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## Gottstein project: utilising underutilised timber

COVER STORY P12



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# Timber industry sad as 'forestry friend' Joel Fitzgibbon quits Labor frontbench

## Champion of native hardwood forest sector and the many jobs it creates

THE timber industry is reeling from the announcement that 'friend of forestry' Joel Fitzgibbon has resigned his portfolio of Shadow Minister for Agriculture and Resources.

Mr Fitzgibbon, 58, a co-convenor of the Parliamentary Friends of Forestry and Forest Products, has been a staunch ally of the sector throughout his 24-year representation of Hunter in NSW, a rich timber and coal hub.

He quit Anthony Albanese's frontbench amid an internal war over the party's climate change policy.

The maverick MP has been involved in public stoushes with left-leaning colleagues on climate change for months and his departure follows attempts by the Labor Party Leader to

**“PLANTATIONS WON'T REPLACE RENEWABLE NATIVE FOREST PRODUCTS**



**Industry supporter... Joel Fitzgibbon addresses the AFPA members' dinner in Canberra.**

negotiate a peace deal.

Mr Fitzgibbon was a sharp critic of the decision by the Andrews government to phase out Victoria's native timber industry, saying a strong relationship between the commonwealth and the states was needed to sustain regional jobs.

He warned Australia could not sustain a forest and forest products industry and "all the jobs and wealth it creates" without a native forest industry.

Mr Fitzgibbon also called

out the "fallacy" of Premier Andrews' claim that the hardwood timber industry in Victoria can transition to plantations by 2030. Speaking at an AFPA members' dinner in Canberra he said: "We have the land and the resource to supply much of this timber from our abundant native forest estate and through an expanded plantation estate.

"It's this sustainably harvested native forest product that generates most of the work in our local hardwood sawmills. Even if plantation forestry could be

grown sufficiently quickly to offset the loss of our native resource – and it can't – it is no replacement for our renewable native forest product."

AFPA thanked Joel Fitzgibbon for his commitment to forestry and regional communities during his extensive time as Shadow Minister for Agriculture, with responsibility for forests.

CEO Ross Hampton said under Mr Fitzgibbon's leadership the federal Labor Party had shown strong support for renewable forest industries and the 180,000 workers employed across its full value chain.

"Mr Fitzgibbon has been a tremendous supporter of our sustainably managed forest industries and under his leadership the Labor Party has recognised the importance and potential of the sector," Mr Hampton said.

"Especially the native forest sector and those working in it. Something which,

Cont P 11



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# The forgotten men: their experience a loss for royal commission



Phil Cheney



David Packham



Neil Burrows



Vic Jurkis



Rick Sneeuwjagt



Lachlan McCaw

## Veteran fire and land managers among those uninvited to the bushfire inquiry

JIM BOWDEN

AUSTRALIAN veteran fire and land managers representing more than 500 years of combined experience in the field were not invited to be witnesses at the Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements.

The inquiry was called in the wake of the devastating 2019-20 Black Summer fires.

The 80 recommendations provide advice on the coordination of all levels of government during emergencies, warning systems for the public, firefighting resources, climate data, the role of the Australian Defence Force and how charities and other groups can best respond in the wake of disasters.

Minister for Emergency Management David Littleproud said the government would "carefully and methodically" consider the report and its recommendations.



**Roger Underwood... an indicator of the inevitable consequences of past mismanagement.**

The introduction of a national state of emergency, an all-hazard emergency warning app and a national fleet of water bombers are among the recommendations in the bushfire royal commission's final report. However, key elements of effective bushfire management, including a focus on preparing bushfire-prone areas in expectation of fire, and mitigating fire damage, were scarcely touched upon in the report.

Roger Underwood, recognised for decades of service to forestry and bushfire management in Western Australia with his appointment as a Member of the Order of Australia, said a

significant weakness of the royal commission was the failure to take into account any of the findings from previous inquiries after the 1994 COAG inquiry.

