

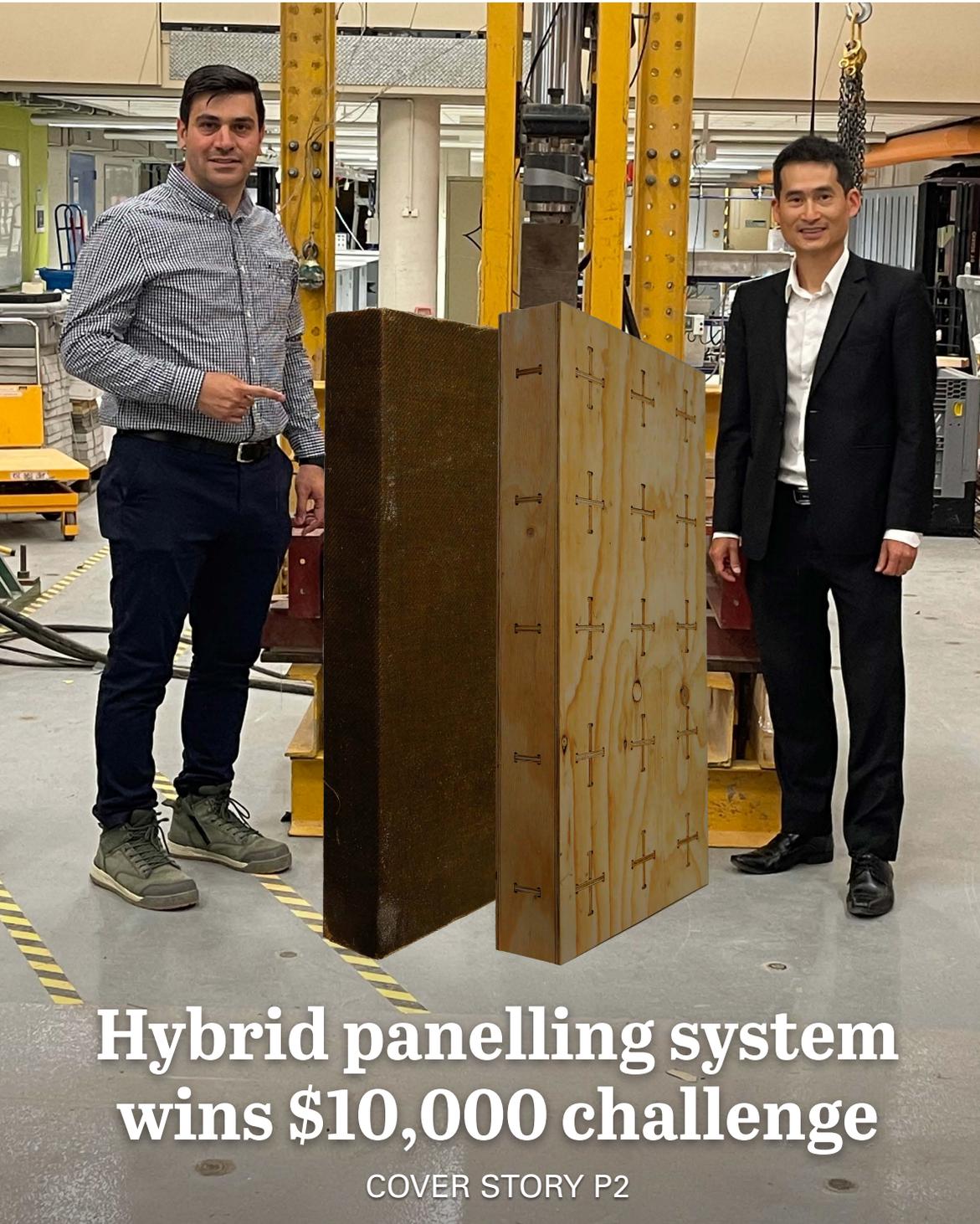
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Hybrid panelling system wins \$10,000 challenge

COVER STORY P2



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Low-cost hybrid sandwich panelling system clinches \$10,000 University Wood Challenge

Innovative sustainable solution to help meet growing construction industry demands

THE 2021 National University Wood Challenge winners have been announced by the minister responsible for forestry Senator Jonathon Duniam.

“This challenge aims to foster the breakthrough ideas that will create jobs and economic opportunities in Australia’s great forest industry,” Senator Duniam said.

A team from the University of Melbourne’s Faculty of Engineering has taken home the trophy for their work in ‘The Digital Fabrication and Structural Design of Low-Cost Hybrid Sandwich Panel Systems’ along with an additional \$10,000 grant to support the ongoing development of their system.

The panels offer a sustainable solution to help meet growing construction industry demand and could be used as prefabricated walls or floors in low to mid-rise buildings once they reach market.

Using digital fabrication –

combining 3D modelling and computer-aided design with additive manufacturing – the team combined low-grade timber with bio-based, fibre-reinforced polymer (for the outer wrapping layer) and recycled wood fibre to achieve a lightweight prototype with excellent strength that complies with building design standards.

The panels can be manufactured at low cost, with rapid production speed and will result in low building energy consumption (thanks to excellent insulation properties) and will reduce material usage and wastage.

The challenge, opened in June 2021, is funded by the federal government with support from the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment and run by Forest and Wood Products Australia.

The goal of the challenge is to support teams of students and academics who work to generate ideas of how wood can be used in innovative



Senator Jonno Duniam... breakthrough idea that will create jobs and economic opportunities in Australia’s great forest industry.

and higher value ways.

The prize-money supported the four finalist teams to bring their innovative, novel or untested ideas for new products to life through the building of a prototype, creating or testing their ideas using Australian wood fibre.

The other finalist teams

were from the University of Melbourne, Griffith University and the University of Tasmania, with ideas to create a new timber-fibre and expandable foam composite material for structural applications, hybrid fibre-filled steel tubular (FFST) posts and beams and optimal adhesive for making engineered wood products from Tasmanian plantation Eucalyptus nitens.

