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COVER STORY P11

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Shortage of supply, shortage of tradies as housing buckles down in all regions

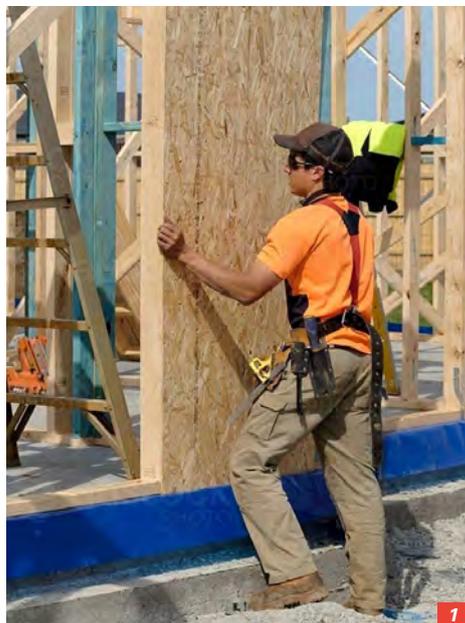
ALL trades across residential construction in Australia are in short supply – and the shortage extends across every region.

The Housing Industry Association has analysed the demand/supply balance of tradespeople across 13 areas of residential construction throughout 10 regions for the June quarter.

The HIA trades availability index improved marginally from -0.55 to -0.53 in the June 2021 quarter indicating the industry is experiencing one of the most significant skills shortages of the past 20 years.

“This small improvement reflects quarterly volatility, not a material improvement in the supply of trades,” HIA economist Angela Lillicrap said.

At the end of HomeBuilder, there were more than 120,000 applications for a new build or renovation expected to enter the construction pipeline, stretching the availability of trades and supply.



1/ Shortage of builders across Australia, but a good time to start an apprenticeship or learn a trade.

2/ Angela Lillicrap... record year for detached home building.

“These are vastly different conditions compared to the same time last year when the supply of skilled trades was close to equilibrium,” Ms Lillicrap said.

“The skills shortage is expected to ease in 2022

“SKILLED TRADES IN VERY HIGH DEMAND”

as the number of new homes commencing construction slows,” she said.

“The current surge in building activity means

that it is a good time for anyone interested in starting an apprenticeship or learning a trade.”

Ms Lillicrap said a record year for detached home building had kept skilled trades in very high demand.

Meanwhile, HIA data shows more than 60,000 people have left Sydney and Melbourne to other parts of the country in the 12 months to March.

The exodus of residents from Melbourne follows the Covid recession with more than 32,000 residents departing in the year to March. Sydney also lost 31,600 residents to other parts of the country over the same time. However, this is consistent with the trends of the past 20 years.

This shift in population is the main driver of the tight rental market that exists across the country, other than in Sydney and Melbourne. Regional areas have seen a greater increase in building approvals than capital cities as the population shifts toward lower density areas.



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Women tap into lifeblood of a state's forest industries on Toolara inspection

SARAH PORTER DIX

THE lifeblood of Queensland's forest and timber industry is the regions, so the Women in Forests and Timber Network accepted an offer from HQPlantations to bring a delegation of women to tour the nursery and forestry operations at Toolara state forest north of Brisbane last week.

It was a fantastic opportunity for those of us who work with the end products to see and experience the very literal 'seeds' of the supply chain, where the journey from tree to timber begins ... and. as luck would have it, to spend the day out in the forest enjoying the scent of pine before Brisbane's snap lockdown!

We arrived to morning tea and a warm welcome by HQP's forester Alison Dillon and planning officer Colleen Hair, and then it was straight to the nursery to commence the tour amidst a vast sea of seedlings, along with our 'token male' Gianluca Raffaele, marketing manager at Panel Tools.

Kate Clapson, seed production and tree improvement coordinator, walked us through 60 years of genetic research and plantation cycles that has led to the robust southern pine species grown by HQP across Queensland.

One of Australia's largest plantation growers managing more than 330,000 ha of private plantation and state forests, HQP is primarily a producer of hybrids combining straightness,



On the forest industries tour... front row, left to right are Casey Holmes, Dindas, Beth Welden, Forest Learning, Cairo Chapman, Scribed Flooring, Sarah Porter Dix, Timber Queensland, Kate Killen, Accurate Group, Genevieve Ryan, AKD, Alison Dillon, HQPlantations, and Tash Southey, Big River Group.

high wood density and wet site tolerance of slash pine and the fast growth, fine branching and evenly textured wood of Caribbean pine.

