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DNA science aims at growing superior radiata pine trees

COVER STORY P5



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Senator McKenzie stands up for timber workers to deliver certainty for industry

Legislation clarifies legal anomaly on Victoria's native hardwood forests

NATIONALS Senate leader and senator for Victoria Bridget McKenzie yesterday introduced legislation into Parliament that will provide certainty for Australia's native hardwood timber industries.

Australian Forest Products Association CEO Ross Hampton said the senator's Bill would clarify a legal anomaly created by a Federal Court ruling in May, which has created significant uncertainty for Regional Forest Agreements.

"That certainty is in doubt because of a Federal Court decision in May which took a new interpretation of how RFAs operate, and how they interact with the Commonwealth Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act," Mr Hampton said.

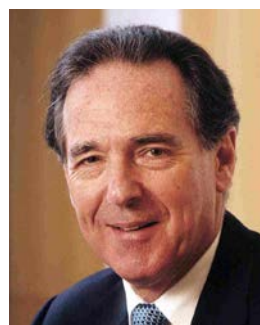
"Australia's native hardwood timber industry has been warning for months that its future is in doubt because of the legal uncertainty the judgment has created, and



Bridget McKenzie



Ross Hampton



Graeme Samuel



Michael O'Connor

the threat of lawfare from anti-forestry groups that threaten to use the precedent to shut down the industry."

Mr Hampton said Senator McKenzie's Bill would affirm and clarify the commonwealth's intent regarding RFAs to make it explicitly clear that forestry operations covered by an RFA were exempt from Part 3 of the EPBC Act.

"This in no way weakens environmental laws because the RFA framework ensures the environmental protections provided by the EPBC Act are reflected in the accredited state environmental laws," he said.

"This Bill merely provides clarity about how those bilateral agreements operate, as they have for more than 20 years under a bipartisan model that balances our shared community needs for social, environmental and economic outcomes from the sustainable management of our forests."

Addressing the legal uncertainty created by the court case was also a

LEGISLATIVE AMENDMENT SUPPORTS RFA PROCESS

recommendation in Professor Graeme Samuel's Interim Report of the independent review of the EPBC Act.

Mr Hampton has thanked Senator McKenzie for standing up for timber workers and urged the government and Opposition to support the Bill.

"As the daughter of a log truck driver and growing up in timber towns in Victoria, Senator McKenzie knows first-hand how vital the industry is for regional communities," Ross Hampton said.

"This minor but vital

Cont P.3



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From P 2

legislative amendment should be supported by everyone in parliament who claims to support RFAs and the Australian timber industry," he said.

Senator McKenzie was able to take this action as she is currently a backbench member of the government. Assistant Minister Jonno Duniam, who has responsibility for forestry, continues to champion the policy changes necessary to secure a strong future for both the native and plantation sectors.

Timber workers union CFMEU Manufacturing has also called on the government to support Senator McKenzie's Bill.

"The changes being pursued would amend the EPBC Act to support sustainable forest management continuing to deliver triple bottom line (social, environmental and economic) benefits from the very small amount of public native forest still available for timber production," the union said.

The union has wrote to the Prime Minister in August calling for bipartisan support to changes to the EPBC Act and the Illegal Logging Regulations to blunt the outrageous and disingenuous smear litigation by green groups such as the Bob Brown Foundation trying to shut down timber communities.

"We welcome Senator McKenzie's Bill," CFMEU national secretary, manufacturing division, Michael O'Connor said.



A big 'thank you'... Bridget McKenzie with AFPA's Greg McCormack joins timber workers at Parliament House in Canberra.

"There has been a lack of urgency to date in defence of timber jobs from the government," Mr O'Connor said.

"Governments needs to do more to protect regional jobs and this would be a good start."

The union's letter to the Prime Minister outlined that the way both the EPBC Act and Illegal Logging Regulations were being interpreted by some was not consistent with the objectives of Australian parliaments when they legislated them.

"THERE IS A LACK OF URGENCY IN DEFENCE OF TIMBER JOBS"

The letter appeals to Scott Morrison reminding him of his comments about Tasmanian timber workers at the 2019 election: "Wherever these jobs are... our government doesn't sneer at the jobs of regional Australians. We think they're very important - it's an honest, hard, decent living"

In addition to the changes to the EPBC Act, the union is continuing to demand

effective amendments to the Code of Practice for Timber Production from the Victorian government.

In July, the Victorian Minister Jaclyn Symes said, "Regional jobs are more important than ever right now, and we can't let outdated regulation put them at risk"

Michael O'Connor said

regulation at federal and state levels was outdated.

"Governments need to back up their rhetoric and promises with action to protect jobs," he said.

"Our union will leave no stone unturned in defence of our members' jobs, their families and their communities."

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DNA timber tests to find importers who go against the grain in Australian trade

AN Australian 'first' national DNA testing program used to verify the species and origin of imported timber sold at retail outlets has released its first round of results, confirming more than 60% of the species' labelling was accurate.

