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Malaysian Timber Council lead Australian trade mission

COVER STORY P 2



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Malaysian Timber Council lead Australian trade and marketing mission



1/ Datu Haji Hashim Haji Bojet, General Manager, Sarawak Timber Industry Development Corporation presents Jon Lambert, CEO, Heartwood Plantations a plaque of appreciation..

2/ Key participants at the Malaysian Timber Council Melbourne seminar are Madam Norrida Yusoff, Chair Malaysian Timber Council, John Halkett, ATIF and Muhtar Suhaili, CEO, Malaysian Timber Council.

3/ Bunnings senior executive Brad Lawrence (centre) discusses Bunnings timber product range with members of the Malaysian mission..

THE Malaysian Timber Council's Australian trade and marketing mission to Melbourne and Sydney is occurring this week.

The mission includes visits to Malaysian timber related manufacturing and timber importing companies, inspections of hardwood plantation projects and

business-to-business seminars.

• Full report in next week's edition of **Timber and Forestry enews**.

On the cover: Malaysian Timber Council lead Australian trade and marketing mission delegates visit Heartwood Plantations 10-year old eucalypts agri-forestry project in Gippsland, Victoria.

People's Choice Award voting for Australian Timber Design Awards now open

VOTING is now open for the 2022 Australian Timber Design Awards, People's Choice Award for 2022.

Now in their 23rd year, the awards are distinguished by a 'proud heritage of innovation and achievement, promoting and encouraging outstanding timber designs'.

The Awards promote and encourage outstanding timber design and are open to builders, designers, architects, engineers and landscapers: to anyone involved in the design or building of structures that feature timber.

A Rising Star Award is also available to students and entrants aged 35 or under.

Due to COVID, it has been a few years since the awards have been celebrated in a face to face manner with organisers looking forward to their return.

There are more than 60 entrants in the People's Choice Award, with guests only allowed one vote, so are being advised to 'use it wisely'.

To admire the entries and to vote visit www.timberdesignawards.com.



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Want to know how cold it was in 1490? Forest ecologists say ask a tree

US forest ecologists hunting for climate clues have taken on an ambitious project to find and core the oldest trees in the state's northeast.

The project aims to core the oldest trees and track ring data for a glimpse into the past

Four teams of researchers, led by Harvard University forest ecologists, searched for a patch of ancient trees deep in the woods of western Pennsylvania as part of a project to study how climate changes has affected trees over the centuries.

One of the scientists had come across them 40 years earlier, but they appeared to have vanished. Just as the group was about to give up and move on they came across someone who gave them a valuable clue.

"When he jumped out of his Jeep to greet us, we were about to plunge into another forest that was at least three-quarters or a mile away," said Neil Pederson, a senior ecologist and co-manager of the 'tree ring lab' at Harvard Forest, an ecological research area of 1215 ha owned and managed by Harvard University and located in Petersham, Massachusetts.

The Jeep driver took them to a clump of scraggly-looking eastern hemlocks. "Several hours later, we'd finally found them," Pederson said.

That day's search was part of the lab's ambitious project to find and core the oldest



Tapping into a tree's memory... ecologist Neil Pederson in the 'tree lab' alongside core samples.

trees in the state's northeast. Studying the colour and size of their rings offers scientists a glimpse into the past, allowing them to see how trees and forests responded to extreme climate events, like droughts or late-spring frosts.

They then use that data to map the long-term development of these forests and model the future impact on their health from climate-related weather events, which are growing harsher as the planet warms.

"Large-scale forest disturbances may represent the kind of extreme climate events that we expect to see increase with climate change, so understanding more about their frequency in the past could help to inform how far things are moving from baseline," said Laura Gayle Smith, a research assistant at Harvard Forest, who works as a member of the 'tree ring lab'.

"The common framework for temperate forests is that they are basically in equilibrium over large scales and somewhat agnostic to

time – centuries to millennia.

"The ecologists used tree cores to extract what they have been leaning toward calling the memory of the tree," said Neil Pederson.

