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COVER STORY P 13



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# Sarawak-Australia agreement to promote 'green' EWPs development in Malaysia's housing sector

## \$40 million investment to produce high value-added products from acacia forest plantations

SARAWAK will soon be promoting the use of engineered wood in the state's housing and building construction sector following a collaboration with Woodsfield Glulam Manufacturing and Australia's Tilling Timber Pty Ltd.

The Sarawak Timber Industry Development Corporation signed an MOU with the two companies in Melbourne which will see a feasibility study conducted for a joint venture investment to develop an engineered wood plant in Sarawak by utilising timber from planted forests.

Sarawak is the largest among the 13 states in Malaysia and the development of EWPs is in line with the state's goals of promoting green development, environmental



**Sarawak Deputy Premier Datuk Amar Awang (seventh from left) witnesses the exchange of the signed MOUs between Sarawak Timber Industry Development Corporation general manager Datu Hashim (eighth left), Eddie Ling Lee, Woodsfield Glulam (fifth left) and Glen Tilling (fourth right).**

sustainability and carbon storage.

The MOU is a manifestation of the state's commitment to implement its transformation plan to promote high value-added products from planted forest materials. It is also in line with Malaysia's Post-Covid Development Strategy 2030 which aims to generate economic prosperity, social inclusivity and environmental sustainability.

Deputy Premier Datuk

Amar Awang Tengah Ali Hasan was in Melbourne to witness the signing ceremony which saw general manager Datu Hashim Bojet signing on behalf of the corporation while Woodsfield Glulam Manufacturing and Tilling Timber were represented by their respective managing

directors Eddie Ling Lee Tee and Glenn Tilling.

Also present were Sarawak's Deputy Minister of International Trade and Investment Datuk Malcolm Mussen Lamoh, economic planning unit director Datu Abdullah Zaidel, acting permanent secretary of the Ministry

of International Trade and Investment Dzulkornain Masron, Malaysian High Commissioner to Australia Dato Roslan Abdul Rahman, and Malaysian Consul-General of Malaysia to Melbourne Mazita Marzuki.

The proposed project will attract an investment of about \$40 million and is projected to generate an annual earnings of about \$26 million.

**“MOU SIGNED IN MELBOURNE WITH TILLING**

Cont P 5



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# Importers in deep discussions with Canberra as Australia's timber shortage realities made clear

## Growing demand empties supply pipeline of EWPs and solid softwood structural products

TIMBER importers are continuing to hold discussions with officials from various federal government departments about timber product supply realities that have emerged as a result of the invasion of Ukraine.

Australian Timber Importers Federation general manager John Halkett said that in particular, softwood structural timber import shortages, not only from Russia, but from Europe more broadly, were likely to result in a reduction in the capacity of the Australian timber supply chain to import sufficient quantities of both engineered wood products and solid softwood structural products to meet foreseeable demand.

Meetings in Canberra last week included the Department of Industry, Science, Energy, and the Department of Agriculture, Water Resources and Environment. Timber supply challenges and possible government and industry actions related to both softwood and hardwood



*Reviewing timber shortages in the context of building and construction trends.*

supplies were top of the agenda.

A meeting was also held with the Housing Industry Association to review timber shortages in the context of building and construction trends.

The significant timber shortage is expected to continue through 2022 and into 2023. However, it has been forecast that Australia will remain short on timber until 2035 and beyond.

Increasing timber production is not a quick fix; we all know, you can't just grow a new timber plantation overnight. Typically these can take up to 25-30 years before being ready to harvest.

The government's recently announced \$86 million investment in timber plantations to help offset the timber demand will not be realised until at least 2047.

There are many contributing factors to the timber shortage. Some are more recent but others are

due to a knock-on effect from a historical lack of investment and supply

planning to meet the timber demands of 2022 and beyond.

Since 2001, Australia's sawlog production from native forests has decreased by 1.615 million cub m, according to Forest and Wood Products Australia.

Typically Australia produces 80% of its required timber domestically, with the remaining 20% sourced from international suppliers. This split has remained steady over recent years. However, both sources have been significantly affected over the past couple of years

*Cont P 4*

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“MEETING WITH HIA TO REVIEW SHORTAGE IN TIMBER SUPPLY”

From P 3

Global supply has been affected by the rerouting of available timber to markets paying the highest cost price, typically the US following the 2021 global building boom.

Domestic supply has also been affected by Covid, bushfires, and flood events, all contributing to the availability of timber for harvesting.

In relation to softwood timber supply, a draft report for FWPA – Future market dynamics and potential impacts on Australian timber imports – makes it clear that Australia will have a

**“ AUSTRALIA FACES PROSPECT OF BEING UNABLE TO MEET NEW HOUSING DEMAND**



1/ **Nils Koren**  
2/ **John Halkett**

substantial shortage of softwood timber.

“Because of a persistent and growing gap between demand and supply, on current trajectories Australia faces the prospect of being unable to meet the demand for new housing,” John Halkett said.