Assistant Minister responsible for forestry Jonno Duniam said the compliance testing was conducted to build consumer trust and identify those who trade off illegally harvested products.

"The forestry industry is sustainable and well-managed, employing more than 52,000 in regional communities, but Australia is not immune to the trade of illegally logged timber," Mr Duniam said.

"We will always back Aussie

timber – but when it comes to imported timber it's essential consumers have confidence in the products they're purchasing."

Timber samples were purchased from major hardware stores, timber suppliers and furniture stores in Queensland, New South Wales, Western Australia, South Australia and the ACT.

The products from various countries were sold as oak, merbau, meranti, acacia, eucalyptus, pine, rosewood, mahogany and teak. The samples were sent to the University of Adelaide for testing, which found 60% of the timber species were accurately labelled in the first round of testing.



Jonno Duniam... we will always back Aussie timber.

"In some instances, the timber was labelled incorrectly, and it's concerning that DNA testing found durian tree had been wrongly labelled as cedar in one instance, while a species of rubber tree was labelled as meranti," Mr Duniam said.

"The Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment will now work with retailers to determine where the problems have

occurred and identify if there has been any deliberate non-compliance."

Mr Duniam said timber importers must have robust due diligence processes to guarantee the accuracy of labelling from their timber suppliers.

Under the Illegal Logging Prohibition Act 2012, importers were required to undertake due diligence, including identifying, assessing and managing any risks that the timber might be illegally harvested.

"Illegal logging is a major global problem," Mr Duniam said, "and the United Nations and Interpol estimate that illegal logging costs the global community up to \$206 billion each year.

"It is estimated that up to 10%, or \$800 million, of our timber imports could come from high-risk sources every year."

Design awards feature next issue

The Marrickville library and community centre in Sydney's inner-west, which led a near-record field of entries from builders, designers, architects, engineers and landscapers, was the overall winner in the Australian Timber Design Awards announced last week

The \$40 million project was a joint venture by Taylor Thomson Whitting and BVN Architects. Accepting the award at a special ceremony in Sydney on Tuesday, presented by John Simon (left), life



member of Forests and Wood Products Australia, the award sponsor, are Andre Callanan of BVN Architects and Kevin Berry, structural engineer, TTW.

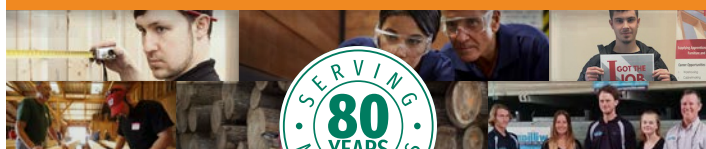
Timber&Forestry enews will carry a special coverage of the awards next week.



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Growing the right tree in the right place at the right time

A superior radiata using DNA science

FINDING the formula to grow taller, straighter and stronger radiata pine trees is about to take a major advance for Australian growers thanks to the development of a sophisticated new genetic analysis program.

Tree Breeding Australia's research geneticist Dr Richard Kerr is developing new digital tools with the capability of pinpointing tree genes and measurement data to assist growers to select parents with optimal breeding values for specific locations, supporting operational and economic gains.

Dr Kerr first partnered with the Mount Gambier-based organisation more than 20 years ago to create TREEPLAN, a world-recognised system that can handle the peculiarities of tree data to assist breeding decision making, which is also utilised by growers in Sweden, France and China. This digital evaluation system transformed industry decision making, ranking trees on their genetic merit, linking performance data and pedigree information to build



Dr Richard Kerr... a formula to grow taller, straighter and stronger radiata pine trees.

robust genetic values for plantation regions.

This system is similar to data analysis tools used by the beef sector to produce higher yield. This latest research will further sophisticate the TREEPLAN software, incorporating for the first-time genomic data for the whole species of radiata pine

in Australia.

TBA general manager Dr Tony McRae said it was hoped the new system would double the rate of genetic gain, providing industry with the tools to interpret DNA data for accurate and efficient decision making.

"This is world class research that is providing industry with the tools to sophisticate its breeding program," he said.

"Richard is building the interface to link data from multiple sources to better interpret the trees DNA to

create true genetic predictions."

Dr Kerr has sourced needles from 1000 key radiata breeding trees to extract DNA and generate gene variant data, sourcing information from 30,000 informative points on the genome. He explained the DNA assay was undertaken in an American laboratory which

has some of the world's best technicians and tools. Meanwhile, the sequencing of important ancestors of the current breeding parents is being completed in Australian laboratories to further strengthen this assay.

"A spot in the genome might have variants in terms of the genes that spot is coding for," Dr Kerr said.

"A tree carrying one variant may have a slight advantage in economic terms, such

**NEW SYSTEM
COULD DOUBLE
THE RATE OF
GENETIC GAIN**

Cont P 6



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

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New genetic analysis... producing superior radiata pine trees.

