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ISSUE 733 | November 17, 2022

# timber & FORESTRY *e*news



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# COP 27's global 'call for action' to grow sustainable forests as best climate-friendly fibre supply solution

NEW research by the FAO Advisory Committee on Sustainable Forest-Based Industries and the International Council of Forest and Paper Associations launched as the World Climate Conference in Egypt, which wraps up this week, recommends "a call to action" for countries to take nationally determined approaches to growing their sustainable forest industries.

"This will address an emerging global timber and wood fibre supply gap as the world moves to climate-friendly fibre supplies," said African-based Mokena Makeka, principal of global analysis and solutions group Dalberg.

The growing roles of forest products in climate change mitigation and the need for

**GROWING ROLE OF FORESTS IN CLIMATE MITIGATION**



1/ Jori Ringman... we need to focus equal attention on ensuring supplies of fibre are secured from sustainably managed forests under world's best environmental standards.



mitigation has."

The Dalberg research concludes that with global demand increasing at an astonishing rate off the back of urban growth, it's

critical we grow timber and fibre sustainably across the world to meet growing demand in the decades ahead.

Jori Ringman, president of ICFPA, said consumers were making a

conscious choice and turning to fibre-based materials.

"We need to focus equal attention on ensuring supplies of fibre are secured from sustainably managed forests under world's best environmental standards," he said.

"In the global north, however, we are seeing a regulatory pressure to reduce fibre supplies. This report demands that we all consider what effect this might have in places which already struggle to prevent illegal harvest."

nationally determined forestry approaches were presented to a live and on-line audience at COP27. The report clarified the challenges the world must meet as it moves away from fossil-fuels.

"If the world doesn't move to encourage growth in sustainable forest industries through climate policy, we will witness greater problems in the years and decades ahead, problems like increased illegal logging and deforestation activity in places where governance controls are most

challenging," Mr Makeka said.

"Individual countries must, however, develop the best policies to suit them. One country might be best suited to growing more sustainable plantations; another to enhancing productivity of small holders. And in another it might mean a careful increase in natural forest management."

Chair of the ACSFI Ross Hampton said half the dry weight of timber was in carbon. "Forest products in all shapes and forms were the best friend that climate



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# Timber warehouses full to the gunnels as Chinese ships arrive in record numbers with essential cargo

JIM BOWDEN

SOME of Australia's biggest processors of domestic timber are re-gearing production methods in a role switch as net importers filling once-empty warehouses with an endless supply of Chinese engineered wood products – manufactured from Russian logs.

It was not so long ago that both PEFC and FSC suspended trading certificates in Russia and Belarus blocking all controlled wood sourcing from the two countries, following Russia's unprovoked attack on Ukraine.

Australian timber importers were big users of the Russian product, notably a range of EWPs. Collectively, these imports provided somewhere between 40% and 50% of the Australian building market demand and included LVL, formwork and I-joint beams.

There have been no structural alternatives to LVL in any meaningful volume available from other sources. In the last 12 months, Australia has constructed around 140,000 detached dwellings with this level of demand to continue for at least 18 months.

Russia is the world's fourth largest softwood producer at 40 million cub m. But domestic consumption is only 10 million cub m, so Russia was the world's largest timber exporter at 28.5 million cub m – pre-war and pre-conflict timber.

But for the Russians there are many ways to skin a cat – or slice a log.

They have dodged the 'conflict' timber ban imposed



*Inspecting huge logs from Russia cut by a Chinese sawmill ready for rail transport at the border town of Manzhouli.*

on them by many countries, including Australia, brought on by the war with Ukraine, by railing hundreds wood wagons each day across the Sino-Russian border into China which has no morality issue with its neighbour.

China is turning these logs into engineered wood products with record shipments arriving in Australia, mainly LVL formwork – which represents 40% of the Australian market – and plywood with the expectation that larger sizes and lengths are not too far away.

"It's like we're still dealing with the Russians," noted one Sydney merchant. "Nothing has changed and we're back to par," a comment reflected in Australian warehouses now bulging with structural timber, in fact more than the market can absorb with heavy discounting likely to be the order of the day.

All pre-conflict wood shipped and paid for were unloaded at Australian ports weeks ago and quickly consumed by the hungry trade.

Then the cost of building a new home in Australia rose by 20% due to material shortages, disrupted supply chains and demand for skilled tradespeople. Builders were preparing for even more

costly timber products after the federal government imposed a 35% tariff increase on imports from Russia and Belarus.

But China is free from this tariff, shipping Russian wood cloaked as "manufactured in China" to global markets.

The Australian Border Patrol has no truck with this if it is legally stamped and meets grading and building standards. In fact, if DNA samples of the manufactured timber were ever taken to determine the content, source and chain of custody then, forgetting the war, if it's from Russia it's most likely

Cont P 7

## The united voice for Australia's forest industries



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# Andrews government policy driving Gippsland timber industry – and forest jobs – to extinction

## Hoodwinking communities that it can replace native forests by converting to plantations

THE Andrews government forest policy is driving the Gippsland timber industry towards extinction and leading to greater use of less ecologically sustainable building materials and imported forest products from countries with poor social and environmental records and manufactured using Russian timber and energy.

Annually in Victoria about



**Fifth-generation logger Brett Robin... Victorian government's forest plan is a plan to annihilate forest jobs.**

1 million cub m has been sourced from the harvesting of about 3000 ha a year

forest coupes, throwing hundreds of people out of work, many with monthly payments on equipment to manage. Mills will be forced to close and timber towns such as Orbost face considerable socio-economic turmoil.

This Supreme Court decision is ironic – VicForests is now forced to spend months completing more

intensive resurveys within a few hundred coupes totalling about 3000 ha, yet there has been no requirement to survey at the same intensity almost all the 7.5 million ha precluded from timber production, to fully appraise the threatened status of the species.

By



**JOHN CAMERON**

within the 160,000 ha of the VicForests 'operable area' that is available for timber production.

The annual harvest area is only 0.04% of the huge 7.5 million ha of Victorian public native forest of which about 7.3 million ha is reserved for other use such as conservation.