About a decade ago, Pederson and David Orwig, a senior forest ecologist and the co-manager of the three-ring lab, showed this isn't always the case. They presented evidence that droughts and harsh spring frosts from 250 years ago affected different forests across hundreds of kilometres in the south east. The disturbances abruptly killed some trees but accelerated the growth of others.

Cont P 4

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“ TREE CORES USED TO EXTRACT MEMORY OF TREE

From P 3

“This study will hopefully give us more insight about the relationship between climate events and forest disturbance so that we can better predict forest response under different climate scenarios,” Gayle Smith said.

For that, the lab seeks guidance from tree rings. The rings, which look a bit like the concentric circles on a dart board, indicate the age of a tree and give hints of what it’s endured. The greater the number of annual rings, the older the tree. Light-coloured ones represent years of extreme cold. Wafer-thin wood indicates dry conditions and stymied tree growth.

“When a drought arrives, when a hurricane arrives, when fire arrives, or an ice storm or insects, trees can’t run and hide like we can,” Smith said.

“Take these events, these



Events and the abuses of time are recorded in the rings of trees.

abuses of time, and they get recorded in their rings, and we can extract that information and learn about anything.”

The first step in this science, called dendrochronology, is getting samples of the rings. To core the trees, the researchers primarily use increment borers, tools that look like a cross between a drill and a

screw. They must be manually twisted through the bark and into its core. As it twists out it extracts pencil-size slivers of the tree ring.

“The borer gets much harder to turn as you drill into the tree, and sometimes will get stuck on the way out so you have to put your body weight into pulling backwards while turning,” Smith said.

Coring leaves a wound

in the tree but doesn’t fatally injure it. The entire process takes between two and three hours. Besides taking samples, scientists jot down visual markings on the trees and demarcate a plot that has a 20-m radius.

The researchers plan to core between 2500 and 3500 trees in 35 forests.

The fieldwork is part of a four-year project funded by the National Science Foundation and kicked off in the northern summer with visits to 15 forests. So far, the group has travelled to forests in Pennsylvania, New York, Maine, and New Jersey. The group will eventually amass 600 years of tree growth data.



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Second-largest encapsulated mass timber building competed in B.C.

THE concept of mass timber construction has been taken to new heights in Langford, British Columbia as project developer, Victoria’s Design Build Services (DBS), along with local dignitaries, prepare for an official ribbon-cutting event of their Tallwood 1 mixed-used building.

“Tallwood 1 is the second largest encapsulated mass timber construction building in British Columbia, the other being Brock Commons at UBC,” explained Rebecca McKay, DBS’s chief business development officer.

“Instead of using concrete



The mass timber structure, the second largest in BC, will open this month.

and steel, we’re using mass timber.”

The mass timber building technique involves the creation of structural panels, posts or beams through a production process that involves the glueing or otherwise fusing of wooden elements together in layers.

The resulting product has a strength rating higher than steel or concrete while being significantly lighter.

Responsible Wood supports sustainably grown, Australian made

AFTER consultation with certified forest managers and chain of custody certificate holders from around Australia, Responsible Wood has developed a new 'supporting statement' to help promote its core values.

The supporting statement, which can be used as a pre-set type or graphic stamp which features a stylised map of Australia and the words 'Sustainably Grown, Australian Made', is aimed at helping forest management and chain of custody certificate holders communicate to their customers about where their goods were grown and made.

Many Australian businesses feel it is important to communicate to customers about where their products come from and where they originated.

"The fact that the trees were grown sustainably in Australia and the products were manufactured here goes a long way, especially as a point of difference from other certification schemes



and imported products," Jonathan Tibbits from Responsible Wood said.

"Consumers can have the confidence that when they read 'Sustainably Grown, Australian Made' they are protecting Australia's forests for the next generation and supporting domestic timber industry supply chains."

The supporting statement can only be used with the Responsible Wood trademark



Responsible Wood

RW/1-10-1

on products that originate from Australian forests certified to AS 4708.

In addition, the Responsible Wood trademark can only be used where there is a minimum of 50%

“CONSUMERS CAN HAVE CONFIDENCE IN WHAT THEY READ”

product content originating from an Australian AS 4708 certified forest.

"Australia is known internationally for the quality of our wood fibre and timber, and we see the value in helping promote this message," Johnathan continued.