We began our tour of Toolara forest at a site of newly-planted pine seedlings, where forester Mitch Maddock talked us through the first four years of managing a new plantation. These trees will take 20-30 years to reach full maturity and be ready for harvest.

“EXPERIENCING 'SEEDS' OF THE SUPPLY CHAIN

Next stop was a more mature plantation recently 'thinned', which occurs about 12 years into the growth cycle between canopy closure and harvest.

Lead forester Randall Norris gave us a rare glimpse into a harvesting operation in process. It was incredible to see (and smell) the raw resource, and even more so

to see one of HQP's female operators on the harvesting machine.

Lunch was courtesy of Big

River Group, one of WFTN's annual partners for 2021. Our

Cont P 11

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Australian Forest Products Association

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NATIONAL FOREST INDUSTRIES SYMPOSIUM



THE HON. JONNO DUNIHAM
Assistant Minister for Forestry
KEYNOTE SPEAKER



AKHIL ABRAHAM
Head of Climate Diplomacy at the British High Commission
UK Forest and Fibre Industries contribution towards Net Zero by 2050.



GINA CASTELAIN
Director, Wik Timber
The journey towards sustainable management of their timber resources.



DEREK NIGHBOR
CEO Forest Products Association of Canada
Working to maintain social licence whilst intersecting with caribou and grizzly bears.



DAVID BRAND
CEO New Forests
How Net Zero climate positions will impact tree growing in Australia.



RIC SINCLAIR
Managing Director of Forest & Wood Products Australia
Converting emissions from ASX Top 50 to commercial forestry.



SANDRA TOSTAR
Lead Biomaterials Scientist for Volvo
Volvo's race to biomaterials and the track to wood-fibre in our cars.



DENITA WAWN
CEO Master Builders Australia
The vital role of timber for housing.

AND THE AWARDING OF THE NATIONAL FOREST INDUSTRY AWARDS

BOOK NOW









From P 3

thanks to Kylie and her team for making the day possible.

The final stop of the day was back in the Mary Valley to visit an Araucaria (hoop pine) plantation. Hoop pine is one of the few endemic rainforest species that has been successfully domesticated in Australia for timber production.

Stopping at Amamoor state forest we saw hoop pine growing alongside native forest, and so these plantations look vastly different to the uniform rows we had seen



Alison Dillon of HQP and Casey Holmes of Dindas with hoop pine seedlings and a mature plantation in the background.

earlier. This proximity to native flora and fauna also



Gianluca Raffaele, marketing manager at Panel Tools, enjoys a day on the forest floor.

means that forest stewardship – managing the land in a way that is environmentally sound, sustainable and responsible and with the future in mind – is of utmost importance here.

We finished the day doing our own bit of

forest management, helping Regina Dodd to release jewel beetles – a natural approach to fighting the cat’s claw vine, which is an invasive species that smothers vegetation and can devastate forest canopies if left unchecked.

• Sarah Porter Dix is communications officer for Timber Queensland and is on the WFTN executive committee.



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Like Covid-19 ‘vaccinate’ forests before it's too late

CANADIAN researchers have called on the British Columbia government to scale up controlled burns in an effort to reduce wildfire risk.

“The public would be surprised to know that wildfires and Covid-19 have a lot in common,” they say.

The coronavirus disease is a contagion; it spreads from person to person through a vulnerable population. Covid spreads through entire populations because it is a novel virus, and there is little natural immunity to it.

Wildfire behaves similarly.

Fire burns as a contagious process and can spread across forest landscapes because they are in a highly vulnerable state and contain



abundant fuel.

The debate over how to end the pandemic has centred on two strategies: natural herd immunity versus vaccination.

According to epidemiologists, herd immunity is achieved when a large proportion of the population has been exposed to the virus and in response,

Cont P 13

Sawillers increasing supply to meet the surge in demand for structural timbers

‘Our best outcome is that we continue to build homes with timber frames’

HOW has supply responded to deal with the timber demand surge?

AKD national marketing manager Christine Briggs, in this second-part summary of AKD’s presentation at the recent WoodSolutions seminar, says analysis of FWPA data shows domestic sawmillers have increased supply of structural softwood by some 300,000 cub m Apr’21 compared to Apr’20.