A decision based on the narrow focus of in-situ conservation of two species (greater and yellow bellied gliders) has resulted in the virtual cessation of this season's harvesting in native

**“ SUPREME COURT DECISION IS IRONIC ”**

VicForests is expected to deliver Rolls Royce conservation within the 3000 ha of coupes it harvests each year, while The Department of Environment Land Water and Planning and Parks Victoria continues to inflict considerable ecological damage by wildfire across 7.5 million ha by persisting with the unsustainable fire policy 'Safer Together' that does not comply with the recommendations of the 2009

Cont P 9

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# WoodSolutions 2-day workshop brings industry and educators together for positive collaboration



Primed and ready... participants in the WoodSolutions Education Program in Melbourne on November 7 and 8.

THE WoodSolutions Education Program delivered its Industry-Educator workshop in Melbourne last week, supported by Deakin University at its beautiful CBD Deakin Downtown Centre.

The event was extremely well supported with 76 participants – 40 from industry, and 36 university lecturers travelling from all over Australia.

This is the second time the event has been delivered by WoodSolutions. The first, in November 2018, was successful and well received with attendees suggesting a

similar event should be held annually.

The aim of this initiative is to bring industry and educators together to discuss facilitation and incorporation of timber content being taught across Australia to ensure the students of today are well informed about timber as the specifiers of tomorrow.

WoodSolutions saw a need to build and strengthen industry and educator contacts and networks. This allowed wood industry experts to meet face-to-face with university academics and researchers to openly

discuss and share ideas and information and to inform and inspire about new innovations and future aspirations that encourage lecturers to add more timber content into their syllabi and to develop more university R&D project activity and linkages.

WoodSolutions education program manager Dr Alastair Woodard said this industry-educator collaborative

**“ BUILDING EDUCATOR CONTACTS AND NETWORKS ”**

initiative was a unique and valuable event strongly supported by educators and industry alike.

He added: “The industry education program has been active now for 27 years making it one of the longest continually running industry programs. A key to its longevity is its ongoing collaboration with university academics and TAFE teachers, to clearly understand their needs.”

Head of the WoodSolutions program Eileen Newbury said the education program

Cont P 6

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From P 5

had constantly updated its educational resources to keep them current and to meet the latest technological course delivery needs.

“The last few years of Covid-19 restrictions have seen major changes to how education can be delivered, with more remote learning frameworks being implemented,” Ms Newbury said.

“WoodSolutions is now investigating how it might build on these changes with new visual and digital timber teaching resources.”

“UNIVERSITY LECTURERS WERE ALL VERY KEEN TO BE PART OF DISCUSSIONS



**Alastair Woodard, WoodSolutions, Rob Nestic, TGA Engineers, Dave Gover, AKD, and Eileen Newbury and Rhiana Archie, WoodSolutions.**

Ms Newbury said this industry-educator initiative was a hugely valuable occasion to allow WoodSolutions to learn directly from the lecturers what worked and what didn't, in delivering remote learning to students.

“The information provided will be enormously valuable in the current educational resource update exercise

WoodSolutions is embarking on,” she said.

“It was an extremely positive two days,” said Boris Iskra, FWPA national codes and standards manager, who presented at the workshop

He noted that “the university lecturers were all very keen to be part of

discussions and expressed a strong desire for WoodSolutions to develop future resources for them that they can then apply in their own lectures.”

The two-day workshop included presentations

Cont P 14



# Develop our future workforce

ForestWorks is an industry-owned not-for-profit organisation offering services to support the skills development of the forest, wood, paper, timber and furnishing industries.

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**1/ Mahmud Ashraf, Deakin University, David Bylund TGA Engineers, and Richard Schaffner, Wespine.**

**2/ Jon Shanks, WoodSolutions, Paola Leardini, University of Queensland, and Gavin Matthew, EWPA.**

**NOVEMBER**

**29: AFPA's gala dinner – Hyatt Hotel, Canberra.** 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](mailto:events@ausfpa.com.au)

**DECEMBER**

**8: 23rd Australian Timber**

**Design Awards – Crown Sydney, Barangaroo, NSW.**

The awards are distinguished by a proud heritage of innovation and achievement, promoting and encouraging outstanding timber design. It has been a few years since we last celebrated the awards together, so come and join us for the evening to find out the best in timber design for 2022 – and enjoy a three-course meal and drinks while being entertained by The Ultimate Renewable brand ambassador Adam Dovile, resident builder on Channel Seven's Better Homes and Gardens. Visit [www.tdansk.asn.au](http://www.tdansk.asn.au) or call 0420 232 253. Tickets at [ticketstripe.com/events/1030921](http://ticketstripe.com/events/1030921)

**10: Native forest**

**management field day. – 128 Sandows Road, Binjour, QLD (turn off 18 km west of Gayndah on Burnett Highway and follow the field day signs).**

9 am-3 pm. Presenters Bill Schulke, Sean Ryan, Sam Slack. Impacts of thinning on forest health, productivity, economic returns and grazing within spotted gum and Gympie messmate plantation and adjacent private native forest. RSVP [admin@pfsq.org.au](mailto:admin@pfsq.org.au) Tel: (07) 5483 6535 or 0428 457 322 Bring a water bottle, lunch and a chair. Tea, coffee provided.

**2023**

**FEBRUARY 7-8: 6th European Biomass Trade and Power Summit – Copenhagen.** On

site and virtual. Attractive economics and spreads for wood pellet burn across Europe has boosted biomass demand, despite record high pellet prices. High power demand and a rebound in carbon prices has been the catalyst but a shortage of wood pellet supply will likely reduce industrial wood pellet consumption in Europe. Visit [www.cmtevents.com/aboutevent.aspx?ev=230202&](http://www.cmtevents.com/aboutevent.aspx?ev=230202&) or email [huiyan@cmtsp.com.sg](mailto:huiyan@cmtsp.com.sg)

**AUGUST 29-30: Timber & Forestry enews Australian Timber Supply Crisis Summit – Melbourne.** Early warning alert. For any queries relating to the conference, please contact CORP COMM. Email: [info@corp-comm.com](mailto:info@corp-comm.com). au Phone: +61 3 5977 0244

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to be from a legal PEFC/FSC certified forests.

