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ISSUE **657** | **May 13, 2021**

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## Getting to the nub at hub on biophilic wood design

COVER STORY P9



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# Federal Court decision on RFAs a historic decision for native forests

THE Full Bench of the Federal Court has delivered a historic win for Australia's sustainable native forest industries by confirming that forestry operations covered by regional forest agreements provide all the environmental protections required by national environmental laws.

In a unanimous decision on Monday, the court upheld VicForests' appeal against a single-judge decision 12 months ago which had created significant legal uncertainty for RFAs and for the tens of thousands of forest industry jobs that the bilateral state-commonwealth agreements underpin.

[Justice Debra Mortimer found in favour of Friends of Leadbeater's Possum, finding that harvesting within an RFA area was subject to the EPBC Act. She issued orders in August that barred VicForests from logging in 41 of the 66 Central Highland forest coupes which are covered by the Central



**The Federal Court has found that if forest harvesting is conducted within an RFA zone it is exempt from federal law.**

Highlands RFA].

The VicForests appeal hinged on the intended interpretation of s 38 (1) of the Commonwealth EPBC Act, which exempts "RFA forestry operations conducted in accordance with an RFA" from the requirements of Part 3 of the commonwealth's EPBC Act, which regulates activities that impact Matters of National Environmental Significance, including threatened species.

In its decision, the Full Bench affirmed VicForests'

argument that the correct interpretation of this provision is that the EPBC Act does not apply to forestry operations in an RFA region, and thus the Federal Court has no jurisdiction.

This is because RFAs were explicitly created as an alternative regulatory

**“ FULL BENCH UPHOLDS APPEAL BY VICFORESTS ”**

framework to the EPBC Act, and as part of the commonwealth's accreditation of the state-based regulatory system under each RFA the Commonwealth must ensure that it provides the same protections as the EPBC Act for Matters of National Environmental Significance.

AFPA CEO Ross Hampton said the decision provided enormous certainty for Victoria's native timber industry, and indeed for forest industry workers around the country, who depend on the operational certainty that the robust RFA framework provides.

The Friends of Leadbeater's Possum have already flagged they intend to appeal the decision to the High Court.

AFPA will consider the implications of the decision in more detail and organise a briefing session for members in the coming days.

**• Putting end to the continued witch hunt on a sustainable industry, P. 9.**



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# Budget lifts confidence in housing as incentives buoy construction industry

## Growing shortage of pine framing and engineered timber a critical factor

THE first pandemic Budget will boost the confidence of builders and tradies that the economic recovery can be completed – delivered through the front door of the housing industry.

Presenting the 2021-22 Budget on Tuesday, Treasurer Josh Frydenberg is punting on infrastructure, housing and skills as part of critical measures to help Australia continue to recover from the Covid.

The Budget shows the nation's economy is expected to accelerate from 1.25% in 2020-21 to 4.25% in 2021-22, before easing back in subsequent years.

“The Budget will help support the home ownership aspirations for thousands of households and create more opportunities for young people to embark on careers in the housing industry,” said HIA managing director Graham Wolfe.

“This will make a difference in the lives of thousands of Australians,” he said.

Key measures include:

- Creation of an additional



**Infrastructure, housing and skills benefit from Budget... federal Treasurer Josh Frydenberg visits tradies on the NSW Central Coast.**

Australia to rise by 35% in 2020-21 to come in at 45,000 – the highest number of regional house commencements on record.

Of major relevance to building and construction is an additional \$2.7 billion to extend the Boosting Apprenticeships Commencement program. Employers can

10,000 places available from July 1 under the First Home Loan Deposit Scheme, enabling eligible first home buyers to build or purchase a home with as little as 5% deposit without needing to pay mortgage insurance.

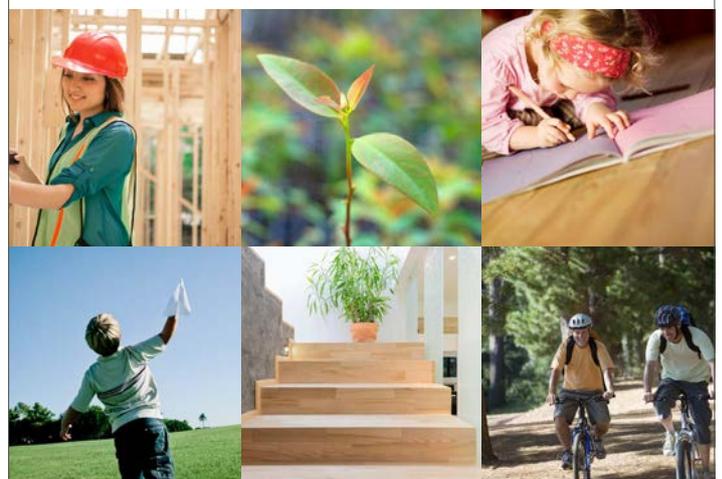
- Creation of a new Family Home Guarantee Scheme enabling single parents with dependants an opportunity to either build a new home or purchase an existing home with a deposit of as little as 2%. This will create 10,000 places over a four-year period.

- An increase in the maximum amount of voluntary contributions which first home buyers can withdraw under the First Home Super Saver Scheme from \$30,000 to \$50,000.

Releasing its latest research briefing, BIS Oxford Economics says it expects the number of new house commencements in regional

Cont P 4

## The united voice for Australia's forest industries



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**“NATION'S ECONOMY IS EXPECTED TO ACCELERATE”**

From P 3

access subsidies of up to 50% of the cost of the wages of the apprentice for 12 months up to a maximum of \$7000 between now and March 31, 2022.