Senator Duniam congratulated all the finalists for their great work, but there could only be one winning team. Professor Tuan Ngo and Dr Yousef Alqaryouti from the University of Melbourne have taken home the final \$10,000 in prize winnings to continue the development of their sandwich panel systems, with the aim of bringing the product to market.

“Thanks to cutting-edge technologies such as digital fabrication and smart use of materials like reinforced

“CONFIDENT NEW PRODUCT WILL ATTRACT INVESTORS”

Cont P 7



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Andrews government must close loophole that opens door to anti-forest vigilantes in Victoria

THE Victorian Liberal-Nationals Coalition is drafting legislation to block anti-logging activists using the courts to delay or halt native timber harvesting.

The activists are exploiting a legislative loophole to launch a barrage of court cases that have crippled timber communities.

Former harvest and haulage contractor and Coalition assistant forestry spokesman Gary Blackwood said if they won government on November 26 the Coalition would "take action to prevent third party litigation against VicForests".

Mr Blackwood said green lawfare had become an easy method for activists to halt legitimate timber harvesting and had disrupted the livelihoods of workers and the supply chain to industries right across Victoria.

He said VicForests, which managed harvesting, already faced 10 court actions by environmental groups, with one of those leading Supreme Court Justice Melinda Jane Richards to last month slap injunctions on any coupe where a Greater Glider possum had been spotted.

Timber harvesting ground to a halt across Victoria's Central Highlands and East Gippsland in the wake of the pre-Christmas ruling, with VicForests struggling to find backup coupes.

Justice Richards' ruling does not require environmentalists to provide proof that they have spotted a Greater Glider in a coupe for it to be



Gary Blackwood



Justin Law



Lily D'Ambrosio

declared off limits. At least six of Victoria's harvest and haulage contracting crews are still out of work as a result of the ruling, while some timber mills report they are down to just one month's supply of logs in the yard.

Mr Blackwood said the Coalition was looking at NSW legislation, which excluded third-party civil enforcement proceedings for breaches of an integrated forestry operations orders. Victoria has similar legislation blocking the general public from taking legal action for breaches of the state's Environmental Protection Act.

TIMBER ACT IS CRIPPLING TIMBER SUPPLY IN VICTORIA

Forest & Wood Communities Australia managing director Justin Law said by leaving open the back door and giving power to vigilante anti-forestry activists, the government was failing to keep their promise of ensuring supply until 2030 unhindered by vexatious litigation.

"It is an appalling double

standard that could be simply fixed by introducing the clause from the Environment Protection Act into the Sustainable Forests (Timber) Act 2004," he said.

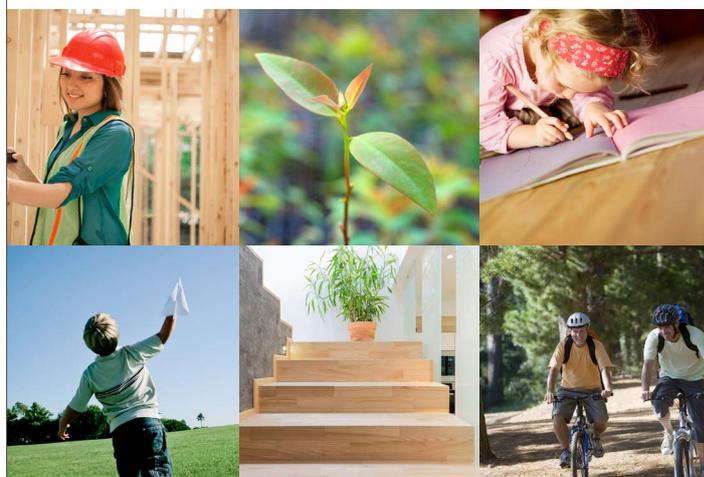
Environment Minister Lily D'Ambrosio has refused appeals from Forest and Wood Communities Australia to block the public from

taking legal action against VicForests under the state's Sustainable Forests (Timber) Act 2004 for breaches to the Code of Practice for Timber Production.

"The Andrews Labor Government does not agree that there is a 'loophole' in the legislation and is continually working to improve environmental standards, including the revision of the Timber Code of Practice to improve clarity and enforceability for timber workers, environmentalists, and the Conservation Regulator," Ms D'Ambrosio's office said.

(With extracts from *The Weekly Times*)

The united voice for Australia's forest industries



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India the new global hot spot for timber trade as Australian log producers meet the demand

The middle classes will number 583 million by 2025 or 41pc of the projected population

JIM BOWDEN

INDIA with its rising middle class has become the global 'hot spot' for timber traders with the most populous democracy in the world ravenous for building materials.

Even with massive hikes in sea freight charges there are profits to be made which hasn't gone unnoticed by plantation owners in South Australia.

In just over a few days this week, hundreds of radiata logs delivered to Melbourne's Portland port added to the growing stockpiles in distribution yards, destined for India.



Trucks deliver logs from South Australia to distribution areas at the Port of Portland this week.

"This is good news for the port," commercial manager Shannon Curran said.

"Grain this season saw bumper shipments out of Portland and we've also seen

some hard work put into developing the log trade to India which is paying off," he said.

Also, the Indian market has providing forest growers with an opportunity to fill the trade gap created by the abrupt cancellation of the log supply trade with China.

But an industry observer said it was disappointing that good timbers were going offshore while builders were crying out for wood for trusses and frames.

He said in a strange quirk, the federal government was subsidising the transport of logs from the Adelaide Hills to Tumut during an Australia-wide timber shortage while at the same time logs were being shipped out of Portland.

Closer to home, for some builders, the timber shortage has led to the collapse of their businesses as they are forced to make the impossible choice between paying exorbitant material prices or accepting delays and consequential liquidated damages.

management specialist at Bluebird Property, said the company was currently working across 10 active construction sites and witnessing the impact of the timber shortage first-hand.

