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## Beijing plays hard ball with timber trade

COVER STORY P3

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# ‘Like a bomb hit the island’: multiple fires and smoke storms across Fraser

VETERAN land and fire mangers this week were saying it again... “Fraser Island is a catastrophe-in-waiting” as multiple bushfires explode near thick forest and smoke storms smother the coastline.

Retired forester West Hill, a long-time Hervey Bay resident, said he had never seen anything like it: “From the mainland we can see smoke mushrooming into the sky. It’s like a bomb hit the island,” he said today.

The world’s largest sand island on the southeastern coast 250 km north of Brisbane, was heritage-listed after timber harvesting ceased in 1991 following concerns raised by the Commission of Inquiry into the Conservation, Management and Use of Fraser Island and the Great Sandy Region, appointed by the Goss Labor government and chaired by Tony Fitzgerald QC.

Prescribed burning of forests also ceased at this



Hot smoke storms rage across Fraser Island

time when the island came under the management of the Queensland Parks and Wildlife.

The fact is, Fraser Island was presented for heritage listing “in pristine order” in 1992 when it was listed as a UNESCO World Heritage site after more than 130 years of timber production.

A Department of Environment and Science spokesperson said fires had been burning in remote and

largely inaccessible sites for more than six weeks and the latest blaze has resulted in a ‘leave now’ order issues to campers.

Parks rangers are searching for campers who are thought to have sparked the large

**“ FIRES THREAT TO FORESTS IN ISLAND’S CENTRE**

bushfire that has so far burned more than 25,000 ha of national park.

Sweltering conditions and fierce winds are becoming a serious problem, particularly if the fires reach the thick forest area in the centre of the island with stands of blackbutt trees (*Eucalyptus pilularis*), Queensland kauri (*Agathis robusta*) and satinay (*Syncarpia hillii*)

Queensland Parks and Wildlife staff are monitoring the fire, which was not a threat to life or property. Crews were on site and water-bombing aircraft were on standby.

The Department of Environment and Science says planning is under way to begin backburning.

Fraser Island has a rich history of timber-getting. Over the years timbers from Fraser were sent to Egypt for use in the construction of the Suez Canal and in the 1980s Hyne & Son sent satinay to Venice to build wooden stakes and platforms for gondolas, which are still in use today.



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# China barking up the wrong tree: nothing to do with beetles – it’s about saving face

## Logs at Portland unlikely to be shipped out in the foreseeable future

JIM BOWDEN  
JOHN HALKETT

BEETLES are turning into a hard day’s night for the Australian log export trade.

China has indefinitely suspended Australian timber exports – but it has nothing to do with bark beetles.

In fact, the Asian nation imports massive amounts of beetle-ravaged timber from Africa – without a whimper.

It is possible that the beetles, which like their meals cooked, entered China in the bark of logs burnt in the 2019-20 summer bushfires.

Nonetheless, AFPA is working with the Department of Agriculture, Water and Environment on phytosanitary issues and will continue to update industry.

The Victorian log trade to China is worth \$260 million a year. Australia’s biggest trading partner has also banned log imports from Queensland claiming beetles were found in the bark by customs officials.

And up to 500 forestry jobs could be lost in South Australia’s Green Triangle

**“UP TO 500 FORESTRY JOBS COULD BE LOST”**



*Australian timber will be missing from China’s huge log stocks.*

by Christmas if China’s ban on Victorian timber remains unresolved, according to the CFMEU.

Most of the logs exported to China from South Australia are shipped through Portland, Victoria’s only naturally deep-water port.

Wang Wenbin, deputy director-general of China’s Foreign Ministry Information Department, made his bluntest comment yet urging Australia to improve the relationship.

“Let him who tied the bell on the tiger take it off,” he said in his best Mandarin.

In a media conference last week, Wang linked the timber quarantining with Foreign Minister Marise Payne speaking out against China’s National People’s Congress for imposing new national security laws on Hong Kong.

Despite China clearly breaking a Hong Kong deal it had signed 36 years ago, Wang blamed Australia for

inflaming diplomatic tensions.

How this all pans out after

*Cont P 4*

15 Asia-Pacific countries on Sunday signed the world’s biggest free trade deal, is anyone’s guess right now. The trade deal is considered a huge coup for China in extending its influence.

The Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) includes 10 southeast Asian economies along with China, Japan, South Korea, New Zealand and Australia, with members accounting for around 30% of global GDP.

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From P 3

Trade is not about holding the moral high ground; it's about having something the other crowd cannot do without. Will the \$80 billion Australian iron ore trade to China be next?

Possibly – as soon as massive new mines and supply chain logistics are completed in Brazil and Guinea.

Meanwhile, few would disagree with the principle that forest growers should seek to maximise the return from their logs sold at the forest gate.