“SHORTAGE OF IMPORTS LIKELY TO CONTINUE UNTIL NEXT YEAR”

Domestic supply is at capacity ... but it falls short given the demand being created and is amplified as bushfire-impacted salvage log has now ceased in New South Wales.

“Idle capacity is about 40% at both AKD’s Tumut and Hynes Tumberumba mills with both scrambling to

increase log intake,” says Ms Briggs.

“Normally structural timber imports from Europe would balance our market but due to better returns in the US and ongoing logistics issues worldwide, this is not happening currently and is unlikely to remedy before next year.”

Ms Briggs says this highlights the importance of a strong growing local industry long term.

AKD’s current estimates are that the supply shortage is about 7-10% for this two-year period if imports



Christine Briggs... continued demand from customers and key users will ensure the long-term supply of timber.

cannot respond to the increased Australian demand. In Christine Briggs words,

“we need to stretch out demand which the current construction cycle is naturally doing to managing surge over a longer than normal construction cycle for new home builds.”

Ms Briggs gives credit to Timber Queensland which recently developed some great communications about the current situation, and which have been adapted below for industry to use nationally:

FACT:

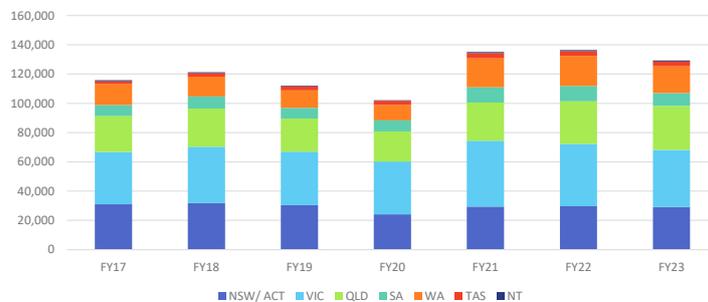
- Pandemic-related international supply issues, on the back of last year’s bushfires, have resulted in timber framing shortages. Up to 25% of Australia’s timber framing demand needs to be imported – but the global market is just as hot.

SOLUTION:

- Australian producers are working hard, processing record numbers of logs and implementing equitable

ANNUAL DETACHED HOUSE COMMITS

Source: BIS Oxford Economics



Cont P 6



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From P 5

volume planning to support their partners. There is high investment in technology in mills to maximise timber volumes.

FACT:

- Homebuilder and other government stimulus measures have resulted in unprecedented housing booms and local demand for timber.

SOLUTION:

- Your supplier relationships need to be as strong as your timber frames! Australian sawmillers have a network of partner timber merchants and fabricators who can be your port of call – not only for product, but for advice.

FACT:

- The structural timber framing shortage is in some circumstances exacerbated

“SUPPLY ISSUES ARE IMPACTING ON ALL BUILDING MATERIALS



Brooke Schultz... one of AKD's apprentice wood machinists at the Caboolture dry mill.

by shortages in roofing and other fixtures and connections. The reality is, supply issues are impacting all building materials.

SOLUTION:

- Timber framing is worth the wait. Timber remains the most environmentally friendly choice, with the lowest embodied energy of all building materials. Choosing timber framing removes greenhouse gasses from the air and stores the

carbon for life.

Ms Briggs passionately explains that for customers and key users “their

continued demand will ensure the long-term supply of timber.” Here, she outlines the following key points:

- Importance of ongoing communication between supply chain partners.
- Relationships matter – be kind and respectful.
- Let data support and drive decisions.
- Supply chain efficiency from improvement gains in production and design.
- FWPA R&D creating opportunities such as grade compliance; bushfire regulations; recycling and re-use.
- Supply security over price.

The key message from Christine Briggs: “The best outcome for Australia is that we continue to build our homes with timber frames.”



Tristan Bellears... keeping an eye on manufacturing for continuous improvement at AKD's post and poles business in Victoria.