Russia achieved PEFC re-endorsement of its forest certification system in 2016, confirming that it met globally recognised sustainability benchmarks. With the Russian Federation containing an estimated 800 million ha

of forest, the equivalent to more than 20% of the world's forest area and more than Canada and Brazil combined, the continued development and increase of sustainable forest management in the country has had considerable environmental, social and economic benefits that give it an edge in competitive global markets.

Specifiers in the Australian commercial space chasing green star ratings won't have anything on site that's not PEFC or FSC certified. Bunnings also will have nothing to do with wood that might have the slightest whiff of Russian content.

Meanwhile, the federal government's Budget pledge

of \$350 million for affordable housing and other building incentives gave no thought to how and from where the wood will come from.

But for builders and their tradies ... well bring it on. If the wood is fit for purpose and seems to have the right ticks and stamps, they don't give a fig where it came from.



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# ANU southern NSW forest report deeply flawed with devastating impacts on communities: SETA

## The net present value and benefit-to-cost ratio investment need to be interpreted cautiously

AN independent review of an Australian National University report advocating for the closure of native forest harvesting in southern NSW has confirmed the report is deeply flawed.

“The ANU report must not be relied on by government decision-makers,” says South East Timber Association secretary Peter Rutherford.

The report, ‘Comparing the value of alternative uses of native-forest in-southern NSW’, was released by the ANU and promoted by law professor Andrew Macintosh and managing director of Frontier Economics Danny Price on November 30 last year.

Mr Rutherford said a review this week of the ANU cost-benefit analysis commissioned by SETA confirmed the ANU/ Macintosh report had a number of serious flaws.

“These flaws were glossed over whenever the report ‘findings’ have been presented to government, the media and general public;”



Prof. Andrew McIntosh



Danny Price



Dr Tyron Venn



Deirdre Rose

he said.

The ANU report claims, “when compared in today’s dollars, the incremental benefits of ceasing native forest harvesting are higher than the incremental costs by \$61.96 million.”

The analysis commissioned by SETA has found the cost-benefit analysis contains errors that, when corrected, increase the present value of the forestry scenario in southern NSW by about \$300 million.

Mr Rutherford said the flaws identified in the report totally undermined the alleged economic benefits of closing the native forest industry in

southern NSW. Rather than a net present value (NPV) of \$61.96 million over 30 years, closure of the industry would result in a negative NPV of -\$252.43 million.

“In reality, the economic impacts are even more devastating for rural communities,” he said.

The review has been undertaken by Dr Tyron

Venn, senior lecturer in Agri Resource Economics at the University of Queensland.

Dr Venn’s review noted “the net present value and benefit-to-cost ratio investment criteria need to be interpreted cautiously when there are large differences in the scales of projects being evaluated.

“An adaptation of the data used by Frontier Economics and Macintosh (2021) highlights the likely changes in production and employment for the Southern and Eden RFA regions of NSW arising from replacing forestry with mountain biking.

**“FLAWS WERE GLOSSED OVER WHENEVER FINDING WERE PRESENTED TO GOVERNMENT**

Cont P 20



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From P 4

Bushfire Royal Commission.

The narrowly-focused court decision also has no regard to the broader consideration of ecologically sustainable development, nor the geopolitical implications.

Based on recent global events, geopolitical considerations are particularly relevant. Actions that reduce supply of Australian timber at this time (where supply is already in decline), are increasing demand for imported timber and timber products, including from countries with appalling records on the environment and social justice.

Russian native forests represent the global 'swing' volume. China sources timber from Russia and accounts for \$2.2 billion of Australia's \$3.7 billion trade deficit in forest products.

Following Putin's invasion of Ukraine, China immediately increased imports of coal, oil and gas from Russia. China is currently building pipelines to receive more Russian gas. A portion of the imported forest products from China are likely to include products manufactured from Russian logs using power derived from Russian coal, oil and gas.

Australia's and Victoria's log production is in serious decline due to closure of native forest to harvesting and conversion of plantations back to farmland, as a result of favourable prices for agricultural commodities.

This declining log production will get a lot worse because



**Construction on the China-Russia eastern natural gas pipeline project... whether by accident or design, Victorian forest policy and green activism are supporting Putin's Russia and other undemocratic countries.**

the plantation estate is shrinking, particularly in the Central Gippsland NPI region close to Opal's Maryvale mill and ASH's hardwood sawmill at Heyfield.

The shrinkage of net plantation area in Victoria is 50,000 ha or 30% over the last five years.

The Andrews government's Forestry Plan launched three years ago was heralded as the solution to phasing out native forest supply, but it has effectively delivered little more than 'announcements'.

The loss of plantation area, rather than expansion of net planted area, is an indictment on the government's Forestry Plan. It should be a lightbulb moment for a government hoodwinking communities that it can replace 1 million cubic m of native forest timber by converting 14,000 ha farmland to plantations in Gippsland.

The 14,000 ha will only produce about 250,000 cubic m a year in about 25-30 years' time and will not even replace the plantation area lost over the last five years.

The decline in native forest log supply over the last 20 years has resulted in a reduction in Victorian Gross Regional Product of \$6.6 billion (cumulative over

20 years) and a reduction in Victorian employment of about 5560 jobs on a full-time equivalent basis.

Over the next 20 years, the cessation of native forest supply under the Victorian 'Forestry Plan' is expected to contribute to a further loss of \$5.6 billion in gross regional product and the loss of another 3660 jobs.

To invest in new technology and remain viable mills need increasing supply, but face a cessation of native forest supply and a decline in plantation supply. Without urgent and sensible government action more mills and forest jobs are at risk.

