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Design studio 'directs' the goals and aspirations of its customers

COVER STORY P 6



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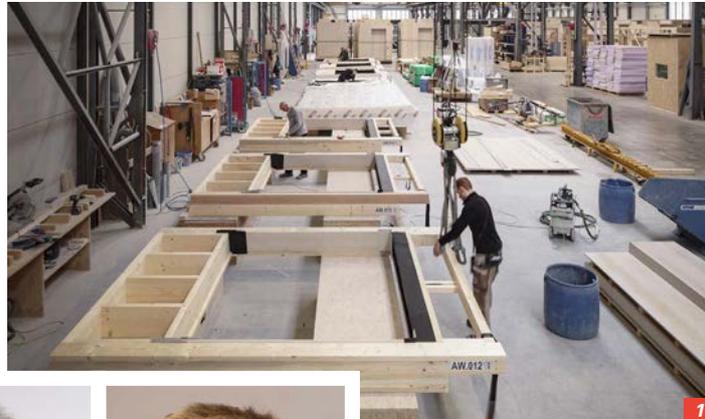
Star international speakers talk up development of global off-site construction technology at TOC 22

JIM BOWDEN

KEVIN Ezard's star international performers at his Frame Australia Conference and Exhibition in Melbourne in two weeks arrive at a time when the country's off-site construction technology is entering its most exciting and challenging phase.

Gerry McCaughey, chief executive and chairman of California-based Entekra, an international leader in design, engineering and manufacture, and Ernst Young's Industry Entrepreneur of the Year, has used his FIOSS process (builders, architects, engineers and key suppliers) to translate construction drawings and plans into the exacting specifications for off-site automated manufacturing now used in more than 90% of new-home timber construction in the USA.

Nick Milestone, chairman of the International Association



- 1/ **The solution... pre-fab timber construction.**
- 2/ **Gerry McCaughey.**
- 3/ **Nick Milestone.**

faster construction, improved quality, and higher turnover.

Mr McCaughey's presentation will outline the concept 'If it's not a system, it's not a solution' to encourage builders to understand the benefits and business opportunities in a fully integrated off-site

for Mass Timber and chairman of TRADA UK, is also a director of projects for Mercer Mass Timber (USA), which last year purchased the Kattera CLT facility in Spokane, Washington, for \$150 million.

Frame Australia will show global trends are moving towards less labour on-site with more value-adding in prefabrication to achieve

solution for both residential and commercial construction.

Postponed last year because of Covid, Kevin Ezard has fortuitously hit the button on the timing of TOC 22 – Timber Offsite Construction – nowhere better reflected than in the Olympics state.

Increased interstate migration spurred on by the pandemic has caused a building boom in Queensland, with Brisbane's successful bid to host the 2032 Olympic Games set to accelerate this demand even further.

With adequate resourcing and enough preparation, the influx of residential and commercial projects has the potential to bolster the state's economy and position it as a leader in construction.

Tradesmen are in high demand as the construction industry undergoes a significant growth period, with the Master Builders Queensland 2022 Outlook predicting a 'challenging' but

“OLYMPIC CITY SET TO LEAD IN ADVANCE OF PRE-FAB TIMBER

Cont P 4



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Industry welcomes new federal shadow ministry as Senator Jonno Duniam takes full 'forestry' title

TASMANIAN senator Jonathan Duniam, 39, will serve as Forestry Minister in the Liberal Party's new-look shadow ministry announced on Sunday.

He will also hold the environment and fisheries portfolios.

Again, the return of 'forestry' in the title on both sides of government is welcomed by industry after Murray Watt was elevated to the Albanese government as Minister for Forestry and Agriculture last week.

Senator Duniam, who has served as a Liberal senator for Tasmania since the 2016 federal election, holds degrees of Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Laws from the University of Tasmania.

Federal Opposition Leader Peter Dutton brought 10 women to his shadow cabinet of 24 members.

The Australian Forest Products Association also welcomed new Shadow Minister for Agriculture, Nationals Leader David Littleproud, Shadow Minister for Climate Change and Energy Ted O'Brien, Shadow Minister for Trade Kevin Hogan and Shadow Minister for Industry Sussan Ley, as holders of portfolios critical to forest industries.

"We also congratulate Shadow Assistant Minister for Infrastructure and Transport Tony Pasin, who has been a key advocate



Senator Duniam... recognising forestry's clear role in helping the environment.

for our sector as co-chair of the Parliamentary Friends of Forest Industries," AFPA CEO Ross Hampton said.

"The Albanese government has its mandate and AFPA will support its policy and funding delivery for forest industries, but effective oppositions are also essential for effective governments," he said.

"Having previously been Assistant Minister for Forestry, Jonno Duniam understands the enormous potential of our industries and what they need to continue to succeed in creating sustainable products and tackling climate change.

"His new role in the environment portfolio will also help our industries in recognition of our clear role in helping Australia and the world's environment.

"AFPA will work with the Opposition, as it will with the new Albanese government, to ensure Australia reaches the one billion trees by 2030 goal to help meet our climate mitigation potential."

Senator Duniam says unfortunately the same view is clearly not held by anti-forestry ideologues, including

science and evidence that was used to make these decisions from those governments and have not received any such evidence. I can only assume, therefore, that no such evidence was considered."