"We first saw the issue in 2019-20 when bushfires hit tens of thousands of hectares of our domestic reserves," she said. "Then with the HomeBuilder boom the situation became even worse.

INDIA LIFTS 25-YEAR BAN ON TIMBER IN CONSTRUCTION

"In the last six months we've seen a 20% to 30% increase in the price of timber and lead times are stretching up to 16 weeks."

Gold Coast-based KDL Property Group managing director Kent Leicester says builders haven't been able to start homes on sites settled in January. Slabs are on the ground but they can't get the

Claire O'Rourke, project

Cont P 5

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From P 4

frames up yet," he said.

"A lot of them have looked at other options and shifted to steel to make up time frame shortfalls but, in the meantime, steel also has been hit by supply issues and hefty price hikes."

Canada, a potentially increasing source of timber supply for Australian importers, is also developing wood markets in India with exports during 2020 earning \$US2.77 billion, according to the United Nations international trade data base.

Canada exports increased by 3.8 % over a month to a record high of \$58.6 billion in November, despite transportation disruptions caused by flooding and landslides in British Columbia.

If India's economy continues to grow as predicted, by 2025 the middle class will number 583 million people, or 41% of India's projected population, almost twice the current population of the United States.

These educated and



Logs stockpiled at the Port of Portland destined for a growing market in India.

predominantly urban wage earners, whose income ranges from roughly \$US24,000 to \$US118,000 on a purchasing power-parity basis, have fuelled India's recent consumer growth and represent the country's future

The OECD projects India's economy will grow 12.6% in 2021. This will make India the only major country to achieve double digit growth in 2021.

Domestic demand is likely to be a major driver of recovery and growth over the next decade, likely to make up 60% of the overall economy.

Rapid urbanisation, climate change and qualities such as lightness, strength and carbon neutrality are currently giving wood-based building materials a revival in the

Indian construction sector.

As lawmakers in southeast Asia, the US and Europe are removing red tape and deregulating in favour of wood-frame buildings, skyscrapers, holiday resorts and multi-storey housing are rising examples of an industry exchanging concrete and steel for a far more environmentally friendly alternative.

Early last year, India lifted a 25-year ban on the use of timber in construction of public buildings and habitat projects. The removal of the

“CERTIFICATION AN ISSUE WITH TIMBER IMPORTS FROM SE ASIA

ban was strongly influenced by India's Ministry of Environment, which alongside environmental benefits – and in line with countries such as Finland, Japan and Austria – is hoping for a growth in the wood-based industries.

Caused by a century of colonial rule and, lately,

changing forest policies, India is suffering from a timber and forest deficit.

India has a long tradition using wood as the primary construction material, but today 60-70% is imported, primarily from southeast Asia and Africa, most of which is uncertified.

Architects and local stakeholders are working hard to strengthen awareness about legality issues and the benefits of certification in India. They will be able to influence whether India's building sector is choosing a sustainable path or continuing old habits.

Australian exports to India were valued at \$18.7 billion in 2019-20, according to latest Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade figures.



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Responsible Wood would like to announce the release of the new AS/NZS 4708 Sustainable Forest Management Standard.

Responsible Wood 
RW/1-10-1

VicForests shoots down ‘untruths’ in report on economic viability of its business model

‘We have consistently interacted with our clients in a transparent and honest way’

MONIQUE DAWSON

I WANT to address a recent article the Weekly Times that questioned the economic viability of VicForests’ business model.

There are many claims made in this article that are not true.

It is an absolute irrefutable fact that the cumulative effect of legal action is the key reason we are not meeting supply targets. This is because these legal actions specifically target planned coupes including coupes where harvesting has commenced or is about to start. This should very well be appreciated by anyone who works in our industry.

The total impact of the 10 legal proceedings brought upon by opponents of sustainable native timber harvesting is more than 2 million cub m of timber. This impact is almost two times the loss of supply due to the 2019-20 bushfires.

One of the opponents involved in constraining our business operations is Warburton Environment Inc, the organisation run by one of the co-authors of this piece.

Some other key claims in this article that I would like to refute are:

- The claim that VicForests made \$38 million less from log sales than it spent getting the logs and that most became woodchips.



1/ VicForests, its contractors and its customers make a contribution to the Victorian economy of around \$500 million a year, supporting 4000 jobs. This includes around 200 directly employed foresters who are also emergency workers who support these country towns and surrounding regions during fires.

2 Monique Dawson... we take pride in being a major industry in rural and regional areas.

It did not cost us more to produce the timber than what we sold it for. In fact, we made a gross profit on harvesting. Our financial statements include all activities, including services we provide to government that are separate to the timber harvesting business as well as technical accounting adjustments.

Our revenue was also significantly impacted by the direct costs of litigation (\$5 million in 2020-21 alone) with indirect costs of litigation including stand-down payments, loss of high-quality coupes, wasted roading and coupe preparation work far exceeding this. The costs

include the litigation brought by one of the co-authors of this article and payments made to the other co-author.

Our pulp log ratio in 2020-21 was the lowest percentage in four years.

- That our loss is equal to paying 380 nurses, teachers, police or firefighters for towns like Mansfield, Warburton, Healesville, Powelltown, Orbost, Bairnsdale and Mallacoota.

There is no relationship

“REVENUE WAS SIGNIFICANTLY IMPACTED BY DIRECT COSTS OF LITIGATION”

between the revenue of VicForests and the allocation of funding by the state government to key public service roles.

That said, we take pride in being a major industry in these rural and regional areas, employing people right throughout all these regional towns. In fact, VicForests, its contractors and its customers make a contribution to the Victorian economy of around \$500 million a year, supporting 4000 jobs. This includes around 200 directly employed foresters who are also emergency workers who support these country towns and surrounding regions during fires.

(An extract of relevant analysis is shown in the panel on Page 18),

- VicForests appears to have inflated how many big sawlog trees it claimed existed in its 1.3 million ha estate.

