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Voices in the House heard: Putting the case for forest industry survival

COVER STORY P 2



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Contractors and communities get good hearing in their fight against ‘abhorrent’ forest closures

‘It’s a shame the government couldn’t return the same level of support for these heroes’

THE Australian Forest Contractors Association says years of perseverance from the Wellington Shire Council in eastern Victoria has led to the granting of a freedom-of-information request to examine the Labor government’s decision to end native forestry in the state.

“Unfortunately, you don’t have to dig very deep to find the lack of decision making and the absolute and deliberate exclusion of contractors and hardwood sawmillers from a fair consultation process,” AFCA general manager Carlie Porteous said.

“Forestry workers were never consulted, advised or considered,” Ms Porteous said. “The actions by the government have been

nothing less than abhorrent.”

Letters provided by the government, as recorded by the shire council in documents released through the FOI, indicated the industry “had a secure future” ... so much so that sawmilling businesses, harvest and haulage operators and flow-on support businesses invested in new capital equipment.

Ms Porteous said forest

contracting was a highly asset-intensive occupation. Most were small to medium-sized, family-owned and multi-generational businesses who had invested heavily in

a future that was decided for them – and then taken away from them.

“Now, only a little over 18 months away from the government’s proposed industry supply reduction in 2024, contracting businesses are hanging up their boots, some with significant debt after honest investment in the industry,” Ms Porteous said.

“Some of our members have not worked since November last year. No business can continue to operate with this level of uncertainty.

“Currently eight harvesting crews have been stood down with uncertain futures. The continuing injunctions as a result of poor government policy, legislative uncertainty and inconsistent



Among the industry delegation to Parliament House in Melbourne ... mill owners, mill operators and forest contracting business owners are joined at Parliament house by Carlie Porteous, AFCA, Deb Kerr, VFPA, Michael O’Connor, CFMEU, Gary Blackwood, MP Narracan, and Tim Bull, MP Gippsland East.

“SOME OF OUR MEMBERS HAVE NOT WORKED SINCE NOVEMBER”

Cont P 4



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Rogue native log exporter nabbed in northern Qld as industry calls for stronger action on compliance

THE Queensland timber industry has condemned the actions of a native log exporter who has been convicted of unlawful tree harvesting in the Rinyirru national park in Far North Queensland.

Chair of the Timber Queensland hardwood division Curly Tatnell said this sort of rogue activity did not represent the responsible behavior of the broader hardwood industry which worked under strict forestry and environmental management regulations.

“Over the past four years we have consistently raised our concerns with both the federal and state governments over rogue native log export operators and the tide of suspect exports,” Mr Tatnell said.

“This most recent conviction simply lends more weight to our legitimate concerns.

“Unfortunately, if concrete action is not put into compliance monitoring by the relevant authorities there is a very real risk of more suspect practices by fly-by-night operators who do not necessarily have in mind the long-term interests of the industry, landowners nor sustainable forest management.”

Timber Queensland has recommended a number of key actions to combat non-compliant exports, but this will take time given the complexity of regulation and



Curly Tatnell... rogue activity does not represent the responsible behavior of the broader hardwood industry.

overarching federal and state requirements. These include:

- Including Queensland native hardwood log exports in the commonwealth illegal logging regulation, to ensure greater due diligence and additional regulatory power for federal enforcement.

- Adequate resourcing for compliance monitoring and coordination across relevant state and commonwealth agencies responsible for forestry and environmental regulation.

- The undertaking of compliance audits of export operators and export permits on a regular basis, rather than simply relying on ‘whistle-blower’ information for any suspect activity.

“We have previously called for a native log export suspension from Queensland for at least two years, which could be reassessed after that time, in terms of progress against the necessary measures needed to confidently assess compliance,” Mr Tatnell said.

Over the past four years there has been a marked rise in containerised native hardwood log exports from Queensland (more

than 360,000 cub m), with widespread reports and incidents of poor forestry practices and breaches of state and federal environmental regulation from opportunistic log traders. These exports have

predominately been to China and other Asian markets and are sourced largely from private native forests, woodlands and even national parks.

Timber Queensland has consistently made representation to the federal and state governments about the lack of a reasonable and systematic regulatory compliance monitoring and auditing regime for native log exports and licence requirements.

“These lawless operators, flagrantly abusing the rules, cannot be tolerated from an industry perspective and should not be tolerated by governments,” Timber Queensland said.

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**“CONVICTION
LENDING WEIGHT
TO LEGITIMATE
CONCERNS**

From P 2

Supreme Court interpretations are crippling the industry.”

A delegation representing contractors, sawmilling businesses and employees visited Parliament House in Melbourne last week to get their message across.