The senator said these were political decisions made in a policy vacuum by inner-city politicians, with little regard for the devastating results for regional families, employment, or indeed the environment.

"They will ultimately lead to demand for timber products and Aussie jobs being pushed offshore to countries where they do not have the same high environmental standards as Australia."

the Labor governments in Victoria and Western Australia who have decided to shut down their sustainable forest industries without any discernible evidence to do so.

"I have requested the

The united voice for Australia's forest industries



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“ SENATOR UNDERSTANDS ENORMOUS POTENTIAL OF OUR INDUSTRY ”

Innovative robotics technology is powering timber construction in world-first project at WA university

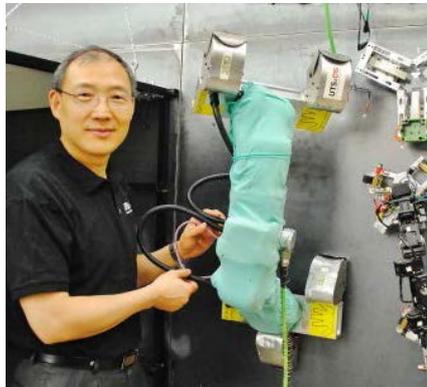
ROBOTIC technology has been trialled on a Western Australian construction site in a 'world-first' project at Murdoch University.

This is in conjunction with major partners Aurecon and the University of Technology Sydney (UTS) in an opportunity to modernise an industry that, by and large, is yet to take a significant leap in innovation.

The robots have been uniquely designed by UTS researchers to deliver



Professor Andrew Deeks... Building 360 will transform the student and staff experience through new digitally-enabled teaching and learning spaces.



Dikai Liu... intelligent robots are changing construction methods.

cumbersome screw fixings. This task can cause fatigue in workers given the repetitive and labour-intensive nature of this work, especially on mass engineered timber construction projects.

The catalyst for the trial is the construction of Building 360 at Murdoch's South Street campus, a technology-rich MET building which will accommodate up to 60% of the university's teaching requirements.

Building 360 will be the largest MET building in Western Australia and a demonstration of Murdoch's commitment to sustainability, aiming for a 6-Star Green

Star rating once complete. The project will feature at the Timber Offsite Construction 'hybrid' conference and exhibition in Melbourne on June 21 and 22.

Murdoch University's Vice Chancellor Professor Andrew Deeks said Building 360 would transform the student and staff experience through offering new, digitally-enabled teaching and learning spaces in an environmentally friendly design.

"MET is a completely renewable resource and a more sustainable construction material than conventional steel or concrete, which is a huge contributor of greenhouse gas emissions globally," Prof Deeks said.

"The building will also have a large array of photovoltaic cells to supply its power needs," he said.

"Working with our design,

Cont P 8

From P 2

potentially prosperous year with pandemic-driven price hikes, shortages and delivery delays in building materials the stumbling blocks.

The Brisbane Olympics is set to trigger a \$1.8 billion construction boom for the state's southeast with plans for major infrastructure and construction projects already under way.

This is an exciting and lucrative opportunity for Queensland which has the potential to supercharge the state's economy, drive massive amounts of tourism and showcase all the state has to offer.

The construction industry is mapping out solutions to combat the rising costs of labour and building materials to allow Queensland to fully reap the economic benefits of this construction boom, rather than suffer from it.

The use of prefabricated timber construction methods will be one of these solutions, providing certainty of quality and efficiency to deliver projects in full and on time.

The Melbourne event is also inextricably linked to Kevin Ezard's theme: Timber Offsite Construction: The Zero Carbon Future.

• See calendar of events, Page 7



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Certainty, or uncertainty, after timber processors are offered extension to wood supply agreements

JIM BOWDEN

TIMBER processors on the flood-affected NSW North Coast have been given certainty to invest in their businesses and equipment following the NSW government's announcement of a five-year extension to existing wood supply agreements.

Deputy Premier Paul Toole said the additional five-year deal had aligned the expiry date for all timber supply contracts right across the region, and confirmed the government's support for the hardwood timber sector.

"Most agreements on the North Coast were due to end in 2023, while others run through to 2028, but now these critical timber mills have all been put on the same timeline to help provide investment and business certainty," Mr Toole said.

CRITICAL FOR GOVERNMENTS TO NURTURE THE INDUSTRY

"This brings immediate relief to the local industry, which generates about \$349 million each year, and is a timely manufacturing boost for the hardwood products that are processed here."

Timber NSW had been campaigning for this extension since 2014.

"So it has taken a very long time to achieve and they do it when very few mills, if any, have any timber due to the wet weather and the flooding and the impacts they still feel post-fire," CEO Maree McCaskill said.

"But it gives those businesses some certainty and equity with the old Boral mill (now Pentarch) contract in terms of time ... but not species."

Ms McCaskill said the bigger issue was that no post-flood relief package had



Paul Toole... this brings immediate relief to the local industry.

effectively been put in place to support the north coast industry.

"Nearly all of the packages do not have criteria that allow the industry to apply with the exception of a couple of directly-flooded premises," she said.

"Yes, the subsidised haulage is a great offer but where are they going to find the timber? Some of our mills have had only one load in six months.