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SEPTEMBER

1: Australian Forest Products Association Gala Dinner and Symposium – Parliament House, Canberra, ACT. For further information see: www.ausfpa.com.au

10: Tasmanian Timber Awards – Launceston, TAS. Celebration of excellence and best practice within the state's timber industry. Winners announced at a gala dinner at Albert Hall. Contacts: Phone 0439 336 511. Email naomi.will@tffpn.com.au. Visit www.tffpn.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 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

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/grants-courses/understanding-wood-science-course>

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



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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/

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

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

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>

MAY 2022

23-24: International Forest Business Conference – Sheraton Sopot Hotel, Poland. A two-day conference on megatrends that shape responsible forest and wood industry investments for climate action. The conference aims to bring together leading forest management organizations (TIMOs), investors interested in forest assets and carbon offsets (e.g., public and corporate pension funds, wealth managers and private banks, sovereign wealth funds, foundations and endowments) and sustainable wood industry representatives in order to exchange and share experiences and ideas about challenges and opportunities for forest sector as a natural climate solution. The main theme of the conference is New Forest Business Frontiers. Register at www.fba-events.com or contact karolina@forest-analytics.com

• Please send events to John Halkett: johnh@timberandforestrynews.com



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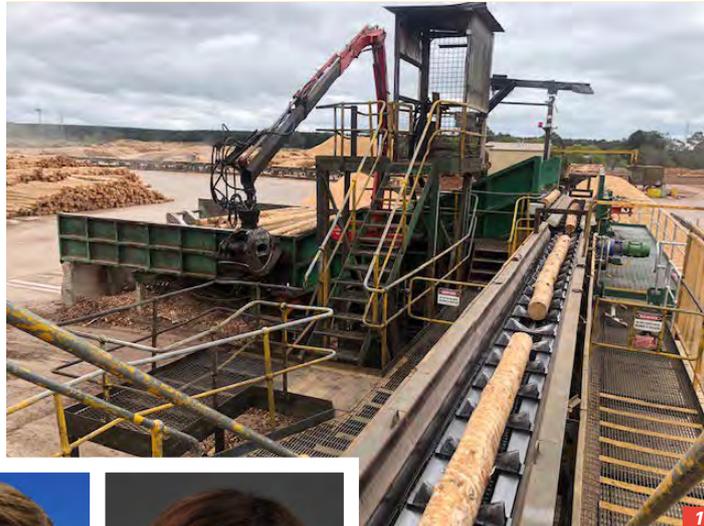
Victoria's forest industry benefits from \$4m Gippsland centre research funding

VICTORIA'S forestry industry is set to benefit from nearly \$4 million of new industry transferable research under the first round of projects funded by the National Institute for Forest Products Innovation centre in Gippsland.

Assistant Minister for Forestry and Fisheries Jonno Duniam and Victoria's Minister for Agriculture Mary-Anne Thomas congratulated the funding recipients and welcomed the benefits these projects would bring to Gippsland and the wider industry across Australia.

"These projects will support innovation in forest product sectors such as timber processing and forest management, and provide a major boost for the forestry industry," Senator Duniam said.

"Each project will directly benefit the forest industry in Gippsland, as well as the



1/ Gippsland innovation centre funding will improve commercialisation of manufactured timber products.

2/ Jonno Duniam... each project will directly benefit the forest industry in Gippsland.

3/ Mary-Anne Thomas... supporting industry by driving innovation across the supply chain.

forestry industry across Australia," he said.

"The research will investigate the impacts of fire on performance of timber projects, as well as the smarter use of spatial information for forest management, improving commercialisation of manufactured timber products,

feral animal management and improvements to plantation productivity."

Mary-Anne Thomas said the investment would drive innovation and collaboration, helping to secure Gippsland's role in advancing forestry research in Australia.

"We are supporting the future of our local timber industry by driving innovation across the supply chain," she said.

"Six projects with a total value of \$3.96 million have been successful under the first round of the Gippsland NIFPI Research and Development Project grants.

"The NIFPI centre in Gippsland will deliver jobs and growth through supporting the smarter use of our forest resources and assisting industry to extract greater value from our forest products."

The Australian and Victorian governments are contributing \$1.89 million to these successful projects, which is being matched by about \$2 million of funding and in-kind contributions from the forestry industry and research agencies.

Innovators and researchers are encouraged to apply for the second round of grants opening soon.

More about the NIFPI recipients and the round one projects at www.nifpi.org.au

Mercer International buys Katerra CLT plant for \$50 million

INTERNATIONAL building materials conglomerate Mercer has paid \$US50 million for the bankrupt CLT plant of Katerra in Washington state.