Much of our alternate building materials such as steel, aluminium and wood-based panels are sourced from China and manufactured using power derived mostly from fossil fuels including increasing supply of fossil fuels from Russia. China's use of fossil fuels has increased three-fold over the last 20

**“ NATIVE FOREST LOG SUPPLY HAS DECLINED OVER THE LAST 20 YEARS ”**

years.

China's imports of coal, oil and gas from Russia increased immediately after Putin invaded Ukraine on February 24 from \$US4.3 billion in February to about \$US9 billion over July-August this year.

The imports have been secured at substantially discounted prices such that the increase in

tonnage is considerable. These purchases are assisting the funding of Putin's unlawful invasion of Ukraine.

China and Russia are in the final stages of building pipelines that can send gas from Siberia to Shanghai. The 8000 km pipeline, with 3000-km in Russia and 5111 km in China, transmits natural gas from Siberia to nine provincial-level regions in China, according to a report from the Xinhua News Agency in September.

Whether by accident or design, Victorian forest policy and green activism are supporting Putin's Russia and other undemocratic countries.

• *John Cameron (Dip Hort. Burnley, MBA Monash, and tertiary units in economics, mathematics and statistics) is a forestry and business consultant previously holding positions in general management, corporate development and research in forestry and forest products. Former roles include chair, Private Forestry Gippsland, chair, Southern Tree Breeding Association, chair, Australian Research Group on Forest Genetics, board member CRC for Forestry Hobart and CRC for Pulp and Paper Science Monash.*

# Back to Fraser: field trip studies rich forest history

FORESTRY Australia last month hosted a unique and insightful field trip to K'gari (formerly Fraser Island).

The world's largest sand island has had a complex history since European settlement. This includes a broad range of forestry activities including logging operations in the late 1800s, attempts at reforestation with kauri pine seedlings in 1883-84, forest regeneration through selective logging, plantation species trials, burning, clearing and other silvicultural regimes.

Sand mining also started in the 1950s.

Given the historic complexities, recent fires and forestry and mining activities the trip was an opportunity to reflect on how active forest management, fire and sand mining have impacted the

island's vegetation.

The field trip was led by Forestry Australia member Associate Professor Grahame Applegate who has a long association with the island dating back to biomass assessments conducted in the early 1980s.

K'gari is the home of the Butchulla people, who continue to hold strong links with the land and sea.

While the island's post-colonial history is known for its controversies, the forest management practices on the island were diverse, innovative, and at times experimental. Several key areas were included in the program to highlight these management practices such as blackbutt regeneration, cypress pine forests, and the old Queensland Forestry Department nursery with



**Kath Nash, David Lee and Peter Leeson measuring the impressive size of a large tallowwood (*Eucalyptus microcorys*) in a detailed yield plot on K'gari.**

some very impressive 20 m tall nursery seedlings. The trip also included a presentation and discussion on research into 2020 fires in the Banksia aemula communities.

Responsible Wood CEO Simon Dorries joined the field trip, commenting on the "impressive native vegetation regeneration" and observed how the landscape appears to have recovered and the visual impacts of sand mining have

disappeared.

"It was a fantastic opportunity to consider the health of the island's vegetation, forests and sand dune formations some 30 years after commercial forestry on the island ended," Mr Dorries said.

The custodianship of the traditional owners is critical to the ongoing conservation of nature and culture. During the trip, the group met with Indigenous and Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service managers to discuss current management priorities and issues as the custodians seek to maintain and enhance these values now and for future generations.

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# Australian forest researcher among world's best

AUSTRALIA'S Dr Sam Van Holsbeeck has been recognised as among the world's best young researchers working in forestry and forest product innovation, reaching the next round of the prestigious international Blue-Sky Young Researcher Innovation Awards.

Sam is one of 14 national finalists selected for the next round of the competition which is sponsored by the International Council of Forest and Paper Associations. The Blue-Sky awards are a biennial program to recognise, celebrate and promote game-changing innovations being developed across the global forest sector.

AFPA acting CEO Victor Violante said Sam was a wonderful example of a young research leader working to

advance Australia's forest industries.

"AFPA was proud to nominate Sam to the international round as the winner of our local competition and a worthy ambassador for Australia, and we congratulate Sam on his nomination as a global finalist in these awards," Mr Violante said.

Sam said he was very honoured to have been selected and to compete against a fine selection of international colleagues.

"My project is looking at opportunities to enhance sustainable development in remote areas though forest and wood-product industries, to build local bio-economies and deliver benefits for remote communities," he said.

"Hopefully I will get the



**Dr Sam Van Holsbeeck... opportunities to enhance sustainable development in remote areas.**

chance to present my work at the Global CEO Roundtable and have a discussion about the practical, 'win-win' climate solutions offered by forest industries."

The next stage will see an international judging panel convened to assess the strength and potential of each entry, with three eventual

winners receiving cash prizes and the opportunity to present their work at the ICFPA's Global CEO Roundtable in early 2023.

Announcing the 14 global finalists, ICFPA president Jori Ringman said the global forest sector had the potential to address some of the most urgent social, environmental, and economic challenges of today.

"From advancing a lower-carbon world through sustainable forest management, to building the forest bio-economy and leveraging the power of carbon-storing wood products – we are thrilled to help recognise the brilliant young minds whose ideas and innovations can help pave the way forward," Dr Ringman said.

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# ABARES and FWPA enter into new \$750,000 2-year joint 'ideas' work program for 2022-24

## Making more forestry data available so stakeholders have greater access to information

FOLLOWING extensive consultation with FWPA members and associate members, FWPA and ABARES have now agreed upon and entered into a new two-year joint work plan.

The consultation process also brought forward new ideas that have been included in the new FWPA/ABARES 2022-24 Workplan.

The cost to industry for this program is about \$500,000, with ABARES providing funding of \$250,000.

This program will contribute towards making more forestry data available in a timely manner and ensure stakeholders have access to that data.