"They must understand that for most north coast

hardwood processors the species are different. They cannot as a rule suddenly start processing pine or cypress or red gum. It doesn't work that way."

NSW Minister for Agriculture Dugald Saunders said it was critical for governments to nurture the industry ... "so we can keep using it well into the future"

"Under regional forest agreements, NSW has committed to growing and re-growing timber in an environmentally responsible manner to meet community demand in a sustainable way," Mr Saunders said.

He said timber was sold under long-term agreements because processing required specialised facilities, equipment and training. When existing agreements expired, market processes were undertaken to ensure the forests provided the amount of timber required. Timber supply was forecast over a 100-year period, but must be reviewed every five years.

White-eared Honeyeater
(Photo Birdlife Australia)

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Responsible Wood would like to congratulate the 2021 PF Olsen Australia and Birdlife Australia NSW Softwood Plantation Pilot Surveys.

Responsible Wood 

RW/1-10-1

Camera, action! Design studio ‘directs’ the goals, aspirations of clients to produce winning projects

The source: sustainable, certified regrowth forests and wood products from Tassie industry pioneer

THE creation of architecture involves many people and disciplines to produce a successful project.

Architects themselves seem to imitate the role of the movie director, controlling and coaxing the core message, continuously assessing and subtly directing the process to achieve the final solution.

No one is more aware of this than James Fitzpatrick, who after studying architecture in Tasmania, explored theatre and film design at the National Institute of Dramatic Art in Sydney.

fitzpatrick+partners was created in August 2001, evolving from an independent design studio formed by James Fitzpatrick a year earlier. The award-winning design studio with 45 architects is considered one of the leading commercial architecture practices, with current and completed commissions across Australia.

“The skill is to take a client’s goals and aspirations, develop and evolve these into successful projects which meet and exceed their requirements, and in doing so reflect our philosophy about architecture,” Mr Fitzpatrick said.

“The result celebrates the solution, not only the technology and principles of construction, but, most importantly, it embraces the full project idea and concept, creating enjoyable environments for both work and relaxation,” he added.

We visited fitzpatrick+partners in the



1/ Design studio is akin to a workshop... timber stools, commissioned timber benches, tables, door pulls and chairs and ply cabinetry.



2/ Timber supplied by Britton Timbers and Neville Smith Forest Products, one Australia’s largest and most advanced processors of forest and wood products, operating in Tasmania since 1924.

heart of the Sydney CBD.

The lift doors open and you know you are in a studio. The warmth of informality radiates from every corner, welcoming you to share in the activities on show. The space fits us like a glove; it instils a moral and work ethic into a singular and clear message from the moment of entry.

Immediately we’re treated to the colour and aroma of the Tassie oak floor, wall and ceiling that includes a 700 sq m ‘Woodsmith’ pre-finished engineered timber floor which informs the aesthetic of the space.

The design studio’s detailing is quiet but considered. When viewed closely, it shows an understanding of the material and how it can be manipulated to its end purpose. The studio is akin to a workshop – timber stools, commissioned timber benches, tables, door pulls and chairs and ply cabinetry, all carefully considered functional workpieces fitting its intended purpose and informing the overall singular message that great architecture is always functional architecture.

The timber flooring in the studio was supplied by Responsible Wood-certified Neville Smith Forest Products in Launceston, one of Australia’s largest and most advanced processors of certified sustainable regrowth forest and wood products, operating in Tasmania since 1924.

The sawmill manufactures high-value appearance-grade products from sustainably-managed and certified forests, supplying both domestic and overseas markets under the Abelwood and Woodsmith brands.

The Tasmanian oak solid profiles were supplied by Responsible Wood-certified Britton Timbers, also in Tasmania.

fitzpatrick+partners was one of the finalists in the 2021 Australian Timber Design Awards in the Australian Certified Timber category, sponsored by Responsible Wood, Australia’s largest forest certification scheme, winning the best use of timber in a commercial interior award.

Responsible Wood has renewed its long-standing commitment, again sponsoring the certified timber category in the 2022 awards to be held later this year.

Now in their 23rd year, the awards are distinguished by a proud heritage of innovation and achievement that promotes and encourages outstanding timber design.

Responsible Wood acknowledges building projects where Australian timber is used and where credentials for sustainability and legality of wood are confirmed through Responsible Wood, PEFC, or FSC certification.

Responsible Wood marketing and communications officer Jason Ross relishes the importance of forest certification in demonstrating the sustainable origins of timber used on building projects.

On the cover: The warmth of informality – and wood – radiates from every corner of the fitzpatrick+partners design studio in Sydney.