From P 5

as extra height or diameter, compared to another tree carrying a different variant," he said. "When you sum up the effects of the variation at all the individual spots, they could add up to a significant advantage for a tree. We are isolating the best tree by looking at the variance in the genome."

“SUPPORTING ‘PRECISION FORESTRY’ FOR THE FIRST TIME

"This program is a world 'first' in forestry, incorporating DNA and traditional breeding information into a BLUP (Best Linear Unbiased Prediction) analysis to generate an integrated analysis system to enable single step genomic selection.

Green Triangle Forest Industries Hub chair Ian McDonnell praised the research, stating that for the first time all data would be consolidated to support "precision forestry".

"The value creation from this new technology will be enormous," he said. "For the first time industry will have the tools to grow the right tree, in the right place and at the right time tailoring decision making to the economic and environmental

objective.

This project is one of many funded through the National Institute for Forest Products Innovation which is putting the Green Triangle on the map as a centre of excellence in forestry innovation. In the long term it will assist industry to generate more valuable fibre from its existing land.

NIFPI, jointly funded by the commonwealth and South Australian government, is promoting and encouraging innovation across the country's forest and wood products sector.

NIFPI Mount Gambier chair Tammy Auld emphasised how such collaborative research would enable the sector to grow.

"As chair of the NIFPI Mount Gambier Centre and a local forest manager I am excited about this research which demonstrates the skills we have in our region," she said.

"This research will ensure that South Australia can continue to grow and produce Australia's premium structural grade pine and ensures this renewable resource is available to meet increasing future construction demand."

On the cover: Tree Breeding Australia's research geneticist Dr Richard Kerr is developing new digital tools to pinpoint tree genes and measurement data to assist growers to select parents with optimal breeding values.

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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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

AFPA logo: new look for a new decade of advocacy

IN advance of its 10th anniversary, to be celebrated in 2021, the Australian Forest Products Association has unveiled a new brand (pictured).

AFPA chairman Greg McCormack said, "Ten years ago two important industry bodies decided that there was far more to be achieved speaking as one voice than as separate advocacy organisations.

"The National Association

of Forest Industries and the Australian Plantation Products and Paper Industry Council united at that time to create AFPA. That decision has paid great dividends and AFPA is now recognised, rightly, as an important voice for the 80,000 people who work in our \$24billion value chain."

Mr McCormack said on the cusp of AFPA's decade, it was timely to refresh the original branding to ensure "we still reflect the values and mission




of the organisation."

Branding and design company PERCEPT was chosen and tasked with producing a logo and approach which ticked all the boxes. To do this they needed to come up with a design which said sustainable, dynamic, forever renewing, creative

and the environmental choice. They also needed to show that AFPA works in the spaces which bring industry, communities, environment and governments together.

"They have achieved this goal admirably," Mr McCormack said.

"The logo will also be used, with local variation, by the emerging cross industry advocacy bodies in Tasmania, Victoria and South Australia," he said.



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A Miracle Economy (so far so good) .. and timber industry has led the charge

I MUST be showing my age but right at the moment the economic data seems to conjure up the sounds of the 1975 hit by Hot Chocolate 'I believe in miracles'.

However, to ensure a measured tone in these unsettled times, I have left off the rest of the title, the very catchy "you sexy thing".

How else to describe the GDP data for the September quarter? On the back of the worst quarter on record in June, where the economy contracted by 7%, we have now bounced back in the September quarter (admittedly off a low base) with growth of 3.3%.

Our industry has led the charge.

Housing approvals for Australia were up 2.7% to 177,654 year-ending October. Standouts were Victoria – up 13.6% and Western Australia up 4.7% on an annualised basis. This strength in demand is underpinned by building work completed which in the September quarter was up 1.1% for new house construction over the previous quarter and up 5.1% for alterations and additions.

Not surprisingly, housing finance continued to expand for the fifth month in a row. Significantly for our industry loans for construction of new housing or purchase of newly-built housing hit \$5.1 billion in October, up on \$4.8 billion in September and well above



Housing approvals were up 2.7% to 177,654 year-ending October. Standouts were Victoria – up 13.6% and Western Australia up 4.7% on an annualised basis.

the trough in February when loans for this activity plunged to \$3.1 billion.

Collectively, all this activity has seen softwood timber sales continue to strengthen with sales in the FWPA softwood data series moving up to 3.04 million cub m a year, ending October nearing the previous peak of 3.17 million cub m in June 2018.

