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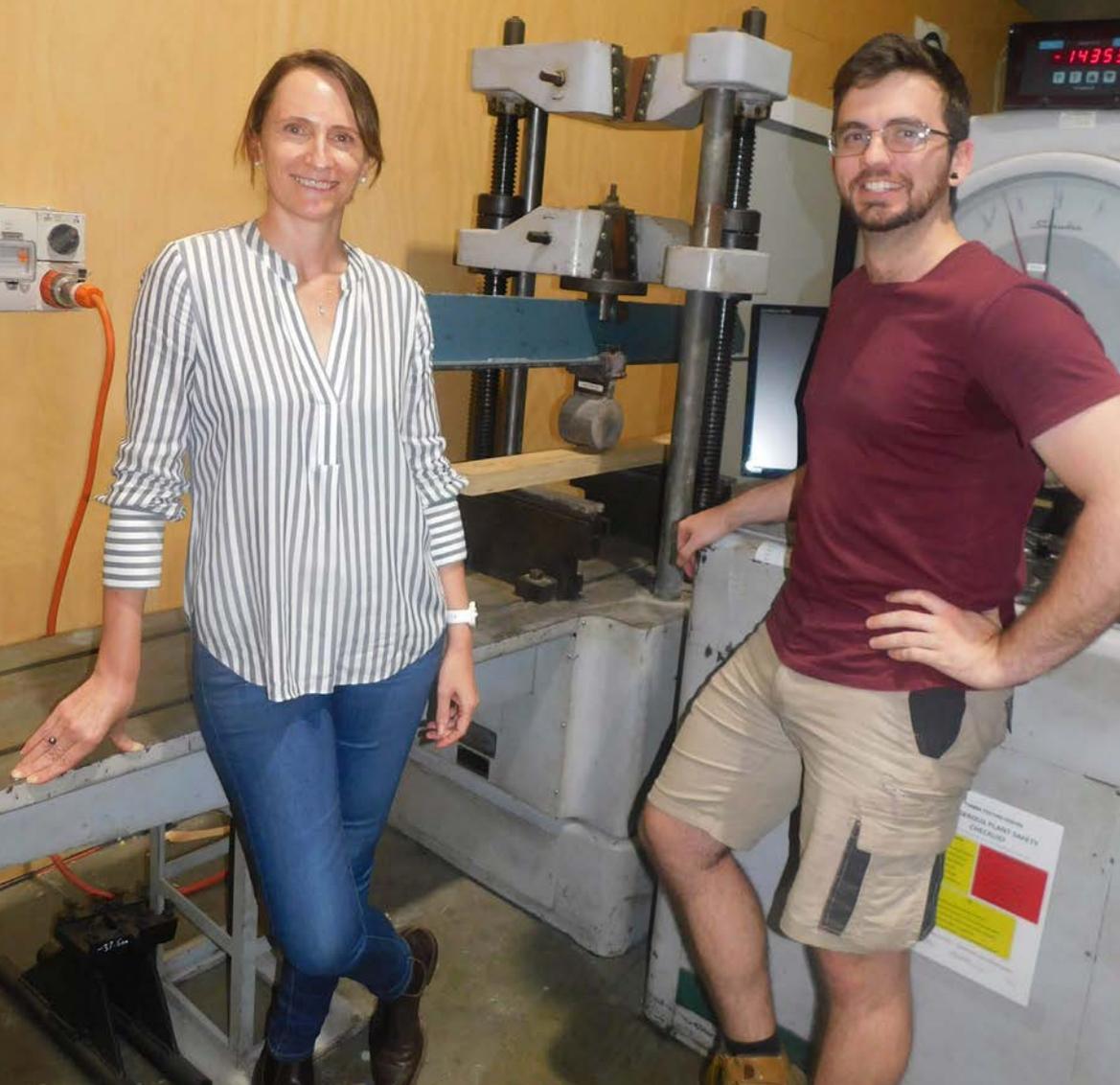
# timber

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## Testing lab ensures structural timbers meet quality standards

COVER STORY P11



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# New Forests expands global perspective with new independent director position

WITH \$US4.5 billion in managed assets across nearly 1 million ha of forestry and conservation lands New Forests Pty Ltd has expanded its global perspective with the appointment of a new independent director.

Christine Loh brings a wealth of international experience across government and public policy, finance, and academia with a focus on energy, climate change, and environmental issues.

Ms Loh previously served as under-secretary for the environment for the Hong Kong government is chief development strategist at the Institute for the Environment, Hong Kong University of Science and Technology.

New Forests says as global demand for resources grows, there is a need to increase productivity at a

time of expansion for the business in Asia, the US and other markets. The appointment will bolster the depth of experience, global perspective, and “talent that we have on our board”.