The 20-strong delegation, representing some of the largest industry employers in Victoria, was organised by advocate and

“THESE ARE SAME BUSINESSES THAT FOUGHT THE BLACK SUMMER BUSHFIRES



Member for Eastern Victoria Melina Bath (left), Member for Gippsland South Danny O'Brien (third from left), and Carlie Porteous, AFCA (second from right), joined processors, mill workers and forest contracting businesses at Parliament House in Melbourne.

friend of industry Gary Blackwood, MP Narracan and Shadow Assistant Minister for Forestry, Peter Walsh MP Murray Plains, Leader of the Nationals, and Shadow Minister for Agriculture, and Melina Bath MP Eastern Victoria.

Supporters included

members of AFCA, the Victorian Forest Products Association and the CFMEU who met with ministers and members of the Nationals, Liberal and Labor parties, Darren Hinch's Justice Party, Liberal Democrats, Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party and the Transport Matters Party.

“All of the constituents met with the members and were extremely generous with their time,” Ms Porteous said.

“They were all empathetic to the needs of our industry

and expressed concern at the immediate financial hardship these businesses and timber communities face. There was, across all parties, a real uniting of support.

“These were the same businesses that fought the 2019-2020 Black Summer bushfires, with 34 crews contributing to fire-fighting efforts, clearing roads, creating fire breaks and preventing fires from destroying critical infrastructure and homes. The crews worked for 138 days straight to protect the communities that they support and that support them.

“It's a shame this government couldn't return the same level of support and appreciation for these heroes,” Carlie Porteous said.

“And I wonder who will be left to protect Victorians when the next catastrophic bushfire hits us.”

On the cover: Gathering at Parliament House in Melbourne are Carlie Porteous, general manager, AFCA, forest contractors, David Blackwood, Adam Campbell and Darryn Kelly, and Gary Blackwood, MP Narracan.



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Malaysian Wood Expo in Nov.

THE Malaysian Wood Expo from November 20-22 will throw a spotlight on the southeast Asia forest and forest products sector.

Jointly organised by the Malaysian Timber Council and the Panels and Furniture Group, the expo is catering for top exhibitors in the region.

“Trading with ASEAN members will lead to a wealth of business possibilities and Malaysia is the gateway to these markets,” say organisers.

MWE in 2019 attracted

exhibitors from 22 countries and visitors from more than 50 countries included delegates at a senior management level with purchasing authority. The event hosted exhibitors from Germany, Italy, Australia, France, Belgium, Gabon, China, Chile, New Zealand, Taiwan and Singapore, with the trade visitors from France, New Zealand, South Africa, India, Singapore and Maldives.

Contact (65) 6266 5512 or mobile (65) 9621 4283. Visit: www.malaysianwoodexpo.com.my/

Guy Barnett comes in a 'good package' taking the forestry, construction and housing portfolios

'Forestry sector will be a key leader in the recovery and rebuilding phase of Tasmania's economy'

INDUSTRY in Tasmania has welcomed new Premier Jeremy Rockliff's decision to retain Guy Barnett as Minister for Resources, which includes forestry, in the state government restructure last week.

Mr Barnett also picks up state development, construction and housing – a good and appropriate all-round packaging of his portfolio.

Mr Rockliff, deputy premier since the Liberals came to power in 2014, was voted unopposed as Tasmania's 47th premier at a party room meeting on Friday after the shock decision by Peter Gutwein to quit politics after two years in the top job. He called time on a 20-year political career, saying his "tank was empty" following a draining few years managing Covid-19 issues.

“COMMITTED TO PROTECTING THE FORESTRY AND BUILDING SECTOR

Born and raised on a farm at Hagley in northern Tasmania, Guy Barnett gained a law degree and Master of Laws at the University of Tasmania, after almost a decade representing Tasmania in the senate. His experience has been trumpeted by both the forest and housing sectors with a third of a nine-member cabinet team new to the job this year, making it the state's most inexperienced ministry since 2014.

Mr Barnett said the government remained committed to protecting and building the forestry sector, recognising it was a vital employer in many regional communities.

"While we have all faced the extraordinary challenge of Covid-19, I am extremely proud of the way the forestry industry has proactively adapted to working in unprecedented circumstances," he said.

"The forestry sector will be a key leader in the recovery and rebuilding phase for the



Comes with experience... Guy Barnett stays with forestry in Tasmania.

Tasmanian economy, driving investment and providing thousands of jobs, many in regional areas."

Tasmanian Forest Products Association CEO Nick Steel welcomed the return of Guy Barnett's forestry representation in the resources portfolio.

"Minister Barnett is a strong advocate for our sustainable and mixed forestry industry and shares our vision of continuing to grow and transform all elements of the forestry

value chain, from the sustainable harvesting of plantations and multiple use natural forest, to increasing on-island processing of timber resources," Mr Steel said.

"The Tasmanian forest industry is worth more than \$700 million at the point of sale, and over \$1.2

billion when considering the flow-on-effects to the state's economy.

"We have the potential to contribute even more as the world looks to forest products as a solution to reducing carbon in our atmosphere and to reducing our reliance on carbon intensive industries.