Is this sustainable when the normal drivers of housing demand are challenged? Household formation rates

FOCUS ON FORESTS



With JIM HOUGHTON

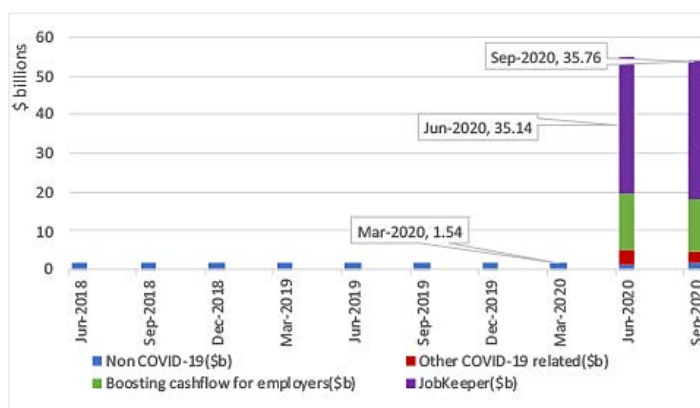
have been turned on their head with the collapse in

migration due to Covid-19. Plus under-employment continues to rise suggesting people in work are not currently obtaining the hours of work they are seeking.

At the macro level the key is the transition outlined in the October budget. The expectation is that the significant support payments currently being provided will be wound back by March 2021. This is the 'fiscal cliff' some commentators are referencing. As can be seen in Chart 1, government support has increased from a base level of some \$1.54 billion per quarter with outlays on JobKeeper running at just under \$36 billion in the September quarter.

As these payments are wound back the budget has provided incentives with tax deductions and investment allowances to encourage consumers to spend and business to invest. So the key thing to keep an eye on coming months is whether

GOVERNMENT SUPPORT FOR BUSINESS IN RESPONSE TO COVID 19



Source: ABS Cat 5206

“HOUSING FINANCE CONTINUES TO EXPAND”

From P 8

business investment and household consumption step up to meet the shortfall. The extent of the gap can be seen in Chart 2.

To get back to pre-Covid levels of business investment will need to increase some \$5.8 billion while household consumption will need to increase \$18.5 billion. This is

“HOUSEHOLD CONSUMPTION MOVE IN RIGHT DIRECTION

not a one off but an increase in activity required each

quarter here on. Whether this happens or not is effectively

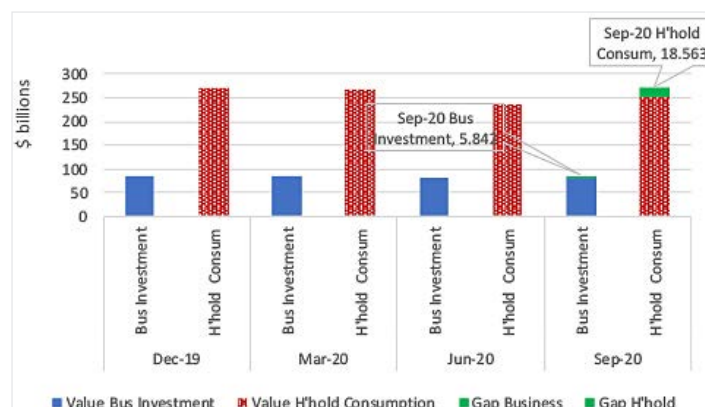
the \$24.3 billion question hanging over the economy.

At present household consumption is moving in the right direction with an increase in the September quarter of 7.9% while business investment is flat. Spending in these areas will need to accelerate through 2021 to compensate for the phase out of JobKeeper.

So enjoy Christmas and let's hope Hot Chocolate are proved right.

• *Jim Houghton is statistics and economics manager at Forest and Wood Products Australia.*

TRANSITION GAP BUSINESS INVESTMENT, H'HOLD CONSUMPTION



Source: FWPA, ABS Cat 5206

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Unhappy Chinese businesses kowtow to Republic's harsh ruling on imports

Is the bark beetle the real culprit behind the log jam at Portland?

UNCONFIRMED reports by shippers at the Victoria's Port of Portland suggest quantities of stock-piled logs abandoned by Chinese importers are being road transported to processors for chipping into by-products such as MDF.

The port, strategically located on the southwest coast between Melbourne and Adelaide, has seen no log shipments to China for more than a month as industry leaders say an export ban is costing jobs.

China has banned timber imports from South Australia and Tasmania only weeks after it imposed a similar ban on Victorian and Queensland log exports.

Chinese authorities notified the Australia government they would not accept Australian logs, claiming they had detected live bark

“THE LOG BAN IS NOT ABOUT BEETLES



Standstill... no shipments from Portland for more than a month. Photo: The Standard

beetles in a number of shipments this year.

A Timber&Forestry enews correspondent, a Chinese Australian based in Guangdong province, says it is patently obvious to everyone the log ban is not about beetles.

He said under WTO rules a member could only impose a ban on a specific class of goods from a specific region

for a limited time until the issue was resolved. And it would normally be resolved quickly.

“China knows the rules and so there is no ban,” he said. “They have worded up the shipping companies not to load Australian timber (not just logs) and they will obey. We cannot load our sawn cypress at the moment and I am sure the same applies to

all timber from any port in Australia.”



