancements was devoid in these companies and this



The Malaysian timber industry has benefited from the increase in demand for home improvement-based products.

was a turn off for the younger generation that does not see the need to continue the family business.

Factors such as automation, digitalisation, knowledge talent, digital marketing and branding were not being given enough consideration, said Wong, who added that Malaysia needs to keep up with competitors from Vietnam, Indonesia, and the Philippines.

Wong added that MTC has carved out a three-year business transformation plan from 2021 to 2023 that centres on business continuity.

“The timber industry is considered a manufacturing sector and yet you can hardly find engineers in the factories. The middle management in these companies must have the right talent pool to elevate the operation processes to boost growth and business for the timber sector,” said Wong.

He added that in the past,

“**FOCUSING ON LONG-TERM GAINS RATHER THAN SHORT-TERM DEMANDS**”

one of the main ways of securing businesses was by visiting trade fairs but with the pandemic, this was no longer possible.

“We are now looking into online exhibitions. However, we are not being overly ambitious at the moment as not all timber-based products can be taken onto e-commerce platforms but at least, we can prepare these companies to showcase smaller products online,” he said.

Wong said MTC is willing to help manufacturers who are keen on transforming their business operations.

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Rugby golden oldies kicking goals for charity

TIMBER&Forestry enews has financially supported the Australian Police Golden Oldies/Wallopers Rugby.

The Wallopers and their sponsors, including enews, proudly support the Police Legacy which supports families of those officers who have lost their lives or suffered debilitating injuries while serving.

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Wallopers... serving and retired state and federal police officers share a passion for rugby.

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The Wallopers team members, committee and association all have a common bond – serving the community, fulfilling charitable donations and proudly representing the Australian Policing affiliation in the wonderful game of Rugby Union.

The Wallopers look forward to a year of fun, fitness, family, friends and, most importantly, community support.

From P 2

The STA firmly believes that quality assurances should be an end-to-end process and that competency and compliance are crucial in achieving excellent standards across all construction projects.

Over the last four years, the association has been going through a period of intense transformation.

“A few might say this was a risky strategy, as we made some bold decisions that could have polarised some of our members,” Mr Carpenter said.

“However, our sector by its very nature is innovative and when we outlined our plans surrounding quality,



Structural timber systems are now acknowledged as the optimum construction solution in the battle to reduce carbon emissions.”

competency and compliance – our members understood the benefits and quickly got on board.”

He added: “We are now building on the UK’s outstanding heritage – timber architecture is having its

moment; however, it is going to be far greater than that. It is a trend that has major potential for the future of building design and development.

“Continuous technical developments and the need for sustainable management of our resources are further reasons why timber systems are proving to be the material of choice for the decade.

“Now is the time for timber to not only ‘build back better’ but also greener. Now is the time to invest in building in timber; for the prosperity of the country and its residents, for employment, for the economy and – ultimately – for safeguarding the environment, today and tomorrow.”

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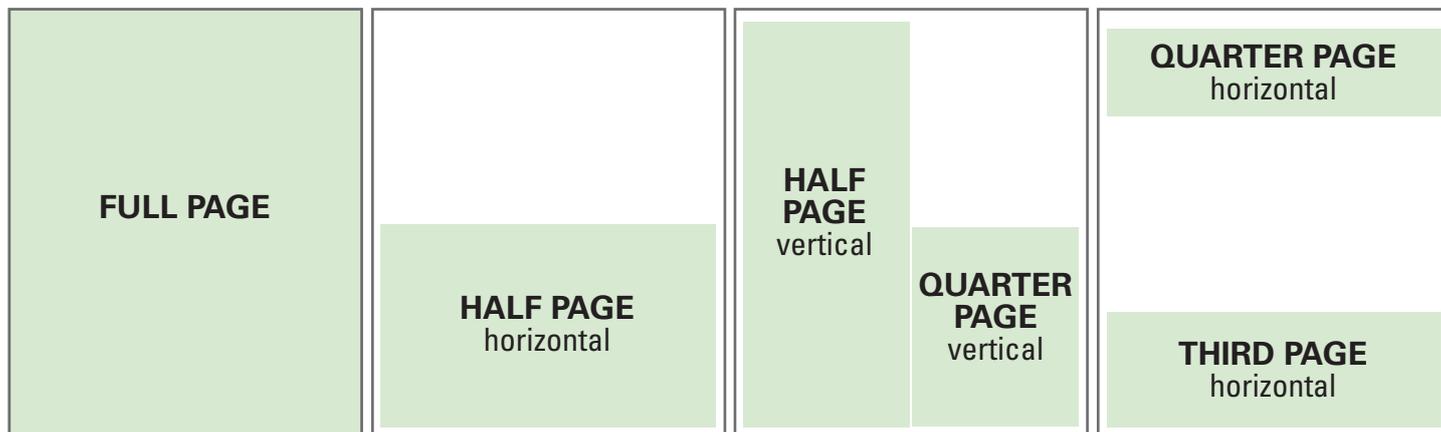
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