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## Timber trade with China returns

COVER STORY P5

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# New manager appointed for Murray Region Forestry Hub

THE Murray Region Forestry Hub (MRFH) has appointed Carlie Porteous as its new Hub Manager.

Chair of MRFH and Softwoods Working Group, Peter Crowe OAM, said Ms Porteous brings more than 12 years of experience in the forest and wood products industry to her new role.

"Carlie has been involved in most aspects of the value chain and brings a wealth of experience to her new position," Mr Crowe said.

"Her introduction to the timber industry was through Visy's fibre supply certification, where she developed and successfully implemented Visy's full supply chain Forest Stewardship Council and Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification scheme, which is still the largest certificate in the Australasia region.

"She has gone on to

represent the needs of forest contracting businesses as general manager of the Australian Forest Contractors Association, growing the business profile, engagement, and numbers considerably since her commencement.

"Carlie also has nearly 10 years of experience in the waste transport industry in multiple roles including contract management, operations, and project implementation.

"She continues to prove her investment to the industry as a voluntary member of the Board for FSC Australia and New Zealand as well as a Trustee for the Gottstein Trust."

Mr Crowe said Ms Porteous would commence in the new role in July and, together with her family, will move from Queensland to



MRFH's new manager Carlie Porteous.

Key forestry towns in the NSW part of the hub are Tumut, Batlow, Tumbarumba, Gundagai and Adelong, while in Victoria the hub centres around Corryong, Tallangatta, Myrtleford and Wangaratta.

This area contains around 170,000 hectares of softwood plantations (public and private). The

Murray Region is home to one of the largest softwood-plantation forestry industries in Australia.

Mr Crowe thanked the outgoing executive officer, Phil Clements, for his dedicated and valuable input into establishing the MRFH.

"Phil has a vast knowledge of the timber industry in the region, and he will continue in a non-executive role to contribute to the development of the MRFH," he said.

Albury later in the year.

Eleven regional forestry hubs were created under the National Forest Industries Plan to identify the constraints limiting forestry and timber industry growth.

The MRFH takes in about 3.5 million hectares east of the Hume Freeway, west of the Great Dividing Range, south of Gundagai, and includes plantations in north-east Victoria down to Lake Eildon.

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# Has a new report spelt the death knell for forestry on NZ's East Coast?

FOLLOWING major forestry 'slash damage' caused to roads, bridges, and farms on New Zealand's East Coast in 2018, several forest owners were fined for breaches of their operating licenses.

Most, or even all had since tidied up their operations, especially at harvest, but unfortunately not enough to prevent the same thing from happening again in 2023 - although with the intensity of rain at 70 millimeters per hour for several hours, it is likely that no harvesting practices could have withstood the onslaught of hundreds of millions of tonnes of raging waterways.

Indeed the damage caused was much worse this time.

And with damage occurring TWICE: Once in January and then again in February.

Cyclones Hale and the Gabriella which struck in successive months were the worst natural disasters ever to hit New Zealand, save for the 2011 Christchurch earthquake.

The cost of damage (nationwide) caused by the twin cyclones is estimated at between \$9.5 and \$14 billion.

Much of this occurred on the East Coast of the North Island, where forestry is a huge 25% of the economy, but where damage was particularly widespread.

Almost immediately there was community outrage, and a Ministerial Inquiry into the "forestry slash damage" was ordered.

Its report has just been published.

It is far-reaching and has



1/ The report has made more than 50 recommendations which would be challenging for the industry.  
2/ The Gisborne District Council in turn, says it's "extremely disappointed" by the findings.



made 50 recommendations.

If adopted, they would have a major impact on the ability of the forest industry to harvest much of its 160,000 hectares of radiata pine trees on the East Coast – certainly at break-even costs or better.

The report is brutal in its conclusions.

For instance, it states that:

1. The forestry industry has lost its social license in Tairāwhiti (Gisborne) because of a culture 'of poor practices', which the report said is, "facilitated by the Gisborne District Council's capitulation to the permissiveness of the regulatory regime ----"

2. The current land use is "unsustainable"

The Gisborne District Council in turn, says it's "extremely disappointed" by the findings and "fundamentally disagrees" with several recommendations in the report.