He said the shipping companies knew that if they did not impose the unofficial ban they would be unofficially “done over” in Chinese ports any time the Chinese Communist Party chooses.

“Also, officials here have held meetings with thousands of Chinese importers

of the targeted categories of goods and told them they should not import these goods,” the correspondent said.

“Chinese companies are not happy about this; there is nothing in writing but they will obey because they fear reprisals at any time by the Republic. If they want to stay

Cont P 12

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A real tree in the House celebrates Christmas

QUEENSLAND parliamentarians and forest and timber industry representatives celebrated the start of the festive season late last week with the unveiling of a 'live' Christmas tree in the foyer of Parliament House.

Grown in western Queensland, the Monterey pine (*Pinus radiata*) is festooned with locally grown and processed plywood decorations in the shape of a tree – symbolising the growth of the state's \$2.4 billion forest and timber industry.

The Speaker of the Queensland Parliament

“SYMBOLISING GROWTH OF A \$2.4BN INDUSTRY



Festive celebration in Brisbane... Members of Parliament and Industry representatives celebrate the gifting of a Christmas tree by Timber Queensland. Top row, from left: Sam Hyne, Hyne Timber, Clarissa Brandt Timber Queensland, Greg Phipps, Eco Cottages, Sarah Porter, Timber Queensland, Beth Welden, Forest Learning, and bottom row, from left Steve Worley, HQPlantations, Curtis Pitt, Speaker of the Queensland Parliament, Tony Perrett, Shadow Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Mick Stephens, CEO, Timber Queensland, Bruce Saunders, Assistant Minister for Train Manufacturing and Regional Roads, Simon Dorries, CEO, Responsible Wood, Ian Haines, DTM Timber, and Mick de Brenni Minister for Public Works and Procurement.

Curtis Pitt was joined at the event by the co-chairs of the Queensland's Parliamentary Friends of the Forest and Timber Industry

Network Bruce Saunders, MP Maryborough, and Tony Perrett, MP Gympie.


The occasion was celebrated with a contingent

of parliamentary colleagues from around the chamber, including Mick de Brenni, Minister for Public Works and Procurement, and Deb Frecklington, Shadow Minister for Regional Development and Manufacturing.


Joan Pease, MP Lytton, Chris Whiting, MP Bancroft, and Bart Mellish, Assistant Minister to the Premier for Veterans Affairs, Trade and Covid Economic Recovery, also stopped by for a photo with the tree.

Surrounding the tree are 'southern pine' seedlings donated by HQPlantations, Queensland's largest commercial plantation grower. The seedlings are *Pinus caribaea* and *Pinus Elliottii* hybrids, the major commercial pine species grown in Queensland.

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Winner of the Australian Certified Timber Award at the 2020 Australian Timber Design Awards. Designed by Cox Architecture.

(Photo by Mike Chorley Photography and Ethan Rohloff)

responsiblewood.org.au



Jason Ross presents the 2020 Responsible Wood Australian Certified Timber Award to Nick Tyrell, Director, from Cox Architecture.



Bark beetles... causing all the fuss over log exports.

From P 10

in business they will kowtow to Chinese officials."

The federal Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment wrote to Chinese authorities on November 16 seeking an end to the suspension.

"At this time, Chinese authorities have not responded," a department spokesman said.

"Australia continues to seek technical engagement on the biosecurity issues cited by China as justification for the suspension of log exports," he said.

The department also proposed a number of changes to the regulation of log exports, designed to further reduce the possibility of live insects on exported logs.

A spokesman said the department had noted with China that "almost all of the insects intercepted" were on containerised logs.

"On this basis, the department requested an immediate lifting of the suspensions for bulk cargoes," he said.

Green Triangle Forest Industry Hub chair Ian McDonnell would not reveal specifics of the impacts to the industry but said "there have been some layoffs"

since the suspension started.

"They would be spread across south-eastern South Australia and south-western Victoria," he said.

"But 'on the flip side' the domestic timber market was "strong", increasing jobs in the processing sector.

"Having said that the export market is a very important part of our industry," Mr. McDonnell said.

Colac-based AKD Softwoods CEO Shane Vicary said the suspension had prompted a rethink in the industry.

"I think it's an opportunity in our industry, like all other industries, to reset out thinking about supply chain security," Mr. Vicar said.

Port of Portland CEO Greg Tremewen said the port usually saw about one log ship leave for China a week, but there were none since the suspension.

"There are thousands of jobs that will be affected and the government, from where I sit, seems to be the only body that will be able to fix it and that needs to be done with urgency," he said.

Mr Tremewen said the bark beetle issue was focused on containerised logs, not

Cont P 16



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Bombs away ... but for what purpose?

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QUESTIONS have been asked why a \$15 million water bomber sat idle for a month only 90 km away from Fraser Island while bushfires raged across 800,000 ha of the world heritage site.

But the Bundaberg-based air tanker, capable of dropping 10,000 litres of water at once and supposed to be deployed to catastrophic bushfires at a moment's notice, brings into question the overall effectiveness of this fire-fighting system.