The desired outcome is to deliver unbiased, evidence-based forestry related analysis and statistics that can be used to inform industry and support the department's forest policy development

Here is a selection of the projects ABARES will undertake:

- **Biannual Australian Forest and Wood Products Statistics and monthly trade data provision**

ABARES twice-yearly publication, Australian forest and wood product statistics (AFWPS) is highly regarded by both government and



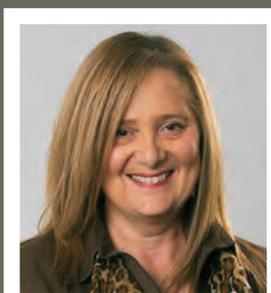
*Reporting on key indicators of activity in the forestry sector.*

industry. The publication reports on key indicators of activity in the forestry sector. The 2022-23 May-June AFWPS will also report on key socio-economic indicators based on the ABS 2021 Census.

- **National wood processing survey**

The National Wood Processing Survey will provide information on structural changes in Australia's wood processing industry. The survey will provide a snapshot of the wood processing industry's current structure, the amount and source of logs for processing and the efficiency of log processing. The survey also includes questions on employment, processing costs, past and future investments, and perceptions on the future outlook.

### TALKING TIMBER



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

- **Tabular plantation survey updates**

Australia's annual plantation statistics report is a key publication to inform changes in the wood production resource base. The annual tabular update is a supporting data set to the comprehensive five-yearly spatial update.

The value of the annual data set is to provide information on softwood and hardwood plantation areas and provide a baseline of national, state, and regional statistics that can be used to inform forest policy and industry investment

- **Five-year outlook report**

ABARES will publish a five-year outlook report for the value, volume and price of Australia's forestry domestic production and exports. The report will focus on the volume and value of hardwood and softwood logs sourced from plantations and native forests. The report will factor in how changes to the outlook may affect Australian forest growers and the value of their production.

ABARES will undertake a project to determine if there are any other administrative datasets that could be utilised by ABARES forest economics to supplement/support existing data. Administrative data could be sourced from the federal Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Levies division, FWPA, other state agencies or industry.

Potentially ABARES could enter agreements with other data holders to share data or combine data requests to reduce survey burdens.



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# New timber treatment an environmental 'win' by transitioning from solvent to water-based carriers

There has been an estimated 25-30pc swing to the process often utilising harvested rain water

LONG-TIME timber treatment specialist and modern-day wood preservation pioneer Gerry Gardiner has introduced new highly-patented technology with outstanding environmental credentials at his ITreat Timber facility at Narangba north of Brisbane.

Mr Gardiner was instrumental in attracting and encouraging global wood protection company Kop-Coat Protection Products (KCPP) to share its patented technology with the Australian timber industry.

This continues today at ITreat Timber with founder and managing director Gerry Gardiner still significantly involved in the market development of this technology.

Now, some 12 years later, and with several licensees in place, and no known failures, Mr Gardiner reflects on what this means to the timber industry, the consumer – and most significantly the environment.

"The use of TRU-CORE has had a significant input into the decarbonising of some timber treatments," he said.

"In an industry that already has outstanding credentials this goes a step further in enhancing our value to the environment."

While he would be the first to admit he has distributed train loads of solvent-treated timber products over his 40-plus years in the industry, it was while investigating TRU-CORE that he accepted there may be an alternative process



and a great opportunity.

KCPP has supplied ITreat Timber with low-moisture uptake water-based technology for 12 years. Kop-Coat is constantly reviewing this technology to assess whether any evolutionary and/or revolutionary enhancements can be made and applications that can be developed.

Part of this development is to consider each client's needs, which includes timber species and product type.

"As a result, each program developed has a unique aspect to it," says Mr Gardiner.

"It's certainly not a 'one-size-fits-all' approach. This is evident in the fact that Pacific WoodTech in the US is treating all veneers in its LVL products."

The process treats the finished product, not individual veneers, through a process where the active chemicals are released from



the glue resin through the hot press application.

Now looking back and gauging the volumes of TRU-CORE-treated product compared to a mineral spirit hydrocarbon solvent-based process, Mr Gardiner believes there has been a swing to the water-based process by an estimated 25-30% – often utilising harvested rain water.

"What is of particular interest is that this volume, estimated to be 10,000 cub m a month, represents a reduction in the use of solvent by about 400,000 litres a month.

"With a little bit of desk-

**1/ The transition from solvent-based carriers to water-based carriers is immediate.**  
**2/ Gerry Gardiner... in an industry that already has outstanding credentials this goes a step further in enhancing our value to the environment.**

top research, this equates to 3000 motor cars in Australia, being removed from our roads each and every month."

[Mr Gardiner notes this is a broad assessment as there are differences between solvent and diesel and unleaded fuels].

He says there has been much talk about EVs, including the development of EV trucks, being introduced into the industry.

"This is certainly one way that will assist in decarbonising our sector. However, these conversions have a very long 'pay back' time in the reduction of carbon.

"The transition from solvent-based carriers to water-based carriers is immediate – for every 500 cub m converted to TRU-CORE from LOSP represents an estimated, further 130 cars off the road," Mr Gardiner concluded.

From P 6

on topics from micro-credentials and upskilling to innovations and challenges in codes and standards. Participants also heard from industry experts on timber design, wood products, prefabrication, and construction.

Rounding up day one was a presentation on innovations in the European industry and timber education from Professor Robert Jockwer from Chalmers University in Sweden.

The second day included presentations from representatives of all the university participants who outlined their timber-related teachings and R&D expertise, giving the workshop participants a complete picture about who is doing what in timber education in Australia.

Next, an interactive session focused on opportunities for industry and educator collaboration in research and development.

The final group discussion involved a series of roundtable discussions on R&D topics and how collaboration and coordination can deliver

**“ OPPORTUNITIES FOR INDUSTRY AND EDUCATOR COLLABORATION**



1/ General shot of the Shark Tank session at the WoodSolutions Education Program in Melbourne.  
2/ Benoit Gilbert, DAF Salisbury, Hassan Karampour, Griffith University, Varun Bharti, MiTek, and Afzal Laphir, Meyer Timber.