The amount available to VicForests to harvest is impacted over time by increased environmental protection including increased permanent protection. This results in the adjustment of the amount available to be harvested. The resource model is independently audited on a regular basis as is the statement of assets as part of our annual financial audit.

The suggestion that this has been “inflated” is completely rejected.

The area of Victoria’s public land is 8.05 million ha,

JANUARY 2022

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

FEBRUARY

9: AFPA industry dinner – Hyatt Hotel, Canberra, ACT.

Ticketing closes February 3. In-person dinner and meetings proceeding with hybrid arrangements (not for the dinner) if unable to attend. The event has no restrictions which would prevent in-person meetings (with the usual precautions). Other jurisdictions may have different rules. Refunds available up to 7 days prior to the event. Inquiries to (02) 6285 3833 or email

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9-10: Australian Timber Design workshop – two locations, Queensland & Tasmania. Organised by the Centre for Future Timber Structures at UQ St Lucia campus for building design professionals interested in timber construction to develop skills, confidence and networks in a unique, hands-on environment. The University of Tasmania and the University of Queensland are collaborating to deliver this course with concurrent workshops running on both campuses. Early bird price of \$900 until December 24, then standard fee of \$1100. Contact The Centre for Future Timber Structure k.crews@uq.edu.au

MARCH

11: Green Triangle Timber Industry Awards – The Barn, Mount Gambier, SA.

Visit www.gttia.com or email info@gttia.com
Tickets available for purchase in the new year. (See notice, Page 10).

APRIL

3-8: Gottstein Trust Understanding Wood Science Course – Sunday evening, April 3, 2022, in Albury, NSW, for the field trip component, ending on Friday, April 8, in Canberra.

The course is fully booked and a wait list is operating on a first-in-first-served basis. Delivered in partnership with the ANU, the course timing prior to next Easter matches up with the semester break. The course program can be downloaded at www.gottsteintrust.org

MAY

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

JUNE

21-22: Frame Australia Timber Offsite Construction – Crown Promenade Melbourne, VIC.

New global 'hybrid' format. 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

From P 2

polymer, we can find exciting new ways to achieve quality products with timber sustainably," Professor Ngo said.

"Once in production, these panels could help bring the construction industry closer to the government's net zero

carbon emissions target for the sector by 2050.

"With the prize-money we will work with industry partners to test the product in large-scale buildings and apply different sustainable and recycled materials to expand applications for the global market. We will also further build industry

engagement and finalise intellectual property and other requirements to facilitate commercialisation.

Dr Alqaryouti said the team was confident the sandwich panel system would attract investors.

"We hope building designers and the construction industry will

be inspired to explore its potential for achieving sustainable and affordable homes and apartments," Dr Alqaryouti said.

On the cover: Professor Tuan Ngo and Dr Yousef Alqaryouti from the University of Melbourne... their panel system could help bring the construction industry closer to the government's net zero carbon emissions target.

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From P 6

with 3.2 million ha comprising state forest. Of that, while 1.7 million ha is made available by the government for harvesting under the Allocation Order, only 367,000 ha is modelled as potentially suitable for commercial harvesting. Therefore 1.4 million ha is not available due to forest type, condition and age, legislative and regulatory requirements, protections for species and topographical considerations like slope,

“FORESTRY REMAINS VITAL FOR BUSINESS TO CONTINUE PROVIDING CRITICAL JOBS

Across both VicForests and its first-round customers, the total contribution of the native forestry industry to the Victorian economy in 2018-19 is estimated to be \$509.1 million in value added, supporting a total of 3,957 full-time equivalent jobs across the State. The components of the total economic contribution are summarised in Table 2.3.

Table 2.3: Total economic contribution

| | Value added (\$ million) | Employment (FTE) |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|------------------|
| VicForests | 89.8 | 547 |
| Customers | 419.3 | 3,409 |
| Total contribution | 509.1 | 3,957 |

Source: Deloitte Access Economics; VicForests. Note: Columns may not add due to rounding.



VicForests harvests about 3000 ha each year, which is around 0.04% of the state's native forest

for businesses to continue providing critical jobs and incomes for communities in regional Victoria and essential materials for many industry sectors.

[The Herald and Weekly Times Pty Ltd is a publishing company based in Melbourne and owned and operated by Rupert Murdoch's News Corp Australia].

• *Monique Dawson is chief executive officer of VicForests, a state-owned business responsible for the harvest, commercial sale and re growing of timber from state forests on behalf of the government. VicForests regrows all harvested areas with the same type of forest that was originally there and the vast majority of native forests will never be harvested. The business harvests about 3000 ha each year, which is around 0.04% of Victoria's native forests.*

streams and rock.

VicForests has at all times sought to interact with its customers and contractors with transparency and honesty. The involvement of a member of our industry in this reporting is deeply disappointing, but we acknowledge this is not a reflection of the industry.

Forestry remains vital

Surprise rise in US housing starts

NEW US home construction unexpectedly strengthened in December to the fastest pace in nine months, led by apartment projects and suggesting builders found some success navigating shortages of materials and labour.

Residential starts rose 1.4% to a 1.70 million annualised rate.

Home prices have surged

over the last year as potential buyers compete for a very limited number of homes. Builders are racing to replenish inventory, but supply chain challenges, high commodities prices and a lack of skilled workers have elongated construction timelines and inflated backlogs.

Without enough finished homes to meet demand, housing affordability is poised to deteriorate further in 2022.

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Bad beetles beaten by best biosecurity brains

A NEW national environment reference centre (eDNA) will support the next generation of cutting-edge tools for Australia's biosecurity system.

The reference centre will be developed by the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment and the University of Canberra following the signing of a new partnership arrangement this week.

Secretary of the department Andrew Metcalfe AO and University of Canberra Vice-Chancellor Paddy Nixon said the agreement would provide essential support to the department's work in cutting edge eDNA research.