"Tasmania's forests and wood products were the key to our state's target of net zero by 2030. To achieve this, it is critical

Cont P 7



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

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Wood 

RW/1-10-1

Little girl leads bold plan to plant a billion trees: a great story that highlights a shortage of timber

THE Australian Forest Products Association has set out a bold plan to get one billion new trees planted across the nation by 2030 in a new campaign by creative shop Galore.

Australia is on the cusp of a serious nationwide shortage of locally-grown timber and wood-based products, which is why AFPA believes now is the time to act with a goal to influence government policy and public support to significantly increase the growth of sustainable plantations before the decade ends.

“The AFPA came to us with a great story that needed telling,” Galore founder Tim Kirby said.

“There is a clear current problem, but it’s one that brings a multitude of enormous benefits for Australia if we can help to solve it. So, we set about working out the best way to tell that story.”

Written and directed by Nick Snelling, an award-winning creative director



and copywriter, the emotive spots for ‘Australia. We Need a Tree Change’ opens with a young girl engrossed in colouring in her school homework project. When her curious father interrupts to ask what she’s doing, she spells out the case to him in

- 1/ **A great story that needs telling.**
- 2 **Nick Snelling... we all know kids possess a simple wisdom and purity of thought.**

simple language as to why Australia should aim to plant one billion new trees.

Says Snelling: “We felt it was vital that we bring the high stakes of an Australian wood shortage home – not just for tradies, who will feel its ramifications first, but for parents. We all know kids

“A MESSAGE COLOURED BY A SIMPLE SOLUTION

possess a simple wisdom and purity of thought that often escapes us as adults. Kids tend to only see the common sense or potential for good in things. So that felt like the perfect way to approach this film.”

Joe Prevedello, AFPA communications director, added: “We are delighted with the whole concept. We have the kind of ambitious but achievable goal that we believe a lot of Aussies will rally behind, and who better to lay out our argument than a super-smart little girl, whose generation will ultimately inherit the vital decisions we all make today,” he said.

“At the current rate of timber production versus usage, Australia is on a path to have massive wood shortages in the future if no action is taken.”

The new AFPA spots will run across commercial television and online platforms throughout April.

Go to video link <https://ausfpa.com.au/australia-we-need-a-tree-change/>

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APRIL

20-21: Centre for Future Timber Structures 2022 Australian Timber Design Workshops in Launceston, Tasmania and Brisbane, QLD. Created for building design professionals interested in timber construction to develop skills, confidence and networks in a unique, hands-on environment. Registration and cost: Early bird discount (ends February 28): \$900. Standard: \$1100 (single day \$650, student price: \$250). For further information Professor Keith Crews email: k.crews@uq.edu.au Event re-scheduled from early February.

MAY

10-12: Environmental Forestry – Rotorua, New Zealand. Forest Industry Engineering Association. Improving environmental performance across the forest industry. For

further information see: www.environmentalforestry.events

18-19: DesignBUILD – Melbourne Convention & Exhibition Centre, Melbourne, VIC. Event will bring together Australia’s architecture, building, construction and design communities. For further information see: designbuildexpo.com.au

21: Queensland Timber Industry Awards – Rydges Southbank, Brisbane. Contact Alicia Oelkers 0418 449 031. www.tabma.com.au

JUNE

10: Third time lucky! GTTIA Awards – Mount Gambier, SA. The GTTIA committee confirms the awards gala event will be held on June 10 at The Barn, Mount Gambier SA. Tickets on sale April 25 and for purchase online. Email: info@gttia.com

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

JULY

10-15: 65th The Society of Wood Science and Technology annual meeting – Salt/Peppers Mantra complex, Kingscliffe, NSW. SWST activities include publishing wood and fibre science and accrediting undergraduate wood science programs in North American, South America, Asia and Europe. This will be the first time SWST meets in our part of the world and more than 160

abstracts have been submitted from 25 countries. The meeting will bring together scientists from around the globe to address topics including basic timber properties, mass timber construction, plantation resources, timber certification and timber processing. Registration is now open at www.swst.org.

SEPTEMBER

11-16: Gottstein Trust Understanding Wood Science Course – Sunday evening, September 11, 2022, in Albury, NSW, for the field trip component, ending on Friday, September 16, 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 program can be downloaded at www.gottsteintrust.org

From P 5

that the government integrates sustainable forest management and its products into their strategy and develops a collaborative public marketing campaign to demonstrate the forest industry’s carbon and environmental benefits as demand surges.”

Mr Steel said international demand was fierce for sustainable forest products.

“We can no longer rely on imports for our housing

and fibre needs and we must achieve sovereign capability by working together to accelerate government support for private forest management incentives, to develop a more financially secure and long-term private timber resource and extend state-owned supply arrangements on a long-term basis,” he said.

“These goals can be achieved and to do this we encourage the government to provide funding towards a whole-of-forest industry



Nick Steel... the forestry sector will be a key leader in the recovery and rebuilding phase for the Tasmanian economy.

transformation package to support the future of sustainable forestry and the benefits forests provide to our communities, economy and environment.