3/ Dylan Bray, deciBel, Eileen Newbury, FWPA, and Tony Arnel, FWPA board and Deakin University.  
4/ Andrew Leighton, FWPA, and Lisa Ottenhaus, University of Queensland.  
5/ Philip Christopher, University of Melbourne, Professor Keith Crews, Centre for Future Timber Structures, and Chris McEvoy, Radial Timber.



effective and timely R&D activities.

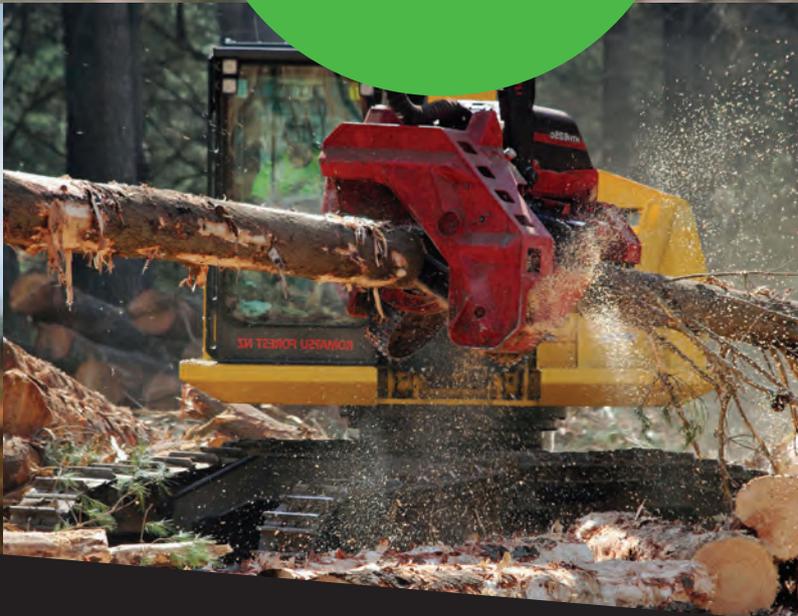
Feedback from both industry and university attendees was that the

workshop had been extremely worthwhile and a great initiative and that they were certainly looking forward to future events.

For further information on this workshop or the WoodSolutions education program contact woodard@woodsolutions.com.au



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# Small-scale harvesting trial improves prospects for fledgling NZ industry: totara most popular choice

## Low-cost farm machinery may be very significant when dealing with small-volume harvests

SOME two years ago the Totara Industry Pilot (TIP) project confirmed the financial viability of a sustainably managed farm-totara industry in Northland, New Zealand. Timber&Forestry enews caught up on the latest developments with Paul Quinlan of the Northland Totara Working Group.

Paul says totara has become one of the most popular choices of native canopy tree species being planted in new native afforestation projects.

“Many people planted manuka hoping for some income from honey production, but included totara in the mix for long-term timber potential – knowing that on most fertile soils manuka will be succeeded by taller vegetation through the processes of natural succession,” Paul said.

However, most of the totara growing in Northland is an untended resource. “Many farms have naturally regenerated trees that are of millable size, or will be within a few decades,” Paul said. “The advanced regeneration provides an opportunity to start with some sustainable harvesting now.”

He notes that previous trial harvests (conducted under the auspices of the TIP) used forestry contractors with heavy machinery. “However,



**Small-scale trial using farm-based machinery ... a 45-hp tractor with 4-tonne pulling capacity.**

these machines were often too large to comfortably negotiate tight farm gates, tracks and races, etc. without causing damage. Moreover, significant transport costs were associated with getting heavy machinery to site. This made small-volume harvest situations uneconomic.”

With that in mind, a trial involving low-cost, farm-based extraction machinery was undertaken to test the feasibility of small-volume selective harvesting – in effect, applying continuous cover forestry principles. The production/thinning operation took place on a Pamu (Landcorp Farming Ltd) property, and had a Sustainable Forest Management Plan approved by the Ministry for Primary Industries under the Forests Act.

The trial also involved milling the logs on the same property – and, later, selling the timber.

Low-impact harvesting

machinery and crews.

In the trial, poorer-formed trees were removed “to improve the mid- and long-term timber production potential of the future crop trees within the stand”.

Paul says the New Zealand Forest Service “has helpfully tried to develop a template approach for totara Sustainable Forest Management’s

plans – and I have tested this on several properties.

“The difficulties in obtaining statistically meaningful inventories and the high cost associated with these inventories remain. I’m hopeful it’s an area that can still be improved upon,” he said.

“But regulatory issues are not limited to the Forests Act. There is a risk of additional costs and time for resource consent processes if required under the Resource Management Act – for example, as a result of ambiguous rules in district plans.

“This would be a significant disincentive and add considerable uncertainty, cost, and delays. Therefore, it is essential that harvesting activities under MPI-approved SFM provisions of the Forests Act are explicitly attributed as ‘permitted activity’ in all

### ACROSS THE DITCH



With **MICHAEL SMITH**

techniques were applied, most notably directional felling (including winch-assisted felling); the use of a skidding cone to prevent logs catching on roots and stumps; and deploying snatch blocks with tree-protectors to avoid damage to the residual forest.

Paul concluded that the use of “relatively inexpensive farm machinery and equipment may be very significant when dealing with small-volume harvests”, especially in comparison with relocation costs for conventional forestry

“TRIAL ALSO INVOLVED MILLING LOGS ON THE SAME PROPERTY

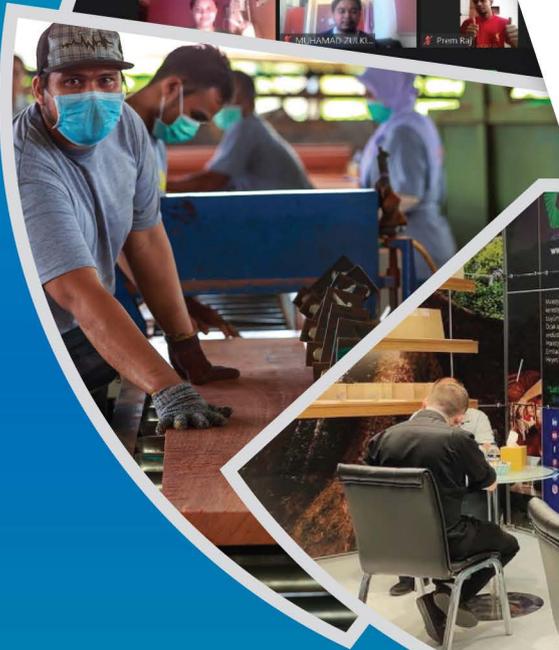
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# Vietnam in a close-up never ceases to amaze as farmers expand plantations from zero to 3m ha

THIRTY-FIVE delegates from the DANA-Gingko global woodchip and biomass trade conference in Singapore last month visited Vietnam in a post-event industry inspection to learn how more than a million farmers have transformed the southeastern Asian country's plantations from zero to more than 3 million ha.