Mercer International, with bases in the US, Canada and Germany, is one of the world's largest sawmill operations with annual production capacity of more than 1.3 million cub m.

Katerra purchased the

Spokane-based facility in 2019. In June 2021, the company shut down the site and 117 people lost their jobs.

The facility is located on 22 ha of land and is equipped with state-of-the-art extensive automation technology.



Katerra operations include one of the largest CLT presses in the world.

Mercer CEO David Gandossi said the Katerra acquisition represented an attractive entry

point into the CLT business.

Katerra is equipped with extensive automation technologies including one of the largest CLT presses in the world. The facility has capacity of about 140,000 cub m annually based on five-day operations, which represents 30% of the current North American mass timber manufacturing capacity.

The Bennett's Trails a story of resilience and collaboration across a forest reserve

KATE HOLBROOK

IT was smiles all round at the opening of two new trails at Bennett's Forest Reserve in the Adelaide Hills on Saturday, July 10.

The sun came out along with some 40 riders and delegates from Forestry SA to experience the new trails built by Gravity Enduro SA and an army of volunteers.

It's been a tough couple of years for the mountain bike community in the Adelaide Hills with bushfires and then the Covid pandemic. Still, through the community's resilience and support from Forestry SA and local businesses, things are starting to look up.

With the race season (and life in general) looking uncertain in 2020, we were

On the cover: More than 40 riders from Forestry SA enjoyed challenging the new trails built by Gravity Enduro SA and an army of volunteers. Photo: Fletcher Media



Monique Blason, manager of community services, Forestry SA (left), and Kate Holbrook, coordinator, Gravity Enduro SA, at the starting line at the Bennett's Trail in the Adelaide Hills.

feeling restless. We seized the opportunity to build some new trails and help maintain the momentum that mountain biking in South Australia had experienced in recent years.

Up until 2015, Bennett's Forest Reserve had been the home of a popular downhill trail until it was destroyed by a bushfire. At that time, a couple of local legends had the foresight to identify a trail alignment and work with Forestry SA to have the plantation planned around it so that the trail could be built once the plantation had grown.

In 2020, with the trees over 1.8 m tall, we reached out to Forestry SA for approval to build the trail. With a renewed organisational focus on recreation, Forestry SA was very supportive. We were soon spending our weekends working away in the forest. We had never built trails before, and it was a steep learning curve.

Building trails by hand is tough, time-consuming work, especially when there are limited natural features. We carried close to 10 tonnes of rock into the trail to support jumps, drops and berms.

Luckily, we secured grant funding from Responsible Wood and further financial support from Forestry SA for the second trail to be cut by machine.

As a result of 800 hours of volunteer labour, and collaborations with Lighthouse Youth Project and Heroes on the Homefront, we now have two great trails at Bennett's Forest Reserve and plans for up to five more.

On a personal note, the most positive thing I have taken from this project is the role women have played. In recent years, we've seen significant growth in women and girls participating in mountain biking. And now, we have women driving projects that will influence the future of mountain biking in South Australia as well as getting on the tools and making stuff

• **Kate Holbrook works with Gravity Enduro South Australia, an organisation dedicated to bringing gravity enduro mountain biking to Adelaide and its surrounding areas.**



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From P 4

develops antibodies to the disease. When a large proportion of the population has achieved this state of natural immunity, it significantly slows the spread of the virus through the remainder of the population.

Unfortunately, achieving herd immunity through transmission of the virus means that many infected individuals will not be able to develop antibodies and will instead get very sick or die. Developing and administering a vaccine to a large proportion of the population is intended to achieve the same result but without the excess deaths and societal impacts.

Mitigation of the wildfire crisis centres on the same two strategies.

Herd immunity, in the context of wildfires, is achieved by creating large patches throughout the

landscape containing very little fuel or fuel that is too moist to burn. Grasslands, shrublands, wet meadows, aspen forests, woodlands, harvested areas that have been prescribed burned, and areas recently burned are all examples of patches that contain very little fuel.

“When a wildfire encounters these patches, especially if there are many of them, fires burn less intensely, slow down and are more easily contained,” says wildlife fire ecologist Robert Gray.

“This is the landscape of the indigenous peoples of North America who proactively managed with fire,” he said.



Wildfire watch... Robert Gray says forest fire behaviour similar to a pandemic.

“If we stick with our current forest management and fire suppression paradigm, and climate change continues unabated, we will actually reach herd immunity in a few short decades.”