"This is especially the case at a time where access to timber is a challenge and finding quality products is essential."

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Boost to process more plantation timber

AUSTRALIAN Sustainable Hardwoods (ASH) are expanding their plantation timber manufacturing operations thanks to a \$1.2 million Victorian Forestry Plan innovation grant.

The new funding will help build a new \$2.4 million specialised MASSLAM (Glue Laminated Timber) manufacturing facility to support the mill's transition to alternative fibre sources thanks to the Victorian Timber Innovation Fund.

ASH is the only large-scale manufacturer of MASSLAM in Australia and

“PLANTATION SHINING GUM IS A KEY PILLAR IN THE FUTURE



Funding will support the build of the specialised MASSLAM manufacturing facility.

this investment will help them expand their current operations to manufacture products made out of plantation shining gum.

The grant will support the build of the specialised MASSLAM manufacturing facility which will create 12

new full-time jobs and help retain the mill's existing 172 roles.

The investment will help future-proof ASH's manufacturing business. The facility will be able to manufacture more products from plantation timber in the future such as mass flooring systems, engineered floorboards, kitchen benchtops and components for staircases, windows, doors and furniture.

"Plantation shining gum is a key pillar in the future of MASSLAM production. This investment will mean that ASH can continue to produce Australian made large-scale section columns and beams," Australian Sustainable

Hardwoods managing director Vince Hurley said.

The mill previously received \$1.6 million through the Victorian Timber Innovation Fund to install a new manufacturing line to produce engineered flooring made from plantation shining gum and Australian made pine plywood and

to expand both its online and retail outlet.

The retail space has recently been completed and customers can purchase staircase and furniture components directly from ASH.

The engineered floorboard line is anticipated to be up and running by the end of the year, ASH will become the only company in the country to manufacture this kind of high-value plantation product.

"We are proud to support ASH to continue to support local jobs and manufacture world renowned timber products into the future," Minister for Agriculture Gayle Tierney said.

ForestWorks

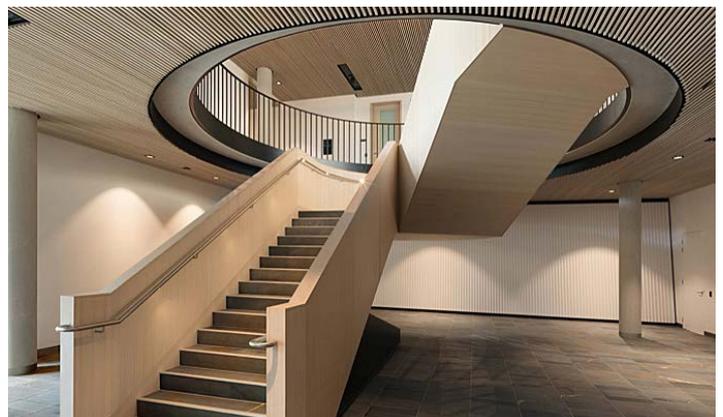
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The investment means ASH can continue to produce Australian made large-scale section columns and beams.

OCTOBER

6: Forestry Australia webinar – ONLINE. Australia’s timber supply: the role of imports, impacts of war and what do we do now? 1-2 pm(AEDT). As national population grows, demand for timber and wood products will continue to expand. However, domestic supply is severely constrained, let alone being able to meet the additional demand from the expected population increase. Presenter: Tim Woods, managing director, IndustryEdge. Information and registration: www.forestry.org.au/webinar-australias-timber-supply/

12: Australian Timber Importers Federation Board meeting – Brisbane, QLD. For further information contact John Halkett on 0417 421 187 or email: john.halkett@atif.asn.au

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 close August 10. Take advantage of discounted fees for in person and virtual registration and register early. Contact Forestry Australia on +61 3 7065 4252 or email: conference@forestry.org.au Visit www.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/ or contact Mariela Ferrari at marielaferriari.e@gmail.com

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.

NOVEMBER

10: AFCA’s Hall of Fame dinner – Gippsland Performing Arts Centre, Tarlton, VIC. Celebrating industry achievers and new accolades for emerging leaders. Event kicks off inaugural AFCA mentoring program next day (November 11). Visit www.afca.asn.au.