Vietnam's estimated 2.2 million ha of Acacia hybrid trees has enabled the country to become by far the world's largest exporter of hardwood chips – in 2022 probably more than 15 million bone dried metric tonnes (compared with the second largest exporter, Australia at around 4.7 million BDMT.

In two full days delegates visited three chip mills, two wood pellet mills a nursery, harvesting operations and woodchip export ports.

Hosts included two of the world's largest woodchip production and export companies. One of them, Mihaud, has 12 woodchip mills

in Vietnam and in total (multi-country) will handle more than 2.5 million BDMT dried metric tonnes of woodchips in 2022. The other, Pisico, has 15 mills and exports 1.2 million BDMT.

"One port visited, Dung Quat will ship around 3.5million million BDMT of woodchips in 2022 – by far the largest single port export volume in the world," said tour leader Dennis Neilson.

"There is no doubt the pulp fibre plantation and the wood export trade is seriously big business in Vietnam," he said.

Neilson says in addition there is a rapidly-growing wood pellet export sector, which has grown from almost nothing five years ago to a three million GMT export business this year.

The huge increase in woodchip demand from new



**Delegates from the DANA-Gingko global woodchip and biomass trade conference in Singapore visit Da Nang a major port system located in central Vietnam at the mouth of the Han River on the east Vietnam Sea.**

Chinese pulp mill start-ups has strained even the Vietnamese logistics to cope, and FOB chip prices have increased from \$US125 per BDMT at the start of the year to over \$190.

"And, pulp logs landed at chip mills have almost doubled in 18 months to AUD110 per GMT," Neilson said. "And often this is for often for 'sticks' which would be left on the cutover of Australian eucalyptus harvesting operations."

But probably the most amazing of an amazing industry is the huge profitability of tree growing for

Vietnamese farmers. For the first time DANA and delegates were able to compile reliable and accurate data from land leasing to seedlings to establishment/ management and then to harvesting and log transport – and at the ripe old rotation age of 4-5 years.

One Australian delegate calculated that as a base case, farmers are returning 62% internal rate of return

This compares with returns to Australian pulpwood plantation growers in the Green Triangle (calculated by DANA in mid-2022) of 2-5%.

Dennis Neilson concluded: "If the Vietnamese woodchip export sector ever seriously stumbles, the Chinese pulp industry would catch such a devastating dose of "fibre supply Covid" that it would have difficulty to avoid going on life support.

From P 16

regional and district plans nationwide."

Interestingly, Paul says that planted native forests (unlike naturally regenerating stands) are exempt from the sustainable management requirements of the Act. "Owners of such forests can have them mapped and

**“ NEW ZEALAND FOREST SERVICE DEVELOPING A TEMPLATE APPROACH FOR TOTARA**



**Production thinning: active management by using harvest as a silvicultural intervention.**

certified by MPI. In fact, certification would allow them to be treated like exotic woodlots ... even clear-felled, if that's what the owners wanted.

"The difficulty comes when inter-planting into existing scrub/reversion areas, and/or sporadic, scattered edges of naturally regenerated vegetation. Mapping distinctions between planted and naturally regenerated can be difficult. Also problematic are district plan rules. For example, if a location is mapped as a 'Significant Natural Area'"

**(Part 1 in a 2-part series)**



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From P 8

“Relative to continuation of forestry in the region, the gross value of production will fall by about 99% (\$99 million a year), and direct employment will fall by about 80% (240 jobs) if the forests are managed for strict conservation and mountain biking instead.

“Condensing the analysis into a net present value hid the enormity of these differences, and the extent to which carbon value is relied on for the mountain bike recreation scenario to surpass forestry.”

Peter Rutherford said ANU carbon whistle-blower law Professor Andrew Macintosh “continues to defend a flawed economic report with a cone of silence.

“It is almost a year since a report advocating the closure of the native forest industry in southern NSW was released. SETA has repeatedly called on Macintosh and Deirdre Rose of Frontier Economics, to explain how their economic assessment can be regarded as properly researched,

**“DEFENDING FLAWED REPORT WITH A STEELY CODE OF SILENCE**



**1/ Flaws in the report totally undermines the alleged economic benefits of closing the native forest industry in southern NSW.**  
**2/ Peter Rutherford... ANU report must not be relied on by government decision-makers.**

when it contains so many fundamental flaws.”

He said documents obtained under Freedom of Information had revealed that Macintosh was the ‘agreement manager’ with responsibility for supervision of the agreement on behalf of the ANU.

Ms Rose, was responsible under the research services agreement for ensuring standards to the satisfaction of the ANU agreement manager were met.

“Despite Macintosh initially being advised of some of the more serious flaws in the report on December 9 last year, he continues to refuse to respond,” Mr Rutherford said.

In June this year, SETA



attempted to get a response from Ms Rose to a series of questions relating to the report findings. Mr Rutherford confirmed emails and phone calls to ANU Chancellor Bishop’s office have also failed to elicit a response.

ANU and Frontier Economics staff have stoutly defended their spurious findings with a steely cone of silence,” he said.

Peter Rutherford said the FOI process, which commenced in late December last year, had also been

frustrating at times. One key finding was the funding for the ANU to pay for the report amounted to just over \$80,000. Also, the funding of £44,000 had come from an anonymous donor in the UK.