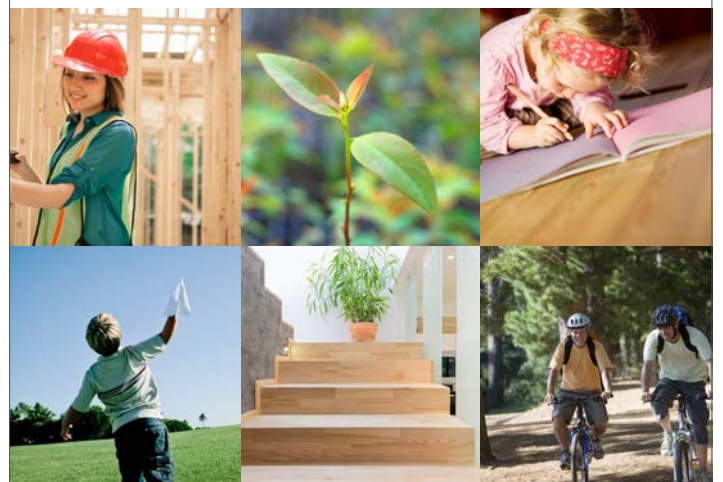
The forest industry is yet to make any definitive statements about the Report and its finding and recommendations.

However, whatever recommendations in the Report that the government decides to adopt, they will certainly mean that current

forestry practices will be significantly modified, with much less volume harvested annually.

The cost of harvesting on the East Coast will likely skyrocket – perhaps to the point that forestry will indeed become an unsustainable land use.

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“ FORESTRY PRACTICES WILL BE SIGNIFICANTLY MODIFIED

# Native logging to cease in Victoria next year

THE timeline to the end of native forest logging has been sped up with the Government announcing this week the industry will cease operation in 12 months.

In a statement, the Victorian Government said it is 'stepping in' to deliver certainty for timber workers, sawmill operators and their communities, with an expanded transition support package as part of the Victorian Budget 2023/24.

"This package removes the uncertainty that has been caused by ongoing court and litigation process and increasingly severe bushfires, with an additional \$200 million in support for workers and their families to transition away from native timber



The Victorian Government has handed a cease date in 2024.

logging earlier than planned – by 1 January 2024," the statement said.

This brings the Government's total support for the forestry transition to more than \$875 million, including existing worker support services and

investments to support the transition to plantation timber.

In 2019, the Government moved to secure a long-term and sustainable future for Victoria's forestry industry – and for the Victorian workers and communities who rely on it.

"We put forward a plan to support the sector as it transitioned, backing long-term, sustainable jobs and giving local workers confidence about their future," the statement said.

"But since then, native forestry has been hit with increasingly severe bushfires, prolonged legal action and court decisions.

"There are no alternative timber supply sources available domestically or internationally that can offset the current disruptions to supply to Victorian mills and there are no options for regulatory reform which can prevent further legal

injunctions continuing to disrupt native timber harvesting operations.

"All of that has drastically cut the timber supply we can actually use. And that's left workers in complete limbo.

"Hundreds of workers, across Victoria, haven't been able to work a day in recent months. They've got no certainty over their jobs. They don't even know when they'll be able to get back to work," the statement continued.

"We have been right there with impacted communities, providing support payments to keep workers in their jobs and paid – but the uncertainty has taken a toll on communities, families and mental health.

"It simply cannot continue."

Native timber harvesting in state forests will end in 2024 – with existing supports being brought forward and scaled up – which will mean every single timber worker will be directly supported to find a new job.

Forest contractor workers will be secured with contracts for forest management works, enabling them to continue to work in the forests they know so well and contribute to bushfire risk reduction.

"It's not good enough for us to just cross our fingers and hope for the best," Victorian Premier Daniel Andrews said.

"We need a plan to support workers, their families and support local jobs."

"That's why we're stepping up to give these workers – and their communities, businesses, and partners along the supply chain – the certainty they deserve."

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TRANSITION AWAY FROM NATIVE TIMBER LOGGING EARLIER THAN PLANNED

# Industry welcomes return of timber trade with China

The timber industry has cautiously welcomed the announcement of the return of timber trade to China

CHINA'S ban on Australian timber imports has been lifted, China's ambassador to Canberra confirmed late last week in what appears to be another sign that trade ties with Australia are slowly normalising.

In 2020, Australia's \$600 million annual timber trade with China was suspended with Beijing citing quarantine risks.

Ambassador Xiao Qian told reporters in Canberra last Thursday morning, the import ban had now been lifted.

"Yesterday, the Chinese Customs have formally notified the Australian Minister of Agriculture that, starting from today, China will resume import of Australian timbers," he said.