“Tasmania’s forest sector has have always played a major role in the economy

and it is critical that the state has an experienced minister like Guy Barnett who understands the complexities and benefits of our industries.”

AFPA CEO Ross Hampton added: “From a national perspective, we look forward to working with Mr Barnett to ensure the right policy direction is chartered for forest industries as the sector faces a number of hurdles, not the least of which is the ongoing trade dispute with China.



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Responsible Wood briefs SFM on new standard

IN December last year, Responsible Wood published the new AS/NZS 4708:2021 – Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) principles standard.

The new standard underpins the Responsible Wood sustainable forest management certification scheme in Australia and the PEFC sustainable forest management scheme in New Zealand and replaces AS 4708:2013 and NZS AS 4708:2014.

Sustainability manager Matt de Jongh has spent a week in Tasmania meeting with SFM certificate holders and discussing the new standard. This included hosting a workshop with all Tasmanian SFM certificate holders in historic Campbell Town, 65 km southeast of Launceston.

Mr de Jongh also attended and spoke at the Tasmanian Forests and Forest Products Network breakfast in Launceston.

“IT’S IMPORTANT TO COMMUNICATE WITH CERTIFICATE HOLDERS



1/ Responsible Wood sustainability manager Matt de Jongh (left) with SFM certificate holders in Launceston ... Daniel Hodge, Sustainable Timber Tasmania, Tony Stonjek, AKS Forest Solutions, Mark Leech, Fine Timber Tasmania, Gayle Quin, Timberlands Pacific, Sandra Hetherington, Norske Skog, Dan Ryan, AKS Forest Solutions, Leanne Chappell, SFM Forest Products, Simon Cook and Ann Lasla, Forico, and Darryn Crook, Reliance Forest. Fibre)

2/ Sustainable Timber Tasmania’s Daniel Hodge and Lachie Clark explaining to Matt de Jongh of Responsible Wood how this tree is identified and retained at a harvesting operation due to its size.



“It is important to communicate with certificate holders on the key changes to the new standard and that there is a two-year transition period,” Mr de Jongh said.

“Therefore, certificate holders have until March 10, 2024, to transition to the new standard,” he said. “It is also important to point out that

the new standard is now a revised joint Australian and New Zealand standard.”

Most importantly, forest certification through Responsible Wood provided a mechanism to promote the sustainable management of Australia’s forests and ensured forest-based

products reached the marketplace had been sourced from sustainably managed forests, Mr de Jongh said.

SFM is an integrated forest management company operating Australia-wide for almost two decades. It provides certified forest management solutions to land managers and is committed to achieving quality sustainable outcomes without compromising

on a commercial return.

Through its broad industry networks and strong relationships with government and other agencies, SFM offers an unprecedented level of operational efficiency, market access and sector intelligence.



House construction costs surge as structural timber shortages hit home harder



Construction cost growth is adding further uncertainty to new building projects and renovations.

A SHORTAGE of key materials such as structural timbers and metal products along with higher fuel costs and a labour shortage is likely to keep upwards pressure on building costs, says leading property analyst CoreLogic.

Releasing the March quarter edition of its Construction Cost Index Report, CoreLogic says the average cost to build free-standing, semi-detached and two storey homes rose by 2.4% during the March quarter to be up by 9% over the 12 months to March.

This represents the highest rate of growth recorded in the index's history except for a 10.2% growth spurt over the 12 months to March 2001 following the introduction of the GST.

CoreLogic construction cost estimation manager John Bennett says timber, metals and imported products are driving much of the growth.

"Timber costs continue to rise, with cladding, decking and other timber items affected," Mr Bennett said.

"Steep rises in metal prices are also now flowing through

to the market, with structural steel, fixings and metal components hit hard.

"We continued to see volatility in the rest of the market, with imported products the most vulnerable due to elevated shipping costs. Rising fuel costs are also on the radar and we have continued to see further increases in the cost of other materials."

Research director Tim Lawless says construction cost growth is adding further uncertainty to new building projects and renovations as well as inflationary pressures to the economy.

While the most obvious impact lies with builders, new home buyers and home renovators, Mr Lawless says another consideration lies with the sum insured by homeowners.

"With construction costs up more than 25% over the past five years, homeowners will need to reassess their insurance terms and make sure they are adequately covered should they need to make a claim," he said.

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HYNE TIMBER

Atlassian's new 40-storey timber HQ is high on agenda for offsite conference event in Melbourne

TECH giant Atlassian's plan for a 40-storey timber skyscraper next to Sydney's Central Railway has been approved by NSW government and the 180-m tower will be the tallest commercial hybrid timber building in the world, with construction to start next year.

The ground-breaking visionary project will be a program highlight at the Timber Offsite Construction conference in Melbourne on June 21 and 22 themed Timber and Technology: The Zero Carbon Future.

The tower design concept was created by New York-based architects SHoP, with Australian practice BVN as the design team, and engineering by TTW.