Mr Rutherford said that “despite the donor agreeing to be publicly acknowledged for the donation, the ANU has chosen to keep their identity secret. This secrecy begs the question as to whether there are ulterior motives behind the donation.”

He said SETA was also curious to know why the donor would choose to have a law professor lead the production of an economic report, rather than economic experts from the ANU Research School of Economics.

Mr Rutherford said “coincidentally last week WWF Australia have released a Frontier Economics report, advocating for the closure of the whole of the NSW native forest industry.”

“SETA has simple advice to any politician or decision maker, who think they should use the report ... don’t.

“For too long, all tiers of government in Australia have accepted eco-political nonsense, instead of seeking truly expert and independent advice, when developing native forest related policy.”

## LVL turbine blades to give wind industry ‘sustainable future’

UNDER a partnership, German start-up company Voodin and Swedish firm Stora Enso will begin producing wind blades made from laminated veneer lumber.

The partners are currently completing a 20-m blade for a 0.5MW turbine near Warburg in Germany and they also have plans to produce an 80-m blade made from the material.

Stora Enso says the

partnership was devised to provide an innovative solution to replace “less environmentally-friendly materials” with renewable products made from wood.

Blades for wind turbines are typically produced with fibreglass and carbon fibre, as well as ‘energy-intensive’ plastics that cannot easily be recycled and the firms says “tens of thousands” of them end up in landfills.



The firms said that developing blades made from sustainable wood made them lighter and would reduce dependency on fossil fuels.

In addition to the high load-bearing capacity and low carbon footprint of wooden blades, another advantage was that LVL is relatively easy to transport to the site of wind farms without heavy equipment.

Earlier this year Stora Enso announced a partnership with wood technology company Modvion to produce wooden turbine towers.

# First driver drop-in day makes forest roads safer

SOFTWOOD forest growers in southern NSW and northeast Victoria have joined forces with one of their major customers Hyne Timber to host a driver safety day and start a conversation with the forestry transport industry.

All truck drivers leaving the Hyne Timber Tumbumba mill during the day pulled in for a conversation on driver wellbeing and fatigue, chain of responsibility and load construction.

"Around 45 drivers talked to forestry industry representatives on what they need to be safer on the road," HVP Plantations northern customer and haulage manager Steve Blake said.

Forest owners and managers representing around 95% of the local industry worked together to plan the event, including HVP Plantations, Forestry Corporation of NSW, Hyne Timber, PF Olsen, Southern Cross and Hume Forests.

**“FORTY-FIVE DRIVERS GET A ROAD SAFETY MESSAGE”**



**1/ Participants and organisers of the driver drop-in day.**

**2/ Josh Cummins, FCNSW, and Angela Pappin, Hyne Timber... a conversation with forest transport industry.**

"This is one of the ways we are engaging the forestry transport industry on safety and our focus is on a two-way conversation so we can target future actions," Mr Blake said.

Forestry Corporation haulage and sales manager Linda Cotterill added: "Hearing drivers' stories of working in the forest industry really bought home what a big part of our community it is and how much people care about it."



Special guest Alan Pincott from Australian Trucking Safety Services and Solutions was also on hand to talk to drivers about their needs and concerns

"It was great to see a holistic and unified approach and have the chance to meet drivers who know their stuff – the forest industry is ahead

of others in this space," he said.

Hyne Timber's green mill manager Angela Pappin was also very pleased with the day and conversations flowing from it.

"It was a great joint effort, collaboration and opportunity to listen to drivers,"

she said.

The next event is already in motion, planned for the Visy Pulp and Paper mill in early 2023, where organisers expect to engage even more of the industry, hear their feedback, and continue to collaborate and progress safety focus and support in the forestry transport sector.

A huge network of Australian roadways interconnects various parts of this vast country, and the roadways are so well-built that it has formed the backbone of the Australian infrastructure. The total area connected by Australian roadways is estimated at 913,000 km.

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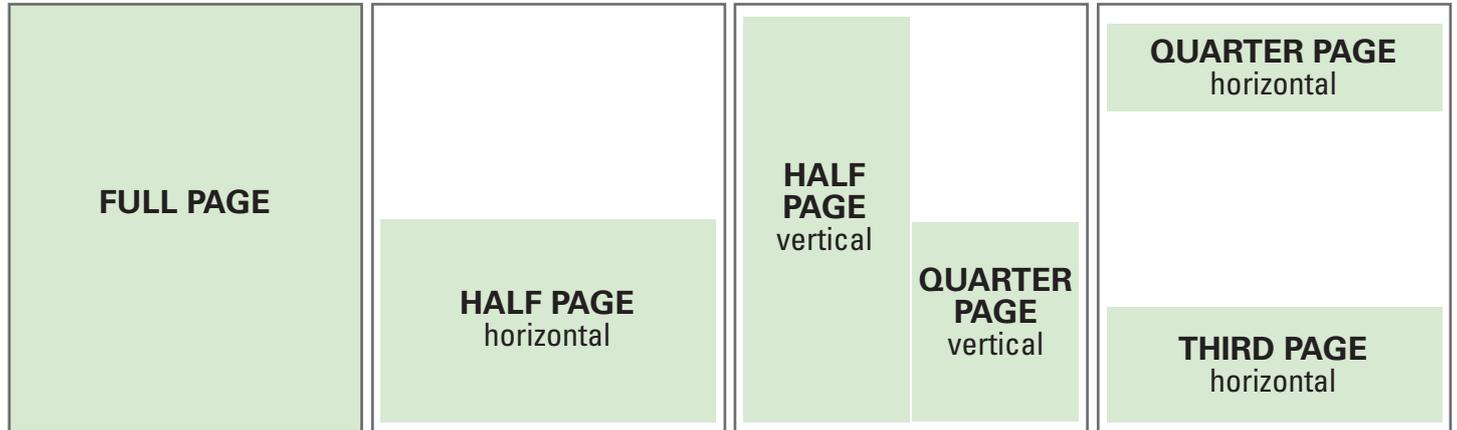
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