However, there is a broader view that supplying logs to domestic sawmills has significant employment, regional development and flow-on benefits. This reality has, in part, been behind the initiative taken by southern NSW sawmillers to seek support from the federal



**Who's sorry now? PM Scott Morrison up close with President Xi Jinping last year.**

government to contribute to the costs of transporting logs from the Portland region to sawmills in southern NSW.

Having worked assiduously to salvage and process fire-killed plantations these sawmills are now facing the prospect of restricted log supplies into the future, with consequent impacts

on employment and on their regional economic contribution.

Timber&Forestry enews investigations suggest that logs currently at Portland, and scheduled for export to China, are unlikely to be shipped out in the foreseeable future. It is also apparent that time constraints on the export of such logs will become an issue. So, what to do with these logs in the short-term will be a significant challenge for Victorian and South Australian forest growers.

**“OTHER PORTS AN UNVIABLE OPTION**

Into the future it would seem prudent for forest growers to endeavour to optimise the processing of such logs in Australia. There will certainly be a domestic market for the timber produced.

The actions in China should be a salutary lesson that relying on China as a principle market for, in this case logs, is a dangerous and risky strategy.

It is likely to be in the

interests of both forest growers and local sawmills in the future to collaborate to see available logs processed domestically, rather than relying on the vagaries and political whims of the Chinese government.

As forest growers, investors and shippers come to grips with the log ban, South Australia Timber Processors Association CEO David Quill told the ABC the situation could bring opportunities for smaller, local operators.

“One of the major issues facing local processors, whether they be large or small, is the fact that this fibre is being exported, so if the exports were to cease there's a huge opportunity for growth in this region,” Mr Quill said.

“I think that would immediately bring about the potential establishment of a number of different facilities in Mount Gambier or in the Green Triangle.”

However, he said he did not believe local processors could take on all the extra resources.

“China is without question the biggest export market,” Mr Quill said.

“I think there's going to be huge pressure on domestic processors to take additional fibre if the demand to China is stopped.

“I think the demand could be met probably to a maximum of 200,000 tonnes, so it would still be a shortfall of 800,000 tonnes-plus a year.”

David Quill said the export market from the Green Triangle was one reason there had not been enough wood available for local processors to grow their operations.

“The ownership of plantation softwood plantations in this region

Cont P 5

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From P 4

has changed from domestic ownership primarily to overseas fund managers and ... are driven by profit," he said.

"So, what's happened is that the volume of wood export has increased, mainly because the demand from China has increased, and therefore the price they're prepared to pay for that wood has increased."

Mr Quill did not think the larger domestic timber processors would be affected by the situation in the short-term.

"This will give us a chance to take a long, hard look at what we've been doing," he said.

"If we want to come out of Covid, employ more people, and get this country back on its feet again, we should be increasing our manufacturing industry.

"This represents a golden opportunity to do so."

Trade Minister Simon Birmingham has voiced



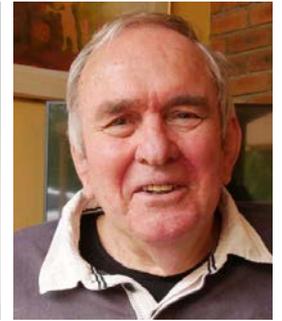
Simon Birmingham



David Basham



Clare Scriven



David Quill

concern over China's trading behaviour, urging Beijing to respect international trade rules and "focus on evidence" when making decisions about imports of Australian products.

Labor's regional development spokeswoman in South Australia Clare Scriven said the trade barrier presented a significant threat to the state's \$1.3 billion industry and called on the state government to provide a support package to forestry businesses.

State Primary Industries Minister David Basham said the government was working with industry and the federal government.

"South Australians can support the local timber industry and jobs by supporting use of value-added timber products from our sustainably-grown plantations," Mr Basham said.

"The issues are just the

inability to export out of Portland, which then causes backlog issues right through the process," he said.

"We have to try and get that resolved as quickly as possible to allow the industry to operate in the most efficient way.

"We'll also make sure that where channels are still open and operating [that] protocols are there to make sure timber leaving there is up to standard."

He said conversations with the timber industry were needed to determine whether exporting from other ports was "feasible"

"It's not something you can just turn on and off overnight, to implement that sort of approach, to have a complete redirection," he said.

However, David Quill said alternative ports would likely be unviable options.

"Currently, the total volume

of softwood material being exported out of Portland is slightly in excess of a million tonnes a year," he said.

"Port Adelaide — you'd be adding a cost of about \$30 to every tonne of wood. Exported through Geelong, you'd be adding a cost of something in the order of \$25-\$28 a tonne, which would make [both of them] cost-prohibitive."

The Federal Opposition has said it will pore over the details of the trade deal closely but warned it could not be used as a distraction from the serious deterioration of the relationship between Canberra and Beijing.

Australian ministers have not been able to talk to their Chinese counterparts for months.