Ms Loh was also aligned to the company’s vision to see institutional forestry investment play a significant role in the transition to a net zero emission future, enhance biodiversity and conservation, and create economic opportunities for rural communities.

She has had a distinguished career in both the public and private sector and was co-founder of Civic Exchange, an independent non-profit think tank.

While holding public office, Ms Loh championed many reforms including land inheritance rights for the indigenous women of the New Territories and introduced and passed the historic Protection of the Harbour Ordinance. Prior to her career in politics, she spent 14 years in the private commercial sector in physical



**Christine Loh... expanding global perspective for forest assets manager New Forests.**

commodities trading. She is a published author on public policy, US-China relations, climate change and the environment.

“As global demand for resources grows, there is a need to increase productivity while ensuring the conservation of the world’s remaining natural forests,” Mr Brand said.

New Forests seeks to create investment strategies that provide lasting solutions to this challenge.

“Through responsible management of forests and other real assets, we create shared benefit for investors and local communities alike.

New Forests is a Certified B Corp with offices and assets in Australia, New Zealand, southeast Asia and the US.

**“FORESTRY INVESTMENT PLAYS ROLE IN NET ZERO EMISSIONS**

## Record year for housing in Vic

A RECORD number of detached housing starts will occur in Victoria in the 12 months to September 2021 of more than 45,000 starts.

HIA says this is almost 17% higher than the peak of the previous boom in 2018. This large volume of work will ensure that the industry remains very active through

until at least the second half of 2022.

Renovation activity is also at an all-time high and likely to remain elevated for a number of years through the post-Covid house price growth.

This level of activity is not likely to be seen again for many years, if not decades.



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# Timber supply shortages worsen as construction boom explodes globally

## Governments look to build themselves out of the economic woes of Covid

A BUILDING and construction boom has exploded around the world, including Australia where governments are looking to build themselves out of the Covid pandemic's economic woes.

It has pushed the price of building-related commodities through the roof, with timber and iron ore hitting record prices.

Iron ore surged to \$US228 a tonne last week as Chinese steel mills continue to ramp up production.

"That's exactly \$US173 a tonne more than Australia's Treasury assumed when it calculated the 2021 budget deficit last year, so it's as wrong as you can get," said ABC finance presenter Alan Kohler.

During the week, lumber futures in the US broke records, surging beyond \$US1700 per thousand board feet for the first time, a meteoric rise for a commodity that was sitting below \$US400 this time last year.

The rocketing price is being driven by America's housing boom.

**“SCARCITY OF IMPORTS IS PUSHING UP PRICES**

According to the US National Association of Home Builders, the soaring lumber price could add an extra \$US36,000 to the price of building an average single-family home.

For a variety of reasons timber prices in Australia are



**More and more architects in North America are recommending mass timber structures which is soaking up global supplies.**

also up this year. Independent forestry consultant Rudolf van Rensburg said Australian softwood prices had increased between 5 and 15%.

"Australia faces a situation where there hasn't been any significant expansion of the softwood plantations since the 1990s, so the supply from current plantations is fairly static and demand is increasing with a rising population. Scarcity in imports is also exacerbating prices," he said.

"With lumber prices in the US very attractive, exporters are focusing on that market ... and with freight [shipping] rates very high, it's making the distant Australian market less attractive."

The Australian Timber Importers Federation has raised this issue with federal ministers and this week is involved in discussions with officials in Canberra on

imported timber supply, including what might be done to improve deliveries to the Australian market.

Speaking to ABC News Radio, Master Builders CEO Denita Wawn said the federal government's HomeBuilder Scheme had created a lot of work, but had caused extreme pressures in the supply chain.

Cont P 4

## The united voice for Australia's forest industries



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From P 3

“We’ve got a [building] boom across the entire country which is very unusual,” she said.

“We’re now seeing shortages of both labour and products, especially timber, steel and engineered timber products.

“It’s putting a huge amount of pressure on the supply chain as whole, not only in Australia, but the world is using housing to stimulate economies and there’s a world-wide shortage of key essential products.”

It is estimated that up to 60,000 ha of softwood plantations were lost during the 2019-2020 summer bushfires, which is another

**STARTING TO SEE THEFT ON BUILDING SITES**



**Exporters are focused on North American sales... very high shipping freight costs are making the distant Australia market less attractive.**

factor affecting timber supplies in Australia.

Australian Timber Importers Federation general manager John Halkett said it was clear that the shortage of timber and other building materials was having an acute impact on building and construction activity across Australia.

“Timber wholesalers are doing their very best under difficult circumstances to supply customers with orders to the best of their ability,” he said.