Year after year of these large, destructive wildfires will eventually convert many forests to grasslands, shrublands and woodlands. However, to reach this state of ‘herd immunity’ the province will lose a large proportion of

its forests.

The other option is to ‘vaccinate’ the landscape against large-scale, destructive fire by building back in the network of inflammable patches generated by indigenous burning at a scale adequate to limit the destructive potential of large wildfires.

“Whether we’re managing a crisis centred on a dangerous virus or uncontrollable and highly damaging wildfires, our actions should be guided by a proactive management strategy,” Mr Gray said.

“In the coming decades wildfires are predicted to result in thousands of premature human deaths a year due to smoke (disproportionately affecting children).”

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P.O. Box 302 Robina QLD 4226
M +61 418217374
@ garyspillane@bigpond.com

INCOMAC S.r.l.
Via G. Ferraris 50 - 31044
Montebelluna (TV) Italy
P +39 042321646
@ info@incomac.com

Tree plantings were a fun day for ASH volunteers and a 'win' for environment

Seed bank was used to regenerate landscape after Black Summer bushfires

A SMALL, mighty and Covid-safe group from Australian Sustainable Hardwoods partnered up with the Maffra and Districts Landcare Network to celebrate Plant Ark's National Tree Day.

Also known as Plant A Tree Day, with plantings done on the last Sunday of July, this is Australia's biggest community planting. More than 10 million native trees and native shrubs have been planted by some million volunteers since 'tree day' started in 1996.

With the Gippsland region in Victoria the perfect backdrop, the ASH group planted more than 300 trees in just over one hour.

Australian Sustainable Hardwoods is an advanced timber manufacturer and mill in Heyfield, Vic. Focused on supplying sustainable timber products to the Australian market, ASH supports initiatives like National Tree Day as it promotes a greater environment for all.

The team planted a variety of native plants along a 200-metre stretch of the Gippsland Plains Rail Trail between Heyfield and Tinamba. The Maffra and Districts Landcare Network and the Gippsland Plains Rail Trail's committee of management prepared the site, ready for the group of 10 to plant and cover each seedling.

The plants, sourced from John Topp at Gippsland Indigenous Plants, included a variety of local species including red gum, manna gum, casuarina, callistemon,



Michelle Zackor, sales and marketing coordinator at Australian Sustainable Hardwoods, enjoys National Tree Planting Day and helping contribute to the community's environment and native wildlife habitat.

lomandra and dianella. Wildflowers including everlasting daisy, bulbine lilies and trigger plants were also planted, adding diversity to the native grasses, blackwood and black wattle already growing in this section of Rail Trail, surrounded by dairy pasture.

Not only is National Tree Day a fantastic team-bonding experience, but the reason ASH wanted to participate is to contribute to the

community's environment and improve habitat for native wildlife along the trail.

The forestry industry has a long history of contributing to the regeneration of Victoria's environment by replanting every tree that is sustainably harvested. Even recently, forest management's extensive seed bank was used to regenerate the landscape after the Black Summer bushfires. Without

it, Victoria would not have the seeds available to sow 2000 kg of Alpine ash and 200 kg of mountain ash seed and regenerate 23,000 ha of immature ash forest.

"It is important to support forest management as it creates opportunities not only to offer support after bushfires, but to manage the forest landscape, survey and support habitat and regenerate the forest," ASH marketing manager Megan Para said.

"And what an incredible day it was," she said. "We assembled 10 volunteers to keep within Covid restrictions and headed to the rail trail on the Thursday afternoon.

"The entire group loved the experience; it involved getting out into nature, contributing to the environment, and enjoying a fun afternoon together."

Carmen Lee, landcare facilitator with the Maffra and Districts Landcare Network said it was great to partner with ASH for the tree day activity ... "and it shows what a big difference can be made by a small group in a short amount of time."

The benefits of the planting would be long term and included helping to create a biolink along the Rail Trail (which extends 63 km between Traralgon and Stratford).

"This will create shade and shelter for the dairy stock in adjacent paddocks, and increasing amenity of the Rail Trail for its many users," Carmen said.

"Aside from all of that, it was fun!"



A fun task on Plant a Tree Day for (front) Michelle Zackor, Megan Para, and Nicholas Veale and (back) Robyn Trbovich, Vince Hurley, Mitch Komen, Gav Whitehead, Shane Phillips, Paul Higgins (Maffra Landcare volunteer) and Mandy Graham.