"That is a conclusion [come to] after a serious study based on the materials provided by the Australian side."

He said that was related to the quarantine of timbers, and they "have satisfied the



**Bryan Hayes says he hopes there is a return in jobs.** Photo image via ABC

conditions of the Chinese Customs".

"There are also other issues on the table," Mr Xiao said.

"The momentum is positive. Both sides agreed to sit down and talk about their differences."

The restoration of timber imports comes a month after Australia agreed to suspend its appeal to the World Trade Organization over Chinese government tariffs on Australian barley.

According to the ABC, that



**Joel Fitzgibbon has cautiously welcomed the announcement.**

agreement came just before the international body was due to hand down a finding over the dispute.

"While Mr Xiao maintained that China's ban was a purely regulatory measure, Australian officials say it was clearly part of a broader campaign of economic punishment orchestrated by Beijing in

“THE MOMENTUM IS POSITIVE

2020 when the relationship was mired in acrimony," the ABC said.

The ambassador also linked trade blocks to the broader political relationship during his press conference, saying that "as we improve our relationship the people in China have more and more favourable attitudes towards Australia, and equally to Australian products".

There has been a cautious, yet positive response from within the timber industry.

Australian Forest Products Association (AFPA) chief executive Joel Fitzgibbon said the industry was pleased by the announcement.

"We welcome the news of China's decision to lift its quarantine ban that will allow the export trade of timber logs to resume. China has been and will continue to be an important market for Australian timber and wood fibre export products. When

Cont P 6

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fibre export products. When the ban came into effect more than two years ago it caused a great deal of upheaval and uncertainty for many timber exporters and the broader forest sector and this resolution is welcomed," Joel Fitzgibbon said.

"AFPA and log exporters have worked closely with the Albanese Government, especially Trade Minister Don Farrell, and the former Coalition Government on this issue, and we thank them for their efforts helping to resolve the quarantine issues that China faced importing logs from Australia."

China voiced phytosanitary concerns and the Commonwealth worked on a range of measures including increased inspections of log consignments, monitoring during fumigation, re-inspections after fumigation,



Trade was suspended in 2020 with Beijing citing quarantine issues.

and increased audits for all log exporters.

"I look forward to normalisation of trade relations with regards to the timber log trade and AFPA will work closely with our impacted members, other stakeholders and the Commonwealth to ensure a smooth transition back to normal trade following today's decision," Joel

Fitzgibbon concluded.

Chair of the Tasmanian Forest Products Association, Bryan Hayes, said the ambassador's announcement sounded like a positive development "at first blush".

"I guess we'll wait to see the detail because, you know, it's one thing to hear a political announcement, it's another to see what actually transpires on the ground in a commercial sense," Mr Hayes said.

Mr Hayes was the chief executive of log exporter Forico at the time of the trade ban and he told the ABC 100 people lost their jobs.

While some sawn timber was still able to get to Chinese markets, whole-round log exports were banned.

"I would hope that those jobs come back and the people are able to resume,

but people are a little bit gun shy – there are a few battle scars from that sudden announcement [in 2020] and there was a huge disruption to businesses and people's lives," he said.

Mr Hayes added it would be expensive for some companies to re-engage with China and take a risk to set up the logistics and supply chains again.

"I know a number of them have looked for and found alternative markets and even onshore processing, because, ideally, we'd like to be doing more onshore processing and manufacturing here in Australia rather than exporting raw materials across to value add somewhere else," he said.

Karen Stephens, president of Timber Towns Victoria, which represents local government and the forestry sector, told the ABC there would be "lots of celebrations".

However, she said there would also be some caution.

"The timber industry was reliant on the huge contracts with China to supply timber, but the import ban did make the [industry] rethink," she said.

"So they have found new markets. So it could be a very interesting playing field now for China," she said.