JUNE

14: AFPA-Timber Queensland dinner – Rydges Southbank, Brisbane, QLD. Starts 6 pm. First national forest industries event in the new federal parliamentary term. Tickets at <https://events.humanitix.com/afpa-quarterly-meetings-june-2022-including-the-afpa-and-timber-queensland-forest-industries-dinner>

16: Timber Queensland R&D field day – Brisbane, QLD. 8 am-2 pm. Showcase of current R&D from Queensland's three major research centres and their partners. Visit www.timberqueensland.com.au/events

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. Registration 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

OCTOBER

20-22: Forestry Australia Symposium – Albury, NSW. Leading, adapting and reimagining: the future of forestry. Available in person or online www.forestryconference.com.au/

26-28: DANA-Gingko Global Woodchip and Biomass Trade Conference – Marriott Singapore Tang Plaza Hotel, Singapore. Focus on woodchips and biomass. (Venue to be advised). Website live and early bird registrations now open. Visit <https://danaevents.co.nz/2022singapore> Contact conference organiser Mariela Ferrari marielaferri.e@gmail.com

Antarctic leader takes us to the edge at Forestry Australia webinar

ANTARCTIC expedition leader and one of Australia's most booked in-person and virtual speakers will present at Forestry Australia's webinar *Leading on the Edge* on June 22.

Rachel Robertson, a chief ranger with 20 years of 'extreme' leadership experience was only the second female to lead a team to Davis Station in Antarctica. She managed a diverse group of up to 120 people through total isolation, months of darkness, with no way in and no way out. It was a

leadership laboratory in the most extreme and hostile environment on Earth, where most of the theory doesn't apply.

In Antarctica she built a resilient and highly successful team based on the foundation that 'respect trumps harmony'. Prior to leading the expedition Rachael had 16 years' experience in a variety of senior operational roles in complex and challenging environments.

Since returning to Australia, Rachael has completed her MBA, written a best-selling



book on her experience, *Leading on the Edge*, which has been presented at more than 1200 conferences and events around the world.

In the webinar (12.30pm-

1.30pm AEST), Rachel will share how she led and inspired her team through the long, tough Antarctic year.

Registration (inc. GST) is \$10 for Forestry Australia members, \$50 non-members with student members free.

Everyone who registers receives a link and joining instructions 24 hours before the webinar commences and a recording of the webinar, so if you can't listen live you can listen later.

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Responsible Wood supports mass timber conference

Leading forest certification scheme Responsible Wood will feature at the Timber Offsite Construction Conference and Exhibition in Melbourne this month, sponsoring the opening session.

With a focus on timber construction, the conference is the only national event for design, manufacture and construction of offsite and mass timber buildings.

Mass timber, otherwise known as engineered timber, includes glulam, cross laminated timber and LVL

providing high performance options for builders, architects, engineer, and developers for building projects.

Responsible Wood will host the conference opening session – Timber Design Influences – and will be joining exhibitors, partners and sponsors to educate delegates on the benefits of wood and will be using the platform to double down on the environmental and social credentials of forest certification.

In the first session Karl-Heinz Weiss, head of Value



James Fitzpatrick... award winner.

Chain Relationships and R&D at Lend Lease and Andrew Waugh, founding director at Waugh Thistleton Architects, will join James Fitzpatrick,

partner at fitzpatrick+partners to discuss trends in timber design.

fitzpatrick+partners was one of the finalists in the 2021 Australian Timber Design Awards in the Australian certified timber category, sponsored by Responsible Wood, winning the award for best use of timber in a commercial interior award.

Responsible Wood's Jason Ross says the focus is to raise awareness of forest certification and promote pathways for use in the market place.

From P 4

engineering and advisory partner Aurecon we set out to determine where technology would add value to the construction process. The concept was developed to trial robots installing screw fixings – an important, but labour intensive task, that's essential on MET construction sites."

Tim Spies, Aurecon managing director, Built Environment Australia, says the pilot project shows that by thinking more innovatively, the timber industry can lead the way in improving construction project

outcomes.

"The project's immediate objective is focused on a proof of concept, to demonstrate the robot's capability of installing screw fixings in an accurate manner," Mr Spies said.

"The long-term objective is to prove that the modular nature of timber construction will benefit from the automation of some on-site construction activities, helping to increase productivity, reduce cost, improve workers' OH&S, and advance innovation in the construction industry."

Dikai Liu, distinguished



Tim Spies... thinking more innovatively the timber industry can lead the way in improving construction project outcomes.

Professor of the UTS Robotics Institute and the project leader, says intelligent robots are changing construction.

"Construction sites are varied, complex and changing – and that can be a real challenge for a robot to navigate and conduct operations such as drilling a screw into the right position," Professor Liu said.

"What we have been able to design is an intelligent robot that can focus on an important task even amid this disruptive environment."

There are around 200,000 to 300,000 screw fixings on the Building 360 construction site and the robots was trialled installing about 50 to 100 fixings as part of the proof of concept.



TRAINING AND
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ForestFit

Seedlings support koala habitat tree plantings in NSW north coast region

FORESTRY Corporation of NSW has delivered 25,000 koala food tree seedlings to the Friends of the Koala's Lismore nursery to support NSW north coast koala conservation groups' efforts to establish habitat on private land.

With wet weather rife across the region, all involved were relieved that the nursery site remained dry enough to receive the bulk seedling delivery in support of Friends of the Koala's and Bangalow Koalas' planting programs.

Forestry Corporation has donated about 175,000 seedlings to conservation groups over the last four years to support community koala habitat planting programs.

"We're proud to work with Bangalow Koalas, Friends of the Koala and the Port Macquarie Koala Hospital to help local communities improve existing habitat connectivity and create future food sources across the landscape," Forestry Corporation partnerships leader Ryan Ellis said.