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AFPA NSW slams activist action on RFA

IN a legal 'first', the Environmental Defenders Office is heading to the Federal Court to challenge the northeast NSW regional forest agreement, which covers timber harvesting in the coastal area between Sydney and the Queensland border.

The RFA also exempts harvesting in native forests from the federal biodiversity law.

AFP NSW CEO Sue Grau has labelled the challenge as time wasting and inappropriate.

"During the current Covid crisis and building boom across the state, many families are struggling to get enough timber to meet market demand for construction," Ms Grau said.

"Activists attempting to close NSW native forestry will further reduce Sydney's building timber supplies. If we don't use sustainably-sourced hardwood from northern NSW – loved for flooring, staircases, doors and fine furniture - inevitably this shortfall will have to come from places with often far less sustainable forestry practices."

She said the High Court and the Federal Court respectively had rejected similar claims attempting to undermine the RFAs in Tasmania and Victoria.

"Australia's rigorous RFA framework has withstood these claims, with the courts holding that RFA forestry operations operate with strong environmental controls and in parallel with



Sue Grau... Australia's rigorous RFA framework has withstood these claims.

the Environment Protection Biodiversity and Conservation Act," she said

Originally signed between the commonwealth and NSW in 2000, the RFA was renewed in 2018 for another 20 years with rolling extensions that could continue indefinitely.

In the 2019-20 summer, bushfires swept through native forests in the RFA region, including areas of the World Heritage-listed Gondwana Rainforests of Australia.

On behalf of client the North East Forest Alliance, the Environmental Defenders Office will argue that when the northeast RFA was renewed, the commonwealth did not have regard to endangered species, the state of old growth forests or the impacts of climate change.

The NEFA is asking the Federal Court to declare that the RFA does not validly exempt native forest logging from federal biodiversity assessment and approval requirements.

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Tigercat raises the bar on steep slope logging further improving stability, operator comfort

TIGERCAT has raised the bar again with the introduction of the LSX870D shovel logger.

Based on the popular LX870D series track carrier platform, the machine is designed for extreme duty steep slope logging. With the choice of attachments including the new Tigercat BG13 grapple with a live heel boom or the SC08 shovel clam grapple, the LSX870D is suited to pre-bunching and shovel logging in challenging terrain.

The addition of the LSX870D to the Tigercat lineup provides a higher power, closed loop drive alternative to the LS855E. Where the LS855E provides higher swing speed and lower ground pressure, the LSX870D allows for



Tigercat LSX870D... a higher-powered, closed loop drive alternative shovel logger.

improved multifunctioning ability and quicker, more responsive travel speed. The Tigercat FPT C87 engine supplies 245 kW, which combined with the dedicated attachment pump, provides plenty of multi-functioning

power. Lift and reach capabilities for the LS855E and the LSX870D are identical.

Tigercat's levelling track machines use innovative technologies and systems optimised for a wide range

of steep slope applications including shovel logging, felling and harvesting.

The super-duty levelling undercarriage is longer and wider, providing exceptional stability on steep slopes. The patented levelling design uses two massive hydraulic cylinders and heavy steel sections for a solution that is simple, robust and reliable.

Unlike competing systems, the Tigercat levelling system leans into the hill when levelling to the side which further improves machine stability and operator comfort.

National distributor Onetrak now has seven branches – Victoria, NSW, Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia and two in Tasmania.

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Niro Sports: Kia's drive for electric leadership

C'EST une sacrée coïncidence. Student French emerged as we returned to Brisbane after visiting Le Coq Bressan eatery at Flaxton above the Sunshine Coast, just moments before the lock-down siren sounded at 4 pm.

It was a silent departure ... we were in Kia's all-new Niro sports SUV, its motor drowned out by the rustling leaves in a nearby camphor laurel tree.

The 64 kWh single-speed Niro is Kia's first dedicated electric vehicle and it drives the South Korean manufacturer's aggressive move into electric vehicles with a challenge to others to be a leader in this expanding market.

So now the French connection. Minjee Lee, 25, a Korean Perth-born golf star, had just won the Evian championship at Aix-les-Bains in France which saw her shoot a flawless final round seven-under 64 and then win a sudden death playoff at the first hole. She's favourite for gold this later week at the Tokyo Olympics.