Master Builders CEO Denita Wawn said an extension of the instant asset write-off scheme would mean the cash registers continued to ring as sales of utes and other business assets would continue to bounce back to pre-pandemic levels.

“Builders and tradies are big backers of themselves and their business success,” she said.

“Also, building and construction SMEs have one of the lowest rates for uptake of technology, so the government’s investment in improving digital skills and capacity can make our industry even more productive.”



**Good news for housing brings supply shortages more sharply into view.**

Mrs Wawn said the Treasurer had also recognised that women needed well paid jobs not gender wars.

The new support for 5000 women to learn a trade in an industry like building and

construction will be highly effective in boosting women’s economic security,” she said.

“This Budget has linked good economic policy with good social policy.”

Meanwhile, many timber merchants agree the good news for housing brings supply shortages more sharply into view.

Forward supplies of pine framing and to a lesser extent engineered wood products, LVL in particular, are now in “the hands of the gods,” say timber merchants we spoke to this week.

They say they have done everything possible to supply pre-fabricated wall frames and roof trusses on time. But the harsh reality is they can forward order pine supply one, two or three months ahead of time ... “but what we get and when we get it is now out of our hands”

A number of frame and

truss plants along the eastern seaboard are not trading for a full working week – not because of a lack of orders, but due to a short supply of pine framing.

“Going forward we may have to sacrifice the pre-nailed wall frames first, as we believe that sourcing pine framing from one or more other suppliers and stick framing is better solution to keep a project moving and we prioritise the pine framing for our roof trusses,” a Brisbane merchant said.

“Our ability to source EWP’s is still at about five weeks and this lead time looks to continue for a while yet, due to the forward demand resulting from the HomeBuilder Program.”

Major suppliers are discontinuing a number of LVL sizes in 35 mm (130 x 35, 150 x 35, 200 x 35 and 300 x 35 mm).

Increasing prices for timber products is another issue. Canberra and the Reserve Bank say inflation “is not a worry”

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**“ BUDGET LINKS GOOD ECONOMIC POLICY WITH GOOD SOCIAL POLICY ”**

Cont P 5

From P 4

Figures for the first quarter of 2021, published by ABS this week, show underlying inflation rose by just 1.1% over the past year.

What this highlights is the absence of significant inflationary pressures in the economy. It validates the Reserve Bank's view that both aggressive monetary and fiscal stimulus are required to revitalise the economy.

The central bank can keep

**“TIMBER SUPPLY IN THE HANDS OF THE GODS**



1/ The Prime Minister Scott Morrison visits a HomeBuilder building site with Master Builders Australia CEO Denita Wawn.

2/ Graham Wolfe... the Budget helps support the home ownership aspirations for thousands of households.



base," a Sydney merchant said.

The steel industry is in no better position with price rises following supply problems, worsened by

interest rates at historically low levels without triggering a dangerous spike in inflation.

"But they're not factoring

in the rising costs and prices in the building industry, which have increased from 5% to 15%, admittedly off a low

widespread storm damage to roofing where the demand has gone wild.

## Native forest critics: drop weapons, join the battle

AFPA calls on native forestry critics to drop the weapons and join the battle against climate change.

THE Australian Forest Products Association says a landmark study into the Black Summer bushfires confirming timber harvesting operations do not increase bushfire severity, and that the biggest factor is climate change, is an opportunity for all sides of the native forestry debate to

join together to fight the real threat to native forests and threatened species.

The report, The Severity and Extent of the Australia 2019–20 Eucalyptus Forest Fires are not the Legacy of Forest Management just published in the Nature Ecology and Evolution Journal, was authored by a team of researchers led by Professor David Bowman from the University of Tasmania.

As Professor Bowman told The Conversation, their research found forest harvesting, "had little, if any, effect on the Black Summer bushfires. Rather, the disaster's huge extent and severity were more likely due to unprecedented drought and sustained hot, windy weather" and "our research confirms the devastating role climate change played in the Black Summer fires."

AFPA CEO Ross Hampton says a number of activists have tried to link sustainable forest harvesting to bushfire severity.

"Last year one of those attempts, using what the Australian Senate called 'bodgy science', led to a journal article being retracted and an investigation launched into the research methods used by its authors," Mr Hampton said.



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RW/1-10-1

# Renaissance in forest research gets ‘green light’ in pro-industry Budget

THE federal Budget delivers a major step towards a new R&D vision for Australia’s renewable, carbon-positive forest industries that will turbocharge a new generation of jobs in advanced timber manufacturing and wood-based renewable bio-products.

The Budget has pledged \$1.3 million for a feasibility study to create a new National Institute for Forest Products Innovation. In addition, \$10.6 million has been announced to expand

and continue regional forestry hubs, including new funding for hubs in Northern Territory and southeast NSW in response to AFPA’s requests.

The Budget also places forest industries squarely in the frame for the ambitious goal to grow the commodities sector to \$100 billion by 2030 and powers up the Anti-Dumping Commission.

“Clearly our messages about the potential of our industries to play a big part in a post-Covid economic



**Ross Hampton... \$10.6 million pledged to expand regional forestry hubs.**

recovery have been heard,” AFPA CEO Ross Hampton said.

“As the world moves to phase out single-use plastics, while expanding wood use, other countries are investing heavily in the development of environmentally friendly

fibre-based products,” Mr Hampton said.

“The \$1.3 million committed for a feasibility study for the NIFPI builds on the successes of pilot schemes in Mount Gambier and Launceston.”