"These projects are primarily on private or public lands outside of the state forest estate."

The northern NSW landscape continues to weather the current wet period, which has significantly affected volunteer organisations, local communities and industry.

"The ongoing work being carried out shows the resilience of these groups; they continue to accomplish great outcomes and are best placed to support local



Mark Wilson... coordinating delivery of 25,000 seedlings in one day a big effort.

projects," Mr Ellis said.

This year's delivery to Lismore was delayed due to flooding across the region. However, the wet season and additional time in the nursery resulted in a healthy and more mature delivery of seedlings than usual.

"The stock we have received are in great condition and now stored safely at our Lismore facility for acclimatisation and hardening," said Friends of the Koala Nursery manager Mark Wilson.

"Coordinating a delivery of 25,000 seedlings in one day was a big effort, so many thanks to the volunteers who assisted on the day," Mr Wilson said..

"The challenges we currently face include prolonged waterlogging, excessive grass and weed growth and access to some sites," Bangalow Koalas president Linda Sparrow said.

The mix of koala-preferred species this year includes forest red gum, tallowwood, swamp mahogany, grey gum, Dunn's white gum and blackbutt.



Forestry contributes to sector's \$86.2bn revenue

AUSTRALIA'S agricultural exports are set to hit a record \$65 billion in value in 2022-23 as total production tops \$80 billion for a second straight year.

Executive director of ABARES Dr Jared Greenville said the sector would weather input and supply chain challenges to produce \$80.4 billion in commodities on the back of favourable conditions and high global prices.

"While ongoing disruptions to global supply chains are expected to continue to challenge exporters, exports are not expected to be meaningfully restricted.

“ATTRACTING WORKERS TO REGIONAL JOBS

"We are expecting our forestry and fishing sectors also to perform well, with the total value of the agriculture, fisheries and forestry sectors forecast to be \$86.2 billion.

"This is just below the record for 2021-22.

But rising costs and access to labour and imported machinery will continue to challenge many Australian businesses.

"We understand this and that's why I've identified these issues as key priorities," said Murray Watt, who is undertaking his first farm visit this week as the new federal Minister for Agriculture and Forestry to hear first-hand from producers and other industry representatives about the challenges and opportunities facing the sector.



Murray Watt



Dr Jared Greenville

Cabinet to ensure that regions benefit from the new government's increased emphasis on training up local workers."

Tackling biosecurity threats

and ensuring producers derive more value from their products are also priorities for Minister Watt.

"I've spent a lot of time in central Queensland and I wanted to return there to kick-start my term as minister," he said.

Mr Watt said the government would strengthen the Pacific Australia Labour Mobility Scheme to help overcome labour shortages.

"But there is also much more we can do to attract Australian workers to regional areas and retain them," he said

"I'll be working closely with

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WFTN Queensland forum sets new future direction

MORE than 30 women with a vested interest in championing progress, visibility and inclusivity for women in Queensland's forest and timber industry came together (both in person and remotely) in Brisbane last Friday to set a future vision, mission and agenda for the Women in Forests & Timber Network (WFTN) Queensland chapter going forward.

Following a survey of the wider industry that aimed to identify issues, perceptions and insights unique to women in their various workplaces, the WFTN Queensland Future Directions Workshop was a forum for members and stakeholders to engage in discussion and have their voices heard on which of these should be prioritised by the WFTN for action over the

next one to three years.

The workshop was the first step in a revitalisation process for the network, which will look to now formalise an executive committee and the organisational structure to enable a move beyond social networking and towards more meaningful advocacy and professional development work.

The workshop also saw the formation of five sub-committees that will focus on key priority areas: professional development and mentoring, advocacy, networking (including the establishment of regional WFTN Queensland

'hubs' to ensure wider access to the network for women outside of metropolitan areas), sponsorship and communications.

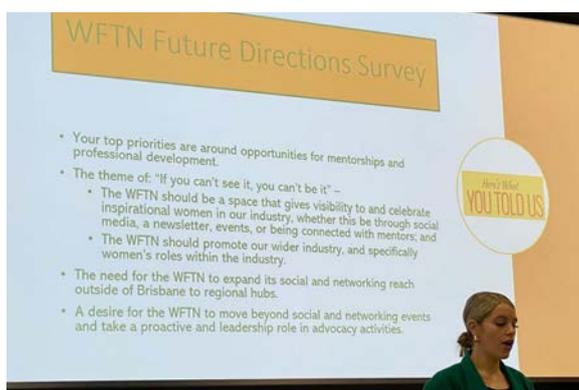
"We were delighted to share the WFTN's new collaborative vision and mission supporting the needs of women by promoting a diverse and inclusive forest and timber industry," said

Sarah Porter Dix, communications officer, Timber Queensland.

"We are a community to share, support, advocate for and empower women from across Queensland and within the forest and timber industry ... to connect, educate

and inspire them to reach their goals while working collectively."

If you would like to get involved with WFTN Queensland, or are interested in working (in a volunteer capacity) on one of the sub-committees, get in touch with Sarah at sarah@timberqueensland.com.au.



Sarah presents at the Women in Forests & Timber Network in Brisbane.