By taking immediate action to establish new softwood plantations, the FWPA report suggests Australia can mitigate the risk and increase its sovereign supply capability. The report predicts that by no later than 2050

Australia will have:

- A population between 33.6 and 40 million people.
- New housing demand of around 259,000 dwellings per year.
- 5.2 million additional households whose demography will demand a different housing mix to the current distribution of housing formats.
- Sawn softwood demand of 6.5 million cub m a year—almost 2 million cub m higher than 2021.
- Local sawn softwood

production static at between 3.6 and 3.8 million cub m a year due to constraints on sawlog supply.

• An implied gap between demand and local production of 2.638 million cub m a year, equivalent to 40.5% of total demand.

• To bridge the implied gap, Australia could establish as much as 468,000 ha of additional softwood plantations, commencing immediately.

ATIF will be providing further advice to federal officials in coming weeks. Further, chairman Nils Koren and general manager John Halkett will be scheduling a meeting with the new forestry minister Murray Watts as soon as it can be arranged.

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## 3 million seedling planting program starts in Bathurst

FORESTRY Corporation of NSW has started its 2022 replanting program, with three million seedlings set to be replanted into 2400 ha of Bathurst pine plantations previously harvested.



**Seedling replanting program at Canobolas state forest.**

Silviculture manager Mike Freeman said this winter’s planting program was a vital part in the organisation’s operations.

“The forestry cycle means that for every tree we harvest to supply renewable timber, we need to plant another to take its place,” Mr Freeman said.

“The planting program work engages several businesses and some 30 contracted planting staff, so the program

is also an important step in supporting regional employment and economies.”

Each seedling is planted by hand with an experienced planter able to plant around 2000 seedlings a day.

“Through their efforts we are rebuilding plantations previously harvested for timber, including Mount David, Canobolas and Vulcan state forests,” Mr Freeman said.

From P 2

The Sarawak Timber Industry Development Corporation's role in the project will be to facilitate the proposed investment and material requirements whereas Tilling Timber will be responsible for developing and securing the market of engineered wood products.

Woodsfield Glulam Manufacturing will be responsible for transferring technology on engineered wood manufacturing based on its commercial production experiences.

Following the signing of the MOU, the Sarawak delegation later visited the Tilling Timber factory at Kilsyth.

Woodsfield Glulam pioneered the introduction of glulam technology in Malaysia using tropical hardwood timber.

Based on Sarawak Forest Department figures, some 520,000 ha in Sarawak has been planted with fast-growing commercial timber



species, predominately Acacia mangium. State authorities have issued more than 40 licences for planted forests with gross area of some 2.3 million ha.

The planted forest started to produce 4726 cub m of logs in 2011 and this was increased to 1.68 million cub m in 2020.

During that year, the data shows that Sarawak exported 413,805 cub m of plantation logs (Acacia mangium) worth about \$32,890,520 (fob) to Indonesia.

On the other hand, log production from natural

forests has been on a sharp decline, from 9.61 million cub m in 2011 to 2.42 million cub m in 2020.

The Sarawak government has set 2025 for the state to achieve one million ha of planted forests.

Some 96,000 ha of planted forests have been certified under the Malaysia Timber Certification Scheme, which is affiliated to the Program for Endorsement of Forest Certification.

Ta Ann Holdings, one of the pioneers in forest plantation projects, has increasingly utilised plantation logs for plywood

manufacturing to make up for the decreased log production from natural forests, in line with the state's sustainable forest management policy.

Malaysia's Acacia mangium species originated from north Australia, Papua New Guinea and East Indonesia (Maluku and Irian Jaya). It usually occurs in lowland areas below 100 m above sea level. This species can grow up to 30 m in height with common processed usages including furniture manufacture, cabinet and door framework, mouldings, pulp and paper and light construction.



1/ Eddie Ling of Woodsfield Glulam Manufacturing, based at Johor on the Malay Peninsula, called in on friend John Muller of Wood Addiction at Balmoral Ridge on the Sunshine Coast during his visit to Australia to sign a joint venture investment in an engineered wood plant in Sarawak. John and timber journalist Jim Bowden introduced Mr Ling to the glulam industry during a Malaysian Timber Council tour of industry in Queensland they hosted in 2008. John was foundation president of the Glulam Association of Australia.  
2/ Malaysia's pavilion at the World Expo in Milan was constructed by Woodsfield Glulam Manufacturing using 200 tonnes of glulam manufactured in Johor and shipped to Italy for assembly on site using steel components.

**“MALAYSIAN PIONEERS OF GLULAM TECHNOLOGY**

White-eared Honeyeater (Photo Birdlife Australia)

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RW/1-10-1

# Major Asian wood fibre deficit looms as demand now likely to climb to 34.7 million bdmt by 2026

THE annual demand for mostly hardwood – but now also increasingly for softwood chips – has been inexorably increasing annually for many years, 2020-21 Covid-hit demand excepted, with demand heading north again in 2022.

In 2021, total hardwood chip demand was 22.5 million bone dry metric tonnes (bdmt), increasing to almost pre-Covid levels to 25.6 million bdmt with another big jump to 27 million expected in 2022.