He said the \$10.6 million committed for new and existing regional forestry hubs would allow industry to accelerate planning and strategies to accommodate the rollout

Cont P 7

**“CLEARLY OUR MESSAGE HAS BEEN HEARD”**

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**MAY**

**20: Close of 2021 Gottstein fellowships, industry awards and scholarships – ONLINE.** Entries currently open. Contact gottsteinsecretary@gmail.com or Helen Murray on +61 419 991 424. Details visit: gottsteintrust.org/fellowships/

**26: Timber Queensland Detailing for Durability – ONLINE.** Free technical webinar with CPD point opportunity. 11 am-12.20 pm. From hazard classes to treatment systems and maintenance regimes, the webinars a guide to the latest research and information for ensuring extended service life. A 'must-attend' for building professionals from engineers and architects, through to builders and end-users with future timber durability in mind. Registration link at www.timberqueensland.com.au

**JUNE**

**16-18: TABMA National Conference – Oaks Cypress Lakes Resort, Hunter Valley, NSW.** Celebrating our 80th year, the conference will aim to "honour our past, treasure the present and shape the future" of our industry. Our daytime sessions will concentrate on "shaping the future", with keynote speaker Claire Madden talking Generation Z. Gala dinner "honouring our past and treasuring the present". Includes the 2020 Andrew Bone TABMA Member of The Year, TABMA Industry Legends and Trainee and Apprentice Member of The Year awards. For more information or to book visit [https:// tabma.com.au/2021-national\[1\]conference/](https://tabma.com.au/2021-national[1]conference/) or contact Alicia Oelkers at [alicia@tabma.com.au](mailto:alicia@tabma.com.au)

**SEPTEMBER**

**1: Australian Forest Products**

**Association Gala Dinner and Symposium – Parliament House, Canberra, ACT.** For further information see: [www.ausfpa.com.au](http://www.ausfpa.com.au)

**OCTOBER**

**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.

**NOVEMBER**

**10-13: AUSTimber 2021 – Gormandale in eastern Victoria between Yarram and Traralgon.** Nov. 10: Field trips. Nov. 11: Field trips (site

visits by invitation). Welcome dinner. Nov. 12: Show day (9 am-5 pm). Nov. 13: Show day (9 am-3 pm). Contact Dionne Olsen on +61 429 202 929 or email [austimber2020@afca.asn.au](mailto:austimber2020@afca.asn.au)

**14-19: 2021 Gottstein Trust Understanding Wood Science Course – Albury, NSW.** November 14-15 based in Albury with field trips to northern Victoria. November 16-19: Guest lectures and field trip, then relocate by coach to Canberra for three days including a laboratory day and guest lectures at ANU, and a formal course dinner celebrating 50th Anniversary of the trust. Detailed information, registration and the draft program: <https://gottsteintrust.org/course/wood-science-courses/>

From P 6

of the government's One Billion Trees program, vital to produce the timber Australians were crying out for to realise their new home builds and renovations."

Mr Hampton said the Assistant Minister for Forestry Senator Jonathon Duniam was to be congratulated for delivering the two hubs in the Northern Territory and

southeast NSW which means all the major forest industry regions in Australia are now represented.

He said the federal government was also to be commended for committing additional funding to properly resource the Anti-Dumping Commission, on which AFPA represents forest growers, harvesters and manufacturers of timber and paper products.

Mr Hampton said the

Budget was strong on climate change initiatives but still fell short on forestry measures, despite the industry being poised to deliver enormous positives to the nation.

"AFPA will continue to argue for equal treatment for production trees with environmental plantings in the regional forestry hubs and fast tracking of policies which will provide carbon credits for carbon storing timber which

replaces energy intensive materials," he said.

AFPA says forthcoming Regional Investment Corporation concessional loan funding totalling \$37.5 million is also welcomed to progress the federal government's commitment to encourage new plantation developments as well as replant regions damaged during the 2019-20 summer bushfires.



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### MAY

**24-25: International Conference on Forestry Science and Silviculture (ICFSS) – London, UK.** World Academy of Science, Engineering and Technology. For further information see: <https://waset.org/forestry-science-and-silviculture-conference-in-may-2021-in-london>

**24-28: XV World Forestry Congress – Seoul, South Korea.** 15th World Forestry Congress. The theme will be: Building a green, healthy and resilient future with forests. For further information see: <https://wfc2021korea.org/online/notice.html?act=view&aid=40>

### JUNE

**15-16: Carbon Forestry Conference – Rotorua, New Zealand.** Changes to legislation in relation to climate change and emissions trading, including carbon farming investment opportunities. For further information see: <https://carbonforestry.events/>

**29-1: WoodEX for Africa – Gallagher Convention Centre, Johannesburg, South Africa.** Long established as the gateway to Africa's timber trade, WoodEX for Africa 2021 will be the ultimate machinery, tools and supplies gathering in Africa. Held in conjunction with the 2nd Deck & Flooring Expo and co-located with Africa's biggest construction expo, African Construction Expo. For further information see: <https://woodexforafrica.com/>

### JULY

**2-4: Foire De Libramont 2021 – Libramont Exhibition & Congress, Rue des Aubépinés, 50 B-6800 Libramont, Belgium.** The Libramont agricultural, forestry and agri-food fair is a huge outdoor exhibition that offers a showcase for the rural world in all its many shapes and forms (machinery, livestock breeding, forestry, the agri-food industry, horticulture, study, and R&D). For further information see: <http://www.libramont-exhibition.com/>