"This new centre is a critical component of the department's national eDNA testing program and our ability to make informed biosecurity decisions at the Australian border, and beyond," Mr Metcalfe said.

"The program will provide infrastructure, governance and policy to underpin and enable an efficient, functional, and sustainable eDNA testing for environmental and biosecurity risk management purposes.

"While the program will have the capacity for broad risk management application, our immediate focus is to address risks associated with



Gotcha ... the squeeze is on for hitchhiker pests.

khapra beetle and high-priority hitchhiker pests generally.

"eDNA testing is currently being used to detect khapra beetle and brown marmorated stink bug arriving in sea containers and help target biosecurity risk management. Over the next four years many other unwanted pest tests will become operational."

Professor Nixon said the centre agreement recognised the expertise of the university in eDNA, which would further be complemented by a second partner arrangement for student exchange.

"This partnership recognises UC's depth of research and we're excited to be able to support the national effort of tackling invasive species at the points of entry," he said.

"Training and research in partnership with faculty researchers and front-line biosecurity staff is essential to Australia's future prosperity and ensures technology gets into the hands of the end users."

The centre's location, at Bruce campus, will further create an opportunity for the Canberra region to lead eDNA research, facilitate collaboration and help establish national protocols and standards.

“PROGRAM WILL HAVE CAPACITY FOR HIGH RISK APPLICATION

HYNE.COM.AU

Canada's defence unit helps plant 2bn trees

THE Canadian federal government has a new partner in its goal to plant two billion trees by 2030 – the Department of National Defence.

Defence department media relations has confirmed the Canadian Forces Housing Agency will participate in the program and has tree-planting plans for most of its locations across Canada over the next seven years.

The agency runs the department's residential housing program and delivers other housing support to Canadian Armed Forces members and their families across the dominion.

The Liberals' major 2019 campaign promise to plant two billion trees by 2030 to help get to net-zero emissions by 2050 hinges on cost-sharing with provinces, territories, municipalities,



Defence personnel ramp up tree planting in Canada.

slow start, Natural Resources Canada released its plan to ramp up tree-planting gradually so nurseries can keep pace with the demand. It aims to be planting up to 320 million trees a year from 2027 onwards.

indigenous communities and businesses.

After coming under fire for a

In February last year, Natural Resources expressed interest in collaborating with the Defence Department to meet its tree-planting commitment.



by higher demand of hardwood

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Royd Clan House project the ‘radical’ re-built timber home inspired by boundaries of nature

An architect’s clear vision to create a CLT-glulam structure that emulates its rocky surrounds

AN award-winning architect inspired by nature has used cross-laminated timber and glulam in a Victorian project that blends with the surrounding rocky landscape.

From the remnants of an old property, Melbourne-based Level Architekture, ‘ticked all the boxes’ on the client’s brief for Royd Clan’s House.

Level Architekture’s senior principal architect Nadine Samaha – the recipient of the Australian Timber Design Award sponsored by Responsible Wood – had a clear vision: to create a structure that emulated the surrounding boulders while fragmenting the house into pavilion clusters to reduce wind turbulence.

CLT was specified for the floor and roof diaphragm and inclined walls of each pavilion and glulam portal frames were arranged as one of the primary axes of each pavilion.

Responsible Wood-certified XLam and Hyne Timber were able to assist with material assessment, logistical considerations, and structural analysis to capture the architect’s vision.

The central living pavilion was a distinct challenge with long spans, large voids and a butterfly roof.

Nadine explained the challenging structural demands: “The dialogue was focused more on the



A recurring theme in the success of the project was the importance of DfMA (Design for Manufacture and Assembly). The culmination of this collaborative building methodology became highly

timber in the project included 40 m³ of glulam and 180 m³ of CLT, which, Robert Mansell, Hyne’s glulam business development manager, says will be re-grown in softwood plantations in just 17 minutes!

On working with engineered timber, Nadine remarked: “Timber is a beautiful material to work

with, particularly when it comes from a renewable resource. It’s a live material that reconnects with nature, while CLT’s thermal property and mass adds value to any structure.

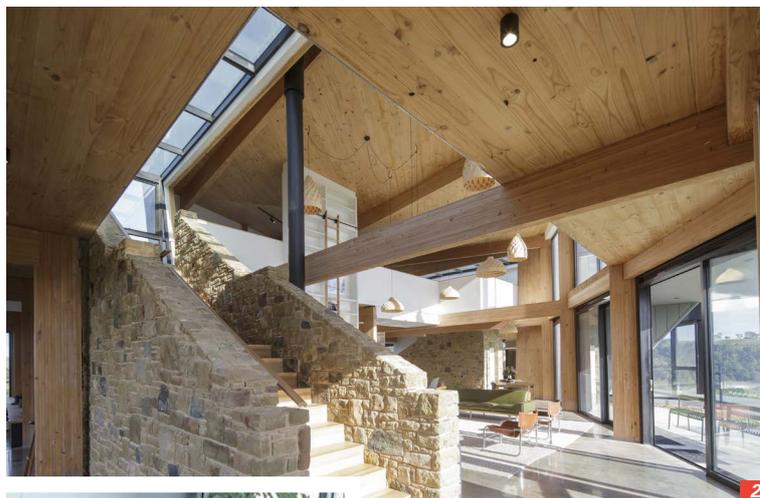
“The client used only the fireplace to heat the whole house in winter, which is remarkable. We did insulate with PIR above the CLT on the walls and the roof

using thermally broken double-glazed windows. But obviously the CLT is performing better than we expected.”

Nadine says she would love to work again with both CLT and GLT on a multi-storey structure and perhaps with GLT on an individual structure where the boundaries in the design can be pushed further.

She says she learned a lot about CLT and the sustainability measures for waste when she visited the XLam factory at Wodonga.

Mass timber speaks to these values and Royd Clan’s House will maintain those foundations for many generations to come.