Forest bushfire veterans say the recently-concluded royal commission was "sucked into the trap" of thinking that more and bigger water bombers, indeed a national fleet of water bombers, a veritable air force of water bombers, would be "the answer to the bushfire maiden's prayer".

"They overlook the fact that the existing water bomber fleet was of little value in the 2020 bushfires," said Roger Underwood, who was recognised with a Member of the Order of Australia for his decades of service to forestry and bushfire management in Western Australia.

Speaking after his submission to the commission was left in a bottom drawn, Mr Underwood said: "Even in California, a focus on water bombing has been condemned as a waste of money and effort. The climate change-bushfires argument and the call for a water bombing air force are clearly linked.

"Nobody really knows how



A growing reliance on water bombing a foolish and costly approach to bushfire management.

the Australian climate can be "fixed" so as to prevent bushfires, so a fall-back plan was needed: attack the flames with a strategy similar to that of the RAF's Sir Arthur 'Bomber' Harris' in World War 2 ... "it won't work, but the media will love it."

Mr Underwood said with the failure to come out powerfully on the need for the states to invest responsibly in a preparedness and mitigation strategy, based on fuel reduction, the royal commission would have (if implemented) set back the clock on bushfire management by about 30 years.

"It has been a waste of time, money and the energy of good people, and will ensure only one thing – if the PM and the states buy it, identical bushfire disasters are inevitable," he said.

Water bombers have dumped almost 3.5 million litres of water and fire-

retardant gel on the Fraser Island fires, sparked by an illegal campfire. But the loose soil on the world's largest sand island is causing the liquid to drain away quickly in the inaccessible, bush-covered dunes where the fire continues to burn on multiple fronts.

“CLIMATE ARGUMENT AND WATER BOMBERS ARE CLEARLY LINKED”

PM Scott Emerson has pushed for a full inquiry into the response to the fire that has burnt through half of the island.

Roger Underwood said there were calls for the government to increase its fleet of aerial water bombers, specifically the gargantuan DC10 and the Very Large Air Tanker (VLAT).

"Water bombing aircraft are also beloved of the

uniformed firemen who dominate our emergency services, because they are the ultimate expression of 'wet firefighting'. Wet firefighting is fighting fires with water; uniformed firemen everywhere have been trained to know it is the only approach."

Experienced land managers advocate fire prevention and damage mitigation, with desperate firefighting seen as the last resort, only needed when an effective land management program has broken down.

"We understand that forest fires must be fought 'dry', that is, with bulldozers constructing containment lines. In this approach water is used for mopping up the fire edge, not for constructing the edge, which (in forest country) it cannot do," Mr Underwood said.

"We regard the growing reliance on water bombing as

Cont P 15

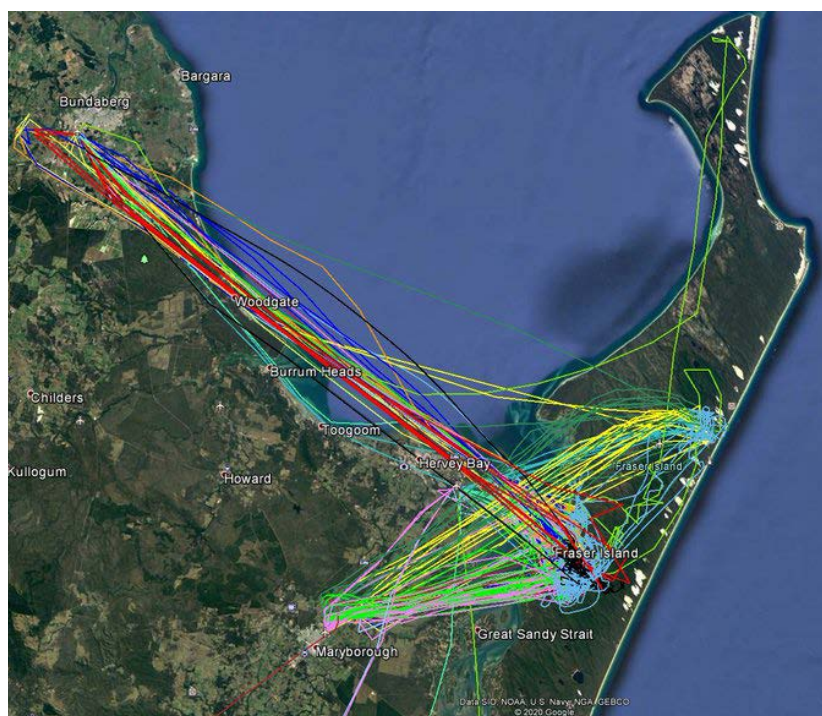
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a foolish and costly approach to bushfire management."

Consider this:

- Because of atmospheric turbulence and smoke, water bombing aircraft cannot get at the seat of a rampaging forest fire; they must stand off from the head, and then the drop is evaporated by radiant heat well before the flames arrive.