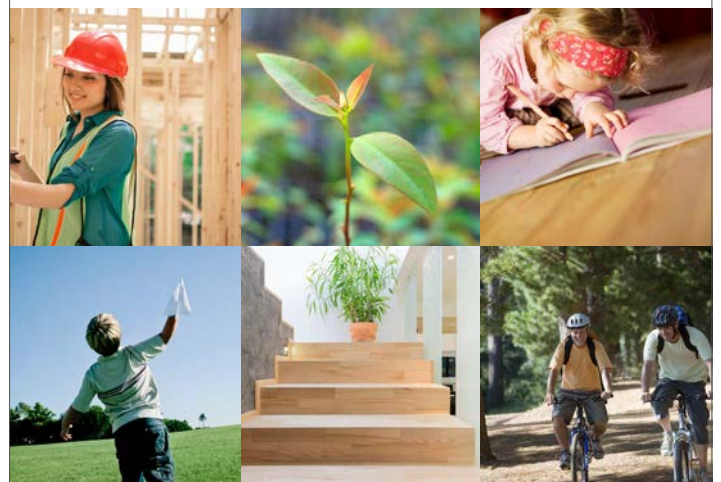
"Wonderful investigations and reports such as those

of Euan Ferguson into the Yarloop fires in WA – applauded by the Association of Bush Fire Brigades – were simply ignored.

"Even worse, the COAG inquiry and report

Cont P 4

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**“FAILURE TO  
TAKE ACCOUNT  
OF FINDINGS OF  
PAST INQUIRIES**



From P 3

is considered a laughing stock in Australian bushfire management."

He said the catastrophic bushfires of 2009 in Victoria, and the other great fires of recent years in that state, New South Wales, the ACT and South Australia, were dramatic expressions not just of killing forces unleashed, but of human folly.

"Most unforgivable of all, they demonstrate the inability of people in powerful and influential positions to profit from the lessons of history and to heed the wisdom of experience.

"To me, the epidemic of recent killer bushfires is not an indicator of an inevitable future; they are an indicator of the inevitable consequences of past mismanagement. These fires toll like bells – they toll for failed leadership, failed governance and failed



*There needs to be a far better understanding of the nature of bushfires in Australia.*

land management.

Mr Underwood said in his view the commission must now be seen as a shallow, political exercise, the outcome of which was to protect the people who were actually responsible for the fires – those who oversaw the development of conditions (heavy fuels, poorly prepared communities, over-reliance

on water bombers) that made the disaster inevitable.

"We will see an inevitable repeat of last summer's disasters some time in the next 10 years, or sooner," he said.

**“INQUIRY SEEN AS A SHALLOW AND POLITICAL EXERCISE**

Mr Underwood said he was unable to provide a definitive list of bushfire experts who were not invited to be witnesses at the royal commission, but they included:

- Phil Cheney, former head of the CSIRO's

bushfire research unit and an international expert on bushfire science and operations.

- David Packham, a pioneer of aerial prescribed burning, recognised as Australia's foremost expert on fire weather and fire behaviour.

- Neil Burrows, recently retired head of research in WA's conservation and land management agency, an expert in fire behaviour and fire ecology.

- Vic Jurkis, the best informed and most practical fire ecologist in Australia.

- Rick Sneeuwjagt, a doyen of bushfire science and operations in WA and one of Australia's foremost experts in prescribed burning and wildfire analysis.

- Lachlan McCaw a top bushfire researcher, scientist and prescribed burning practitioner.

"None of these people was, to the best of my knowledge, invited to be witnesses to the royal commission," Mr Underwood said. "On the other hand, the commission took advice from academics and 'fire chiefs' with almost zero practical experience and understanding of bushfire management and bushfire science."

## Mark Furner returns to forestry

BRISBANE-based MP Mark Furner, who cut his teeth as a truck driver before joining the Transport Workers Union, has been re-appointed minister responsible for forestry in the returned Palaszczuk Labor government in Queensland.

Mr Furner adds rural communities to his agriculture and fisheries responsibilities.

Townsville-based Scott



**Mark Furner**

Stewart will be Resources Minister while Leeanne Enoch has moved from the Great Barrier Reef, Science and Arts folio to Minister for Communities and Housing.



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# Exports: New Zealand forest owners cautiously confident as the year closes

DENNIS NEILSON

THE vital export log market has presented a topsy-turvy world for New Zealand forest owners, but as they approach loading end-of-year shipments most will be feeling surprisingly comfortable about their prospects in 2021.

Forest owners supply several markets overseas, but one – China – dominates, accounting for 17.8 million cub m in 2019, or 82% of NZ's total log exports. It will similarly dominate in 2020 and into 2021.

The year started with a collapse of demand and prices in China. Owners and exporters were groaning "not again" after suffering two such collapses in the previous two years ... after four previous years of stable to rising process, and rising demand.

But then, except for

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THOSE WHO HAVE  
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*China log imports... demand has been strong and prices are firming'*

'essential services', the government locked down the country for Covid-19. Forestry and wood processing was deemed to be non-essential and so all harvesting and most shipping stopped for several weeks.