1/ Royd Clan’s House... cross-laminated timber and glulam blends with the surrounding rocky landscape.

2/ CLT was specified for the floor and roof diaphragm and inclined walls of each pavilion and glulam portal frames were arranged as one of the primary axes of each pavilion.

3/ Level Architekture’s Nadine Samaha... timber is a beautiful material to work with, particularly when it comes from a renewable resource.

connections, the thickness of the timber elements and how they would work with other materials. Due to transport logistics the CLT panel lengths and widths were given special consideration, with no change to the architectural design.”

visible on-site with the arrival of three trucks of GLT from Hyne and six trucks of CLT panels from XLam.

In total, there were 15 lifting days for GLT erection and 10 lifting days for CLT.

The total volumes of certified pine plantation

Lockdowns, but pipeline strong for housing

LOCKDOWNS in Sydney and Melbourne saw a sharp contraction in new detached home starts in the September quarter, with a 16.5% contraction compared to the record high of the previous quarter.

“But the decline in new home commencements in the quarter was not a reflection of a slowing market, with other indicators, such as building approvals, showing a continued strong pipeline,” Housing Industry Association economist Tom Devitt said.

ABS figures this week show there were almost 36,000 new house commencements in the September quarter.

“Despite the decline, this is still stronger than any quarter before the mid-2020 introduction of the



HomeBuilder grant,” Mr Devitt said.

“This puts detached house commencements over the last 12 months at 149,345, a new record high and 12.8% above the pre-HomeBuilder record of 132,377 in 1988-89.

“There were also more than 20,500 new multi-unit commencements in the September quarter – down by 15.8% on the previous quarter. And despite this contraction, multi-unit

commencements were also still up by 11.7% for the year.”

The current boom is expected to continue supporting strong levels of employment into 2023, aided further by record low interest rates and the pandemic pushing households towards

“PUSH FROM RECORD LOW INTEREST RATES”

lower density living.

Strong employment conditions, rising house prices and consumer confidence are also continuing to support housing demand.

“The constraint on home building is not demand but the availability of land, labour and materials,” Mr Devitt said.

“This shortage has led to construction timeframes increasing significantly. Under normal circumstances, the surge of HomeBuilder projects would have translated into an increase in completions from the June 2021 quarter. “However, completions have been slower to respond. As a result, the volume of approved-but-not-yet-commenced work is at its highest level in over a decade.”

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Forestry Australia calls for science to justify native harvesting decision by WA government

FORESTRY Australia is calling on the Western Australian Government to release scientific evidence in justification of its decision to end native forest harvesting.

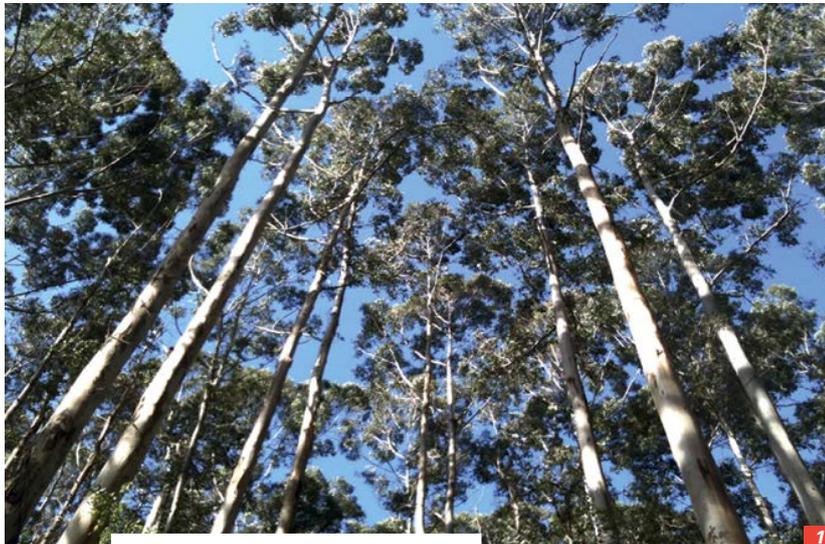
The professional association represents forest scientists, professionals, managers and growers operating in all aspects of forest and natural resource management throughout Australia.

President Bob Gordon said the association was concerned the decision to end native harvesting was not based on science and demonstrated poor understanding of WA's world-class forest management practices which would result in increased imports of wood products from countries with lower management standards.

"We are calling on the government to publish the scientific evidence that it used as a basis for the decision and its claim that halting native harvesting in the state will protect native forests," Mr Gordon said.

"This thought-bubble policy is out of step with the rest

“THOUGHT-BUBBLE POLICY OUT OF STEP WITH REST OF THE WORLD”



1/ Sustainable and science-based forest management could help us address many of the challenges of our modern world including addressing climate change and mitigating catastrophic fire.
2/ Bob Gordon... forestry should be viewed as a key part of the solution, not as a problem.

of the world, which views well-regulated, sustainable native forest management and biodiverse plantings as the preferred source of timber, because of their positive contribution to climate change mitigation, biodiversity and forest resilience."

Mr Gordon said forestry should be viewed as a key part of the solution, not as a problem. Sustainable and science-based forest management could help us address many of the challenges of our modern world including addressing climate change, mitigating catastrophic fire, supporting biodiversity, supporting Traditional Owner self-determination and providing timber and other forest

products, which were renewable and climate friendly resources that are in increasingly short supply and high demand.

"The decision by the Western Australian government ignores these facts and will instead force WA to rely on timber imports from other countries, with associated high carbon miles and risks of illegal logging and unsustainable harvesting," Mr Gordon said.

"At the time of the announcement to end native forest harvesting in WA, the government claimed that, 'the ever-increasing impacts of climate change, the importance of maintaining biodiversity and forest health, the need for carbon capture and storage, and declining timber yields mean that it is essential that we act now to protect WA's forests'.