However, in its ‘base-case’ prediction, DANA-GingKo calculates that demand could climb as high as 34.7 million bdmt by 2026, or even to 39 million in an



Chip liners at Dung Quat port stretching as far as the eye can see... to be visited as part of a two-day field trip to inspect chip and wood pellet mills in Vietnam during the DANA-Gingco conference in Singapore.

“optimistic scenario”.

With major suppliers Vietnam, Australia and Chile chip availability expected to top out in 2023-24 and, for some countries, then declining, DANA-Gingko

has not identified how this potential large (to huge?) deficit will be made up. On paper that annual deficit could be well north of the total Australian supply.

The smaller softwood woodchip demand in north Asia climbed from 1.5 million bdmt in 2020, to 2.3 million in 2021, and then to 2.7 million. Even with softwood mills switching to hardwood (or closing down) this demand will hold, limited only by restricted supply from the US and Australia and likely reduced supply from Fiji and New Zealand.

“WOODCHIP AND BIOMASS TRADE CONFERENCE IN SINGAPORE

In 2022, north Asian pulp company buyers are scouring the globe for softwood chips, including as far away as the US South

Delegates can now register for the DANA-Gingko 2022 Global Woodchip and Biomass Trade Conference

in Singapore from October 26-28, and then travel to Vietnam for a two-day field trip to visit chip and wood pellet mills, chip export ports and acacia pulpwood plantations.

More than 25 speakers will present at the conference on woodchip and biomass demand and supply

country trends, shipping and other issues, including the burgeoning tree carbon trade market, and what impact the Russian wood fibre export stoppages is having on the huge Finnish and Swedish pulp mill industry.

Vietnam holds the key to an ability to supply even current levels of Asian wood fibre demand. In 2021, it exported 13.6 million bdmt to north Asia, compared to 4.2 million by the second-largest supplier Australia, and 2 million from Chile.

All information for the conference and field trip is on [danaevents.co.nz/2022singapore/](http://danaevents.co.nz/2022singapore/) or contact Mariela Ferrari at [marielaferri@gmail.com](mailto:marielaferri@gmail.com)

See notice, Page 15.

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**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](http://www.swst.org)

**13: Weathertex Building a Circular Economy. – Caroma on Collins, 39 Collins St, Alexandria, NSW.**

Live event in Sydney. 9.30 am-3.30 pm. Business and political leaders alike are coming to the realisation that continuous economic growth through endless consumption is not a sustainable way forward. Join industry leaders as we explore how circular economies may provide hope for sustainability

and economic prosperity to co-exist. Speakers include Davina Rooney, CEO Green Building Council of Australia, Amy Hogan, national manager of sustainability, Stockland, David Rowlinson, Make it Wood Program manager, Planet Ark, Jason Ross, marketing and communications officer, Responsible Wood. All profits donated to <https://walk-awhile-foundation.raisely.com/deborah-de-jong>. Contact 1800 040 080. [www.weathertex.com.au/building-a-circular-australia](http://www.weathertex.com.au/building-a-circular-australia)

**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](http://www.gottsteintrust.org)

**14: AFPA's gala dinner – Great Hall, Parliament House, Canberra, ACT.** Time: 6 pm-10 pm. Dress code business attire. To take advantage of the 15% discount, guests can visit their web sites directly and follow the links to make a reservation. Enquiries 0408 404 764 or email [enquiries@ausfpa.com.au](mailto:enquiries@ausfpa.com.au)

**OCTOBER**

**20-22: Forestry Australia Symposium – Mantra Hotel, Albury, NSW, and online.**

Theme: Leading, Adapting and Reimagining the Future for Forestry. Closing keynote address by corporate speaker James O'Loughlin, one of Australia's most respected, entertaining and experienced corporate speakers, Early bird registrations extended to Friday, July 24. Contact Forestry Australia on +61

3 7065 4252 or email: [conference@forestry.org.au](mailto:conference@forestry.org.au)

**26-28: DANA-Gingko Global Woodchip and Biomass Trade Conference – Marriott Singapore Tang Plaza Hotel, Singapore.**

Includes post-conference field trip to inspect chip and wood pellet mills in Vietnam. Field trip places are limited and preference will be given to those registering for the conference. Information on the conference and field trip is on [danaevents.co.nz/2022singapore/](http://danaevents.co.nz/2022singapore/) or contact Mariela Ferrari at [marielaferriari.e@gmail.com](mailto:marielaferriari.e@gmail.com) (See notice, P 15)

**28: TABMA Australia NSW awards gala evening – Le Montage Lilyfield NSW.**

Nominations and ticket sales open later this month, so look out for further information. Contact Alicia Oelkers on 0418 449 031 or free phone 1300 693 483.

**Independent review: government commits to strengthen carbon trading**

THE Australian government is delivering on its election commitment to strengthen carbon trading in Australia by appointing an independent panel to review the integrity of Australian Carbon Credit Units (ACCUs).

The panel, to be led by former Chief Scientist

Professor Ian Chubb, will include four experts with the experience and expertise to advise the government on how best Australia can realise the full potential of the ACCU system.