“In the face of a global building and construction frenzy there are acute supply challenges. For Australian timber importers this is not assisted by shipping price increases, shortages of containers and congestion at ports.”

Mr Halkett said there was no silver bullet and northern hemisphere suppliers of structural softwood and engineered wood products were flat out supplying European and US markets.

Importers in Australia were finding it really difficult despite their best efforts to

get the quantities of supply, particularly of structural timber products that were required to service customers.

Mr Halkett said he expected this issue would be “the elephant in the room” at the upcoming TABMA national conference in the Hunter Valley next month.

ATIF will be attending the conference and will be available to discuss the issue and actions being taken to attempt to improve the timber supply situation ... “although there seems to be no easy answers.”

Housing Industry Association Melbourne East Metro branch chair Tim Renwick said the shortage was reaching crisis point across Victoria.

“We’re now starting to see theft of timber out on building sites,” he said. “It’s a real thing and clients are facing hold ups out there on sites.”

Mr Renwick says the pandemic affecting timber imports and the effects of bushfires were behind the shortage.

“We import 80% our timber and that just stopped overnight,” he said.

“We’re looking at about an 11% increase overall in building materials this year alone. The cost of containers bringing stuff in from overseas has gone up 300%.”

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## AWISA event will run in 2024

THE AWISA Ltd board has announced it will delay the next international woodworking exhibition until July 2024.

“The industry worldwide plans early and makes commitments early,” general manager Geoff Holland said.

“Many machinery companies need to know

early so they can place orders for machines for the event. Many hardware companies have to source their displays from Europe,” he said.

AWISA has delayed the launch as far as it can but must now make a decision based on the factors that apply now – all related to the problems created by Covid-19.

# Inclusivity and reconciliation underpin UQ architectural students' design prize

## Responsible Wood connects with next generation of leaders in architecture

TWO University of Queensland architectural students have been awarded the Responsible Wood Architectural Prize for Excellence in Timber Design for their research paper and model on the construction of a fire observation tower in the Brisbane Valley region.

The students, Dylan Francks and Simin Louei, assisted by Matthew Walton, Alec Hutchinson and Emile Hildebrandt, presented research design and models for the Emu Creek Observation Tower, which uses culturally sustainable participatory principles.

It is has been argued that the emphasis of sustainable development within the field of architecture has been mostly concentrated on environmental 'green issues', with the aspects of culture lying outside the scope of research for many years.

However, in recent times, there appears to be growing interest among scholars to emphasise the important role



*University of Queensland architectural students at work on the design of a fire observation tower in the Brisbane Valley.*

that culture plays within the maintenance of sustainable development.

The project, completed for the requirements of ARCH7071: Arch Research: Environmental Sustainability, looked to establish the region as a new travel destination for campers and adventurers within southeast Queensland. The on-site facilities include camping grounds, 4x4 tracks, a water sports activity area, raised walking tracks, horse stables, an auditorium, zip

lines and a 30 m tall fire lookout tower.

The polyhedral tower is constructed from more than 200 singular prefabricated panels which are attached to a larger superstructure. The panels act as a perforated screens or louvres, shading

**CULTURE PLAYS IMPORTANT ROLE IN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

visitors from the harsh Queensland sun as they climb to the observation platform at the top of the tower. Once visitors reach the peak they are rewarded with a view of the surrounding Brisbane Valley and mountain ranges.

The tower design incorporates locally-sourced under-utilised grey ironbark

(*Eucalyptus drepanophylla*), a timber abundant in the region which can be found in one of the many nearby timber plantations, with the tower acting as an "ode to the region's colonial past".

As the students Dylan and Simin suggest, there could be significant issues of sustainable development that will be missed if the role of culture is undermined,

*Cont P 6*



*Ballarat Region Treegrowers, a recipient of the 2020 Responsible Wood Small Grants Program.*

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From P 5

with culture itself providing a necessary foundation and condition to reach sustainable development goals.

Though there has been a distinct shift towards the inclusion of indigenous architecture in contemporary Australian society, mixed intentions could be partly to blame for the varied results and slow uptake associated with the practice, as many scholars and practitioners have been engaged “for their aesthetics rather than politics,” while indigenous collaborators may have participated with less of an aesthetic vision in mind and more for political intent.

Responsible Wood CEO Simon Dorries said the award provided an ideal opportunity to connect with the next generation of leaders in architectural design – a generation increasingly

concerned with the wellbeing of global forests.

Responsible Wood is the governing body in Australia for PEFC International, the world’s largest forest certification scheme.

“Certification plays a crucial role in ensuring forests are managed responsibly and sustainably, now and for multi-generational use in the future,” Mr Dorries said.

“Responsible Wood is committed to working with universities to educate tomorrow’s leaders about the power of forest certification for greater good.”