*On the cover: A back pass on timber imports by China president Xi Jinping.*

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# Coveted award and 25 years service a double celebration for DAF Salisbury

JIM BOWDEN

IT was a double celebration at the DAF Salisbury Research Facility last Friday.

The entire staff, along with forest industry luminaries, gathered to applaud the awarding of the centre's finalist merit certificate in the coveted Richard Stanton Memorial Award and the 25-year service to wood research by its project manager Dr Robbie McGavin.

The award, recognising the life of a man devoted to the forest industry, was presented by Simon Dorries, CEO, Responsible Wood.

Mr Dorries said with the largest number of nominations since the award was established five years ago, Responsible Wood, for the first time, presented three finalist merits this year. The other recipients were Richard Kirk of Kirk Architects for his commitment to certified timber and Anthonino Stonjek of AKS Forest Management Services for his dedication to certification standards.

Salisbury's award entry centred on the work by the DAF Forest Product Innovation team to deliver and validate technologies that transform low-value forest resources and sub-optimum quality logs into sustainable, high-value construction and aesthetic products suitable for Australian and international markets.

This focus aligns perfectly with DAF's requirements to undertake R&D supporting their Sustainable Forest Management certification in accordance with AS 4708:2013. Findings have supported the successful



**1/ A day of celebration... Dr Robbie McGavin (centre row, fourth from left) with Cindy Day, administration officer, Dr Maryam Shirmohammadi, principal research scientist, Bill Leggate, forest product innovation team leader, Lesley Francis, research scientist, and Rica Minett, technical assistant. Back row, from left, Dr Chandan Kumar, senior research scientist, Eric Litte, technical assistant, Chris Fitzgerald, senior research technician, Andrew Outhwaite, senior research technician, Rhianna Robinson, research scientist, Dan Field, research technician, Jack Dorries, research technician, Stuart Meldrum, senior research technician, Adam Faircloth, timber engineer, Tony Dakin, principal research scientist, and Jock Kennedy, research technician.**

**2/ Coveted award... Simon Dorries, CEO, Responsible Wood (centre) presents the Richard Stanton merit award to Bill Leggate, forest product innovation team leader, and Salisbury research facility project manager Dr Robbie McGavin.**



development and commercialisation of veneer-based bridge girders and other engineered timber bridge components.

The event – on November 13 – was the actual date 25 years ago when Dr McGavin first entered the wood research profession. For all but a few years, he has worked at DAF Salisbury, his accomplishments peaking in 2016 with a PhD for research in small diameter log processing and new spindleless veneer lathe technology.

The writer recalls taking Dr McGavin on his first overseas mission with 28 other industry leaders in 2001 that included Italy, Austria and Germany (for the Hanover LIGNA machinery fair).

Since then his research projects have taken him across many regions, including southeast Asia, China and Fiji and most of Australia from Cape York to Tasmania.

"I've been fortunate to help steer DAF Salisbury through some exciting times over the past 25 years to where it

is now – a well-equipped and relevant timber research hub and one of the most respected on the world stage," Dr McGavin said.

He said early forestry mentors that inspired his career included David Gough, Dr Graeme Palmer, Dr Michael Kennedy and Myron Cause.

"In the same category I would put Bill Leggate my research team buddy who started at Salisbury in 1995, and Dr Henri Bailleres (former team leader and now product development manager at Hyne)," Dr McGavin said.

"Henri put in 12 years at Salisbury and I have nothing but the highest respect for his skills and knowledge."

He added: "About 12 months ago we celebrated 100 years of forest research in Queensland. I'm proud to have been around for a quarter of that!"

Dr McGavin celebrated the silver anniversary later in the day with his wife of 23 years Angela and their two daughters Alexis and Louisa.

**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](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)

# FWPA performance review open for industry comment

INDUSTRY-owned services body Forest and Wood Products Australia has commissioned an independent organisational performance review.

The review is a requirement under FWPA's statutory funding agreement with the

federal government.

The team conducting the review, led by Forest Hill Consulting, has created a web page ([www.fwpareview.org](http://www.fwpareview.org)) that sets out the terms of reference for the review and how to make submissions to it.

The team has established an online survey to gather input from FWPA stakeholders. The survey is a valuable opportunity for industry to have its say on FWPA's performance over the last four years. Visit [www.fwpareview.org](http://www.fwpareview.org) and complete

the online survey.

FWPA is one of 15 rural research and development corporations (RDCs) and is recognised under the commonwealth's Forestry Marketing and Research and Development Services Act 2007.



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# NSW Forestry Corp's five-day boot camp prepares firefighters for the season ahead

NSW Forestry Corporation firefighting staff from the Tumut, Moss Vale, Deniliquin, Bombala, Bathurst and central cypress forest protection areas honed their skills recently in a five-day training camp at Laurel Hill in preparation for the fire season ahead.