Concerns have been raised about several aspects of the carbon crediting system,

including the integrity of its key methods and the Australian carbon credit units issued under it.

The government wants to make sure it remains a strong and credible scheme supported by participants, purchasers and the broader community.

The review panel will consider these concerns by examining the governance arrangements and legislative requirements, the integrity of the key methods used and the broader scheme settings that affect the integrity of ACCUs.

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# Expressions of interest: regional forestry hubs set targets for new research and development projects

QUEENSLAND'S Regional Forestry Hubs have announced five new expressions of interest this week to deliver projects to foster growth and productivity across the state's forest and timber sector.

Supply chains and infrastructure, bioenergy and carbon, forestry and plantation investment models are focus areas for four projects in North Queensland and a new project in the South + Central region will examine skills and training requirements for the region.

North Queensland Regional Forestry Hub manager Hulton King said these were the first projects identified to address some of the technical issues, needs and opportunities to progress growth in the region.

"These projects are the initial step in growing Northern Australia's forest industry through improved investor returns, smarter management



**Hulton King... smarter management and utilisation of forest resources.**

and utilisation of forestry resources, traditional owner engagement, as well as a renewed community understanding and engagement in forestry," Mr King said.

The projects are:

- Assessment of the current and future potential supply chain infrastructure supporting regional forestry and wood processing activities.
- Assessment of the carbon regulatory framework



**Kerry Fullerton...shortage of skills a major constraint on forests development.**

for North Queensland's plantation and farm forestry industry

- Assessment of the current and future potential volume of underutilised or waste biomass from local forestry and wood processing activities and their potential use and markets

**GROWING NORTH'S FOREST INDUSTRIES THROUGH IMPROVED INVESTOR RETURNS**

South + Central Queensland Regional Forestry Hub manager Kerry Fullerton says the new EOI is in response to the sector facing substantial challenges to recruiting and retaining suitably skilled and qualified workers.

"Shortage of skills is a major constraint on the development of an efficient and effective forest industry in South + Central Queensland," she said.

"Low skills levels across the sector inhibit the attainment of economic, sustainable forest management. This project will identify the future skills needed and determine the size and scope of the training required."

For further information contact Clarissa Brandt, strategic relations and communications manager on 0416 350 328 or email: [clarissa@timberqueensland.com.au](mailto:clarissa@timberqueensland.com.au)



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# Builders worried that interest rates rise could send businesses to wall

THE Master Builders Association with more than 8500 members has raised alarm that rising interest rates could force more construction businesses to the wall.

Responding to the Reserve Bank of Australia's decision to raise official interest rates by a further 0.5%, CEO Denita Wawn acknowledged the need for monetary policy to return to more normalised settings.

But she warned that many builders already challenged by supply bottlenecks would not survive if any move to tighten monetary policy too quickly led to a hard economic landing.

"Time should now be given to observe the effect of the latest adjustments before going too far with further rate rises," Mrs Wawn said.

"The Reserve Bank's decision to further increase interest rates is more evidence of the need for monetary policy to return to more normalised settings to combat inflation," she said.

"However, while acknowledging the need to tackle the dire effects of inflation, we are concerned that a continuing regime of steep rate rises risks turning the economic dial too far in the opposition direction and stalling economic growth needed to for the continuing recovery from Covid.



**1/ Denita Wawn... the building and construction industry has shouldered much of the responsibility for underpinning the economic recovery.**



Mrs Wawn said the building and construction industry had shouldered much of the responsibility for underpinning the economic recovery. Suppressing construction activity would counteract the efforts of governments and the expenditure of billions in taxpayer's funds to shepherd the economy through the pandemic and protect growth.

The latest warning follows the decision by the Reserve Bank to increase official interest rates by a further 50 basis points to 1.35%.

At this level, official interest rates remain well below levels of between 2% and 6% which have been observed over the past two decades – although rates are now above pre-pandemic levels of 0.75%.

The Reserve Bank says inflation is expected to increase further before peaking later this year and trending downward back toward the bank's 2-3% range next year with global supply problems to ease and commodity prices to stabilise, albeit at higher levels.

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HYNE TIMBER

# Paper costs worry publishers but there's two sides to story

URGENT progress on the Billion Trees Plan is required if Australia is to have sufficient fibre to meet its future needs, says CEO of the Australian Forest Products Association Ross Hampton.

"Getting more trees in the ground now is an absolute must," he said.

"Trees are the most economically efficient and effective way to take carbon from the atmosphere and turn it into a form that is useful and valuable, whether that is sawn timber for use in housing construction, or fibre used to make essentials such as paper, packaging or tissues."

Mr Hampton said only forestry industries offered such an array of climate-positive solutions that are

available right now, including long-term, stable carbon sequestration, decarbonisation of energy systems and substitution for single-use and problematic plastics.

"However, we won't achieve anything near what we need to unless we can get more trees in the ground starting today," he said.