As the students Dylan and Simin suggest there could be significant issues



**Emphasis on sustainable development... model of the Emu Creek Observation Tower designed to include 200 singular prefabricated panels which are attached to a larger superstructure.**

of sustainable development that will be missed if the role of culture is undermined, with culture itself providing a necessary foundation and condition to reach sustainable development goals.

Though there has been a distinct shift towards the inclusion of indigenous architecture in contemporary

Australian society, mixed intentions could be partly to blame for the varied results and slow uptake associated with the practice, as many scholars and practitioners have been engaged “for their aesthetics rather than politics,” while indigenous collaborators may have participated with less of an aesthetic vision in mind and more for

political intent.

In addition to the architectural prize, a Responsible Wood Civil Engineering Prize was also presented to UQ students William Webster and Duncan Hossy. Further information will be provided in an upcoming edition.



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**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

**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/>

**16-17: Frame Australia Timber Offsite Construction – Crown Promenade Melbourne, VIC.** New global ‘hybrid’ format will retain avital face to face element. Choose from a selection of half-day and full-day programs. Virtual delegates can register for just one or more conference sessions.

For further information and registration visit the website [www.timberoffsiteconstruction.com](http://www.timberoffsiteconstruction.com)

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## EVENTS LISTS MAY CHANGE DUE TO CORONAVIRUS TRAVEL, SOCIAL DISTANCING AND OTHER RESTRICTIONS. PLEASE CHECK THE RELEVANT WEBSITES FOR UPDATES.

### 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 Aubépines, 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, Pobeditelei 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)

## Aussie-made can boost economy and create 11,000 jobs

THE first-ever Australian Made Week kicked off on Monday urging shoppers to say 'g'day' to one extra locally-made or grown product to help boost the country's economy over the next 12 months.

Roy Morgan research says if every household spent an additional \$10 a week on

Australian-made products it would inject an extra \$5 billion into the economy each year and create up to 11,000 new jobs.

The Australian forest products sector is no different. As custodian of the Australian standards for Sustainable Forest Management (AS 4708)

and Chain of Custody for Forest Products (AS 4707), Responsible Wood is strongly aligned to the campaign.

Certification right across the Australian forest products value chain demonstrates to customers and buyers that timber and paper-based products are grown in sustainably-managed forests

and manufactured, retailed and sold through Australian businesses.

Australian Made CEO Ben Lazzaro, said the purpose of Australian Made Week – which runs from May 24 to May 30 – is to celebrate and support local makers and growers.

# November date for Timber Offsite event

FRAME Australia has announced the Timber Offsite Construction (TOC) has been re-scheduled to November 16 and 17 this year.

Event founder Kevin Ezard said experts had indicated all Australian adults could be vaccinated by Christmas if the supply of vaccines remains consistent.

“So on that basis we believe November will be safe to proceed,” Mr Ezard said.

A key feature of Frame Australia events for the past 23 years has been personal networking with colleagues – rating number one in post-event surveys.

“The new global ‘hybrid’ format will retain this vital face to face element, while delivering an unrivalled experience with ‘in-person’ and ‘online’ participation for



**1/ Timber offsite construction... changing the ways we build our homes and cities..**  
**2/ Kevin Ezard... new global ‘hybrid’ format.**



both speakers and delegates,” Mr Ezard said.

“With technology now revolutionising the use of timber in construction, TOC21’s theme Timber and Technology: The Zero Carbon Future focuses on the trends that are changing the way we build our homes and cities

for a more sustainable world.

Conference sessions will combine international and local presenters to provide global coverage of topics by world-renowned experts, plus building project panels discussing challenges and

solutions in engineered timber and mass wood projects.

In addition, exhibition displays will feature construction systems, design technologies, manufacturing, and building materials to provide opportunities for engagement with key industry suppliers.

A new feature is the highly flexible registration options for in-person delegates to choose from a selection of half-day and full-day programs, while virtual delegates can register for just one or more conference sessions.

The new event timing is Tuesday and Wednesday November 16 and 17 at Crown Promenade Melbourne.

For further information and registration visit [www.timberoffsiteconstruction.com](http://www.timberoffsiteconstruction.com)



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# Certification platform key link in new Europe timber industry confederation

THE European Timber Industries Confederation has been formally constituted in Brussels.

The new organisation will be the voice for EU institutions and other bodies, especially at a moment when, as never before, the timber sector deserves to be listened to and considered as a key partner in the ongoing transformation of European economic models.

ETIC stands as the prompt and liable response to the urgent request of several European timber industry sectors willing to have a credible interface with European authorities to raise their concerns, namely in the field of sustainable economic and social

Additionally, the new organisation will commit major energy and resources to provide its members with real services, among which will stand up the provision of a 'certification platform' for wood-based products, aiming to endorse the sustainability of all the processing phases converting the raw material into a finished product.