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Shipping container prices fall but global supply chain crisis persists as freight carriers reap profits

COSTS for shipping goods in containers globally have been dropping since March, though experts say it's too early for retailers to celebrate as congestion in the global supply chain lingers and consumer spending shifts.

During most of the past two years, the costs for transporting shipping containers ballooned as people altered their purchasing behaviour to favour physical goods. Now, consumers are increasingly spending their disposable income on services rather than household items and reacting to climbing interest rates.

Since March, prices have tumbled by 19%, according



Port bottlenecks and anchored container ships continue to slow the price decline.

to two shipping-container indexes.

Global events including Russia's invasion of Ukraine and lockdowns in China have also reduced the number of shipping containers in use, freeing up supply. As a result,

the containers are down to their lowest prices since June of 2021, according to London-based Drewry Shipping Consultants Ltd.

Port bottlenecks and land transport delays, however, continue to slow the price decline. Yet prices remain high compared with pre-pandemic levels. At \$US7635 for shipping a 40-ft container last week, Drewry's composite world container index is still five times higher than in the spring of 2020, when the pandemic led to a slowdown in global trade. Prices typically floated between \$US1200 and \$US2000 for several years prior to the pandemic.

Global events, including the current lockdowns in China and the war in Ukraine, are partly responsible for the cut in prices, says Edy Wong, a supply-chain professor at the University of Alberta who studies shipping rates. Both

events have resulted in fewer products being shipped, reducing pressure on container supply and bringing prices down.

"Annual trends are also at play. May and June are typically the cheapest months of the year to ship products before retailers start ordering stock for Christmas at the end of the summer," he said.

While the costs of containers themselves are coming down, other issues continue to affect shipping. One is long delays to unload goods. With boats waiting offshore to be unloaded at transport hubs such as the Port of Vancouver, products that would normally be in transport for two months are now taking four or five months to arrive at their destination.

At North American ports, ships at anchor remain a common sight, though there are fewer vessels waiting compared with last fall. Ships are still unable to quickly find a berth time slot because of the inland snarls.

This means that seasonal products could miss their sales window, and storage costs could mount. Indeed, China COSCO Shipping Corp. Ltd., a Chinese state-owned carrier, doubled its 2020 revenue to \$US51 billion last year, although costs – attributed to greater waiting times and fuel expenditure – also rose by a third last year to \$US30 billion.

Over all, just-in-time inventory is a thing of the past right now. Shipping costs are still expected to be expensive for the balance of the year and beyond.

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“PRICES STILL REMAIN HIGH COMPARED TO PRE-PANDEMIC LEVELS

FWPA's tick of approval extends life of Centre for Timber Durability and Design Life by at least 5 yrs

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A MID-TERM review of the National Centre for Timber Durability and Design Life conducted by FWPA board members will see the extension of the centre's activities for a further five years, with the potential for three more.

This extension reflects the centre's many achievements since it was established at the University of the Sunshine Coast in 2016 with the goal of returning Australia to the forefront of international best practice and underpinning consumer confidence in the performance of timber products. As a result of the positive review, it will now continue to operate until at least 2027.

In conducting its review, the panel considered the primary goal of the centre, which is to create a thriving research enterprise that engages scientists from around the world to work collaboratively in addressing durability issues central to the use of timber in Australia.

"We are delighted with the findings of this review, and the decision to extend the activities of the centre by three years," the centre's director Professor Jeffrey Morrell said.

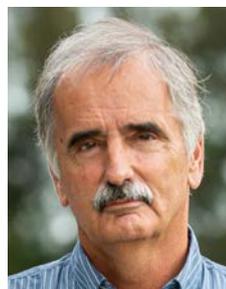
"We are especially pleased it was strongly supported by



Dr Robert Leicester



Dr Chris Lafferty



Prof Jeffrey Morrell

the vast majority of industry representatives surveyed as part of the review," he said.

The centre's key achievements include:

- Hosting internationally recognised visiting scientists for short-term visits.
- Enrolling 10 postgraduate students (eight Doctors of Philosophy and two Masters of Science), who will form the core of a revitalised nationwide durability research effort.
- Publishing widely in peer reviewed, internationally recognised journals, with a focus on research of benefit to Australian timber producers and users.
- Working collaboratively with architectural and

BUILDING STRONG LINKS BETWEEN INDUSTRY, ACADEMIA AND CUSTOMERS

engineering communities to develop data to enhance ageing service life prediction models.

- Collaborating with timber treaters to facilitate development of a system for assessing treated wood quality.
- Organising the International Research Group on Wood Protection (IRGWP) meeting to be held in 2023.
- Organising durability sessions at the World Conferences of Timber Engineering (WCTE) meetings in Santiago, Chile, in 2020, and participating as a sponsor for the 2025 WCTE meeting in Brisbane.
- Positioning itself as a leading, innovative and cutting-edge durability research group that maximises timber usage.
- Creating a firm financial basis for continuation of the centre into the future.

"The centre has successfully established itself

by working to ensure Australia has access to the world's leading research, while building strong links between industry, academia and customers," Dr Chris Lafferty, research and development manager, FWPA, said.

"The centre has already led some vital research projects which have provided significant value to the forestry and wood products industry. It has attracted the attention and support of world-leading researchers and is well on its way to meeting its objective of creating a new generation of Australian durability researchers."