**7-11: New Forest Folk Festival – Powells Farm, Salisbury Road, Plaitford, Romsey, UK.** For further information see: [www.newforestfolkfestival.co.uk](http://www.newforestfolkfestival.co.uk)

**23-26: The International Forest Festival – Feanedock National Forest, Leicestershire, UK.** Music, forests, art and ideas. For further information see: <https://timberfestival.org.uk/>

### AUGUST

**9-12: World Conference on Timber Engineering – Santiago, Chile.** Uruguay XXI will host as part of its strategy to promote investments in the forestry and wood sector. This is the first time this event is held in South America and will be hosted by the Chilean capital. The main topics that this conference will cover are sustainable forests for timber production, wood products and connections, wood engineering and architecture, policy, implementation and management, education, promotion and future trends. For further information see: [www.uruguayxxi.gub.uy/en/events/article/145/](http://www.uruguayxxi.gub.uy/en/events/article/145/)

**16-19: 20th Commonwealth Forestry Conference – VIRTUAL EVENT.** An informal forum for foresters, and all those with an interest in the forestry sector to exchange knowledge and experience. It is organized by the Standing Committee on Commonwealth Forestry and covers general aspects of forest management and governance and has a focus on the changing priorities of the forestry sector. For further information see: <https://cfc2021.ubc.ca/>

**30-31: International Conference on Forest Aesthetics and Site Preparation – Australian Museum Sydney, Australia.** World Academy of Science, Engineering and Technology. For further information see: <https://waset.org/forest-aesthetics-and-site-preparation-conference-in-august-2021-in-sydney>

### SEPTEMBER

**22-24: Natural resources, green**

**technology and sustainable development GREEN2020 – Zagreb, Croatia.** Now rescheduled from last year. For further information see: <https://www.sumins.hr/green2020/>

**27-1: LIGNA.21 Making more out of wood – Hannover, Germany.** For further information see: <https://www.ligna.de/en/>

### OCTOBER

**17-21: Prowood Ghent – Flanders Expo, Maaltekouter 1, 9051 Ghent, East Flanders, Flanders, Belgium.** For further information see: [www.tradefairdates.com/Prowood-M9728/Ghent.html](http://www.tradefairdates.com/Prowood-M9728/Ghent.html)

**22-24: International Conference on Forest Biodiversity and Sustainability (ICFBS) – Dubrovnik, Croatia.** World Academy of Science, Engineering and Technology. For further information see: <https://waset.org/forest-biodiversity-and-sustainability-conference-in-october-2022-in-dubrovnik>

**26-29: Woodworking Minsk – Sports Complex, Pobeditelej 20/2 Minsk, Belarus.** International exhibition of woodworking and furniture production. For further information see: [www.tradefairdates.com/Woodworking-M3361/Minsk.html](http://www.tradefairdates.com/Woodworking-M3361/Minsk.html)

### JANUARY 2022

**28-29: International Conference on Forest Resources Accounting and Economics – Australia World Academy of Science, Engineering and Technology, Sydney, Australia.** Forest industry accounting, methodological and issues and environmental accounting for forestry. For further information see; <https://waset.org/forest-resources-accounting-and-economics-conference-in-january-2022-in-sydney>

• Please send events to John Halkett: [johnh@timberandforestrynews.com](mailto:johnh@timberandforestrynews.com)

# Getting to nub of biophilics at Timber Hub

QUEENSLAND'S Timber Hub office in Brisbane was the perfect venue to talk to interior design students about wood and biophilics, the practice of connecting people and nature within built environments and communities

Allied to the WoodSolutions technical program, Timber Queensland last week hosted two groups of TAFE diploma of building design and diploma of interior design tertiary students who are designing an office as part of their next assignment.

"We can rest assured that timber will feature heavily in their projects," said Timber Queensland strategic relations and communications manager Clarissa Brandt who hosted the gathering, along



**Timber Queensland's Clarissa Brandt (second from left) welcomes TAFE tertiary students to the Timber Hub in Brisbane.**

with Simon Dorries, CEO, Responsible Wood, which is based at the hub.

"There has been good feedback from the lecturers and I believe this format would be worth offering to other groups, something I will discuss with the University of Queensland and the Queensland University of Technology."

Program speakers included David Rowlinson, Make it

Wood Campaign manager, Planet Ark, and Canadian architect Tye Farrow of Farrow Partners in Toronto, via a WoodSolutions webinar.

Tye Farrow has gained international recognition for designing places that enhance our capacity to thrive – culturally, economically, mentally and physically.

He has initiated a global "Cause Health" movement

aimed at raising expectations for design as the basis for total health, which extends beyond environmental sustainability and physical health to encompass our mind health ... "connecting the dots between neuroscience and architecture."

Mr Farrow's projects across North America,

Asia, Africa and the Middle East demonstrate leadership in this visionary quest. He has been invited to present his ideas at leading institutions, including the Mayo Clinic.

**On the cover: TAFE design students take part in a WoodSolutions technical program around Timber Queensland's board room table which features black wattle, Queensland silver ash and Darwin stringybark.**

## Federal Court ruling fuels fight against forests 'witch hunt'

THE Federal Court's unanimous ruling that Regional Forest Agreements uphold Australia's required environmental standards has been welcomed by Leader of the Nationals in the senate Bridget McKenzie.

Senator McKenzie's Private Senator's Bill that sought to clarify this [since the ruling of Justice Mortimer in May last year] seeks to

achieve certainty for native forest industries, their future viability, sustainability, and security for the jobs the industry creates.