ETIC intends to play a proactive role in the European sector social dialogue process and commit significant energies in the implementation of dedicated EU-granted projects.

"It is an historical moment for the European timber sector," says ETIC acting chairman Vítor Manuel Poças.

"Our confederation will be the loyal ally of all wood value chain players, from all member states, willing to join our ranks," he said.

"ETIC will be an inclusive and really democratic body that aims to provide new momentum to relations between the sector and EU authorities. By its proactive attitude, the organisation will bring a breath of fresh air to the sector. And its journey has just begun."

ETIC aims to enter the Brussels scene, and more specifically the forest-based industries group of official representatives, with the resolute ambition of developing strong factual synergies.

This approach aims to affirm



**Victor Poças... confederation will be the loyal ally of all wood value chain players.**

the organisations values and intention to come forward as a complementary partner and not as an alternative to already consolidated organisations

In the coming weeks and months, ETIC management will start contacts with EU institution representatives as well as with a large panel of Brussels-based stakeholders to raise the organisation's profile and establish possible

**“ HISTORIC MOMENT FOR EUROPEAN TIMBER SECTOR**



collaboration protocols where appropriate.

ETIC headquarters are located in the prestigious area of the Square de Meeûs, a stone's throw from the European Parliament.

Visit [info@etic.website](mailto:info@etic.website)

Meanwhile, in Britain, the building industry is marking the fourth anniversary of the appalling Grenfell Tower tragedy.

"In those four years, the construction sector has realised its collective failings and is addressing those involved with construction products to pledge and provide accurate product information, with a commitment to putting people's safety first at all stages of building creation and use," UK Timber Federation CEO David Hopkins said.

The federation has taken a positive step registering as a signatory to the Building a Safer Future Charter.



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# Testing centre underscores importance of expert systematic analysis of timber

WITH surging domestic and global demand for renewable timber products putting pressure on Australian supply chains but also creating new opportunities, it is a great time to discuss how timber products and the claims made within Australian markets should be underpinned by a quality and independent product testing regime.

Timber product manufacturers use testing by independent laboratories to verify their products meet the requirements of the product standards and any performance claims made by the manufacturer under those standards.

The Timber Testing Centre, an independent, NATA-accredited testing laboratory based in Brisbane, has been servicing the timber industry for more than 60 years, testing a broad range of engineered and solid wood products.

TTC can test to various standards, including Australian and New Zealand standards (AS/NZS), International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO) standards, European (EN),



**With the majority of timber products ending up in structural applications, it is crucial that structural products meet the requirements of relevant manufacturing standards.**

American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM), and Japanese standards (JAS/JIS).

The timber testing laboratory can offer various strength and stiffness, shear, and formaldehyde tests of key timber and engineered wood products, such as sawn timber, plywood, laminated veneer lumber (LVL), panels, cross-laminated timber (CLT) and glulam.

Formaldehyde emissions and structural verification are two examples of in-demand market testing. The monitoring of formaldehyde levels in timber products is critical, with some international studies indicating a possible link between high formaldehyde levels and health concerns. Homeowners, builders, manufacturers, and

consumers are increasingly becoming more pro-active in ensuring high formaldehyde levels in products are identified and monitored.

With the majority of timber products ending up in structural applications, it is crucial that structural products meet the requirements of relevant manufacturing standards. Structural verification includes testing for elasticity, bending strength, tension, compression, and shear properties.

TTC's general manager Suzie Steiger said the timber product manufacturing sector produced many innovative, reliable and renewable products that should be recognised as preferred building materials in a low-emissions future.

"It is even more important than usual, during this period of huge demand, to make sure that confidence in timber products is underpinned by expert systematic testing of each product's key performance characteristics," Ms Steiger said.

"As markets for traditional and new innovative uses of timber products (including CLT, LVL and glulam) continue to grow, manufacturers can be assured that TTC as a responsive, independent, NATA-accredited testing laboratory, is there to help their business operate and meet the new demand."

For more information on the Timber Testing Centre, to receive a quote, or to book a test, contact Suzie Steiger on 07 3250 3777 or mobile 0478 221 120. Email: [suzie.steiger@timbertc.com.au](mailto:suzie.steiger@timbertc.com.au)

**On the cover: Suzie Steiger, general manager, and Troy Edwards, supervisor... Timber Testing Centre a NATA-accredited testing laboratory is helping businesses operate and meet new demands for timber products.**



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# Why are you afraid? Don't you know that everything is made of chemicals?