"The pandemic revealed how perilous it is to be too dependent on global supply chains. We have welcomed the Labor government's strong support for local manufacturing through its Made in Australia policy and



**1/ Ross Hampton... pandemic reveals how perilous it is to be too dependent on global supply chains.**



its Buy Australian Plans. It is important too that the federal government delivers policy consistency.

This week the government has announced financial support for some local and regional newspaper publishers to assist them

absorb price rises associated with newsprint.

"While keeping the presses turning everywhere in Australia is to be applauded, it needs to be noted that the price rises

were only being faced by those publishers who had not chosen to lock in contracts with domestic newsprint suppliers and instead had taken their chances with the global spot price market," Mr Hampton said.

"It would be a poor policy outcome if publishers which backed local production and jobs – in line with Labor policy - find themselves at a disadvantage against publishers who did not"

# Responsible Wood spreading PEFC message in NZ

RESPONSIBLE Wood CEO Simon Dorries and sustainability manager Matt de Jongh have spent the last week travelling across New Zealand to introduce the new AS / NZS 4708 Sustainable Forest Management standard to the NZ market.

This included hosting a workshop at SCION House, Rotorua, where Matt de Jongh and Simon Dorries introduced the new standard to a cross-section of PEFC certificate holders and stakeholders.

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

Published for the first time as a trans-Tasman standard, it provides common



*Trans-Tasman gathering... Responsible Wood's Simon Dorries (centre) and Matt de Jongh (right) with Shaun Foster, John Filmer and Graeme Manley of Southwood Exports, based in Invercargill.*

benchmarks for sustainably-managed Australian and New Zealand forests.

"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.

Mr de Jongh will continue to hold workshops throughout Australia and New Zealand over coming months.

In November last year, the SCION Innovation Hub was awarded World Architecture Festival Best Use of Certified Timber Prize, supported by

PEFC International in Lisbon, Portugal.

The building showcases PEFC-certified timber in a unique diagrid structure – a design requiring less material than a traditional mass engineered timber building, greatly assisting with earthquake conditions as well as achieving embodied carbon zero.

Earlier in the week, Simon Dorries and Matt de Jongh visited a PEFC-certified Southwood Exports Ltd forest in Invercargill.

PEFC continues to grow with more than 600,000 ha of New Zealand -defined forest now certified under certification.

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# FWPA forest grower members and UTas co-fund six new scholarships to support research priorities

## Working relationships between students and industry ensure projects remain industry focused

AUSTRALIAN forest growers have identified new research priorities. These priorities are the impetus for the co-funding of six PhD research scholarships by FWPA forest grower members and the University of Tasmania (UTas).

The projects will cover a wide range of challenges, from the risk posed to plantations by browsing herbivorous mammals, to traits in genetic material that affect resistance to drought, heat, diseases and pests, as well as management approaches designed to maximise tree survival under various conditions.

The successful projects have the potential to help advance and build capacity in the priority research areas identified by growers. They will see forest managers work collaboratively with PhD students.

The Forest Growers Research Program (FGRP), which is supported by the federal government through matching funding with FWPA, is the result of ongoing conversations between UTas and FWPA through its grower research advisory committee.

"The University of Tasmania has a long history of successful, collaborative research with national and state-based forest industry



**1/ Successful projects have the potential to help advance and build capacity in the priority research areas identified by forest growers.**

**2/ Dr Julianne O'Reilly-Wapstra.**

**3/ Jodie Jason.**



partners," said Dr Julianne O'Reilly-Wapstra, Associate Professor in Biological Sciences at the UTas School of Natural Sciences and ARC Training Centre for Forest Value.

"Close working relationships between PhD students and industry partners ensure research projects remain industry focused, and that students are trained to be industry-ready," Dr O'Reilly-Wapstra said.

FWPA forest research manager Jodie Jason says programs such as the FGRP help build capacity in the sector, while ensuring

### TALKING TIMBER



**With Eileen Newbury**  
Head of marketing and communications and head of WoodSolutions program

proactive practices that support the continued growth and productivity of the forestry industry through the development of innovative solutions to current and future grower challenges.

The six projects to receive funding via the scholarships were selected by a working group of FWPA and forest

grower members.

For each of the six successful projects, GRAC members and companies with a particular interest in that specific research area will become project partners and/or advisors, meeting regularly with supervisors and students in either a formal or informal capacity, allowing industry direct input into the projects.

The six selected projects are:

- Quantifying risks and the scale of the mammal browsing problem to inform technological solutions.
- Maximising and maintaining site productivity.
- Identification of elite eucalypt genetic material and molecular markers for contemporary and future risk traits.
- A similar project to the above will focus on the exploration of models and systems for the inclusion of novel traits into Eucalyptus globulus breeding.
- Biotic agents and site silvicultural practices: combined management approaches to maximise tree survival in hardwood plantations.
- Improved provenance choice for native forest silviculture and management in the face of climate change.

Further information on each of these projects will be made available as they progress.



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# Black Summer revisited as Melbourne conference calls for massive increases in budget for fire study

**‘As we move into worsening conditions our knowledge and political discussions must keep pace’**

WITH climate change set to drive bigger and hotter bushfires, much more money needs to be spent on preparations to mitigate against fires in the first place, according to Climate Councillor Greg Mullins.