18-19: Fast & Forward Forestry Expo – Rotorua, New Zealand. New Zealand’s first event of its kind, Fast & Forward Forestry brings the forestry industry together, showcasing the contribution the sector makes to the New Zealand economy. Visit: www.fica.org.nz/fast-and-forward-expo or contact the Forest Industry Contractors Association Email: office@fica.org.au or phone (New Zealand only) 0800 342 269.

29: AFPA’s gala dinner – Hyatt Hotel, Canberra, ACT. With the cancellation of the AFPA forest industries gala dinner scheduled for September 14 and the mourning of the passing of the Queen, AFPA will now focus on enlarging the dinner arranged for November 29 at the Hyatt Hotel in Canberra., which will celebrate the decade-long chairmanship of Greg McCormack with political leaders in attendance. Tickets purchased for the gala dinner can either be refunded or transferred to the November dinner. Please advise your preference via events@ausfpa.com.au

DECEMBER

Australian Timber Design Awards – date and venue TBA. Award entries have been extended by two weeks. Entries are pouring in so make sure to get ready, or sneak in a last-minute entry. Don’t miss this great opportunity. Visit www.tdansw.asn.au or call 0420 232 253



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Responsible Wood PlantingSeeds' nesting box project implements regenerative habitats

THE B&B Highway, a 'bed and breakfast habitat regeneration initiative' has been created by PlantingSeeds to support biodiversity and encourage sustainability within our ecosystem,

PlantingSeeds' microbat nesting box program is a positive case study in these partnerships.

The construction of the nesting boxes and other items for the 2021 Responsible Wood PlantingSeeds' Nesting Box Project has involved many individuals and organisations.

The Community Timber Partnerships program which provided the timber and its transportation to Sydney to



1

allow construction brings together the Forestry Corporation NSW, Pentarch Forestry and Planet Ark's Make it Wood Campaign.

The nesting box project supports PlantingSeeds' B&B Highway initiative which implements



2

1/ The PlantingSeeds team have been creating the B&B Highway across NSW.

2/ The B&B project spans across schools and preschools in NSW.

regenerative habitats at schools to form corridors for biodiversity and learning.

The B&B Highway focuses on pollinators such as bees, birds and bats to support numbers and ranges, supporting these threatened species.

The 'Highway' now numbers close to 100 B&Bs in three States – NSW, Victoria and Queensland – and each school becomes a B&B hub through plantings, constructed habitat and

Cont P 9



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The Responsible Wood project supports the creation of B&B hubs in a number of new locations.

From P 8

educational sessions. The constructed habitat at each school is determined by the particular pollinator that is native to the area.

Timber provided by the Responsible Wood project has created scores of possum and parrot nesting boxes, as well as microbat boxes based on two designs, and platforms for

“THE PROJECT IS SUPPORTING THREATENED SPECIES

native stingless bees. The research that supports the microbat box designs is based on the latest academic field research with the University of Sydney’s Dr Caragh Threlfall advising on structure, dimensions and optimum numbers for installation.

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Research indicates that microbats prefer ‘safety in numbers’ and will be more likely to roost in a nesting box if others are nearby. Consequently, PlantingSeeds will install at least five microbat boxes in each of the schools that can support these important and threatened pollinators.

Additionally, the Responsible Wood project supports the creation of B&B hubs in a number of new locations. As a result of the grant, PlantingSeeds is completing the implementation of plantings, habitats and educational sessions at four Sydney schools near the Cumberland State Forest – at Asquith Public School, West Pennant Hills Public School, Castle Hill Public School and Muirfield High School. They are also intending to place nesting boxes produced by this project in schools in other B&B locations. This year, for example, will see them installed at six schools in the Parramatta local government area.

The nesting boxes and other constructions created by the many individuals involved in the Responsible Wood project are tangible symbols of collaboration and conservation.

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'Forest of one' a reality sooner rather than later

A SINGLE tree does not make a forest – just yet. Scion is developing and testing a range of precision forestry technologies with Hawke's Bay, NZ, forestry company Pan Pac Forest Products to make a 'forest of one' a reality sooner rather than later.