All up, 44 staff were trained in essential firefighting skills such as fire behaviour, tactics and strategy, leadership, command, control and communications, and how to operate the range of appliances and equipment used at fires.

The five-day intensive training program is designed to get new recruits nationally qualified and 'fire ready' as forest firefighters. Other more experienced firefighting staff upgraded their qualifications in advanced firefighter and crew leader roles.

"The Covid-19 pandemic has added more complexity to this year's training, but the organisation has adapted and adjusted," Forestry Corporation fire manager Tim McGuffog said.

"This year has thrown a



**Training camp... opportunity for experienced fire-fighting staff to upgrade their qualifications in advance firefighter and crew leader roles.**

few challenges to our face-to-face training camps, but we have changed our approach to make it work," Mr McGuffog said.

"One of the key ways we've adapted is to run a 'closed camp' in 2020, meaning no-one comes or leaves during the week-long training.

"We have also implemented a series of personal distancing and hygiene measures to reduce the risk of Covid."

Mr McGuffog said the camps were essential for developing a skilled and

capable workforce for the fire season ahead.

"Our training program is comprehensive and recruits also get the opportunity to learn other skills like using chainsaws, first aid, chemical use and driving 4WD vehicles and tankers when they return to their depots," he said.

"Safety is always at the top of this list though – our firefighters' wellbeing is our

biggest concern and it all comes back to correct training and procedures.

"We take our firefighting responsibilities incredibly seriously – our training ensures everyone from our most experienced firefighter through to our newest recruits are fit and ready to be deployed to the fire front.

"We also send crews to assist on large bushfires across all tenures within their local areas, interstate and even internationally, so we need to ensure we are at the top of our game."

Forestry Corporation is responsible for preventing and managing fires in 2 million ha of state forests across NSW.

To find out more about Forestry Corporation's fire training, view the video at //youtu.be/VoWU284o8EA or visit [www.forestrycorporation.com.au](http://www.forestrycorporation.com.au)

**“ COVID-19 HAS ADDED MORE COMPLEXITY TO FIRE TRAINING ”**



**FWPA**  
Forest & Wood  
Products Australia

**HAVE YOUR SAY!**

FWPA has recently commissioned an independent organisational performance review and is seeking feedback on the company's performance.

Go to [www.fwpareview.org](http://www.fwpareview.org) and complete the online survey.

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# A sweet harvest for Santanol: biggest processing yet of sandalwood in WA

THE world's second-biggest producer of Indian sandalwood (*Santalum spicatum*) has completed its largest ever commercial harvest in Western Australia's remote Kimberley region.

More than 106 ha of timber has been put through Santanol's processing shed in Kununurra, where the sweet scent of sandalwood wafts through the air as it is dried, graded, and fed through grinding equipment.

From there the processed chips are trucked more than 3000 km south to the company's facility in Perth, where the sandalwood oil will be distilled and refined over the next 12 months.

Santanol managing director David Brocklehurst said after many years spent trying to perfect its forestry model, this was the company's most important harvest yet.

"This is one of our very early plantations," he said.

"They were still learning the art of growing sandalwood, so for so many of our trees to have that much heartwood is really encouraging.



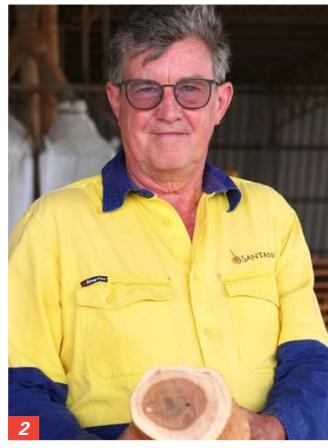
**1/ One of Santanol's new plantations in the Ord Irrigation Scheme.** Photo: ABC  
**2/ David Brocklehurst... our most important harvest yet.**

"The results from this will be incredibly valuable for us across the balance of the estate and how we manage it moving forward."

Santanol has harvested more than 100 ha of sandalwood this year, which is processed at this facility in Kununurra.

The Indian sandalwood producer, which was bought by global forestry giant Mercer International in 2018, owns more than 2000 ha of trees across the Ord Irrigation Scheme.

Over the past four years



the company has been selling its Santalum album oil to fine fragrance markets in Europe, North America, the Middle East, India, and China.

Often described as "liquid gold", nearly half of all perfumes contain sandalwood oil.

David Brocklehurst said sales had been growing rapidly, but

the harvest milestone came at a challenging time for the global perfume industry.

"We can only hope that Covid-19 goes away, because the fine fragrance industry has been severely impacted by lack of travel around the world," he said.

"I think prices for sandalwood will stay stable for now ... it's a very consistent product from a perfumer's perspective, but other essential oils are a quarter of the selling price they were 12 to 18 months ago."

Closer to home, the Indian sandalwood industry in Kununurra weathered some turbulent times after Santanol's major competitor, Quintis, fell into administration and recapitalised as a private company in 2018.