The former Commissioner of Fire and Rescue NSW said the fire agencies community needed to “band together to make a bigger pie” instead of “fighting for the crumbs on the table”.

Greg Mullins was making the keynote address at a recent three-day conference in Melbourne on ‘Fire and Climate’, presented by the International Association of Wildland Fire in partnership with Natural Hazards Research Australia, which is building on the work of its predecessor Cooperative Research Centres, the Bushfire CRC and the Bushfire and Natural Hazards CRC.

More than 360 delegates registered for the five-day program that featured nine keynote presenters – all leaders in the science, policy, planning and operations of fire and climate, expert panels on cultural burning in Australia and North America and on fire science communications, plus almost 100 research and practice presentations from subject matter experts.

“It’s time for the fire management sector to band together and argue the case for a massive increase in the budget across fire research,” Mr Mullins said.

“Up to 97% of spending is on response and rebuilding during and after events, and only 3% on preparation and



**1/ Greg Mullins... history and personal experience are no longer reliable indicators of the future.**

**2/ Dr Sophie Lewis... Black Summer wasn't just one extreme event.**



mitigation. That mismatch needs to be turned around but not at the expense of insufficient current operational budgets,” he said.

Mr Mullins continued with the theme of Black Summer being a case study in what we know today to be a really bad scenario.

“Fires the same as or worse than Black Summer are inevitable,” Mr Mullins said.

“As each event unfolds, we assume that things can’t get any worse but just ask the Californians – they can. I shudder to think what a bad summer will look like during an El Nino in 2050.

“As we move into a predictable shift to increasingly worsening conditions, our knowledge, preparations, resources and political discussions need to keep pace, said Mullins.

Mr Mullins added: “What now needs to be understood is that history and personal experience are no longer reliable indicators of the future

and that gap needs to be filled with high-quality research and reliable data.”

The conference concentrated on the most significant forces shaping wildland fire today. The conference goal was to better prepare Australia to focus and respond to the formidable challenges “involving our people, our communities and our landscapes both built and natural.”

Fire and Climate 2022 was the first International Association of Wildland Fire conference under that title but drew on the traditions of past IAWF conferences on fuels and fire behaviour, human dimensions and the Safety Summit.

As we collectively face a present and a future impacted by large and destructive bushfires and still under the cloud of a Covid-19 pandemic, the conference presented a timely opportunity to focus on the bigger issues involved in dealing with natural hazards under climate change.

Two weeks apart, the same conference but with separate programs, was held in Pasadena, California, and then in Melbourne.

The scale and impacts of recent bushfires both in Australia and elsewhere are reminders of the relevance of innovation and research in the emergency management and bushfire management sectors. The research, case studies and

personal reflections on show during the conference week demonstrated the significant work and the benefits that will be delivered over coming years, both in Australia and internationally.

The conference began with Dr Sophie Lewis, the ACT Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment, who said the Black Summer wasn’t just one extreme event.

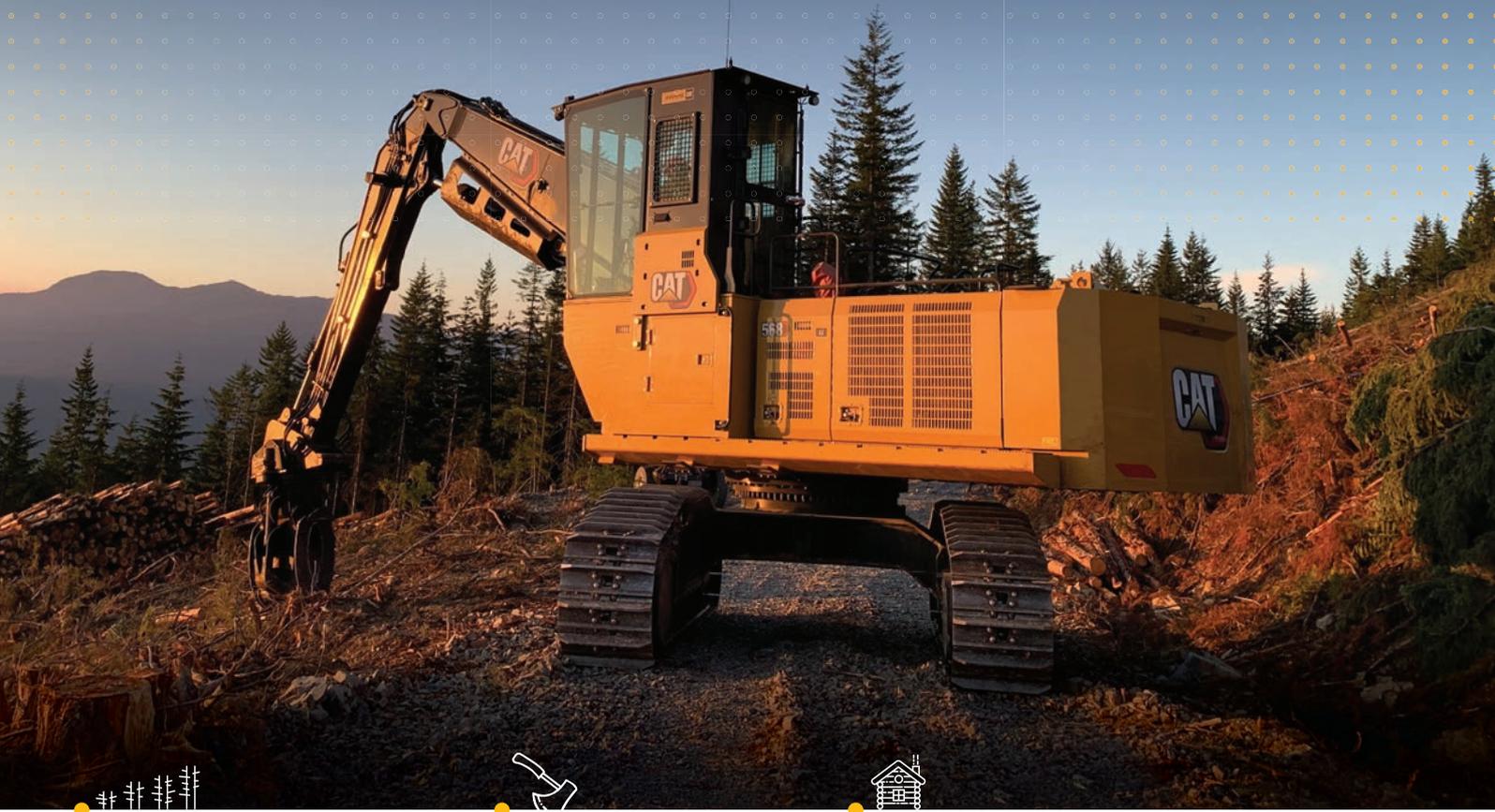
“We had heatwaves, extreme smoke and then extreme rainfall falling on burnt areas while other areas were experiencing fires,” Dr Lewis said.