As always the forest owners only benefitted when it recommenced in May. China's log stocks were depleted and exporters enjoyed one boom month before prices fell again.

However, since then, demand has been strong and prices are firming or at worst steady, and December exports report "cautious" optimism

going into December and early 2021.

This is surprising as many were expecting a combination of a slow post-Covid China construction recovery, a flood of logs arriving in China from spruce killed forests in Europe, and accelerated salvage of fire-damaged Australian pine logs to dampen the demand and prices of NZ logs.

For instance, with an expected annualised rate of European spruce log deliveries from just four countries (Germany, Czech Republic, France, Poland) being 11.7 million cub m, and up from

very small volumes a few years ago, this compares with expected full-year imports from NZ of 14.5 million cub m.

Germany alone increased its log exports to China, from 365,000 cub m to 3 million cub m in 2019 (+725%), which could be up another 150% to more than 7 million cub m in 2020.

In addition, we expected 2020 log imports from Australia to be around 4.5 million cub m in 2020.

However, in the fast moving world of log trading, several events seem at the moment to be working in favour of NZ forest owners and domestic and export log sellers.

Few in the NZ forestry industry want to see their Australian cousins suffer because of any political events – especially as a number of NZ

*Cont P 7*



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

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# Citations applaud fire-fighting efforts

NSW bushfire emergency citations have been presented to Forestry Corporation staff from Wauchope, Taree and the Hunter region at Coopernook state forest headquarters, acknowledging their contribution to the 2019-20 firefighting efforts. The recipients each received a citation, certificate of recognition, commemorative cap and a letter from the Premier Gladys Berejiklian acknowledging their contribution and thanking them for their service.

Acting CEO Anshul Chaudhary said Forestry Corporation staff and forestry contractors were heavily involved in the firefighting efforts, alongside around 65,000 NSW Rural Fire



**Recognition...** NSW Forestry Corporation staff from Wauchope, Taree and the Hunter region.

Service volunteers and service personnel as part of the state's coordinated firefighting efforts.

"Forestry Corporation plays an important role in the coordinated firefighting response, working in close partnership with the NSW Rural Fire Service, National Parks and Wildlife Service and Fire and Rescue NSW," Mr Chaudhary said.

"During the Black Summer fires, staff completed more

than 16,000 individual firefighting shifts, equating to in excess of 250,000 hours in firefighting and incident management," he said.

Forestry Corporation also engaged a range of contractors to support the firefighting efforts, including heavy plant operators, aircraft and other service providers.

"While the forestry industry has key skills and expertise in forest firefighting and particularly using heavy

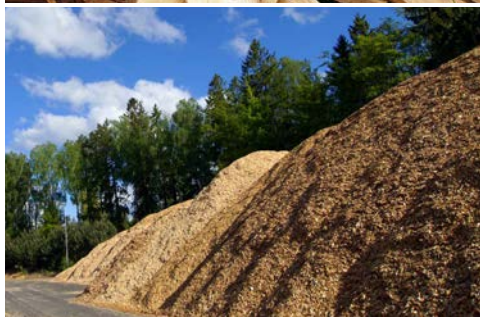
equipment to create roads, fire breaks and containment lines, due to the scale of the fires last season our staff were involved more than ever in direct protection of homes and communities," Mr Chaudhary said.

"I congratulate all our staff for their monumental contribution throughout the fires and their ongoing commitment to the recovery efforts that have been taking place since to repair infrastructure and regrow affected forests for the future."

Forestry Corporation manages more than 260,000 ha of timber plantations in NSW, an area slightly larger than the ACT. State-wide, around 25% of these plantations were impacted by the 2019-2020 bushfires.



## Expression of Interest Supply of biomass to Hunter Energy



Hunter Energy is seeking potential biomass residue suppliers to enter into a non-binding Expression of Interest to supply the Redbank Power Station, near Singleton in the NSW Hunter Valley with biomass after the power station is recommissioned from mid-2021.

### Biomass can be:

- Sawmill and wood processing residues
- Forest residues from harvesting and thinning
- End-of-life, industrial and other wood waste streams

Prospective suppliers should be able to supply a minimum of 2000 tonnes a year, and should be located within a 400 km radius of Singleton.

For further information contact:  
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[mcorbett@rongbuk.com.au](mailto:mcorbett@rongbuk.com.au) or  
mob: 0434 632 533



## 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](mailto: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](http://www.forestry.org.au) or phone (03) 9695 8940.