The benchmark design timber core will be wrapped in a glass and steel facade and include a mix of outdoor and

1/ *Atlassian timber skyscraper... the biggest tech precinct of its kind in Australia.*

2/ *Scott Farquhar... this is an exciting place to be.*



indoor spaces using an energy-efficient approach that features natural ventilation and large planted terraces giving access to nature.

The new 40,000 sq m commercial tower is a global 'first', and Atlassian says the building will operate on 100% renewable energy and include solar panels built into the facade.

“COMMERCIAL TOWER A WORLD 'FIRST'”

Atlassian co-founder and co-CEO Scott Farquhar said the building was more than a new office space.

“It represents our vision to create the biggest tech precinct of its kind in Australia,” he said.

“When complete, Tech Central will become home to thousands of new jobs and help create hundreds of Aussie-grown tech companies. This is an exciting place to be.

Mr Farquhar says he looks

forward to continuing to work closely with industry and government leaders to see this world-class precinct take shape.

The skyscraper will be part of Sydney's new Innovation and Technology precinct adjacent to Central Station. Atlassian is the project's anchor tenant, with two more towers planned for the site.

The Atlassian tower will sit above the station's former Parcels Shed, currently a YHA hostel, and has been rezoned for the development. The shed has been integrated into the project and will become a public space. The Railway Square YHA will return as a 480-bed hostel in the lower floors.

Construction is expected to create 2500 additional jobs and generate \$1 billion in revenue annually. More than 4000 Atlassian staff will use the tower and when the tech precinct is completed will cater for around 25,000 people.

NSW Minister for Jobs and Investment Stuart Ayres said Tech Central was set to become a global technology hub.

“With Atlassian HQ set for construction and the Western Gateway sub-precinct rezoned, the planning controls are now in place to transform this tired transport hub into something to rival Silicon Valley,” Mr Ayres said.

“Tech Central will be home to 25,000 jobs over 24 ha once fully developed. Atlassian's headquarters alone will accommodate 5000 operational jobs in the world's tallest hybrid timber tower.”

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Grumpy has a blue with big box guy in aisle eight: it's not branded, mate, and, no, colour won't cut it

Consumers are confused ... unbranded products are not 'fit-for-purpose' regardless of colouration.

SORRY, but I am back into 'rant mode'. Grrrr and other grievous outbursts we can't utter here.

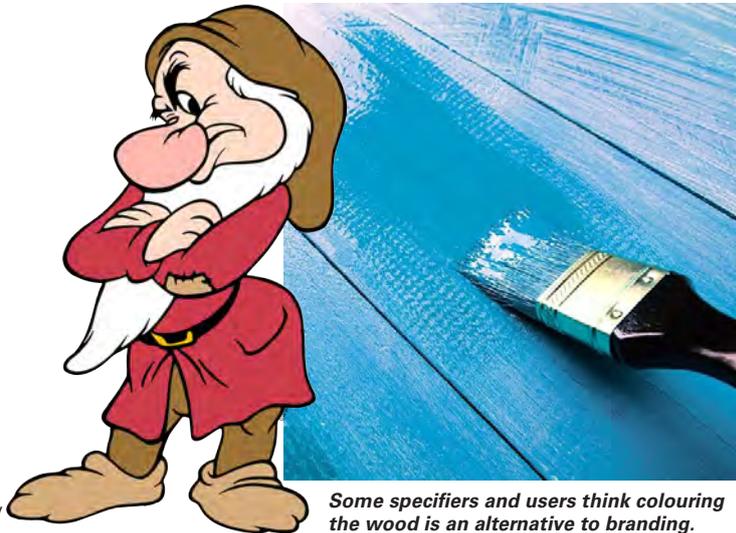
I have been in the preservation game for a scary long time, with a fair portion of my efforts trying to ensure the product being produced/preserved was fit for purpose. I spent 40 years with the government and remember a time when the term public servant was not an oxymoron. As most of us are influenced by the 'early days' some of my public service attitude is still fighting the good fight.

For reasons hard to defend, I recently decided to renovate part of my garage and being who I am, I decided to use preserved wood.

With my list in hand, I took myself off to an extremely large supplier of timber and everything else on the planet and started going through the stacks looking for pine framing protected to H2 or at least H2F. Would you believe I couldn't find any? What's that you say ... you know just what I'm talking about?

There was lots of stuff coloured blue but not

“WHAT ABOUT CHAIN OF CUSTODY?”



Some specifiers and users think colouring the wood is an alternative to branding.

a preservation brand in sight. Feeling grumpy and cantankerous, (part of my role specification as a grandpa), I managed to crash tackle one of the company employees and ask where they kept their termite-protected timber.

"Over there," he said. "It's the blue stuff"

"No it's not," I replied, my steely gaze boring a whole in his forehead. "It's not branded, mate!"

As you can imagine it was downhill from there. This was a battle I couldn't win.

Without a preservation brand, there is no indication of where the stuff comes from and even if the wood contains a preservative. At least it has a pretty hue blue colour. How nice.