Since then the company has resumed harvest operations and completed a product rebrand.

Mr Brocklehurst says it's "really encouraging" that so many of the operation's trees have yielded so much

Cont P 11



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# Gottstein Trust elects Suzette Weeding new chair on eve of its 50th anniversary

ON the eve of its 50th anniversary, the Gottstein Trust Fund has elected Suzette Weeding of Sustainable Timber Tasmania as the new chair after John Simon stepped down from the role he carried out for two years.

The Gottstein Trust board of seven trustee governors thanked Mr Simon for his leadership. He will remain on the board as a trustee and will chair the trust's investment committee.

The transition comes after Mr Simon's recent retirement as chair of Forest and Wood Products Australia.

"I believe in the need for board chairs to plan for and encourage succession," Mr Simon said.

**“GOOD PRACTICE TO REFRESH LEADERSHIP**

"It's good practice to refresh leadership positions periodically and also important to encourage and cultivate generational change for the future of our industry."

Mr Simon congratulated

From P 12

heartwood. He has managed forestry and distillery operations from the company's Perth headquarters since February, bringing more than 20 years of experience from the native sandalwood industry.

"Western Australia is the global heart now for the production of sandalwood oil, whether it be spicatum or

the new chairman and said he was confident the trust was in good hands with Suzette at the helm and administration and courses handled by Helen Murray's experienced team at Kurrumbene Projects and Advocacy.

A Gottstein trustee since 2015, Ms Weeding is general manager land management for Sustainable Timber Tasmania. She is a director of the international Program for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC), a leading alliance of national forest certification systems which includes Responsible Wood in Australia. She is also a director of the Forest Education Foundation.

A graduate of the University of Tasmania with a Bachelor of Science, Suzette has almost 20 years' experience in senior roles directly responsible for environmental management of forests and management of areas of significant biodiversity.

She is a steering committee member of the Launceston National Institute of Forest Products Innovation and her extensive involvement with industry groups includes membership of the Tasmanian

album," he said.

"There are similarities with forestry but they're very distinct product and each have their own place in the market.

"From an [Indian sandalwood] oil perspective, you're well over \$US100,000 a tonne. Compared to something like blue gum chips, it's very much a 'Rolls Royce' item."

(ABC Rural)



**Suzette Weeding... Gottstein trustee since 2015.**

State Fire Management Council and the Forest Practices Advisory Council.

Beginning in 1971, the Gottstein Trust was formed to honour esteemed CSIRO forest scientist Bill Gottstein after his accidental death.

"Although his tremendous contribution to the industry was tragically cut short, his legacy lives on in a substantial way," John Simon said.

Each year the trust awards grants to people seeking to extend their own knowledge in ways that also help to advance the industry.

The Gottstein Trust is currently making its annual appeal for funds which will underpin funding for a new round of 2021 research, study tour and skill development grants to be awarded to individuals involved with the industry.

Visit //gottsteintrust.org/sponsors/ or email the Gottstein team at gottsteinsecretary@gmail.com

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# Woodchip supply: is it always darkest before the golden dawn? We hope so!

## Covid and the Canberra-Beijing trade scrap bring difficult challenges

AS if Covid-19 lock-downs and Messrs Morrison and Xi locking horns on Australia-China trade has not been challenging enough this year, low pulp prices affecting woodchip prices, a big reduction in woodchip demand in Japan and a switch from high-priced *Eucalyptus globulus* to cheaper species by Chinese pulp mills has damped demand for Australian woodchip supplies.

Total Japanese hardwood woodchip imports are down a whopping 25% on the same period in 2019. However, Australian imports, which are heavy to the highest quality but also highest price *globulus*, are down an even higher 43%.

Other big players South Africa (-40%) and Thailand (-47%) have also been hit, but inexplicably the big Chilean import volumes are down only 11%.

Vietnam, the largest supplier by far, has had its imports cut by 17%. Even the price of its acacia woodchips were only 70% of eucalypt chips from Australia in September.

Until recently Japan dominated the woodchip import trade. But it has been



**Projection of Australian eucalypts plantation harvest levels 2001-2029 will need to be revised with the much lower harvest likely in 2020.**

overtaken by China and is not expected to return to its previous dominance, but instead import demand will continue to reduce. In fact, by far the largest investment in a pulp mill by a Japanese company in the last decade has been the \$1 billion investment by Oji Renewable Resources in building a Greenfield pulp mill – at Nantong in China!

Mainland Chinese hardwood woodchip imports are ‘hanging in there’ in 2020 in spite of paper sales being impacted by Covid-19.

**“ JAPAN'S DOMINANCE OF WOODCHIP TRADE OVERTAKEN BY CHINA ”**

In the nine months to September in 2020 total imports were 2% higher than in 2019.