"The native forest industry works to the highest environmental standards in the world as part of the RFAs between the states and the commonwealth, and there is no removal of the environmental standards that industry is required to uphold through this arrangement," Senator McKenzie said.

"Regardless of court rulings, the native forestry industry needs certainty that it is safe from ridiculous green lawfare initiated by



**Bridget McKenzie... native forest industry works to the highest environmental standards.**

environmental extremists," she said.

"This certainty is needed immediately because without it, businesses will

be forced to close as they do not have certainty of a viable future.

"Friends of Leadbeater's Possum have indicated they intend to appeal the decision which is why I will continue fighting for the native forestry industry and to remove uncertainty at a legislation level to put an end to the continued witch hunt on a highly-valued, sustainable industry."

The Environment and Communications Legislation Committee report following the inquiry into the Private Senator's Bill will be tabled in the Senate today (Thursday).

**“NATIVE FORESTS INDUSTRY NEED CERTAINTY”**

# Genetic modification useful tool to have in a forest manager's toolbox

## Commercial benefits for Australia in progressing a GM technology framework

GENETIC modification (GM) technology research and potential deployment in plantation forestry has benefits for Australia in the long term, especially with ongoing market, climate change and biosecurity risks.

In summarising his Gottstein tour of the US and New Zealand, Gottstein fellow Gavin Matthew points out that in Australia should be part of an integrated tree improvement strategy to reduce risk, increase our trees and forests resilience to known and emerging threats, and increase commercial benefit.

A strategic plan could be temporally broken up into short term (application of precision forestry techniques), medium term

(improvements in advanced tree breeding, precision forestry techniques and investment in new technologies, wood products and wood product solutions, while preparing the regulatory and social purpose ground for implementing a GM technology plan), and in the longer term (advanced GM technologies being researched and deployed for key commercial tree species).

Mr Matthew is the CEO of Engineered Wood Products Association of Australasia and previously held a senior role at the Australian Forest Products Association for 10 years where he worked in industry policy and advocacy, natural resource and forest management, wood processing and



**Gavin Matthew... Gottstein study on genetic modification technology research.**

consulting (where he compiled this Gottstein report). He holds a Bachelor of Science (Forestry) degree and a Bachelor of Economics degree, both from the Australian National University, and a Graduate Diploma in Applied Finance and Investment.

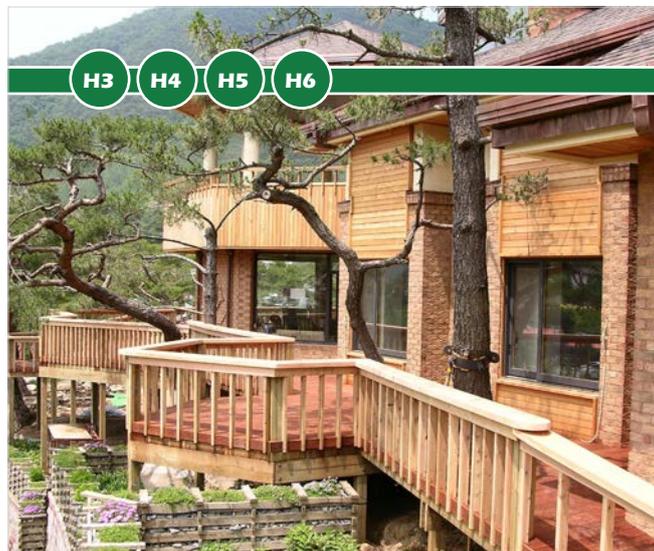
Gavin Matthew says a strategic plan is the essential first step to explore an advanced GM technology framework for commercial tree species. Actions must include:

- Stakeholder engagement and communication strategy, including social purpose.
- Cost/benefit analysis undertaken to inform the strategic plan.
- Sustainable Forest Management (SFM)

- certification engagement.
- Political advocacy and engagement at both Federal and State government levels.
- Regulatory engagement with the office of the Gene Technology Regulator and State government regulators.
- Whole-of-industry commitment to progressing a GM technology strategy, R&D program and work plan.
- Establish an industry

Cont P 11

**“PART OF AN INTEGRATED TREE IMPROVEMENT STRATEGY”**



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From P 3

position/role to coordinate and progress a GM technology strategy and work plan.

- Ongoing collaborative industry funding commitment with matched government funding for a targeted R&D program.

Mr Matthew says Australia's plantation trees need advances in climate adaption, yield, productivity, wood characteristics, and pest and disease resistance to protect the supply chain, meet increasing wood fibre demand, and stay internationally competitive.

Wood product manufacturing innovation such as engineered wood products and panel products can complement a longer strategy of GM technology deployment by bridging the gap between the existing resource and an improved resource but also better utilising the resulting wood



**Grafted southern pine seed orchard located in South Carolina USA.**

characteristics after a tree improvement plan has been implemented.

With the ongoing importance and high uptake of Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) certification schemes in Australia, provisions relating to the utilisation of GM technologies in plantation forestry contained in these standards are important.

There is no doubt that if any advanced GM technology program and potential deployment is to be successful, then a level of social acceptance needs to be achieved and

**“ AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY HAS PAVED THE WAY**

incorporation into existing SFM certification schemes acceptance of this is a major step.

Agricultural industries have paved the way in Australia by progressing GM technologies and deploying resulting material, predominately for the food chain. Australian forest industries can learn a lot from these long-running and sophisticated GM technology programs.

Mr Matthew says a concerted political and industry commitment would need to be coupled with large investments in funding and resources, collaborative effort and communication, and R&D and policy work.

A program is anticipated to have a long time frame of more than 10 years.