JACK'S RANT



With JACK NORTON
Secretary, TPAA

The standard says: "Where colour-coding is used (**in addition to the required marking**), to identify treated timber ... it shall be colour-coded in accordance with ..." (The bold highlighting is mine).

What seems to be happening is that some specifiers and users think

colouring the wood is an alternative to branding ... and the end consumer doesn't know any better.

As far as I am concerned, unbranded product is not 'fit-for-purpose' regardless of any colouration.

I finished up buying the quantity and sizes I needed, but I am also seriously annoyed that we just can't get the message out to users and specifiers about branding and what is and is not preservative-treated wood.

I know there are producers out there doing the right thing, but a poorly informed user/specifier doesn't know what to ask for and therefore can't use a credit card to demand a product that meets the standard.

What about chain of custody? A couple of months ago we got all excited about it here in Queensland but the flames of excitement seem to have disappeared in a wisp of smoke. Hopefully, there will be a flare up once the demand for building products settles down. With a bit of luck, a need or demand for knowing where a product comes from will drive the preservation branding issue.

I guess I will keep bashing my head against a wall and dream about how good it might feel when I stop.

Wildlife ‘bounces back’ after Black Summer fires

SMALL native mammals including bandicoots, antechinus and bush rats are showing remarkable recovery two years on from the Black Summer fires, long-term camera monitoring in NSW state forests south of Eden shows.

Senior field ecologist Rohan Bilney said the Forestry Corporation had been monitoring wildlife at 40 sites south of Eden since 2007 as part of the Southern Brown Bandicoot Species Management Plan, and every monitoring site was

impacted by fires in 2019-20.

“The fires and the severe drought that preceded it caused numerous small mammal species to decline, with some showing a greater than 50% decline, but within two years of the fire we’re delighted to see most species bouncing back, some rather dramatically,” Dr Bilney said.

“Conditions over the past two years have been ideal, as we’ve experienced increased rainfall and prolific vegetation regrowth providing ideal conditions for breeding and recovery for a range of animal species.

“In particular, populations of southern brown bandicoots and bush rats have exploded, with our cameras recording the highest occupancy rates



Dr Rohan Bilney... monitoring wildlife at 40 sites.

of the monitoring sites last year. That equated to greater than a 10-fold increase in occupancy rate within a 12-month period.

“While the recovery of smaller native mammals has been most pronounced, larger and more common species including common

wombats, brush-tailed possums, swamp wallabies, lace monitors, short-beaked echidnas and superb lyrebirds have continued to be recorded at rates similar to those recorded before the fires and drought,” Dr Bilney said.

we’ve seen in 5-6 years, and approaching our highest ever detections.”

But Dr Bilney said the most remarkable change in occupancy had been with the painted button quail, a small bird species rarely detected pre-fire, spotted at over two-thirds

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ForestLearning works with industry professionals to inspire Australia's next generation of foresters

Call for more industry champions across the sector to engage with local teachers and students

SINCE 2011, Forest and Wood Products Australia has run its ForestLearning program to help Australian teachers with quality lesson resources and tools to educate future generations about Australia's sustainable forests and wood products.

The one-stop-shop education portal – forestlearning.edu.au – now houses more than 70 foundation, year 12 curriculum resources aligned to the Australian curriculum. These resources are written by teachers for teachers and approved by the Australian Forest Education Alliance across all subject areas.

Now, ForestLearning is rolling up its sleeves to further assist forest and wood product industry professionals to engage with their local schools and students through the ForestLearning Industry Education Champion Program and new Schools and Industry Champions Toolkit.

ForestLearning Industry Education Champions come from forest and wood

“FORESTRY HAS A POSITIVE AND HOPE-FILLED STORY TO TELL



1

1/ Sarah Maddison, planning forester and drone operator at OneFortyOne Plantations, has partnered with ForestLearning since 2019.

2/ Industry champion Sarah Porter from Timber Queensland volunteered her time to run a forestry education stand during National Ag Week last year with Jason Ross of Responsible Wood.



2

product organisations all over Australia and are involved in a range of face-to-face and virtual activities with schools in their regions. But there is more that can be done. ForestLearning is calling for more industry champions from across our sector to join with them in amplifying learning in schools.

Industry champions volunteer their time based on their own capacity from one hour to one day a year to help educate the next generation about the sustainable forest cycle and the great work in science, innovation and technologies that exists within our industry.

Industry champion Sarah Porter from Timber Queensland volunteered her time during National Ag

TALKING TIMBER



With Eileen Newbury

Head of marketing and communications and head of WoodSolutions program

Week 2021 with Jason Ross of Responsible Wood to run the forestry education stand at Calvary Christian College primary industries education expo. Sarah reflected, “We were encouraged to hear the foundational knowledge that the students already had about trees and the carbon

cycle, and it was fantastic to see the enthusiasm the next generation has for learning, engaging in sustainable practices and potentially working on the land.”