However, again Australian woodchip demand has been impacted by mainland Chinese pulp mills (mostly) seeking cheaper supplies with demand falling 39% to September. The huge volume Vietnamese suppliers have been the big winners this year, with imports up 26% and now being 3-4 times those of Australia (compared with being ‘only’ 1.7 times more in 2019). Again, the price of Vietnamese chips – being only 70% of their Australian competitors – would have been the major catalyst for this switch.

Surprisingly, however, imports from Brazil (mostly

black wattle acacia and up 52%) and from South Africa (including black wattle acacia and up 32%) would indicate that in this paper demand Covid and technology-driven downturn, speciality papers made from black wattle are faring better than those made from eucalyptus.

Woodchip import demand from the two smaller Asian chip importers Taiwan and South Korea are also down. Taiwan’s demand

(data is to August only) was down 8%, but Australian imports dropped by 33%, and demand from South Korea was down 19%.

Australian has not featured in 2020 – the only supplier is Vietnam.

But are there any silver linings below a still black horizon for Australian eucalypt plantation owners and woodchip exporters? Maybe.

One could be that the expected major supply reduction due to occur from 2021 will now at worse be delayed, and indeed may not happen, as the older ‘MIS’ generation plantations may tide supplies over until new rotations mature from the

From P 12

mid-2020s.

The other is the seemingly 'irrational exuberance' of several existing and some new Chinese pulp companies to embark on this time-massive new wave of Greenfield pulp mill building.

Subscribers to DANA reports can get details of all these mills being built or soon to be started. Just two of 26 projects identified, in

**“MASSIVE NEW WAVE OF GREENFIELD PULP MILL BUILDING”**



**Vietnam... the largest supplier of woodchips by far has had its imports cut by 17%. Even the price of its acacia woodchips were only 70% of eucalypt chips from Australia in September.**

two provinces, alone might use more than 5 million BDMT a year of woodchips – and all 26 projects (some of which may be problematic) might use an extra 18 million BDMT or around three times the total volume exported from Australia in 2019.

Why is china doing this? It

seems irrational. But then, rarely anything in China is rational to the Western mind. But it could be that new carbon reduction/zero timetables set by the government in 2020 mean that China is now front-end loading as many coal generated electricity-guzzling

paper mills with pulp mills which can supply carbon free energy to China's huge paper industry.

No doubt we will find out in the next two to three years.

DANA director Dennis Neilson co-writes (and has done for 26 years) the annual Woodchip Trade Review and provides subscribers with monthly and

2020-year-to-date trade statistics. The most recent covers exporter and importer country trade January to September 2020.

Visit [www.dana.co.nz/](http://www.dana.co.nz/) publications to order copies of the annual Woodchip Trade Review.



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# The forest practices system in Tasmania: prescriptions for harvesting, reforestation

I READ with interest the article (Timber&Forestry e-news, November 12) about the excellent ideas for totara harvesting in New Zealand.

Of interest to me was the discussion about restrictions on new silvicultural systems because they are not in the current Forestry Act.

This demonstrates the problem of having prescriptive matters associated with silviculture and land management in general tied up in acts and regulations, which are very difficult to change due to parliamentary processes.

In Tasmania, we have 35 years of operation under a Forest Practices Act. The act is not prescriptive about how forests are managed; it requires that Tasmania's forests are managed according to principles of sustainable forest management taking into account environmental, social and economic factors.

The act sets up a forest practices system which is tenure-blind, so it applies to all forests in Tasmania, no matter who the owner is ... the Crown and private forest owners all must adhere to



**Getting in on the act...** Forest Practices Authority chief forest practices officer Dr Peter Volker and Resources Minister Guy Barnett at the launch of the updated Forest Practices Code last month.

the same rules. The system consists of the act and regulations set by parliament, a Forest Practices Authority, which is an independent statutory body, a Forest Practices Code and authorised Forest Practices officers. Forest practices plans are legal instruments which prescribe how forest practices (harvesting, reforestation etc) are to be carried out on the ground.

The act enables the Forest Practices Authority (FPA) to issue and amend a Forest Practices Code, which provides the prescriptions for harvesting and reforestation. The code can be amended

by the FPA from time to time through a process of public consultation. In fact, the FPA has just been through that process and a new Forest Practices Code 2020 will come into force on January 1 next year. The code is the basis for forest practices officers developing site-specific forest practices plans, which become legal operational plans as soon as they are certified.

The code also calls up a range of 'planning tools' which provide prescriptions and advice in great detail, so that forest practices officers can develop and supervise plans which are specific to the site conditions encountered.

The plan must address all natural and cultural values and protect them where necessary. These planning tools can be amended as soon as new scientific or practical knowledge becomes available. Of course, there is a consultation process, but it is not a complex legalistic approach and experts can be called in from a range of disciplines and backgrounds.