“We don’t really understand what this kind of future will look like. What are the new challenges of compound events? How does it stress people, infrastructure and the environment?”

**On the cover: Field trip to the 70,000-ha Wombat State Forest, 50 km south of Melbourne, during the Fire and Climate Conference.**

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# Albury symposium: reimagining the future for forestry

INNOVATION a state of mind... this session by corporate speaker James O'Loughlin will be the closing keynote address at Forestry Australia's 2022 symposium – Leading, Adapting and Reimagining the Future for Forestry – to be held in person at the Mantra Hotel, Albury, NSW, and online from October 22 to 27.

Mr O'Loughlin is one of Australia's most respected, entertaining and experienced corporate speakers, facilitators and media personalities. He has a passion for innovation and is best known as the host of more than 300 episodes of The New Inventors on ABC-TV, and for his witty and entertaining programs on ABC Local Radio.

From criminal lawyer,



James O'Loughlin



Prof Mark Howden



Dr Libby Pinkard



Rodney Carter



Jason Alexandra

to comedian to media personality and presenter James has a wealth of experience. It was his role as the host of the New Inventors that fuelled his interest in innovation. He will explore practical things we can all do every day to become more innovative, and about the ways in which companies can create a culture that encourages innovation.

Other confirmed speakers and their session

titles include:

- A helicopter view of climate change from the forest and the trees – Prof Mark Howden, director, ANU Institute for Climate, Energy and Disaster Solution and vice-chair, Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

- Managing the risks of climate change for forest growers – Dr Libby Pinkard, research director, Living Landscapes, CSIRO.

- Strategic collaborations

and partnerships – Rodney Carter, CEO, Dja Wurrung Group.

- Forests, water, climate risks and the science-policy dilemma – Jason Alexandra, principal, Alexandra and Associates.

Early bird registrations have been extended to Friday, July 24

Contact Forestry Australia on +61 3 7065 4252 or email: [conference@forestry.org.au](mailto:conference@forestry.org.au)



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# TABMA NSW award recognises the REAL difference

TABMA Australia is excited to announce that the date has been set and venue locked in for the 2022 TABMA NSW Awards.

Keep Friday, October 28, free as TABMA will be celebrating award winners at a gala dinner at Le Montage Lilyfield, Sydney's long-acclaimed waterfront venue

The format is a little different this year.

"Instead of holding the Queensland timber awards and national awards, we have decided to hold two different state awards with winners moving on to the TABMA national awards in 2023," Alicia Oelkers, TABMA's general manager of membership services, explained.

"South Australia and Victoria won't miss out; we



Le Montage... venue for TABMA NSW awards night.

are finalising the program for these state award and will announce details shortly," Alicia said.

TABMA as introducing two new categories – The 'REAL Difference Award and the Safety Culture Award.

The REAL Difference Award is open to any employer who would like

to recognise one of their employees, someone who is **R**egarded highly by their peers, **E**mbraces their company's values, **A**chieves

**“SAFETY IS NOT JUST ONE PERSON'S JOB**

goals, and shows **L**oyalty to both their peers and their employer.