Another industry champion Sarah Maddison, planning forester and drone operator for OneFortyOne Plantations, has partnered with

ForestLearning since 2019. Over this time, she has flown drones at regional career events, presented virtual classrooms to classrooms around Australia via zoom from her office, and starred in the Geography Teachers Association Victoria magazine Interaction.

Sarah said, “I’m really proud of the work I do in planning and forestry. Forestry has such a positive and hope-filled story that directly speaks to today’s climate challenge. Although I’ve not worked a lot in schools before, ForestLearning was with me every step of the way, from helping prepare and edit my presentations to handling

Cont P 16

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the school bookings and technology”.

With forest and wood industry initiatives running across regions of Australia – from virtual classrooms, bus tours, tree planting days, and career events – ForestLearning in collaboration with the Forest Education Foundation has developed a new suite of industry and teacher resources that help align industry themes with educational outcomes, saving

valuable preparation time for industry champions and teachers.

This free-to-download pack of resources aims to take the guess work out of industry presentations and excursion visits for schools by outlining topics relevant to the Australian curriculum by year level and subject area. Guides for F-12 teachers provide educators with the know-how and inspiration to embed forest and wood activities and presentations to meet their curriculum needs.

The Forest Industry Education Champion Toolkit is now available to download at <https://tinyurl.com/forestindustrychampion> and includes:

- How-to guides for industry champions and primary and secondary teachers.
- Activity and presentation preparation checklists and top tips and tricks for industry education champions.
- Evaluation tools for teachers and industry education champions.

Industry champions can also access PowerPoint slide templates for school presentations, order teacher packs for events, or inquire about ForestVR Headset loan kits for VR activations in schools or related school events. Contact Beth Welden, ForestLearning program manager – beth@forestlearning.edu.au

Further information on ForestLearning, the Industry Education Champion program and how to order a free teacher pack is available at forestlearning.edu.au

Pipeline of new homes construction grows across Australia

DETACHED home commencements fell by 10.1% in the final quarter of 2021 but the number of homes under construction continues to grow.

The ABS on Wednesday released its building activity data for the December 2021

quarter. This data provides estimates of the value of building work and number of dwellings commenced, completed, under construction and in the pipeline, across Australia and its states and territories.

“With 32,420

commencements, this quarter is still one of the strongest on record and stronger than any quarter in the 20 years before the pandemic,” HIA economist Thomas Devitt said.

“The 2021 calendar year saw 147,760 detached house commencements,

the strongest calendar year on record, up by 30.5% on the previous year and 11.6% higher than the previous peak in 1988-89.”

Mr Devitt said the decline in the number starts in the

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ATA: hit reset button on truck safety, productivity

THE next government must reset Australia's approach to road safety and productivity, says the chair of the Australian Trucking Association David Smith.

Launching the ATA's 2022 election policy charter, Mr Smith said the number of accidents involving trucks was falling, thanks to the work of the industry and governments.

"But it won't be acceptable until there are zero deaths and zero injuries on our roads," Mr Smith said.

The ATA is calling for a dramatic improvement in road safety, with an aspirational target: a 25% reduction per year in accidents involving trucks, once the measures proposed get started.

The charter puts forward a policy reset to achieve this goal, including:



Time to eliminate wasteful and costly red tape.

- The federal government funding and operating all major freight roads.

- A 10-year, \$5 billion truck roads and rest area program, so truck drivers always have a safe place to stop.

- Continued full expensing for trucks and trailers to increase the use of newer and safer trucks.

- Air crash style investigations of truck accidents where there are lessons to be learned.

"The ATA's policy charter also calls for a dramatic improvement in the industry's productivity and the elimination of red tape," Mr Smith said.

"At present, trucking businesses need to lodge

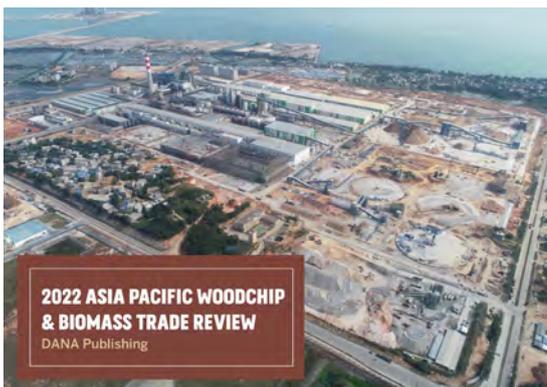
44,000 applications each year to use roads that were built to be used. It's wasteful, costly and time consuming. The Tasmanian road access system shows it is possible to reduce this pointless paperwork by 95% "

Mr Smith slammed the government's decision to halve fuel tax for light vehicle owners for the next six months. The effective tax reduction for trucking businesses was 4.3c/litre, not 22.1c/litre, he said.

"The government's approach to fuel tax has caused confusion for our customers, who are surprised and dismayed when we tell them that the headline figure does not apply to trucks," Mr Smith said. "It will also cause huge cash flow problems for many small trucking businesses," he said.