This Gottstein report can be downloaded from [www.gottsteintrust.org](http://www.gottsteintrust.org)

The 2021 Gottstein Trust grants round closes on May 20. They are a golden opportunities for motivated candidates to put ideas forward and apply to the trust fund for grant support.

Apply online at [www.gottsteintrust.org](http://www.gottsteintrust.org) or contact the Gottstein team: email [gottsteinsecretary@gmail.com](mailto:gottsteinsecretary@gmail.com) or call Helen Murray 0419 991 424.



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# US drives buying mania for European wood

FACING skyrocketing lumber prices at home, US importers are driving competition for European wood ... and winning.

The frenzy comes on the heels of record American forest-products imports from Europe in 2020, when North American demand soared and caught sawmills off guard with low inventories.

Lumber prices have reached new peaks on a near daily basis in recent weeks, quadrupling from just a year ago. The unprecedented rally has been spurred by low borrowing rates, an increased appetite for larger homes, and a frenzy of DIY renovations during the pandemic.

Unrelenting building demand means U.S. sawmills have been unable to catch

up, causing suppliers to look to Europe for a reprieve as it is one of the few parts of the globe with a surplus due to a beetle infestation that killed large swaths of trees that must now be harvested.

Voracious US demand means beetle-killed wood in Europe could sell faster than expected, though international shipping and US trucking constraints limit supply chain capabilities.

"The other markets are getting pulled up by the US," says Geoff Berwick, vice-president, business development, at Atlantic Forest Products.

Berwick has been importing lumber from Europe since 1999 and his job had never been easier, he said. Customers tell him: "Get me covered and let



**Geoff Berwick... normally prices are negotiated.**

me know what it's going to cost." Normally, prices are negotiated.

The buying power of US lumber importers is strengthened by home builders' willingness to pay up, as project costs rise by the hour on some days. The cost of lumber for the average US house has

increased by nearly \$36,000 over the last year, according to the National Association of Home Builders.

The US continues to buy the biggest share of its foreign forest products from Canada, but imports from the European Union reached an all-time high in 2020, nearly tripling 2019's amount.

The biggest jump from European countries came from Sweden, which rose a dizzying 1300%. Imports from Europe remained strong in the first three months of 2021, up 37% from the same period a year ago.

Even with 'insane' Chinese demand for European lumber, the strength of US buying is the largest factor supporting prices.

**(Blomberg Trade News)**

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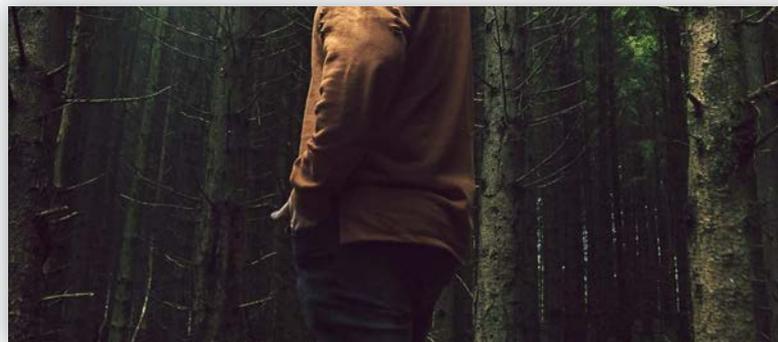
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# Emissions Trading Scheme struggling to deliver a carbon zero future for NZ

## Forest sector has long lost faith in ability of ETS to deliver positive outcomes

MICHAEL SMITH

IN a follow-up to last week's article on meeting New Zealand's climate change commitments, we talk further with independent forestry consultant Jeff Tombleson.

Mr Tombleson says New Zealand has a clearly defined pathway to achieving net zero emissions by 2050.

This involves transitioning the vehicle fleet from fossil fuels to electric, transitioning the industrial burning of fossil fuels to biomass, achieving very modest reductions of biological gases from animals, moving away from fossil-fuel-based fertilisers, and increasing the area of the forest offset.

He adds that we are well placed to meet our commitments – with near-clean hydro-electricity generation and 0.7 million ha of primarily radiata pine forest that qualifies for offsetting 30% of our current gross emissions ... and the potential to achieve much more.

But he is concerned about our current policies and direction.

"On a national basis, those 0.7 million ha [planted on farm sites since 1989] are the unsung biological mechanism currently absorbing carbon dioxide," he says.

"This store of carbon in production forests was primarily established by an estimated 12,000 small-scale growers [mainly farmers] and investors during the 1990s at a planting rate of up to



**Radiata pine plantations (mainly established by farmers) are the unsung biological mechanism absorbing and reducing New Zealand's gross emissions by 30%.**

100,000 ha/year.

"Today these small-scale forests – sometimes referred to as the 'wall of wood' – are being harvested and pumping an estimated \$10 billion into the rural economy.

"By the end of this decade harvesting will be completed ... and the concern is that a significant unquantified portion of these farm-based woodlots is not being replanted."

Mr Tombleson says the next harvest of New Zealand's offset forests will coincide with 2050 when we are committed to achieving a net carbon zero status.

"From a national carbon accounting perspective, forest carbon stocks will be low and our offset forests could, for the first time, become a source of carbon emissions rather than a carbon store. The

He says contrary to popular belief almost all the units claimed by participants under the ETS are required to be returned to the Crown to meet the emissions liabilities following harvest.

In addition, he says the scheme's current rules exclude shelterbelts and narrow-width tree plantings, or areas of trees less than one hectare, from registration.

administrators of the Emissions Trading Scheme appear to be oblivious to this looming concern."