## The timber treatment industry needs to be sensitive to public opinion

PICTURE this ... a new treated timber product hits the shelves and is marketed as being treated with natural products that are free of chemicals.

I am a chemist by training so my response would most likely be along the lines ... "Don't you know everything is made of chemicals?"

I give training courses and presentations on timber protection to anyone who will listen. During these courses, I tell the avid listeners that the problem is not the chemicals, the problem is dosage. Anyone who dumps on chemicals without mentioning dosage is either ignorant (as in doesn't know the facts) or deliberately misleading.

We can all guess what would happen if you drank a bottle of whiskey or vodka in an hour. Such a massive intake of alcohol, without giving the body a chance to clear it, would do, at best, a lot of damage.

It's all about the dose!

(Which reminds me of Ernest Hemingway's funny quote: "I drink to make other people more interesting.")

OK, if everything is made of chemicals, where does this fear of chemicals come from? I think people tend to fear what they don't understand.



*We can all guess what would happen if you drank a bottle of whiskey in an hour. The problem is not the chemicals, the problem is dosage.*

Marketing exploits this by introducing nonsensical terms such as "chemical free" or "natural" to make the product seem safer or better in some way.

The inference from this is that the word 'chemical' implies something toxic or synthetic. Our problem in the timber protection industry is that we need biocides to protect the wood.

The thing is that the industry would not be allowed to use these biocides if they were considered to be unsafe, both in the application and when using the treated product. Concentrations in the wood are low and the most-used systems chemically react with the wood to stop them from leaching out in service.

bad side effect, even if the chances of it happening are really small, the public is wary. Just look at the immunisation hesitancy that is occurring in Australia as you read this article.

Even though the risk of blood clots from the AstraZeneca vaccine is less than the chance of being hurt in a car crash, some people are more worried about getting immunised than getting behind the wheel of a car.

The timber treatment industry needs to be sensitive to public opinion. Rather than being defensive when an anti-timber treatment point is made, it would be better to engage with the debate and ask questions. Where did the other person get their information? What is the basis of their concern? Ultimately, conversation may be the best way to address fear of chemicals.

It might be time to move away from the term 'treated wood'. Our colleagues in the Western Wood Preservers Institute in the US refer to 'preserved wood'.

It's a different way of looking at our product.

• *Jack Norton is national secretary of the Timber Preservers Association of Australia.*

### JACK'S RANT



**With JACK NORTON**  
Secretary, TPAA

I guess there is no such thing as irrational fear. If you're frightened of something then you are frightened.

Scientists and the public view risks differently. Scientists see risk as the likelihood of something happening. The public see consequences; if there is a

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# A new slant on the 'Old Queenslander' – a different house for flood resilience

## A living level responsive to prevailing climatic conditions and orientation

TED STUBBERSFIELD

I CAN only express my commiserations to readers who do not live in Queensland, the Sunshine State, where it's "beautiful one day, perfect the next".

The future for housing in 'tomorrow's Queensland' surely lies in the past with the Old Queenslander design as befits the 'Smart State'.

The Queenslander is an architectural style developed back in the 1840s and while not as common is still constructed today.

The quintessential Queenslander is a high-set, single-storey house made of timber with characteristic veranda and corrugated iron roof. With the urban expansion of cities, the amount of flat land sites for new developments is reducing.

Timber sub-floor construction on sloping sites brings with it many benefits, mainly in the form of reductions in earthwork costs, which is required to bench the land for concrete slabs.

A recent article written by Matthew Smith of Multinail revisits this design and quoted a recent independent cost study comparing residential timber ground



*The future for housing in 'tomorrow's Queensland' surely lies in the past with the Old Queenslander design.*

floors with concrete slabs on ground that revealed there can be a 33% saving when using a timber sub-floor option, when there is a 1500 mm fall in the site. There is even a 16% saving when using timber sub-floors on flat sites.

There are two other advantages of a Queenslander – heath and flood resilience.

I built our present home in 1992, which is about as traditional a Queenslander as you can get I reasoned that in 10 years' time whatever I build will look dated so why not make it look really old, away from the more modern changing trends. There are no carpets and very few curtains. My health has been transformed with only one cleanout since I moved in. The timber floors are also better for your legs as well.

As a nation we seem to have lost our common sense. As one person put it, we are

building homes where our grandparents wouldn't pitch a tent. On top of that we build them with materials that can't get wet.

This was brought home forcefully to locals here in the Lockyer Valley in 2011 when an inland tsunami tore through Grantham, just six minutes from where I live. Highset Queenslanders were generally spared and certainly didn't need to be gutted. Part of Dr Geoff Garrett's Understanding Floods; Questions and Answers, a government response to the catastrophe, was a design by architect Michael Rayner, then of Cox Rayner (now a director of Blight Rayner) which was based on his own personal experience. It led him to think if there might be

a different model of a house for flood resilience.