A forest of one means that we are effectively able to apply forestry management decisions to individual trees, explains Scion autonomous systems scientist Robin Hartley. The idea is not just conceptual – it is at or very near reality for a surprising number of forestry management operations.

"The future of precision forestry is not just sitting on a lab bench – it's being used in the forest now," says Hartley.

Pan Pac is moving to a precision forestry management model at a rapid pace. Managing 35,000 hectares of forestry, Pan Pac is a vertically integrated forestry products company. It uses 725,000 tonnes of logs in its own sawmill and 670,000 tonnes of residual and pulp logs are sent to the pulp mill. Consistently supplying the right type of log to its own mills is crucial and anything that can potentially interrupt that log supply is treated seriously.

Pan Pac forestry manager Sean Wright explains that current precision forestry technologies, when used together, will result in a seven percent improvement in final crop value per hectare across Pan Pac's forest estate. These sorts of efficiency gains and the ability to de-risk possible future labour shortages will be crucial to help forestry



Planting crews in the future could turn up to a site looking like this.

companies thrive and innovate in the future.

"The reality of our industry is that there are not enough skilled labourers willing to take up work in our forests year-round.

"We need crews working in planting, pruning and thinning at different times of the year and it's getting harder to source labour in the Hawke's Bay. If allowed to continue, a shortage of skilled labourers could put future profitability of our processing operations at risk," he says.

Scion New Value from a Digital Forest and Wood Sector portfolio leader Claire Stewart says it's

heartening to see a forestry company such as Pan Pac, who have a willingness to see things differently, put their own funding towards operationalising precision forestry.

"There is an openness to work in partnership to change the way things have traditionally been done," she says.

PRUNING DECISIONS FOR INDIVIDUAL TREES

The Pan Pac sawmill requires a consistent supply of quality pruned logs and this means the management of pruning operations is critical. All decisions related

to the timing of pruning, which trees to prune, as well as pruning height impact on clearwood volumes.

Increasingly, these decisions will soon be able to be made from remote sensing data and powerful algorithms that consider individual tree qualities, such as tree height, their position relative to other trees in the stand and location. At individual tree level, pruning decisions are virtually impossible to make from the ground. A silviculture work crew cannot effectively evaluate all the factors to choose the ideal tree to prune in a stand, given they are swamped in undergrowth and surrounded by branches. They literally cannot see the wood for the trees.

This means that, by necessity, forestry management works to the average tree.

"Average is rarely, if ever, optimal," says Wright. "Some trees will be pruned too early and others too late and often the wrong trees are pruned."

To increase the volume of pruned logs from these remotely selected trees, pruning will move from an average of around six metres (the height crews can reach from the ground) to 10 metres, which can be pruned by robots. This increase in pruning height means that Pan Pac can harvest two pruned logs per tree. Ten metre pruning height is at the upper limit of where it is safe and practicable to prune using silvicultural crews, so robotic pruning is a future reality.

This research is funded by Pan Pac Forestry.

(source: scionresearch)



An Envico-developed UAV with a 20kg bait applicator being flown over farmland and native forest in the western Bay of Plenty. Photo: Envico

US urban biomass from expanding 'city forests' has a \$786m expansion potential

URBAN forests in the US – street trees and municipal parks – are estimated to span 51.5 million ha of land and hold 800 million metric tonnes of carbon.

In a new study published in *One Earth* and funded by Yale University and the US National Science Foundation, scientists examined the economic benefits of creating circular systems for urban biomass.

Substantial urban tree waste is generated and underutilised in the US, the study finds.

"Circular utilisation of urban tree wastes has been explored in the literature, but the life-cycle environmental implications of varied utilisation pathways have not been fully understood," the study authors say.

Researchers tackled the life-cycle environmental implications of managing and utilising urban tree waste to determine the best means of diversion and reuse.

"Furthermore, this study contributes to the [lifestyle assessment] community by providing process-based



Substantial urban tree waste is generated and underutilised in the US.

models and life-cycle inventory (LCI) data for each tree waste utilisation pathway," the study said.