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## 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](http://www.fba-events.com) or contact [karolina@forest-analytics.com](mailto: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/](http://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](mailto:johnh@timberandforestrynews.com)

From P 5

forest owners and log traders operate on both sides of the Tasman.

However, it seems the 1 million cub m annual log trade from Queensland to China has effectively been frozen ... for now, with some worries that

the rest of Australia may be impacted by the Xi-Morrison spat.

Unfortunately, even just the threat of future sanctions may be enough to slow the issue of new letters of credit, and/or the delivery of logs to ports with uncertainty as to whether they will be covered


by LCs to export.

Indeed as this article was being completed we were advised that China has formally notified Canberra it has decided to suspend the importation of logs from Victoria on or after November 11.

This notice will remain in

place until further notice. Victoria is by far the major log exporter to China.

There are two morals to this story – the first is the Golden Rule (which Mr Morrison's advisers forgot to tell him): "They who have the gold make the rules". Mr. Xi has the gold.



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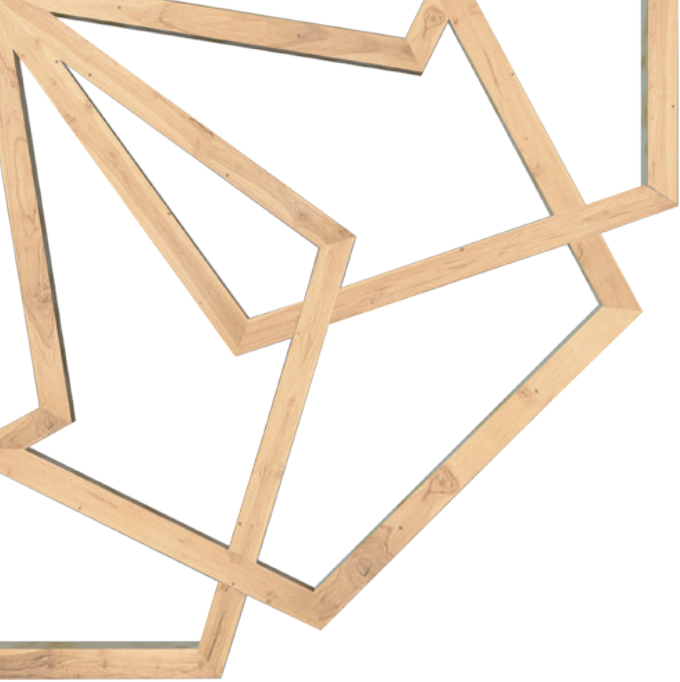
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# Gottstein appeal calls for industry support as trust invites sponsors

THE call is out for the annual funding appeal that underpins the educational study grants from the Joseph William (Bill) Gottstein Memorial Trust Fund.

For almost 50 years companies and individuals have generously supported the trust's activities.

"Regular donations of a modest amount enable the trust fund to be maintained," said John Simon, chair of the group of 17 trustees who oversee the fund.

"This means that grant awards can keep being made to bright, up-and-coming individuals involved at any point along the timber growing and manufacturing supply chain, including in research," he said.

"Our regular opportunities to speak face to face with donors at industry gatherings are non-existent this year due to Covid and so we are corresponding with previous donors seeking their ongoing support ... as well as potential new donors.

"The donations are very important to keep up the strong investment in Gottstein fellowships, scholarships and industry skill awards made available every year.

"Regrettably, the three individuals awarded 2020 fellowships are 'cooling their heels' until international travel can safely resume and their study tours can go ahead."

Patron donation renewals received to date are from Hyne Timber, Sustainable Timber Tasmania and the Australian Forest Products Association.



**John Simon... donations enable the trust fund to be maintained.**

"We thank all of those who have confirmed their ongoing support," John Simon said. "We look forward to others following on."

Patron donors (of \$2000) and sponsor donors (\$1000) are entitled to significant discounts for Australian-based personnel to attend the annual Gottstein week-long courses, which alternate each year under the themes Understanding Forest Science and Understanding Wood Science. A supporter donor category at \$500 is well suited to smaller firms and individuals.

The 2020 appeal letters are being sent to industry participants for their consideration during November.

The trust was formed in 1971 to honour esteemed CSIRO forest scientist Bill Gottstein following his tragic death in a tree-felling operation in Papua New Guinea.