The extension of the centre is subject to several conditions, including the creation of a long-term plan, an ambitious yet realistic set of outcomes and outputs, and a set of measurable performance indicators such as the number of visiting scientists, students trained, and papers published.

"The input of industry as part of this session is vital to ensuring the centre continues to move in the right direction," said Professor Morrell.

"While we are of course keen to hear what stakeholders see as the positives of our work so far, we also see this as a

Cont P 14



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valuable opportunity to invite constructive criticism that will help us in our mission to strive for continuous improvement.

“In addition, our students will have the opportunity to stand face-to-face with industry representatives and get an accurate feel for how their work has been received.”

The centre is sponsoring the International Meeting of the Society of Wood Science and Technology (SWST) in Kingscliff, NSW, from July 10-15 with support from FWPA, AKD, Wesbeam, Responsible Wood, and the Engineered Wood Products Association of Australasia.

“SWST MEETING AT KINGSCLIFFE WILL BE FIRST IN AUSTRALIA



Flashback... at the University of the Sunshine Coast in 2016 for the launch of the National Centre for Timber Durability and Design Life were, from left, Steve Dickson, MP Buderim, Andrew Wallace, Federal Member for Fisher, Senator Anne Ruston, minister responsible for forestry, Greg Hill, vice-chancellor, USC, Prof. Roland De Marco, deputy vice-chancellor, research and innovation, USC, Dr Michael Kennedy, general manager, forestry science, DAF, Prof. José L. Torerom director, Centre for Future Timber Structures at UQ, and Ric Sinclair, FWPA managing director.

SWST is the peak international body dealing with wood science. The Kingscliff meeting will bring together more than 200 attendees, including scientists from across the globe, to address such topics as basic timber properties, mass timber construction, plantation resources, timber certification and timber processing.

Keynote speaker will be Dr

Robert Leicester, a retired CSIRO scientist based in Melbourne, who has led a team that pioneered the development of a series of service life prediction models for timber.

“Dr Leicester’s groundbreaking work led to him receiving the prestigious Marcus Wallenberg Prize, which is sometimes referred to as the Nobel Prize of the

timber world,” Professor Morrell said.

“He will talk about his continued work to improve the models so they can be utilised by engineers and architects to use timber more effectively.”

The 2022 event represents the first time this meeting has been hosted

in Australia and will provide students from across the country with an opportunity to give presentations about their work on the international stage.

More than 160 abstracts from 25 countries have been submitted so far, and registration is now open at www.swst.org

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Huge rate hike will hit Australia's housing market as new homes and renovations keep builders busy

THE housing market in Australia is expected to be impacted as the largest hike in interest rate for 20 years hits household budgets and affects housing demand.

At its monthly board meeting on Tuesday, the Reserve Bank of Australia lifted official interest rates by 50 basis points to 85 basis points or 0.85%.

The increase – which was bigger than many economists had anticipated – represents the largest single monthly increase in the cash rate since February 2000.

The move came after higher fuel and construction prices drove year-on-year inflation to 5.1% in the March quarter.

The Reserve Bank's decision to substantially increase official interest rates is a wake-up call for the economy in which inflation is running well ahead of expectations.

"Inflation hurts everyone in the economy and so we understand the rationale behind the substantial interest rate rise," Master Builders Australia CEO Denita Wawn said.

"However, while there is a need to temper the economy to tackle inflation there is also a need to maintain economic



growth so that building and construction activity is not depressed," Mrs Wawn said.

"Building and construction has been the canary down the inflationary coalmine for the past six months. We have been dealing with cost increases for products and labour that have been well ahead of headline inflation figures and building approvals have been declining over the same period.

Mrs Wawn said there were more than 420,000 building and construction businesses that had been weathering the storm of inflation in advance of the rest of the economy while also shouldering much of responsibility for completing economic

1/ Lending to all segments of the market – first home buyers, other owner occupiers, renovators and investors – remains well above pre-pandemic levels.

2/ Denita Wawn... more than 420,000 building and construction businesses have been weathering the storm of inflation.

recovery.

"With the inflation challenge now facing the country it is important that the federal government makes use of both fiscal and monetary policy levers," she said.

"Microeconomic reform must also be a focus. As an example, the federal government can work to reduce the cost of creating new homes by tackling issues such as land supply, regulation and the tax burden on new home building."

While the RBA forecast that inflation would return to

“MORE HOMES APPROVED THAN IN ANY PREVIOUS CYCLE”

the bank's target rate of 2-3% per annum next year, it warned that this would rise further in the short term on account of higher prices for electricity and fuel.

Lending to all segments of the market – first home buyers,

other owner occupiers, and investors – remains well above pre-pandemic levels, says the HIA.

Lending for renovations, in particular, is sitting at almost three times pre-pandemic levels.

At the end of 2021, there were 75.7% more detached homes under construction than pre-Covid. There are also more homes approved and waiting commencement than in any previous cycle.

HIA says together with similar new home building and renovations booms in other developed economies, this has placed significant demands on the international supply of building materials, along with local supplies of land and labour. The result has been ongoing increases in the cost of home building.

These factors will sustain Australia's elevated number of homes and renovations under construction and keep already-stretched home builders busy until at least June 2023.