"These models are parametric and can be used by other researchers and LCA practitioners for different tree types and operational conditions. The stakeholders and policymakers can further use the results presented in this study to tailor their strategies or policy toward sustainable management of urban tree waste."

More than 25 million oven dry metric tonnes (ODMT) of leaf waste and over 20 million ODMT of tree waste per year produce 20 Mt of carbon mass. This waste can be converted to compost, mulch,

electricity, lumber and chips and biochar.

The economic potential for yard/urban waste in a circular system, such as the production of compost, electricity, firewood and pallets, is estimated to be between \$89 million and \$786 million a year, depending on the products produced.

Researchers focused on the mitigation of climate change and eutrophication – nutrient enrichment in aquatic ecosystems – through the

“SUBURBAN TREE WASTE IN THE US IS SUBSTANTIALLY UNDERUTILISED”

conversion of forestry waste into products that can be utilised as 'carbon sinks' with less environmental impact.

"Such benefits vary with state-level locations due to varied urban tree waste availability and types," the study stated.

"Process-level comparisons identify the most environmentally beneficial combination as using merchantable logs for lumber and residues for biochar. The results highlight the climate change and eutrophication mitigation potential of different circular utilisation pathways, supporting the development of circular bio-economy in the urban environment."

Scenarios identified "different pathways" to waste diversion such as explored landfilling, while others studied biochar, composting and other methods.

"Reusing or recycling most urban wood wastes for energy, products, or other purposes beyond chips or mulch is good utilisation," the study stated.



Canfor flags reduced production capacity in British Columbia

VANCOUVER-based integrated forest products company Canfor has announced a temporary reduction in production in British Columbia due to challenging market conditions.

Production capacity will be reduced through a two-week curtailment beginning on September 26 at the majority of solid wood facilities in the province, which will be followed by the resumption of reduced operating schedules until the end of 2022.

This is expected to result in a



1/ Canfor announces temporary reduction in production in British Columbia.
2 Don Kaye... reduced market demand.

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reduction of about 200 million board feet of production capacity.

“We are temporarily curtailing production in BC due to reduced market demand,” said Don Kaye, president and CEO.

“We will leverage our global operating platform to prioritise the requirements of our customers,” he said.

To limit the impact on employees, they will have the opportunity to work during the downtime to complete maintenance projects and other site activities.

Certain company statements in media releases constitute “forward-

looking statements” which involve known and unknown risks, uncertainties and other factors that may cause actual results to be materially different from any future results

Canfor is a leading integrated forest products company based in Vancouver with interests in British Columbia, Alberta, North and South Carolina, Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi, Arkansas and Louisiana, as well as in Sweden with a 70% interest in the Vida Group.

Canfor produces primarily softwood lumber and also owns a 54.8% interest in Canfor Pulp Products Inc., which is one of the largest global producers of northern bleached softwood Kraft pulp and a leading producer of high-performance Kraft paper.

“PRIORITISING THE NEEDS OF CUSTOMERS”

Five-day fire camp gives new fire recruits the leg up

FORTY-TWO Forestry Corporation of NSW firefighters honed their skills recently in a five-day training camp at Mount Seaview Resort near Wauchope in preparation for the fire season ahead. Staff from the Mid North Coast, Hunter, Far North Coast & North Coast Forest Protection Areas were trained in essential firefighting skills such as fire behaviour, tactics and strategy, leadership, command, control and communications, and how to operate the range of appliances and equipment used at fires. The five-day intensive training program is designed to get new recruits nationally qualified as forest firefighters.

Other more experienced firefighting staff upgraded their qualifications in advanced firefighter and crew



42 firefighters joined the camp to hone their skills ahead of the fire season.

leader roles.

The camp was a mixture of theory and practical exercises to get staff fire-ready for the season ahead, said Forestry Corporation's fire training & operations officer, Adrien Thompson.

"The camps are essential for developing a skilled and capable workforce for the fire season ahead," Mr Thompson said.

"Our training program is comprehensive and recruits also get the opportunity to learn other skills like using chainsaws, first aid, chemical use and driving 4WD vehicles and tankers when they return to their depots.

"Safety is always at the top of this list though – our firefighters' wellbeing is our biggest concern and it all comes back to correct training

and procedures.