Visit [gottsteintrust.org/sponsors/](http://gottsteintrust.org/sponsors/) or email the Gottstein team at [gottsteinsecretary@gmail.com](mailto:gottsteinsecretary@gmail.com)



# New president says TPAA will stay on course for high standards and durability

JIM BOWDEN

THE new president of the Timber Preservers Association of Australia says the year ahead for the treatment sector will stay focused on scrutinising imported products to ensure they meet quality standards.

"The poor treatment methods and sale of some imported products, particularly LVL, threatens to damage the hard-won reputation for durability set by TPAA members," said Andrew Davies who was officillay appointed at the TPAA AGM last month.

[TPAA membes include treaters, preservative suppliers, research organisations and individuals and bodies who have an interest in the production and use of standards-approved preservative-treated timber. The Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority approves the wood preservative chemicals that may be used in Australia, and Australian and New Zealand standards specify the concentration of a particular



**Andrew Davies... positive year ahead for TPAA.**

preservative and how deep it has to penetrate into the wood to protect it from biological hazards]

Mr Davies, who is operation risk and environment manager at DTM Timber,

based at Maryborough, said treaters must be across all information attached to products to ensure builders and the DIY sector were fully and correctly informed on application methods,

especially in relation to cut ends.

"Ongoing fire research is also a big item for us and we are working with Timber Queensland on this," Mr Davies said.


"And we have to keep the challenge up to the steel, concrete and plastic industries on the environmental benefits of timber."

Mr David said these sectors, particularly steel, were making aggressive inroads into the timber and the timber preservation industry with a lot of questionable advertising campaigns.


"We need to be on the ball with this; they are targeting framing, cladding and even crossarms and piles," he said.

"And they're fast and loose with the facts about their so-called durability, fire resistance and their incredibly wild claims about their 'green' credentials."

Cont P 11



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From P 10

He said higher-priced plastic composites, which were gaining ground and suppling crossarms to the Queensland electricity market, were a very 'ungreen' carbon emitter.

[By one estimate, emissions from producing

**“STEEL FAST AND LOOSE WITH THE FACTS ON 'GREEN CREDENTIALS'”**

and incinerating plastics could amount to 56 gigatons of carbon – almost 50 times the annual emissions of all of the coal power plants in the US between now and 2050].

Andrew Davies is the son Kevin Davies, 81, a long-time promotions and marketing guru at Hyne Timber who retired after serving 50 years with the company.

“In fact, dad’s 50 years with Hyne are matched by 50 years at Hyne by my father-in-law Russ Smith who

used to run the green mill at Maryborough and handled site services at Tuan.”

Andrew joined DTM Timber in 2007, also after service at Hyne, which started in 1988.

“My younger brother is in the military and it seems both our families have five generations in either the timber industry or the military.”

Mr Davies said he was a great admirer of Warren Hyne, a fourth generation member of the Hyne dynasty that set

up the sawmill on the banks of the Mary River in 1882.

“He was a timber and a military man ... nothing but the best.”

A keen fisherman, Andrew recalls many great times on Warren’s boat.

Born in 1971, Andrew says next year is the big one for him – his 50th’

*Editor’s note: Kevin Davies is still playing golf – two and sometimes three times a week – and often plays in competitions.*

From P 2

unfortunately, other parts of the Labor Party have at times under-valued.”

Mr Fitzgibbon has also been a passionate advocate for all primary industries, manufacturing and blue-collar workers, and his support resonates in regional communities where forest

industries are predominantly based.

AFPA has worked closely with Mr Fitzgibbon since 2013 when he was first appointed to the Agriculture and Forestry portfolios, and in his role as co-convenor of the Parliamentary Friends of Forest Industries.

Mr Hampton said he expected that while Mr

Fitzgibbon was moving to the opposition backbench, he would continue to be a passionate advocate for regional jobs and communities, and for the forest industries.

“We look forward to continuing to work with him,” Mr Hampton said. “We also await with interest the appointment of a replacement to the portfolio and we can

only hope his successor is as committed as Mr Fitzgibbon has been.”

Mr Fitzgibbon is also the convenor of the powerful Right faction that traditionally determines Labor leaders. At a press conference in Canberra, he would not rule out ambitions for the leadership but said he would need to be “drafted”.

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# Utilising underutilised timber: timely study flags opportunities for Australia

## Gottstein fellowship tour studies UUT benefits in North America and Europe

JIM BOWDEN

FINDINGS of a Gottstein fellowship study to North America and Europe by an ARC Future Timber Hub PhD student at the University of Queensland suggests engineered wood manufacture in Australia could benefit widely by incorporating 'underutilised' timber (UUT) processing.