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EU sanctions ban Russian wood exports to Finland

FINLAND – a considerable exporter of engineered wood to Australia – can no longer import Russian timber following fresh EU-wide sanctions.

The fifth round of sanctions adopted by the EU last Friday over Russia's invasion of Ukraine includes import bans on wood, cement, fertilisers, seafood and liquor.

The latest sanctions will effectively stop all Russian wood exports to Finland and other EU countries.

The sanctions also mean most Finish sawmillers are storing their production for domestic use and to honour orders placed by neighbouring countries in northern Europe. Australian traders have been good customers of Finnish wood products for many years, although they represent less than 10% of amounts previously supplied by Russia.



Metsä Wood... expanding LVL production in Finland.

“These sanctions will in effect end the last remaining import possibilities,” Timo Tolonen, a trade specialist at Finnish Forest Industries said.

Finnish firms have, however, been reducing their reliance on Russian wood imports before the sanctions hit.

In 2021, Russian wood imports accounted for a

10th of the Finnish forest industry's raw material needs. Finnish forest product companies were already looking to substitute Russian wood before the war broke out.

Finnish companies are turning their gaze to domestic timber felled in the process of forest thinnings, according to Finnish Forest Industries, who

added that forestry firms are also considering Baltic wood imports.

Metsä Wood, one of Finland's biggest LVL manufacturers, is constructing a new €200 million LVL mill in central Finland with capacity of more than 150,000 cub m, an increase of some 50% of the group's 'Kerto' brand production.

Kerto LVL is produced from 3 mm thick rotary-peeled strength-graded softwood veneers.

Finland's 2021 export value of forest products totalled €13.1 billion an increase of 16% from the previous year in real terms. Sawn timber had the highest export value – a total of 8.7 million cub m with a value of €2.6 billion.

The most important export countries for Finland's forest industries were Germany (13% share of exports value), China (10%) and the UK (8%).

From P 16

final quarter of 2021 reflected a slowing from the peak of the HomeBuilder projects in the June 2021 quarter. It was not a reflection of a slowing market. Other indicators, such as building approvals, finance approvals and new home sales continued to show a strong

volume of work entering the pipeline.

“Construction time frames have increased significantly,” Mr Devitt said.

“Under normal circumstances, the surge of HomeBuilder projects would have translated into an increase in completions

from the June 2021 quarter. However, completions had barely risen even by the end of 2021. As a result, the volume of work under construction has reached new highs.”

HIA says multi-unit commencements also strengthened in 2021. Despite falling by 19% in

the final quarter, 80,610 commencements were still recorded for 2021, up by 15% on the previous year. This included high rise apartments, as investors looked through the haze of the pandemic in 2021 with more optimism, as well as medium density units and townhouses.

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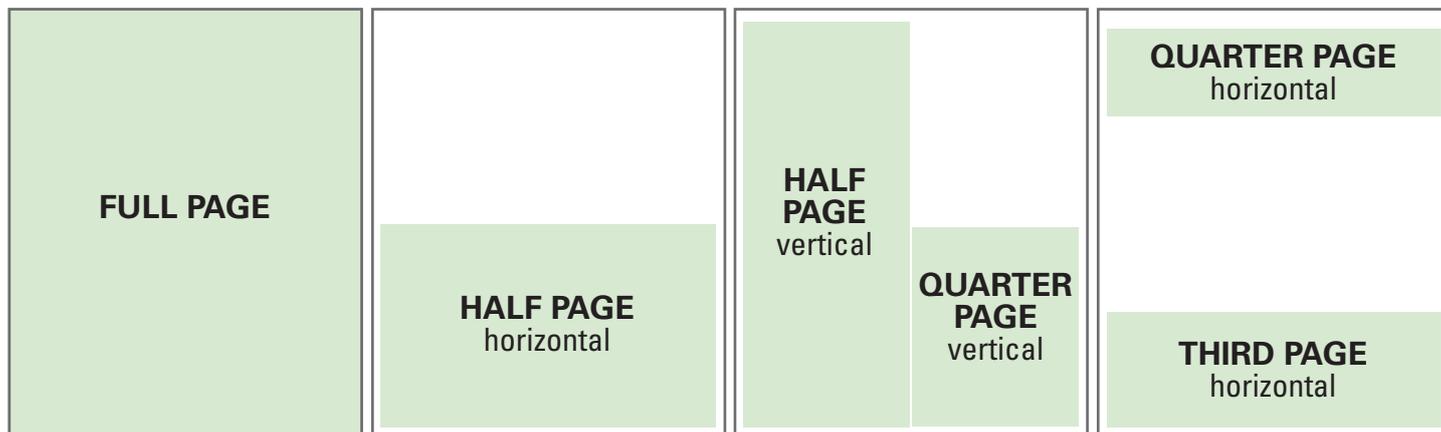
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PAGE 1 Front cover module: Contract booking

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