"We take our firefighting responsibilities incredibly seriously – our training ensures everyone from our most experienced firefighter through to our newest recruits are fit and ready to be deployed to the fire front.

"We also send crews to assist on large bushfires across all tenures within their local areas, interstate and even internationally, so we need to ensure we are at the top of our game," he said.

Forestry Corporation is responsible for preventing and managing fires in two million hectares of State forests across NSW.

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Strengthening the capacity of forest products sector in Gippsland

THE Gippsland region has had a long history of economic activity in wood products and processing based on public native forest and private plantation timber resources.

Trees on farms and private native forests are potentially significant timber and veneer resources, but little is known about the quantity or quality of this resource or its potential for use in new types of veneered timber products such as laminated veneer lumber or LVL. Resource is also potentially available from ecological thinning on public land, council reserves, and land under Traditional Owner management.

A collaborative R&D project funded by the National Institute for Forest Products Innovation (NIFPI) Gippsland Centre aims to develop new and improved EWPs from low grade and underutilised timber resources in Gippsland.

The research team comprising Radial Timber, the University of Melbourne, and Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries will test the potential to process smaller, underutilised, and



The collaborative project aims to develop new and improved EWPs from low grade and underutilised timber resources in Gippsland. Photo: NIFPI

low-quality hardwood using spindleless lathe technology to produce LVL.

The project represents an opportunity for the forest products sector in Gippsland to play a vital role in providing the building sector with a locally produced high-quality EWP to meet the timber demand and secure Gippsland's role in driving forestry research.

Ultimately, such products will generate higher value for tree growers and processors,

support the development of new industries, meet the shortfall in supply of processed timber products to meet local and national demand and provide new markets for private tree growers. The initiative will

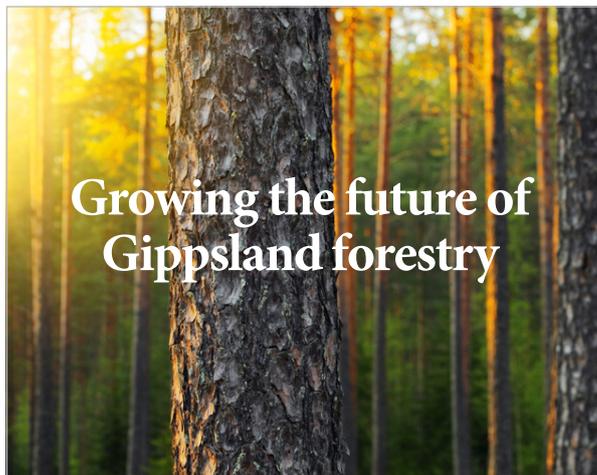
“ THIS WILL SECURE GIPPSLAND'S ROLE IN DRIVING FORESTRY RESEARCH ”

act as a catalyser in developing a sustainable timber manufacturing strategy to address the above-mentioned supply chain issues.

“I firmly believe that this project has the potential to change the face of forestry and timber production not just in Gippsland but throughout Australia,” Chris McEvoy, managing director Radial Timber Australia said.

“Turning small low grade thinnings into high value, much in demand engineered timber products has enormous potential and we will have a commercial facility at our Yarram mill that will help fast track these developments.

“I am really excited to be working with R&D partners in Melbourne University and Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries to help realise this potential,” he said.



Growing the future of Gippsland forestry

\$500,000 research funding investment to boost sustainability, jobs and economic benefits in partnership with industry

With the support of the Australian and Victorian governments, the Gippsland Centre of the National Institute for Forest Products Innovation has up to \$500,000 available for research grants to grow the future of forestry.

Research projects could include: developing new and improved products in relation to composites, extractives and bioenergy; improving workplace and supply chain innovation, safety and efficiency; enhancing tree growing including forest health and genetic gain; maximising precision management and applying new technologies; development of new non-timber forest products and services; improving forest industry social licence; and identifying opportunities with robotics, automation and artificial intelligence. Priority will be given to projects that are Gippsland-based and supported and have emphasis on building research and educational capacity in the Gippsland region.