Mr Tombleson is less than enamoured with the ETS, which he says is so complicated that few people understand it.

"The scheme is punitive and has expensive compliance costs. It's not user friendly and is devoid of plain English resources to navigate and enable compliance.

"Forest-based participants have long lost faith in the ability of the scheme to deliver positive outcomes.

**“CONCERN ABOUT CURRENT POLICIES AND DIRECTION”**

It may be possible in the near future to permit inclusion of all tree areas [irrespective of size] using satellite technology that has recently emerged. The opportunity to apply such technology to quantify gains and losses of tree growth and net carbon stored could also, in theory, be applied to quantifying the net store of carbon from all trees across New Zealand's entire surface.

Mr Tombleson also notes that the ETS "has not incentivised significant areas of new plantings. In fact, the reverse has occurred whereby more than 200,000 ha of forests planted before 1990 were cleared and converted to agriculture.

"Most concerning is the general belief that the ETS

Cont P 16

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From P 14

will achieve the required emissions reductions in the absence of government-led policy," he says. .

"If New Zealand is to fulfil its Paris agreement obligations of net carbon zero

**“ TIME TO TALK TO FARMERS ABOUT FURTHER EXPANDING THE FOREST ESTATE**



1/ Minister for Climate Change James Shaw talks up the NZ Emissions Trading Scheme, watched by PM Jacinda Ardern.

2/ Jeff Tombleson... government-led policy is needed to achieve meaningful and rapid reductions of emissions.



2050, we need to examine the ETS stick.

In the same way that converting our vehicle fleet to EVs can surely only be achieved via timely government policy – e.g. banning the importation of petrol combustion vehicles – it’s time to seek the cooperation of farmers to further expand the forest estate they largely established in the 1990s.”

## Swedish wood products in high demand, limited supply

DESPITE full production and manufacturing records in March, Swedish sawmills have their lowest stock levels for more than 20 years, which has put pressure on sawn wood prices.

“Demand is growing, and so are the prices on the

global markets,” Christian Nielsen, market analyst for the Swedish Forest Industries Federation, said.

Increasing demand for wood products globally has seen stocks at the Swedish sawmills run down, leading to the lowest stock levels for

more than 20 years.

Production is continuing at full throttle and March became the best production month ever for the Swedish sawmill industry.

The global shortage of wood products is mainly due

to lower production in other parts of the world.

Several wood product manufacturers that usually have high output, temporarily scaled back their activity in 2020, leading to a major shortfall in the international market.

# Up to \$20 million available to haul burnt timber in NSW

Bushfire Industry Recovery Package Supply Chain Support Grants (Forestry)

More information: [nsw.gov.au/BIRPforestrygrant](https://nsw.gov.au/BIRPforestrygrant)

Applications close 19 May 2021 or until funding is fully allocated.

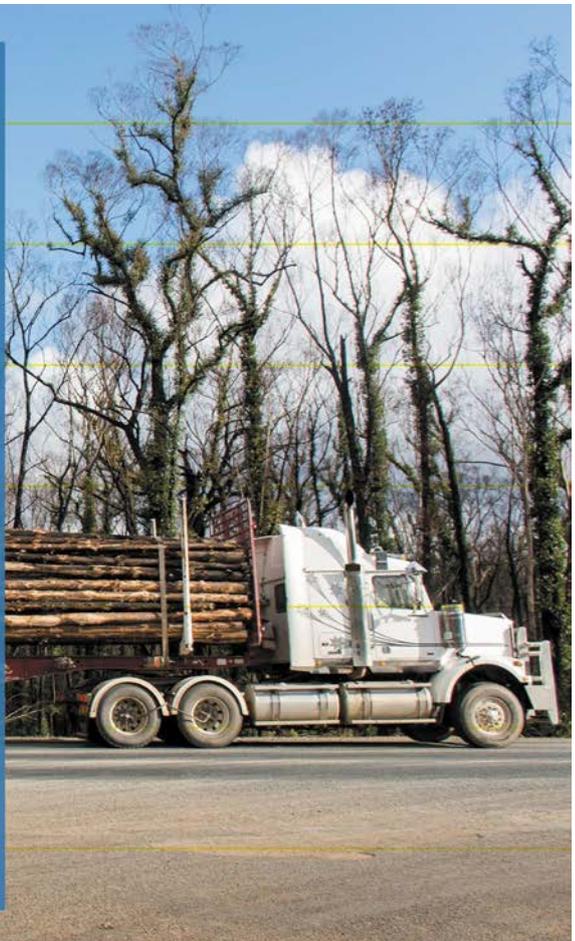
Please note that submission of claims for haulage activities have been extended by 12 months to **17 June 2022**.



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# Study a rethink on bushfire prevention

A NEW study has found landscape spatial patterns and fire weather drove the severity of the 2019- 20 Black Summer bushfires, not past timber harvesting.

The Institute of Foresters of Australia and Australian Forest Growers president Bob Gordon said the study, which identified that “the severity and extent of the Australia 2019–20 eucalyptus forest fires are not the legacy of forest management”, highlights the need for new ways of thinking about how Australia manages the risk of bushfires.

“There is no quick-fix to this problem,” Mr Gordon said.

However, active and adaptive forest management, across all land tenures is paramount to ensuring our



**Bob Gordon... no quick-fix to problem.**

forests are resilient to fire in the future.

“Active and adaptive land management across all land tenures, long-term thinking and the use of a range of techniques informed by the latest science and long-held cultural knowledge from traditional owners are what’s needed to make sure we can mitigate devastation such as that seen in 2019-20.



timber harvesting contributed to the severity of the Black Summer fires and, therefore, future policy needs to reflect that.