As many houses were beyond repair, the owners had the choice to sell out at a loss or rebuild – the problem being ... what to create? His solution was a small footprint, three-level contemporary version of the classic 'Queenslander'. But it is also designed to provide an alternative to apartment blocks as a means of facilitating high densities without discarding the single family detached house type.

The house design comprises three levels performing differently during a flood:

- Ground level comprises only utility functions (staircase, water tanks, laundry, store and garage) which allow floodwaters to flow through and are resilient to damage.

- Middle level comprises

“THREE-LEVEL VERSION WITH A SMALL FOOTPRINT

Cont P 10



1/ The three-level house requires a footprint of only 140 sq m and fits readily on a 250 sq m allotment.

2/ The modern Old Queenslander... a house design of three levels that performs differently during a flood.

From P 9

open plan living, with openable sides, which also allow floodwaters to flow through.

- Upper level is well above the 2011 flood level, and comprises bedrooms but acts in a flood as the level for downstairs furnishings and

other household items to be taken for refuge. In the event of catastrophically high flood, it also allows for floodwaters to flow through.

The three-level house requires a footprint of only 140 sq m and fits readily on a 250 sq m allotment. The design preserves the principles of the classic

Queenslander but amplifies the character by enabling opening up of the sides and ends of the living level

responsive to prevailing climatic conditions and orientation.

Long live the Queenslander in its various iterations!

- *Ted Stubbersfield is a senior timber consultant based at Gatton in Queensland's Lockyer Valley. Email: ted@deckwood.com.au*

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# King Billy pine an ancient conifer and a throwback to days of Gondwanaland

## Visit to Tasmania beckons to see a tree in forests dominated by eucalypts

I HAVE always been intrigued by King Billy - aka King William pine. I haven't seen one in the wild, so a trip to Tasmania beckons!

In a country now dominated by eucalypt trees, King Billy pine is a throwback to the days of Gondwanaland. Then, of course, species of ancient conifer trees ruled the southern hemisphere.

Today very few of these ancient conifers remain where they co-exist only in Tasmania along with a few other Gondwanaland conifer relics and the broadleaf Tasmania myrtle (*Nothofagus cunninghamii*). Those that do have retreated ...small scattered refugees in Australia and across the Pacific.

New Zealand is perhaps the exception where primitive conifer species still dominate extensive areas of forest.

King Billy pine is a medium-size tree. The trunk is frequently forked often low down and butt sweep and buttresses are common. The tree is found in the western and south western Tasmania between the Arthur River in the north and Port Davey and the headquarters of the Huon River in the south up into the alpine zone where the climate is cool. Some trees are probably 2000 years old.

King Billy pine trees are not



1/ **King Billy pine... found in western and south western Tasmania at the head of the Huon River.**

2/ **William III of England ... 'King Billy' the disrespectful Irish Catholic name for this monarch who advocated continuing Protestant ascendancy in Ireland.**

common and grow on steep broken country, exposed ridges and on soils that are usually poor and shallow but well-drained. Trees occur in small stands or as scattered individuals.

Trees may be as tall as 40 metres and have orange-red, slightly furrowed bark, exfoliating in long soft and spongy strips. Tree crowns are very conical, foliage-bearing twigs are numerous, mostly alternate, spreading, covered with stiff, spreading leaves.

King Billy pine has been listed as endangered under Australia's Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act of 1999. The species does not get along

the landscape in areas subject to fire.

The species was named for King Billy, also known as William Lanne (c.1835-1869), commonly described as the last full-blooded male Tasmanian native, although this origin is disputed.

'King Billy' was the disrespectful Irish Catholic name for William III of England, who did much to maintain the Protestant ascendancy in Ireland, which for a long time was the principal instrument of British oppression of Irish Catholics. So, perhaps, the term 'King Billy' applied to William Lanne, and simultaneously conveyed the Tasmanian colonists' opinion at the time of both native Tasmanians and their British gaolers.

King Billy pine timber superficially resembles that of Huon pine and the two species occasionally occur together. Huon pine produces one of the most superior softwood lumbers in the world ... beautiful, easily worked, strong, and highly decay-resistant. King Billy pine trees in a Huon pine forest would have been an object of contempt due to its inferior timber, and thus the name 'King Billy pine' may have been applied by the loggers to convey that feeling for the tree.

### TALKING TREES



With **JOHN HALKETT**

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well with humanity, as shown by its response to fire and climate change. It is one of the least fire-adapted conifers and tends to disappear from



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# Pine frame at Venice architecture biennale explores history of softwood construction

AMERICAN architects Paul Andersen and Paul Preissner have built a four-storey pine frame in front of the US pavilion at the Venice Architecture Biennale that explores the history of softwood as a building material.