The Gottstein project, undertaken last year by Harry Mills, explored the potential for UUT in sustainable design after discussions with professionals in forestry, manufacturing, education and research.

Softwood milling in Australia is producing a large volume of UUT; upwards of 40% of softwood milled boards are destined to fail structural grading and can be classed as UUT. This classification also applies to boards with specific growth and processing characteristics that fail to meet market demand due to visual aesthetics. Some of these features range from knots, wane, distortion and colouration through to being low in stiffness.

Mr Mills said uncertain climatic conditions, varying log quality, and a surge in

interest of timber building products are all varying contributing factors towards UUT.

When found together, UUT characteristics are enough for the material to be classified as low in-grade and thus suffer from little consumer acceptance. While demand for in-grade and high aesthetic timber, or utilised timber (UT) increases, the need for UUT remains low. Furthermore, the onset of a mass timber construction boom is expected to increase the demand for UT.

"For wood growers and manufacturers, through to the consumers of timber products, the potential impacts of this situation are troublesome," Mr Mills said.

"Mass timber can generate an increase in production costs of UT due to the

financial burden of handling UUT, shortages in domestic tree plantation stocks caused by the rise in demand for products, and a high volume of market-less UUT product stock.

"If things remain unchanged, these scenarios can represent a significant volume of resource, which can hinder the addition of value to UUT in the existing product supply chain."

Currently, harvested plantation softwood is processed into four different areas – UT as structural products and systems; UUT

as non-structural products and systems; UUT processed as pellets for biofuel energy; and UUT processed as woodchips and exported.

"As the market for UT products in Australia increases, the built environment is becoming increasingly reliant on the import of structural grade softwood products," Mr Mills said.

"UUT resource represents an opportunity to create innovative industry solutions for catering to the demand for timber products with the goal of efficiency and economisation.

Findings from the study tour suggest that there is a strong support and acceptance of UUT products for use in the built environment. Engineered wood products such as cross laminated timber and glulam were products identified that could be tweaked to have immediate potential to absorb UUT.

"Expanding finger-joint manufacturing for residential framing is another area that has strong precedence in North America," Mr Mills said.

"Long term, the development of additional



**Gottstein fellow Harry Mills (wearing hat centre) with fellow summer builders at the front of Wakeford Hall at the Architectural Association's satellite campus Hooke Park in Dorset, southwest England.**

**“UUT RESOURCE AN OPPORTUNITY TO CREATE INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS”**

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products such as dowel and nail-laminated timber, brettstapel, lignatur and mass plywood panels for the veneer market could be beneficial for Australia."

Circular construction examples were identified in several regions, resulting in greater conscious material use and employment opportunities.

"Overwhelmingly, there are benefits in absorbing a UUT range to new products, meeting the demand from the built environment for timber products with local resource and bringing additional employment opportunities across the timber product supply chain," Mr Mills said.

He added: "The



1/ **Kulum Eispavilion, St Moritz, Switzerland...** the project is a collaboration between **Foster + Partners** and the **Lehmann Group**. Photo: Nigel Young, Foster + Partners

2/ **Assembly Shed at Architectural Association's Hooke Park in the UK.**

products, alternative methods for responsible manufacturing and design of timber, and examples to potential opportunities here in Australia for UUT resource."

The heavily-illustrated Gottstein report – Underutilised Timber (UUT) Acceptance through North America and Europe – can be viewed on the Gottstein Memorial Trust Fund website: [gottsteintrust.org/reports/2344/](http://gottsteintrust.org/reports/2344/)



main highlight of the Gottstein tour was really being able to visit and interview a significant number of people from diverse backgrounds.

"I was able to learn of novel UUT

**On the cover... Main pic: Stora Enso sawmilling facility at Krems an der Donau in Austria. (Photo Harry Mills). Inset: Richmond Olympic Oval, British Columbia, Canada, utilising beetle-killed wood throughout the build. Photo: Harry Mills**

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# Northland totara: sustainably managing a native forest resource in New Zealand

## Pilot project a financial model for a viable business opportunity in the region

MICHAEL SMITH

THE last two years have been witness to some exciting times in the New Zealand Northland as the Totara Industry Pilot (TIP) project undertook an investigation into the business case for a sustainably-managed farm-totara industry.