"Forestry Australia is calling on the government to release its evidence to support this statement. We are seeking the evidence that the WA government used to support its claims that timber yields are declining significantly, and evidence that demonstrates the decline of the health of state forests.

Forestry Australia notes that various reviews of the 2014-2023 Forest Management Plan (FMP), most recently in 2019, all reiterated that the potential effects of climate change on the growth rate of jarrah and karri trees had been applied when projecting future sustainable yields.

Forestry Australia is also calling for an independent review of the science that supported this decision.

Mr Gordon added: "Federal senator Jonathon Duniam recently wrote to the Western Australian government questioning the scientific basis of the decision to close down native forestry operations. No response was provided.

"WA forest management must be based on science if we are to ensure our forests, and the communities who rely on them, remain healthy and resilient."

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We've got you covered: helicopter to support ground fire-fighting crews in Green Triangle

Squirrel complements fixed-wing fire bombers that operate in the plantation estate

TIMBER companies within the Green Triangle have invested in additional aerial firefighting capacity in the region to protect the plantation estate, natural environment and broader community this fire season.

The helicopter, a B2 Squirrel, has been engaged by the Green Triangle Fire Alliance supporting more than 300 trained plantation industry fire fighters working on the ground across the region this summer.

The helicopter has been contracted through the Victorian government and forms part of the Victorian aerial fleet. The GTFA's nine forest grower member companies are providing funding for the helicopter to be positioned at the Casterton airfield.

GTFA general manager Anthony Walsh says the helicopter's 1000-litre bucket can draw water from a variety of sources close to the fire line.

"This helicopter is highly complementary to the fixed-wing fire bombers that operate in the region," Mr Walsh said.



1/ **The Green Triangle Fire Alliance funded Firebird 326 with veteran pilot Peter Bonniface at the controls.**

2/ **Anthony Walsh... a helicopter can find water in close proximity to a fire which supports very short turnaround times.**

"While the fixed-wing bombers carry a greater load, the advantage of a helicopter is that it can find water in close proximity to a fire which supports very short turnaround times."

The helicopter has already been deployed twice, including providing valuable support at the recent Poolaijelo fire.

"Other aircraft may leave the region to attend fires elsewhere across the state, but this helicopter will remain at its Casterton base for the 14-week service period until the end of March," Mr Walsh said.

He said that while operation of the helicopter was currently restricted to Victoria,

Walsh said.

"We remain hopeful that the same level of protection offered to our Victorian based estate will soon extend to South Australia to enable operation across the entire Green Triangle plantation estate."

The helicopter extends the industry's extensive investment in fire suppression resources. The Green Triangle plantation industry collectively has 100 fire appliances with trained fire fighters on standby, ready to rapidly respond to fires throughout the fire season.

"This helicopter provides a further layer of support to our forest industry brigades that work tirelessly over the summer months to not only defend our forest estate, but to protect our broader communities," Mr Walsh said.

The Green Triangle spans the border area between the states of South Australia and Victoria with ready access to the capital cities of Melbourne and Adelaide and covers an area of 6 million ha. Processing activities are centred around the cities of Mt Gambier in South Australia and Portland in Victoria which also provides the region's port



discussions were continuing with the South Australian Country Fire Service to enable operation in the Limestone Coast region.

"We are extremely grateful for the support from the Victorian Department of Environment Land Water and Planning (DELWP) and the Country Fire Authority to establish the service," Mr

“PROTECTING FORESTS AND THE BROADER COMMUNITY”



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Robert Tapiolas, 61, was one of Queensland timber industry's most respected entrepreneurs

THE Queensland timber industry has lost one of its most respected entrepreneurs with the death five days before Christmas of Robert Tapiolas, aged 61.

A director of the Parkside Group and South Pacific Homes he was a grandson of Bruno Tapiolas Vila who arrived in Australia in 1911 looking to start a new life from his economic broken country of Spain.

Bruno quickly found work in the cane industry in Ayr, North Queensland, and worked tirelessly without wages with the promise of equity in the cane farm he worked. It wasn't long before he owned the farm which flourished and his ingenuity led him to develop more efficient cane irrigation systems that are still in use today.

This became the financial grounding for what after more than a century is one of the most successful family timber, land development and home-building enterprises in the southern hemisphere.

Not satisfied with selling only building materials, Bruno decided to start his own home building construction company Tropical Homes, which has grown as one of Queensland's largest project home builders with well over 15,000 homes built.

With sweat and determination Parkside, now with Bruno's three sons Wilfred, Brunie and Joe



1/ Parkside acquired the green mill and dry mill at Greenbushes in Western Australia in 2019.
2/ Robert Tapiolas... passion for industry was legendary.

(Robert's father) involved, the business grew very quickly and needed a guaranteed supply of timber for the expanding business.

In 1962, Parkside acquiring its first sawmill at Eungella, which then led to an expansion in timber sales and building materials in Townsville. In 1972, Parkside acquired a larger and more efficient sawmill in Mackay. The company grew quickly to become a dominant player in North Queensland for timber sales and building materials.

The late 1960s and early 1970s saw the third generation of Tapiolas family join the business with Robert, Wilfred Jnr and Peter. The 1970s also saw Parkside develop retail and commercial properties.

Parkside expanded operations to Papua New Guinea in 2013 with the

establishment of South Pacific Homes Ltd, based at Port Moresby.

With a continued passion for timber, Parkside acquired sawmills at Builyan, Theodore, Wandoan, Eidsvold and Wondai in south-west Queensland. Then in 2019 operations were further expanded with mills and processing plants at Greenbushes and Nannup in Western Australia and Orbost and Bairnsdale in Victoria. Parkside is now Australia's largest hardwood sawmiller and timber manufacturer exporting timber products to Europe, Asia and the Americas.



Robert Tapiolas, with a bachelor in engineering from James Cook University, was a director of Timber Queensland for 16 years.

The chair Ian Haines paid tribute to his many years of service and dedication to the Queensland timber industry.