People with boots on the ground can also give a pragmatic perspective, so the planning tools are not just academic documents, they actually work in real life and we have 35 years of evidence that they do.

If anyone in New Zealand, or other parts of Australia for that matter, is interested in how the forest practices system works in Tasmania they can look at our excellent web site at [www.fpa.tas.gov.au](http://www.fpa.tas.gov.au)

Better still, they are welcome to visit Tasmania and see how it operates on the ground.

– DR PETER VOLKER, chief forest practices officer and director, Forest Practices Authority, Hobart.

## New CEO appointed at Private Forest Services Qld

WITH solid experience in aboriculture and environmental services Anne Love (pictured) is well equipped for her new appointment as CEO at Private Forest Services Queensland, based at Gympie.

Anne's background also includes operational and safety policy and procedural development as well as implementing and managing

operational projects.

She replaces Sean Ryan in the role.

"Sean may have retired but we will entice him from time to time to use his wealth of expertise on projects as required," Bronwyn Lloyd, administration, at PFSQ said.

Bronwyn said PFSQ would be transitioning to a new email

account effective from January 1. The new email is [info@pfsq.org.au](mailto:info@pfsq.org.au)

"The email [pfsq@bigpond.com](mailto:pfsq@bigpond.com) will remain up to this date, but a change in your system will make sure you we don't miss any communications from you," she said.

PFSQ will be shutting down



from December 21 and re-opening January 4 2021.

# The red cedars of Neverland: 'hooked' on an adventure with Peter and Wendy

## Three plantation blocks are thriving in the Illawarra region of NSW

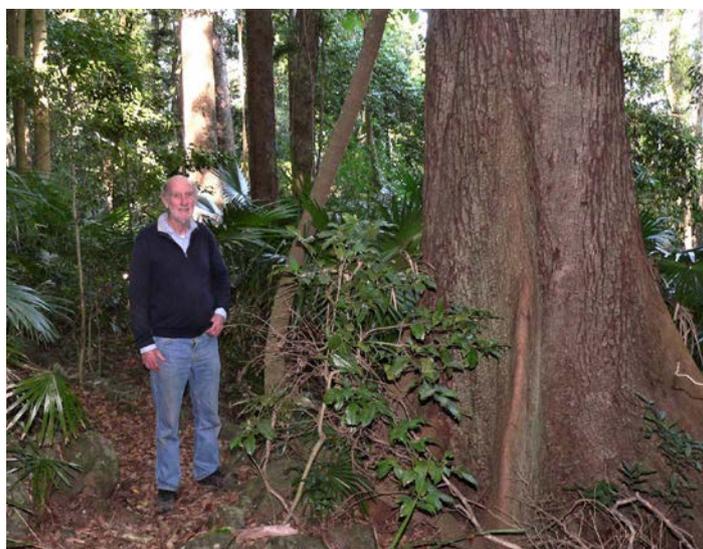
RECENTLY I was fortunate to have had a tree adventure in Neverland, where I was privileged to spend some time with Peter Pan and Wendy. True!

Neverland is a property in the Illawarra region of NSW, and is the home of Peter and Wendy McAra ... better known as Peter Pan and Wendy.

They are both distinguished retired academics, and although you wouldn't think so to look at him Peter is also a much celebrated author of numerous romantic novels and stage plays. But in addition to these interests, and perhaps best of all, Peter and Wendy are red cedar enthusiasts with a red cedar plantation and area of native forest to prove it.

So, I consider myself to have been honoured to spend some time in their company, and to look around their Neverland property. I was constantly on the lookout for Captain Hook.

Among his many attributes, Peter has established a reputation among tree enthusiast groups and farmers for his knowledge about the virtues and technical idiosyncrasies of establishing red cedar plantations. His three red cedar plantation blocks at Neverland are now 10 years old.



**Peter McAra (aka Peter Pan) with one of his beloved red cedar trees at Neverland.**

Commonly known as red cedar, *Toona ciliata* is a large rainforest tree that grows to a height of 40-60 m. The natural range of red cedar emanate from southern parts of Asia through to New Guinea and into Australia.

In Australia red cedar is found on the east coast between southern Queensland down to the southern Illawarra region of NSW.

Red cedar was the start of Australia's timber industry and made a substantial contribution to Australia's early prosperity. From the end of the 18th century free settlers, freed and escaped convicts, ex-soldiers and seamen went

recognised the value of red cedar. He wrote to Lord Sydney on February 13, 1790: "... the wood of some of these trees is very light, they are about the size of large walnut trees, which they resemble, they shed their leaves and bear a small fruit".

'Cedar getting' began along the Hawkesbury River. Lieutenant Colonel Paterson reported on March 21, 1795, (a day now celebrated as World Forestry Day) that he had allowed the master of the ship *Experiment* to take a cargo of cedar to India: "... in the hope that, if it should prove valuable in India, it might be of advantage to His Majesty's interest in any future intercourse with that country".