- In tall, dense forest, the water drop often cannot penetrate the canopy in sufficient volume to make a difference – it is intercepted by the tree crowns. This occurred over and over again in the recent fire in ash forest in the Otway Ranges in Victoria



A map tracks aircraft working over K'gari on Fraser Island in one day last week when 17 water bombers dropped almost 1 million litres of water.

**“DESPERATE
FIREFIGHTING
SEEM AS THE
LAST RESORT**

– the water simply did not get to the ground.

- Water bombers cannot (or do not) operate at night and under high winds, the very conditions when the most damaging forest fires occur.

Mr Underwood said he was not completely against water bombing.

"A small number of light water bombers can assist ground crews in the control of relatively mild-intensity

bushfires, and under some circumstances can 'hold' a fire in a remote spot until the ground crews arrive, or can drench a house threatened by a grass fire.



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Audit gives Responsible Wood compliance tick

SUSTAINABLE forestry champion Responsible Wood has passed an audit and 'check compliance' with flying colours with development activities meeting all requirements of Standards Australia.

"The surveillance audit provides Responsible Wood with an opportunity to demonstrate to Standards Australia an ongoing commitment to standards development," Responsible Wood's certification coordinator Alan Snow said.

"Standards Australia, the owner of the standards and trademarks, is one of five accredited SDOs licensed to develop Australian standards

for forest certification through our ongoing SDAC accreditation," Mr Snow said.

As an SDO, Responsible Wood is accredited to develop Australian standards for forest management in addition to Australian standards that support the Australian Forest Certification Scheme. These standards are used to support Responsible Wood claims on timber or paper-based products recognised and endorsed by PEFC globally.

CEO Simon Dorries said the Responsible Wood certification scheme's unique position as an accredited SDO provided consumers of timber and timber-based products with the trust that products have been sourced from a sustainable source.

"But it is the overarching governance structure, the commitment to independence in the



Alan Snow... standards support Responsible Wood claims on timber and paper-based products recognised and endorsed by PEFC.

certification process, that is of utmost importance," he said.

Responsible Wood is also working towards the revision of AS 4708. The new standard will be developed as a fully recognised joint Australia-New Zealand standard accepted by PEFC International and will meet the requirements for

a fully-fledged JAS-ANZ accredited sustainable forest management system.

"This is highly unique; the new standard will cover sustainable forest management and will underpin PEFC forest certification in Australia and New Zealand," Mr Dorries said.

In addition, Responsible Wood has turned its attention to the revision of AS4707 Chain of Custody of Forest Products. Interested stakeholders have been invited to nominate candidates for the AS/ZS 4707 standards reference committee and working groups.

For information about standards development and an overview of RW standards, refer to the 'standards brochure' at www.responsiblewood.org.au

“ONGOING COMMITMENT TO STANDARDS DEVELOPMENT

From P 12

the bulk loaded logs the port exports, but suspensions exist for both forms of shipping.

The log business is worth hundreds of millions of dollars to the region and involves forestry operators, shipping lines, shipping agents, transport companies and the ports.

Comment: As China-Australia relations descend into a morass of sanctions and mutual recriminations, Beijing is delivering a huge cash windfall to Canberra and Australia's economy through its insatiable demand for iron ore.

China has few alternatives as it seeks to stimulate its economy post Covid-19

through infrastructure investment, with Australia accounting for more than half of iron ore shipments globally.

If Beijing were to try to purchase solely from non-Australian producers, at best it could get 56% of the volumes it typically imports, according to analysis by Goldman Sachs Group Inc.

“TIME TO RESET THINKING ON SUPPLY CHAIN SECURITY

"China is likely to remain reliant on Australian iron ore for the foreseeable future," said Andrew Book, Goldman's chief economist for Australia.

This reflects "the inelasticity of global supply and that China's annual import requirement far exceeds the seaborne supply" of other nations.

Beijing has hit Australian wine and barley with steep tariffs and restricted other commodities such as beef and seafood in recent months, ratcheting up pressure on the world's most China-dependent developed economy.

Ties have deteriorated since 2018 after Canberra barred Huawei Technologies Co. from building a 5G network and plummeted earlier this year when Australia called for an independent probe into the origins of the pandemic in Wuhan.

The total value of exports impacted by China's restrictions to date is just 0.3% of Australian gross domestic product. Yet, Goldman estimates that if Beijing took the nuclear option of banning Australian iron ore imports that would cut GDP growth by about 2 percentage points over 12 months.

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Charge your life with an Outlander GSR

CAUGHT 'short' in an all-electric SUV at night in the back blocks, my watch the only power source, my passenger switched off, but not before declaring "never again".

The electric sedan was a real hummer though. But a hybrid takes away the overwhelming fear of being stranded in a dead end in the dead of the night with a dead battery.