Further, French eSports organisation Team Vitality has announced a partnership with the French division of Kia that will bring attention to a selection of new electric



1

1/ Kia's Niro EV Sport... the South Korean manufacturer's first dedicated electric vehicle.



2

2/ Dial-a-drive for electric excellence.

vehicles. The partnership joins Kia's other long-term association with the League of Legends European Championship.

The Niro is a breakthrough in electric powertrain technology; the permanent magnet synchronous motor puts out 150 kW of power and 395 Nm of torque. Despite its SUV appearance, Niro's electric motor drives the front wheels – as with most hatchbacks.

Range is 455 km – almost halfway from Brisbane to Sydney. Given that battery packs degrade over time, Kia says it guarantees 75% battery capacity up to seven years or 150,000km. If the battery pack's efficiency dips below this in the time frame, it triggers a warranty claim.

Capable of completing the 0-100 km/h sprint in a claimed

3.5 seconds, the Niro is on a par with the flagship Tesla Model Y electric SUV, on the way to a top speed of 260 km/h.

The unique patterned tiger nose grille is surrounded by chevron-shaped LED headlights and daytime running lights.

Regenerative braking helps to convert the kinetic energy when decelerating and breaking into electrical energy to recharge the battery for greater energy efficiency.

Thanks to its all-electric platform, the Niro has substantial front and rear legroom; the floor-mounted centre console isn't connected to the dashboard, giving the front cabin a spacious feeling.

Safety feature are all that you'd expect in its class,

including SRS airbags for driver and front passenger, front side, driver's knee and curtain first and second row air bags, along with front seatbelt pre-tensioners with load limiters, side door impact beams, front and rear, and impact sensing auto-door unlocking.

Also there's blind spot detection, rear cross traffic alert and lane keep and follow assist.

And something new... a silver disk 'dial-a-drive' wheel – just turn it to drive, reverse or neutral.

Niro earns its price – \$70,990 drive-away with premium paint an optional extra at \$520. That's about \$27,000 dearer than Australia's cheapest electric car, and positions it alongside the Tesla Model 3 sedan.

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HEAD OFFICE

Timber & Forestry enews
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
dennisn@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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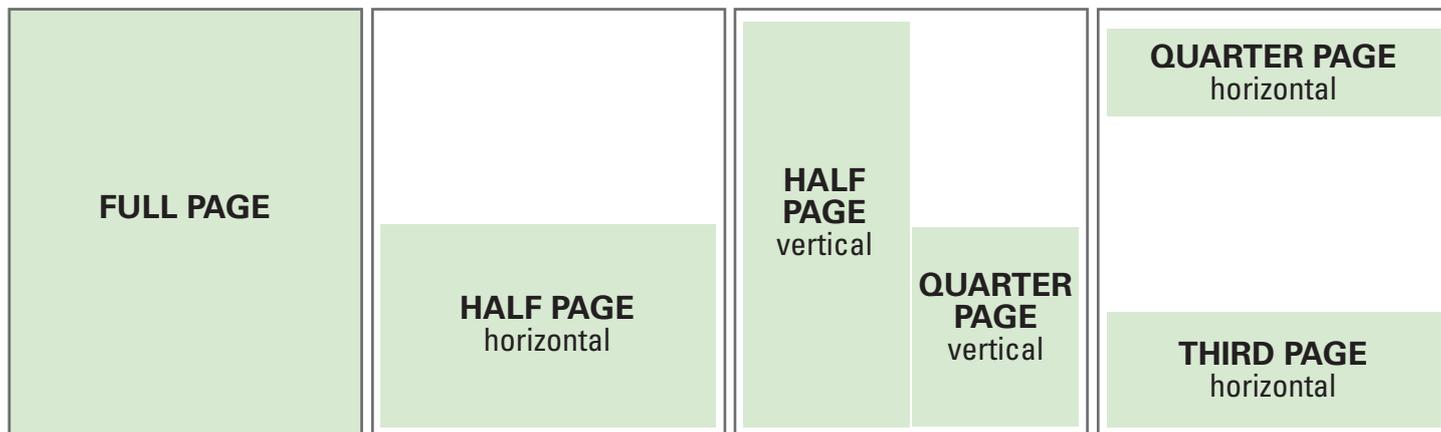
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