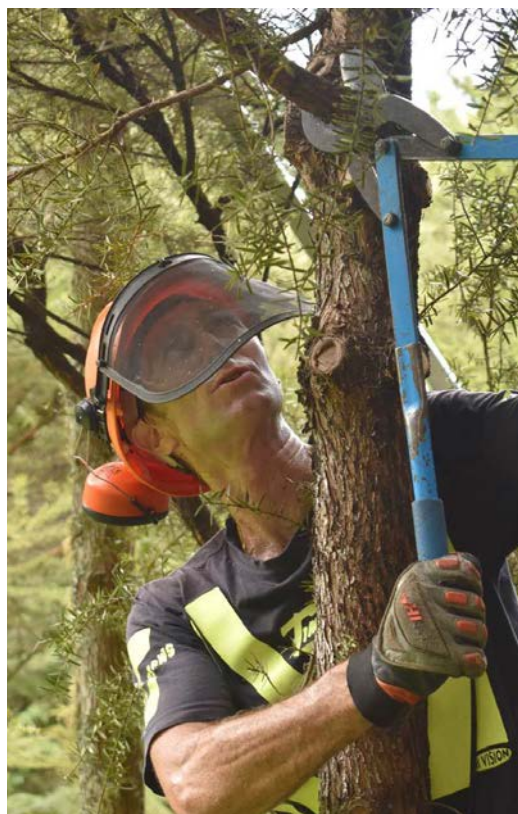
With the TIP's report due to be released shortly, Timber&Forestry enews took the opportunity to talk with Paul Quinlan from the Northland Totara Working Group (NTWG) and Tane's Tree Trust – a TIP project partner.

Paul says low-impact selective harvests of naturally generating totara could be undertaken within existing stands of farm-totara on private land in the region – in direct contrast to clear-fell plantation forestry models.

The TIP project's most recent trial harvest involved the recovery of 200 cub m of totara sawlogs from three farms in the Far North ... using continuous cover forestry (CCF) principles.

"This practical pilot enabled a financial model to be tested and confirmed a viable business opportunity for the region, with stakeholder engagement revealing high levels of interest in the project," Paul said.

He is keen to emphasise



**Paul Quinlan... working with nature 'to regenerate and create a locally appropriate native forest resource'.**

Photo: Katharina Quinlan



**The second trial harvest... processed at Northpine's Waipu sawmill.**

Photo: Paul Quinlan

management approach. This seeks to create a forest structure of mixed species, and with the full range of size-classes – such as tall, large-canopy trees with their potential replacements of pole-sized trees in the subcanopy, and with saplings and seedlings in the understorey, all standing close to each other.

"The system suits single-stem selection and extraction, and forests that include many shade-tolerant tree species. To some extent this approach is directed by the Forests Act, which specifies the harvesting of podocarps only as single stems or in small groups of three to five trees.

"However, totara is a light-demanding tree, and it is yet to be proven that this management system will result in enough light at harvest sites for good totara regeneration. It's likely that the shade-tolerant hardwood trees will benefit from this approach to harvesting and, over time, the forest will become increasingly species diverse and more 'natural' in composition.

"A coupe-felling system, as is used with sustainable beech forestry (where harvesting creates very small clearings), may better suit totara regeneration. But, at present, that is not provided for under the Forests Act."

Because of the small-scale nature of the trial harvests,

**“A FOREST STRUCTURE OF MIXED SPECIES**

that CCF is an umbrella term for a range of specific management approaches – for example, close-to-nature forestry, coupe-felling and shelterwood systems.

"Different species and forest types suit different applications or weightings of these principles," he says.

"Our harvesting applies the German 'Plenterwald' forest

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Paul Quinlan says it was a challenge finding experienced crews.

“Many harvesters have equipment and machinery that is ill-suited to getting around farm tracks with tight races and sharp corners into narrow gateways,” he said.

“Our harvests involved careful directional felling, winching out logs, cleaning up slash and long skidding distances – as well as the loading of log trucks. The work was complicated by fence lines and steep terrain.”

He adds that different machinery combinations were trialled ... beginning with a 22-tonne excavator with a grapple attachment and an eight-wheel-drive, self-loading John Deere 1410 forwarder.

The second harvest used a D4 TSK skidder with 30 m of wire rope for extraction and



**The harvests trialled different machinery combinations using continuous cover forestry principles.** Photo: Paul Quinlan

a 22-tonne grapple digger to load the log truck and trailers. Getting the forwarder through the farm gateways proved difficult ... with a few insulators bruised off some fence lines.

Paul said while at the time of harvest it appeared some damage to the paddocks had

occurred, within six weeks the grass had regrown.