By 1802 logging had grown to such a ferocious extent in the Hawkesbury area, that Governor King, who otherwise encouraged settlement, issued a special order prohibiting the cutting of red cedar without his permission.

However, cedar getters ignored this regulation and the hunt for further stands of cedar spread up and down the coast. Sawyers reached Port Macquarie in the early 1820s and moved north to the Manning River by 1828, and to the Illawarra region by 1810-1815.

### TALKING TREES



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# PEFC gains top rank in ASEAN guidelines

PEFC has achieved the highest ranking in the assessment against ASEAN guidelines for responsible agricultural investment (RAI).

PEFC's sustainable forest management principles scored 9.5 out of 10 points.

The RAI gives guidance on food, agriculture and forestry investments to agribusinesses, governments, financial institutions and producers.

The report follows a comparison by the Central Point of Expertise on Timber (CPET) released by the UK's Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and the Dutch Timber Procurement

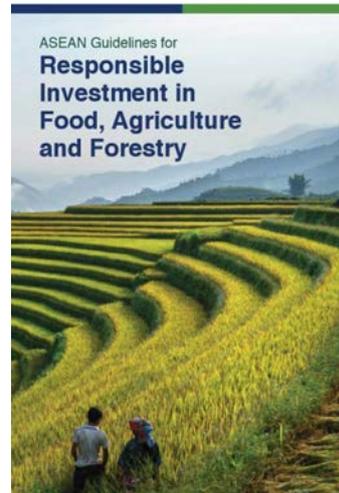
Assessment Committee, which also provided top marks for PEFC.

Responsible Wood CEO Simon Dorries welcomed the release of the report and reiterated the importance of forest certification in meeting commitments for responsible and sustainable forest management.

"Responsible Wood and PEFC forest certification provides a framework for global forests to be managed sustainably for multi-generational use," he said.

The report assessed the PEFC Sustainable Forest Management standard, comprising six main criteria.

"The first five PEFC principles align with the ASEAN RAI guidelines on food nutrition, economic development, natural



resources, climate change and rule of law and governance," the report highlights.

"The sixth PEFC principle (maintenance or appropriate enhancement of socio-economic functions and conditions) emphasises economic development, support to marginalised

populations (women, young people and indigenous people) as well as tenure rights and data collection."

The primary purpose of the guidelines is to promote investment in food and agriculture, including fisheries and forestry in the ASEAN region that contributes to regional economic development, food and nutrition security, food safety and equitable benefits, as well as the sustainable use of natural resources.

The guidelines distil the global best practices for ensuring that larger-scale agribusiness investments are socially, economically, and environmentally sustainable and inclusive. It provides future partners of such investments a roadmap for future investments.

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# 10,000 construction jobs as Victoria pumps billions into social housing over four years

COVID-plagued Victoria will see up to 10,000 construction jobs created and more than 12,000 social and affordable homes built over the next four years after the state government announced a multi-billion dollar investment that will boost social housing supply by 10%.

The government will spend \$5.3 billion to build 12,200 new homes throughout metro and regional Victoria in the upcoming state budget.

The investment will deliver 9300 social homes along with 2900 low-cost and affordable homes to help low to moderate income earners live closer to social and employment opportunities.

Of the social homes, 2000 will be reserved for those with mental illness while the remainder will be available to indigenous Victorians, pensioners, people with disability, family violence victims and single parent families.

This will include replacement of 1100 older dwellings. One quarter of the



1/ **Social housing projects will generate a wealth of construction jobs in Victoria.**

2/ **Richard Wynne... announcement on Monday.**

and affordable homes will be delivered over the next four years.

The new investment comes at a time when Victoria faces a growing homelessness challenge.

According to the Victorian Housing Register, the number of households on social housing waiting lists rose from

“MEETING THE CHALLENGE OF THE HOMELESS”

33,073 in September 2016 to 48,529 as of September this year – with only a small part of this being Covid-related.

Victoria has the lowest proportion of social housing in Australia, accounting for only 3.2% of overall housing stock compared with 4.3% nationwide.

Property and social service groups have welcomed the announcement.

“This colossal investment will mean fewer people cold, hungry and homeless, and more people in work. It’s that simple,” Victorian Council of Social Service CEO Emma King said.

“A single investment of this scale has not been seen in many decades, if ever. It’s a game changer.”

Ms King said the importance of housing should not be underestimated.

“Housing is a springboard to a good life, a life of wellbeing. With a roof over your head, you can overcome all the other challenges more easily.”

Premier Daniel Andrews and Housing Minister Richard Wynne are expected to unveil the package on Monday.

homes will be allocated to regional Victoria.

The program will be delivered by a new agency known as Homes Victoria.

Combined with housing from existing investments such as the Public Housing Renewal Program and the Social Housing Growth Fund, more than 15,800 new social

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