"We want to recognise the sales reps who are among so many hardworking, dedicated people who make a difference in individual businesses and the industry," TABMA CEO David Little said.

The Safety Culture Award is open to all TABMA members and will be presented to the workplace that has a positive safety culture, a workplace that demonstrates leadership in healthy and safety and addresses WHS concerns.

"Safety is not just one person's job," Dean Wilson, TABMA's WHS officer passionately believes.

Nominations and ticket sales for the awards night open later this month.

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# Blackberry invasion: calls for research funding to develop biological control as weed spread worsens

THE Softwoods Working Group in NSW and the Murray Region Forestry Hub are calling for substantial funding to support research into finding an effective biological control for blackberries – not just in the hub's area, but across eastern Australia where they are a massive problem.

Executive officer Phil Clements said a government-coordinated, whole-of-landscape approach across all land tenures was urgently needed to deal with the serious blackberry problem.

"We want to reduce the impact not only on the pines, but also on our farming neighbours, and we will work with them to get real action on this as soon as possible," Mr Clements said

The MRFH is one of 11 federal-funded regional forestry hubs set up across Australia to explore the impediments and opportunities to developing the timber industry.

Mr Clements said the MRFH had prepared a strategy to assist with industry recovery and development during the next 30 years, which included a range of initiatives to ensure



**Peter Crowe... blackberries now a huge impediment to maximising production in pine plantations.**

that the highest possible productivity could be achieved.

"One area of concern is that competition caused by infestations of blackberries – a weed of national significance – would reduce the efficacy of these initiatives," he said.

"This is a severe problem for timber-producing forests and plantations, national parks, farms, roadside reserves and along creeks and gullies.

"We are aware that there is some good research work being undertaken into biological control, but these efforts are not being resourced

anywhere near sufficiently or progressing anywhere near as quickly as the problem warrants. The long term, permanent solution is now beyond the reach of chemical control alone."

Chair of MRFH and SWG Peter Crowe said blackberries were a huge impediment to maximising production in pine plantations. He estimated

**“SOLUTION NOW BEYOND REACH OF CHEMICAL CONTROL**

production losses could be in the order of 5 to 10%.

"As well as impacting the productivity of the pine plantations, blackberries contribute to the fuel load in pine plantations and native forests, restrict access for harvesting and fighting fires, and make road and trail maintenance a much greater task," Mr Crowe said.

"In the South West Slopes region of NSW, 50,000 ha of pine plantation was lost due to the fires in late 2019 and early 2020. The blackberries provided a larger fuel load in the pine plantations and native forests, which made the fires more severe, particularly due to the elevation of the blackberries that carry the fire into the trees."

Mr Crowe said the World Bank estimated global timber demand would quadruple by 2050, so Australia needed to take every step to secure and maximise its timber resources to ensure the supply of renewable, carbon-storing, forest products. Imports were no longer guaranteed and the potential adverse, long-term impact on Australia was extremely serious.

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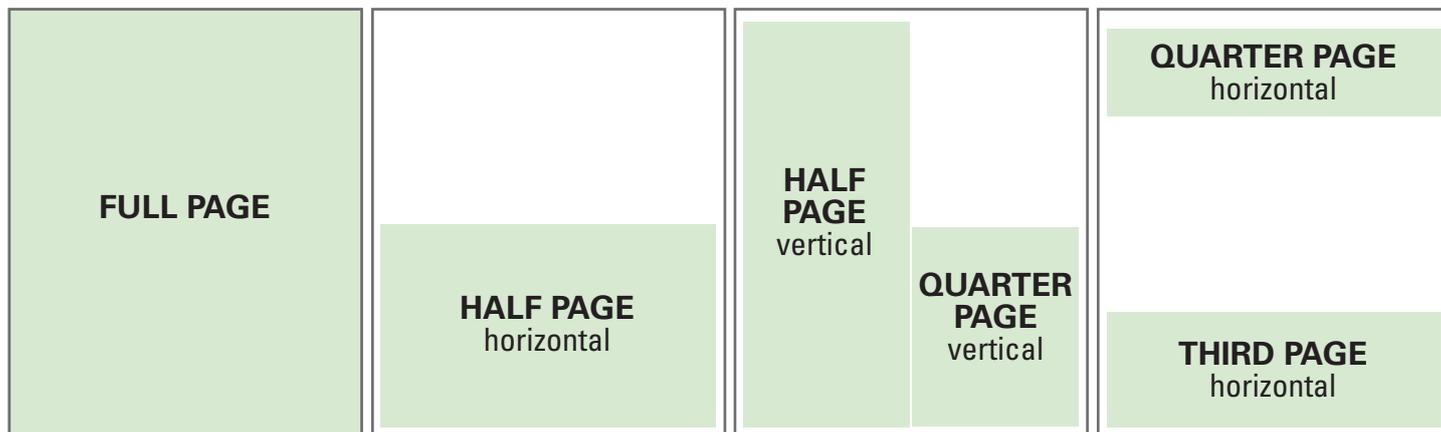
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