The event now under way includes submissions from 61 countries

Called American Framing, the pavilion project was commissioned by the University of Illinois Chicago.

The architects have built traditional features of American houses, such as dormers, gables and a porch, into the 12 m tall wooden skeleton made from pine sourced from Austria.

The structure and the accompanying exhibition inside the neoclassical pavilion reveal a construction method that usually remains hidden and is largely uncelebrated, the architects said.

**FRAMING NOW ACCOUNTS FOR 90% OF DOMESTIC CONSTRUCTION**



**Architects hid the US pavilion at the Venice Architecture Biennale behind a pine frame**

"It started with a conversation about how beautiful projects can be when the framing has been built, but not covered," explained Andersen.

Paul Preissner added: "It seemed a bit mystifying to us that other than in carpentry guides and a handful of academic texts, the subject was never explored with the seriousness as nearly all other types of architecture."

According to Preissner, timber framing now accounts

for more than 90% of domestic construction in America due to the availability and low cost of the material. The duo wanted to bring this to Venice with their pine installation.

"The full-scale work expresses the sublime and profound aesthetic power of a material system that underlies most buildings in the US," Andersen said.

"We hope that the experience of the pavilion reconditions attitudes

towards the widely used but unprivileged construction method, and introduces the topic anew, presenting the vaguely familiar as something profoundly wonderful," added Preissner.

"It's better for the environment than concrete, steel, masonry or old-growth timber," Andersen said. "Plus, you're growing trees while you make it."

Paul Andersen and Paul Preissner are both independent architects and associate professors at the University of Illinois Chicago.

More nature-themed pavilions at this year's Venice Architecture Biennale include a rainwater installation inside the Danish pavilion and a co-living space built out of spruce inside the Nordic pavilion.

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## HEAD OFFICE

Timber & Forestry e-news  
PO Box 69, Potts Point, NSW 1335,  
Australia  
Phone | +61 (0) 417 421 187

## PUBLISHERS

John Halkett | +61 (0) 417 421 187  
johnh@timberandforestryenews.com  
Dennis Neilson | +64 (0) 7 349 2764  
dennison@timberandforestryenews.com

## MANAGING EDITOR

Jim Bowden | +61 (0) 401 312 087  
cancon@bigpond.net.au  
PO Box 330, Hamilton Central QLD  
4007, Australia

## ADVERTISING

John Halkett | +61 (0) 417 421 187  
johnh@timberandforestryenews.com  
advertising@timberandforestryenews.com

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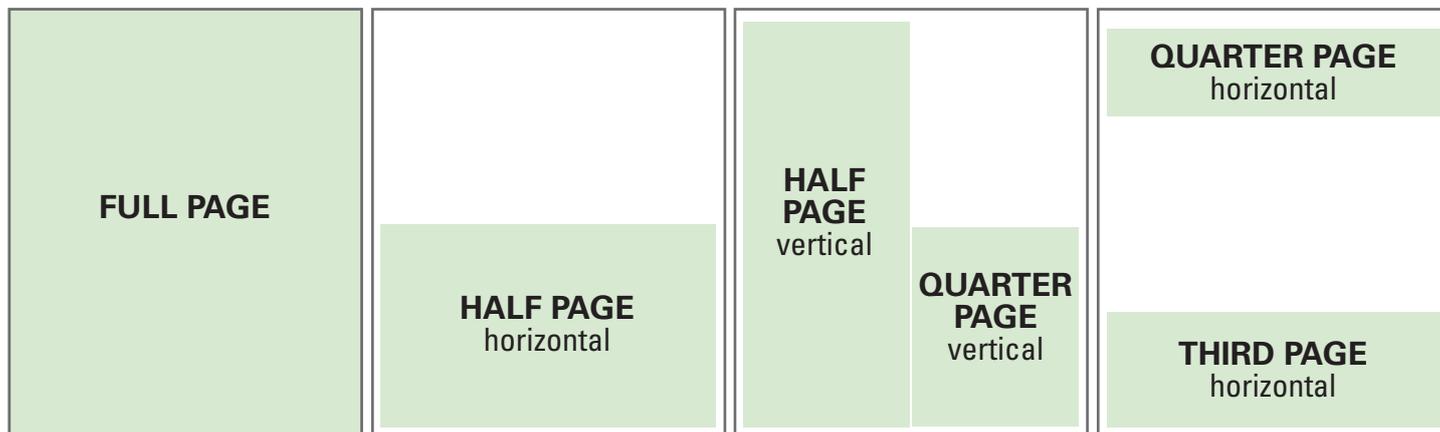
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