"Robert was a long-term director of Timber Queensland and its predecessors, and a champion of the native hardwood sector and the timber industry for many decades," Mr Haines said.

"His passion for the sector was legendary and he paved the way in many respects to continually grow and adapt the Parkside business to both market and resource conditions. While a fierce competitor, he was committed to the broader interests of the industry and the need to have a strong and united political voice on key issues.

"On behalf of the board and members, we send our condolences to the Tapiolas family. His loss will be broadly felt across the industry."

Robert James Tapiolas is survived by wife Maddie, children Brittany and Tash and grandchildren Melodie and Mana. His life was celebrated on December 30 at Lakes Chapel, Townsville.

– JIM BOWDEN

“PLAYED A DOMINANT ROLE IN HARDWOOD INDUSTRY”



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Unmasking Mitsubishi's Outlander Exceed

WHAT a great way to drive into 2022 ... in Mitsubishi's Outlander Exceed Tourer. I avoided looking in the rear-view mirror for fear of seeing the ghosts of Covid past.

They've taken their ghastly toll, but it's not the worst-ever pandemic as some would have us believe. The 1918-19 influenza pandemic alone killed 50 million victims globally at a time when the world had one-quarter of the population it now has.

But the faces of Covid are scary, especially for very young children who have never known a life without masks.

I have reflected on my fears as a young boy living in London during the last years of World War 2 when our gas masks were even scarier. These were issued to all British civilians with the very real fear German bombers would drop poison gas bombs on us and we should prepare for tens of thousands of deaths in London alone. The government told us to expect 250,000 deaths in the first week of the war. Nonetheless, tens of thousands of men, women and children lost life and limb in the Blitz and more than a million homes were destroyed, mostly in London.



1/ Space to spare... Mitsubishi's Outlander Exceed seven-seat tourer.

2/ Gas masks weren't much fun.

As children we were issued 'Mickey Mouse' gas masks, an attempt to make them seem less frightening. It didn't work. After the war my mother used the rubber masks as flower pots.

Now let's unmask the 2022 Mitsubishi Outlander Exceed Tourer, a seven-seat all-wheel drive four-door wagon – a medium SUV built in Japan with prices starting at \$49,990 before on-roads.

An alliance with Nissan-Renault has given Mitsubishi a new lease on life, which has allowed it to revise its Outlander for the better. This fourth-generation 2022 model shares several important components with the Nissan



Rogue, one of the best-selling vehicles in its class.

Its styling, however, is distinctive. It's easily recognisable with its prominent front fascia, 20-in. wheels and widened fenders.

The Exceed has a newly-developed 2.5L 4-cylinder engine and electronically-improved 'super all-wheel control program', as well as

a new drive mode selector. All this, along with seven airbags, greatly increases safety and improves driving dynamics giving it a 5-star rating from ANCAP.

With Covid-restricted travel destinations we relied on Mitsubishi's claim of 8.1L/100 km of unleaded petrol in the combined city and highway cycle. The 55-litre fuel tank should take you 680 km with sensible driving.

Appearance is everything ... two-tone exterior paintwork, either black-over-white or bronze-over-black, previously a \$940 option, two-tone black and tan high-grade leather interior and front massage seats.

The new Outlander brings a sense of space ... its taller than the previous model, with a wheelbase longer by 35.5 mm and 51 mm more width to play with. This increases legroom in the second row that allowed designers to place a third row in back.

Another strong point is Mitsubishi's 10-year or 160,000 km powertrain warranty, five-year or 100,000 km full vehicle warranty and five-year unlimited mileage roadside assistance, offered on all models.

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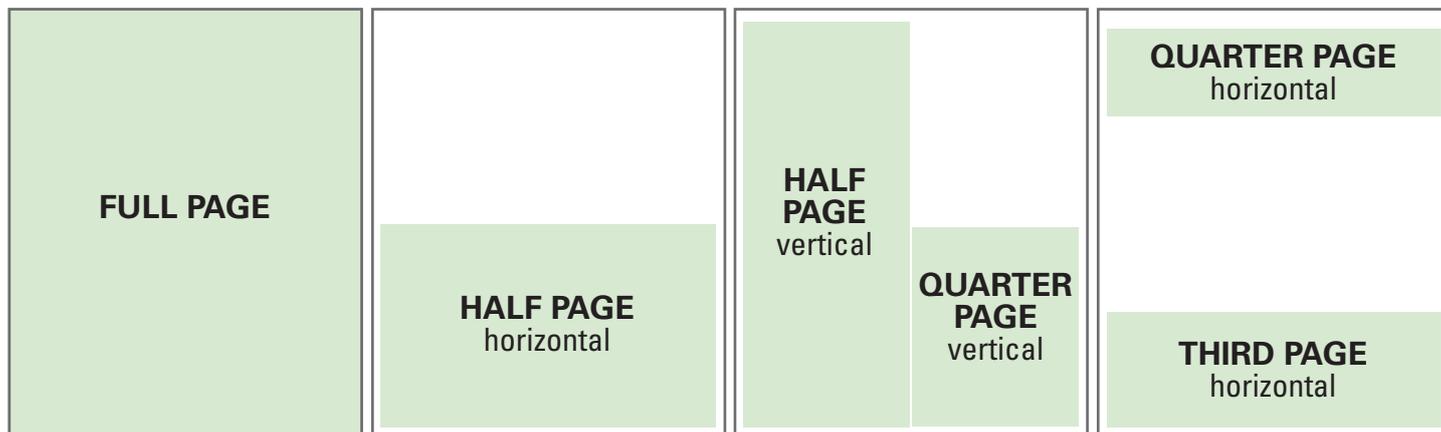
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PAGE 1 Front cover strip: Contract booking

Horizontal • 30mmH x 190mmW

PAGE 1 Front cover module: Contract booking

Horizontal • 45mmH x 49.5mmW

PAGE 2 below story: Contract booking

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