Individual research grants will range from \$50,000 – \$500,000 and will be for periods of up to one and a half years in duration. Funding proposals close on **Friday 11 November 2022** and should be lodged via email to funding.vic@nifpi.org.au. For further information, including a proposal template and briefing document, see www.nifpi.org.au

About us The Gippsland Centre of the National Institute for Forest Products Innovation is a joint venture between the Australian Government, the Victorian Government and the forest and wood products industry with the goal of growing forestry into the future.



Rebuild market grows due to constrained land supply

AN unusually sharp rise in the price of residential land indicates the supply of land is not keeping up with new demand that has emerged during the pandemic.

The HIA-CoreLogic Residential Land Report provides updated information on sales activity in 51 housing markets across Australia, including the six state capital cities.

“Over the year to the March Quarter 2022, median lot prices increased by 19.7%,” Housing Industry Association senior economist Nick Ward said.

“This is not a normal increase – it is the strongest annual growth rate since 2004.



1/ **Price of residential land is not keeping up with the new demand.**
 2 **Katlin Ezzy... land prices surging when the number of lots sold is declining.**

“Constrained supply of land will limit housing activity in greenfield areas from mid-2023 onwards,” Mr Ward said.

New data released by the ABS on demolitions suggests that knock-down rebuilds and small redevelopments are around 25% of the market

for house and townhouse builders in New South Wales. Encouragingly, this segment of the market appears to be growing rapidly, creating new opportunities for the housing and building industries.

According to CoreLogic economist Kaytlin Ezzy, the

scarcity of available residential land continues to be a driving factor across Australian land markets, with land prices surging at a time when the number of lots sold is declining.

While increasing interest rates, rising construction costs and increased uncertainty, particularly across the building industry, have likely smothered some land demand, the surge in land prices suggests that those that want to build are finding it difficult to secure lots.

“With land often taking more than a decade to move through the development pipeline, it’s unlikely we’ll see any material change in land supply for some time,” Ms Ezzy said.

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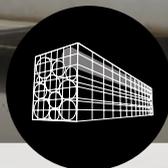
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Firewood cost and demand skyrockets as northern hemisphere heads for winter

THE spiking demand for firewood in Europe serves as a leading economic indicator a recent report revealed.

While Australia is heading into the summer period, Europe is bracing for energy shortages now that a key source of supply, gas piped in from Russia, has run dry amid geopolitical friction over Ukraine – and a lack of immediate alternatives points to an uncertain state of affairs to come.

In Germany, the price of “firewood, wood pellets or the like” was up 86% last month compared with the same period a year earlier. In Bulgaria, the near-doubling of firewood prices fed into a recent decision to stop exporting wood to non-EU countries.

Someone recently told a radio station in Poland that it might now be cheaper there to chop up old furniture and burn it than to buy firewood. In the Netherlands, suppliers were already running out before summer’s end. Even in Switzerland, where the inflation rate has been relatively tame, the price of firewood was up by about 26% last month.

Stacking the woodpile

Year-on-year % change in price of firewood by month in Switzerland from August 2020 to August 2022



Source: Swiss Federal Statistical Office • Created with Datawrapper



Firewood is in high demand as Europe battles gas supply issues.

Wood pellets have also been a source of concern. While burning wood as fuel has been touted as carbon-neutral, as long as the trees being used are replanted, serious questions have been raised about how clean and

sustainable the practice really is.

Research has shown that burning wood for energy emits more carbon dioxide per kilowatt-hour generated than fossil fuels, making the

speedy growth of new trees to absorb those emissions imperative.

“Cutting down forests for energy use is neither sustainable, nor does it help with our energy independence,” a German member of the European Parliament was recently quoted as saying.

The thirst for firewood has other implications; the air pollution caused by burning wood can be problematic, and firewood theft has become an issue. Bigger picture, high wood prices can incentivise over-harvesting and illegal logging, and any wood that’s burned can’t be used as construction timber able to store carbon for long periods.

Still, a steady supply of wood logs promises to be key for the overall effort to limit energy use this winter, and nudge the region closer to energy independence from Russia (while European businesses have already notched tangible reductions in the use of energy, household habits have proven more difficult to gauge).

(source: world economic forum)

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