So it was with this comforting knowledge that we took the Mitsubishi Outlander PHEV for a spin in the mountains above the Gold Coast.

"You don't need to change your life to drive an Outlander PHEV, but it will change your life," says the Japanese auto group's PR.

The GSR features the same mechanicals as other PHEV variants but is underpinned by a new suspension arrangement designed to make the Outlander more dynamically capable.

Product strategy senior manager Owen Thomson says the GSR will broaden the Outlander PHEV's appeal and in doing so, broaden its customer base.

"We've introduced some Bilstein suspension for this



The Mitsubishi Outlander PHEV... dynamically capable.

particular grade to give it a sportier feel and that fits with the rest of the specification of the car," he said.

To match the new inverted struts and beefier shock absorbers, the GSR's spring rates have also been tweaked front and rear to ensure a sportier but composed ride and sharper handling.

Standard equipment includes micro-suede seat upholstery with synthetic leather bolster, power adjustable driver's seat, heated folding door mirrors, cargo blind, leather door trim inserts, privacy glass, front parking sensors, electric tailgate and eight-speaker sound system.

Priced from \$52,490, plus on-roads, the new sports offering brings a few unique

visual cues including a black roof, roof rails, mirror caps, rear spoiler, front and rear skid plates, darkened radiator grille, front air ducts and tailgate garnish and exclusive two-tone 18-in. alloy wheels.

The engine is the same 157 kW/332 Nm 2.4-litre four-cylinder plug-in hybrid drivetrain as the rest of the PHEV range which has been carried over unchanged from the early 2020 model, including the 13.8 kWh battery. As a result, Mitsubishi still claims an all-electric range of around 54 km, an all-electric top speed of 135 km/h and a combined fuel consumption of 1.9 L/100 km.

Given the fuel tank is 45 litres, the driving range tops 650 km, so with 54 km for the pure electric, count on

equaling 700 km.

The car's electric all-wheel drive system still feeds power to each axle directly via the two motors, but now has a Sports mode that sharpens the throttle response.

The front-wheel electric motor's power remains at 60 kW but the rear axle's unit has been upped to 70 kW. The floor-mounted, fan-cooled lithium-ion battery pack that powers them has been bumped from 12 kWh to 13.8 kWh in capacity

Charge times from empty to 100% meanwhile are pegged at 6.5 hours when using a household socket, 3.5 hours when using a home wallbox or up to 80% in 25 minutes when using a DC fast charger.

Standard equipment on the base model – and included or built on in the GSR and top spec Exceed – includes dual zone climate control, Apple CarPlay/Android Auto, 8 in. infotainment touchscreen, rearview camera, Bluetooth with voice recognition and adaptive cruise control.

The Outlander PHEV is covered by its new 10-year Diamond Advantage warranty with the existing eight-year/160,000 km battery warranty carried over.

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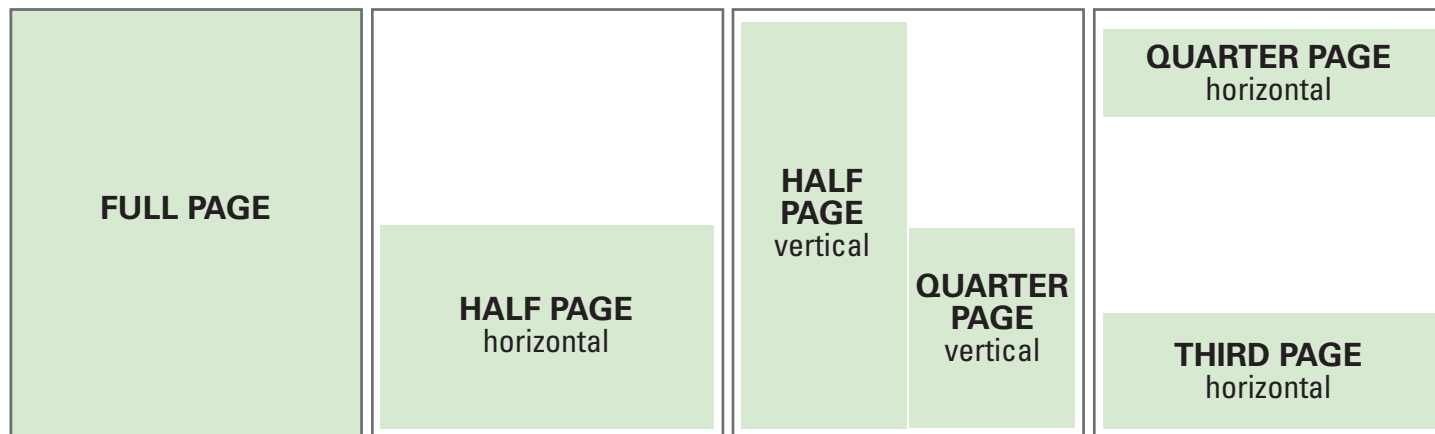
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