A most pleasing aspect

**“DAMAGE TO THE RESIDUAL FOREST WAS LIMITED**

was the post-harvest assessment, which found that damage to the residual forest was limited to a few broken branches of adjacent trees.

“These harvests demonstrated that low-impact selective harvesting is certainly possible in these farm-totara stands,” he said.

• *In an upcoming edition we will analyse the soon-to-be-released TIP project report's findings and talk further with Paul Quinlan about efforts to more accurately gauge Northland's totara resource.*

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# Exporting sawlogs ... simple economics

I LOOK forward to your publication each week and read it from cover to cover.

In the October 29 edition of Timber&Forestry enews there was a yet another call to stop the export of pine sawlog – supposedly to “save the industry”.

The only reason sawlog is exported is because growers are able to achieve higher prices in the export market, than the domestic market.

The simple economic fact



is that domestic processors are at liberty to match or beat the export price at any time, and this will result in sawlog being redirected from the export market to the domestic market.

As a plantation owner, I can assure you that the

economics of a 30-year investment in pine is marginal at best.

If growers are forced to accept lower domestic prices, re-plantings will simply not be undertaken, the pine estate will shrink (as is already happening in parts

of Australia) and the local processing industry will most certainly die.

It's high time the pine industry as a whole faced up to economic reality of plantation investment and the globalised world we live in, and stopped its flirtation with a false, short-sighted economic nirvana of banning sawlog export.

I hope that your publication can play a constructive role in bringing common sense and balanced perspective into this discussion in future.

**MIKE RAUTENBACH, Great Southern, WA.**

## Upcycled tree stumps bring new life to region

THIRTY-TWO enormous snags in the form of tree stumps, root balls and bodies have been replenished into the Darling River in a collaborative effort by traditional owners and volunteers from Western Landcare and OzFish Sunraysia Chapter members.

The work has been close to 12 months in the making having been delayed due to Covid. The habitat was positioned downstream of Ellerslie township in far



western NSW after being identified as a vital site to resnag due to the lack of complex habitat in the

section of the river.

The snags will increase breeding environments, add natural food sources and

create a sustainable native fish community, resulting in benefits not only to the local environment and waterway but to recreational fishers throughout the region.

“It is very important for these projects to go ahead, so that conversations can start around why re snagging is important for the sustainable ecology and the fish populations in the Darling and Murray rivers local western Landcare coordinator Thel O’Shea said.

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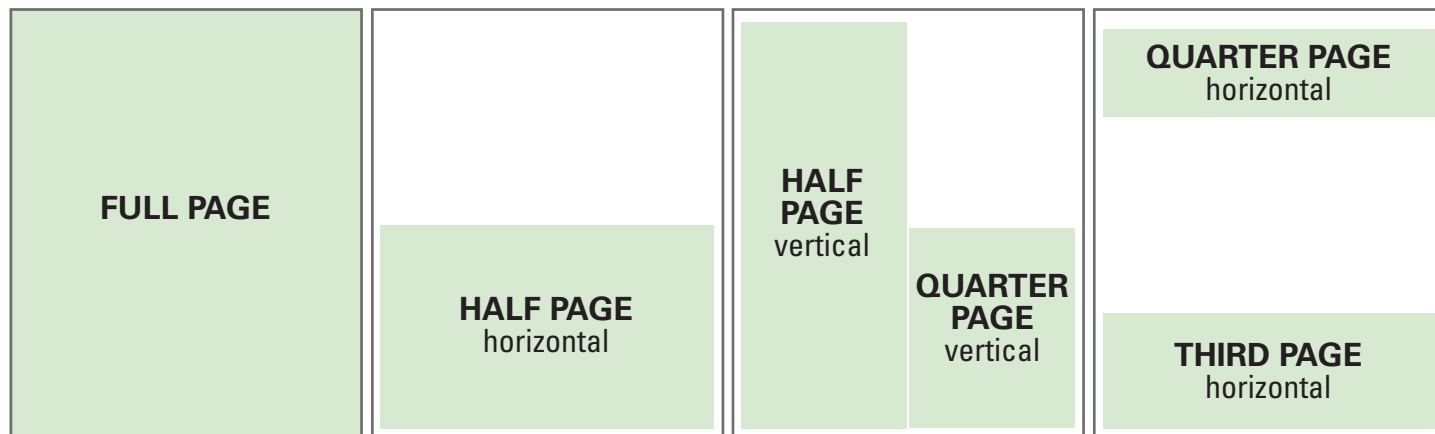
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