“Policy proposals to mitigate fire risks and impacts should be evidence-based

and integrate multiple perspectives,” Professor Keenan said.

“Traditional indigenous knowledge, experience of local and professional fire managers, and the breadth of evidence from bushfire research should inform strategies for reducing bushfire impacts and increasing forest resilience.”

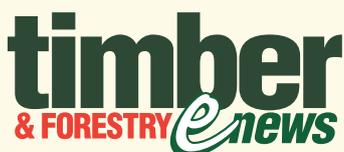
“We also need to establish new shared governance models and an approach to policy that brings together government agencies with indigenous Australians and stakeholders from the private sector and civil society across all tenures.”

IFA/AFG member and one of the paper’s authors Professor Rodney Keenan said there was little evidence

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# Honda's latest SUV is well grounded

I'VE just experienced an exciting drone video produced by Austral Plywoods in Brisbane. It takes you on a clever one-take roller coaster ride through the production line, starting with logs arriving and ending with finished packs of hoop pine ply.

The drone was set up by 18-year-old Rudi Browning, a former world champion drone racer.

Drones, as we know, have been around for a while and the consumer drone industry has exploded. UK forest growers have drones planting 1000 trees a day on high ground that was totally inaccessible by tractors and bulldozers.

Now passenger drones – flying cars – are on the radar designed to carry humans in the future. I'll keep my four wheels planted on the ground. Food delivery drones may be working in Seoul but Honda is 'up there' with its CR-V VTI 7 ... on the ground.

For a budget-focused seven seater, this Honda SUV comes in at a down-to-earth price of \$36,500 (list price), about \$2000 more than the five-seater VTI below it.

A 1.5-litre, turbo-charged four-cylinder engine, with 140 kW of power and 240 Nm



**Honda's CR-V VTI7... big, smooth performer.**

of torque, feeds power via a CVT transmission to the front wheels.

Fuel use is claimed at 7.3L/10 km and it wears an official ANCAP five-star safety rating. Like all CR-Vs it comes with auto transmission.

The VTI 7 is the most economical way to get a seven-seater CR-V, and with this upgrade it's the first

time we've seen a three-row version of this mid-size Honda SUV.

Honda's 'sensing suite' of active safety technologies includes forward collision warning, auto emergency braking with pedestrian detection, lane keeping assist and lane departure warning.

The VTI 7 comes with 17-in. alloy wheels, cloth seat trim,

a 7 in. touchscreen media system with Apple CarPlay and Android Auto, Bluetooth phone and audio streaming. Add four USB ports (two front and two rear), eight-speaker stereo and adaptive cruise control and you have a big, smooth performer on any ground.

Honda design is again aligned to a family's biggest need – space. The front doors house deep, cleverly designed storage bins, both with an in-built bottle holder. We noted how wide the back doors open – almost 90 deg.

Second row passengers get directional air vents as well as two cup holders in the centre armrest. Also, the second row slides forward to give more space to third row passengers.

The gear-shift mechanism has been moved onto the dash, which frees up space in the lower centre console area. With all three rows up, there's 150 litres of boot space.

Leather seats come as standard for this grade and feature electric adjustment, electric lumbar support and two-position memory for the driver's side.

To look up at any drones overhead, there's panoramic sunroof, a nice luxury item that's standard. .



**Drone cameras capture the action at Austral Plywoods.**

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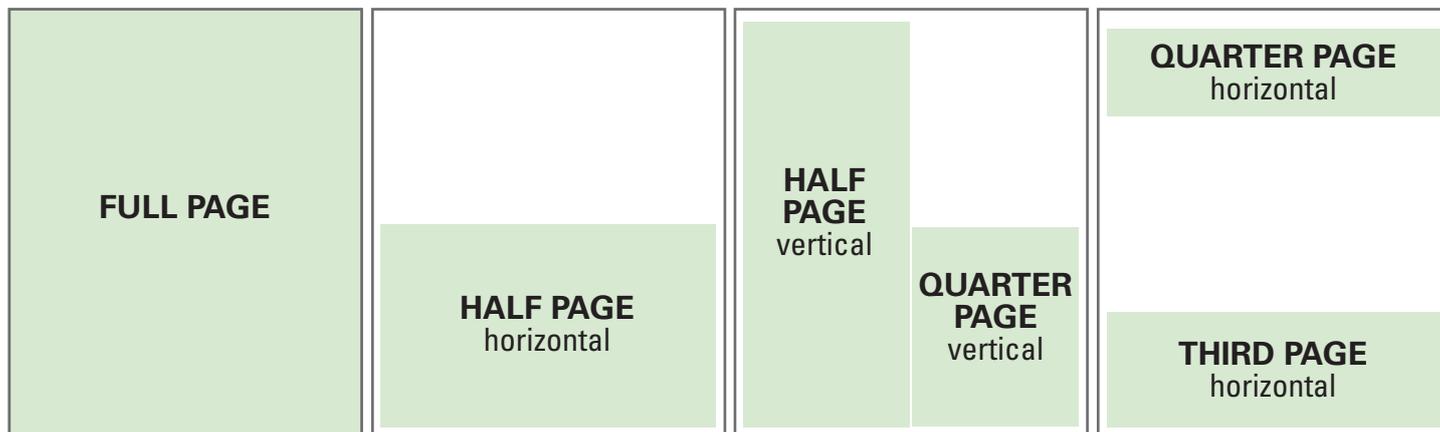
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