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Community to review updated NSW forest plans for softwood plantations and coastal hardwoods

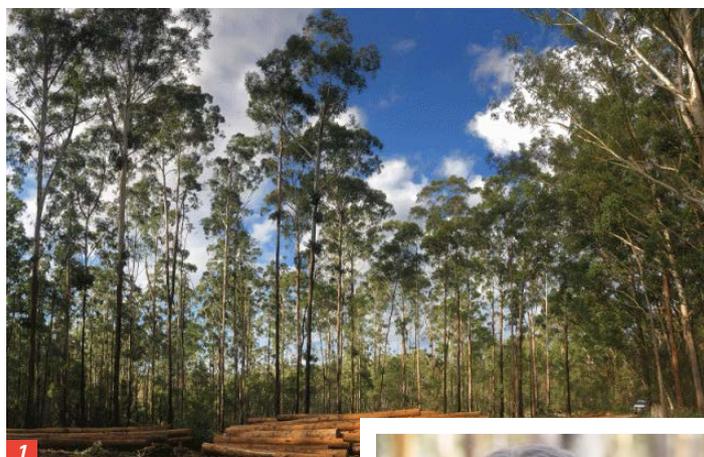
COMMUNITY members are invited to review and provide feedback on updated forest management plans for the softwood plantations and coastal hardwood forests managed by Forestry Corporation of NSW.

Sandra Madeley, forest management system specialist for Forestry Corporation's hardwood forests division, said the forest management plans would be on public display until June 30 and welcomed community feedback.

"Forestry Corporation has been appointed to manage two million hectares of state forests in NSW for multiple uses, including environmental conservation, tourism and recreation, and renewable timber production," Ms Madeley said.

"We do this in line with very detailed regulations, including regional forest agreements, which are long-term agreements

FRAMEWORK FOR SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT



1/ Forest management plan for coastal hardwoods.

Photo: Forestry Corporation

2/ Sandra Madeley ... the principle underpinning forest management is continuous improvement.

between state and federal governments, various commonwealth and NSW legislation, and our independent certification to the Australian standard for Sustainable Forest Management – Responsible Wood.

"These policies and regulations set out the framework for sustainable forest management in state forests. They detail what forest management and timber production activities can take place, as well as where and how they are



conducted, and include monitoring and reporting requirements.

"Forest management plans have been developed to align with these policies and regulations. They summarise our activities as well as the systems, processes and procedures we maintain that ensure we continue to manage forests sustainably."

Ms Madeley said the

principle underpinning forest management was continuous improvement.

"Our forest management plans describe our commitment to planning, monitoring and adapting our activities in response to new information so that we continually improve our practices, processes and outcomes in the forest."

David Lale, forest management system specialist for Forestry Corporation's softwood plantations division, said the forest management plans were reviewed and put on public display for input every five years.

"The agencies responsible for the forest management rules, regulations and frameworks engage with the community while developing them and during periodic reviews, and Forestry Corporation must ensure our forest management plans reflect and implement government policy and regulations," Mr Lale said.

To view the forest management plans, visit www.forestrycorporation.com.au

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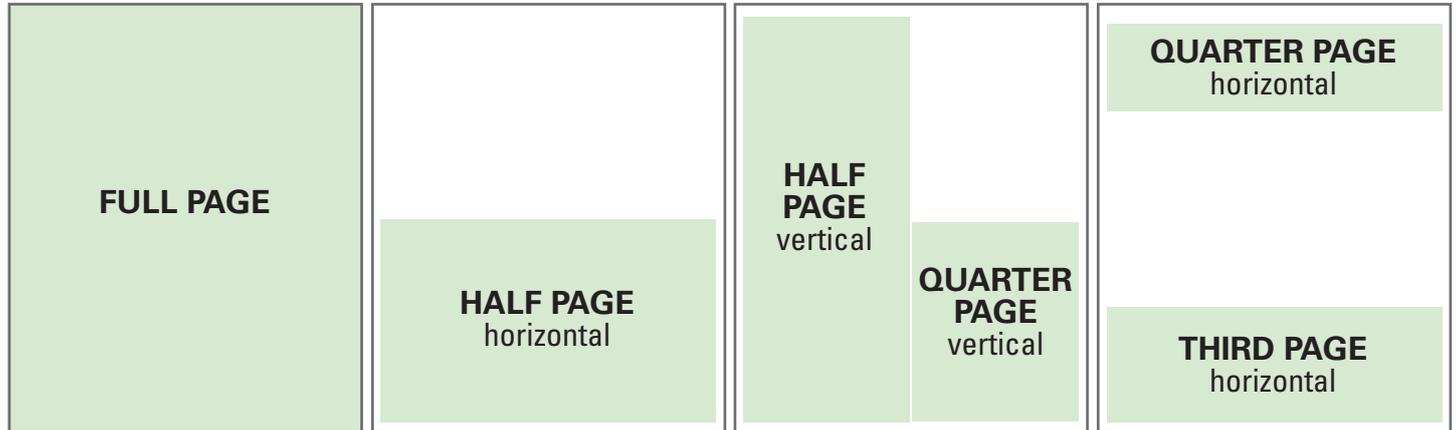
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