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**28-2 June: International Research Group (IRG) on Wood Protection – Cairns, QLD.** The IRG is the world's peak world body on timber durability research and will be hosting more than 250 researchers from 30-40 countries to discuss new developments in the field. Information about the conference and registration is available at: [www.irg-wp.com/IRG54/index.html](http://www.irg-wp.com/IRG54/index.html)

**31-1 Doing Timber Business in Queensland Symposium & Field Tour – Brisbane.** The 4th Biennial symposium Doing Timber Business in Queensland 2023: Preparation, Opportunity, Success will delve into where growth potential for Queensland's forest and timber industry is most likely to occur. This special event will commence with an industry research and development tour on 31 May, followed by a symposium and networking event on 1 June. For more information [admin@timberqueensland.com.au](mailto:admin@timberqueensland.com.au)

**JUNE**

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**18-20: Malaysian Wood Expo – Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.** Malaysian Timber Council, International Wood & Woodworking Expo. For further information see: [www.malaysianwoodexpo.com.my](http://www.malaysianwoodexpo.com.my) or email: [info@malaysianwoodexpo.com.my](mailto:info@malaysianwoodexpo.com.my)

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**AUGUST**

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

**SEPTEMBER**

**11-12: Timber Off-Site Construction Conference – Crown Promenade Melbourne.** The theme for 2023 is "Timber & Technology – The Zero Carbon Future". For more information visit [www.timberoffsiteconstruction.com](http://www.timberoffsiteconstruction.com)

**OCTOBER**

**15-19: ANZIF Conference: Embracing our natural capital: The science, technology, and art of managing forests for all values – Twin Towns Conference Centre, Coolangatta, Queensland.** Further details from Forestry Australia at: <https://www.forestry.org.au/>

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# Green School New Zealand Kina lives up to its name

BY MICHAEL SMITH

AMONG the outstanding projects shortlisted for this year's New Zealand Institute of Architects local awards (Education category, Western branch) is Green School New Zealand Kina by BOON.

Timber & Forestry eNews invited Kyle Arnold, associate director at BOON, to describe various aspects of the build – and, in particular, the myriad advantages of constructing in wood.

Located in an idyllic rural setting between Mt Taranaki and the Tasman Sea, Green School New Zealand focuses on environmental awareness – empowering



Green School shell under construction. Main contractor: Livingstone Building. Photo: Tania Niwa

pupils “to grow up with sustainability and social responsibility at the forefront of their minds”.

Mr Arnold says the

design continues the visual impact of phase one of the project (completed in 2021) – modern, soft forms and curiosity-invoking objects

found in the landscape.

“The design brief for the junior school required particular experiential qualities that would cater to new arrivals and the younger students at the school – to be welcoming and nurturing. We explored various cluster forms found in nature, like interlocking hexagons of beehives, and radiating leaf and flower shapes.

“It became clear that the enclosed circular form with a central courtyard and sheltered outdoor learning space was common to each of the geometric systems we looked at. The functional

Cont P 9



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**The architects were inspired by various cluster forms found in nature.**

Photo: Charlotte Curd

From P 8

program was then distributed around the circumference with access via the courtyard and axial outlook to the hills, river and campus surroundings.

“As the design developed and we explored radial curves on the circular plan, the kina metaphor [New Zealand sea urchin] took hold. We embraced the form and patterns associated with this ubiquitous feature of coastal Aotearoa, and its role as traditional sustenance/kai moana for tangata whenua [people of the land].”

The focal point of the kina design is the curved glulam members – comprising 24 curved portals, several complex eyebrow members, and curved purlins and battens.

Other prominent wood elements include a plywood-enclosed primary shell; New Zealand beech decking; Accoya window and door joinery; and internal cladding comprised of macrocarpa weatherboards.

Mr Arnold says the curved

“SUSTAINABILITY AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY IS AT THE FOREFRONT OF MINDS

members were manufactured offsite, but assembled in situ. “When Covid was not a factor the delivery and assembly was surprisingly quick ... given the perceived complex arrangement of the timber structures.

“Importantly, a big part of the design allowed for repetition, which also ensured the contractor could make up time as their expertise developed with each assembled section.”

He adds that the carbon sequestration ability of mass timber was an important driver of the project – “and very much the logic we applied to the first stage of Green School NZ”.

The design allowed for the negligible use of concrete – reserved for the four foundation blocks of the atrium arches.

“All other foundations were driven timber piles, further minimising the project’s emissions and carbon count,” Mr Arnold said.

A spokesperson for TimberLab (engaged to manufacture the glulam members) says the mass timber “acts as a natural humidity buffer, creating a healthy learning environment for the students by absorbing moisture when it’s wet and

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From P 9

releasing it again when it's dry".

Mr Arnold says "the high level of thermal insulation integrated with the internal moisture barrier is further enhanced by an acoustic insulation layer. Given the energy-efficient hydronic heating and heat exchange ventilation systems, this building will consume an absolute minimum of electrical energy over



**The central courtyard's curved shapes "create an atmosphere that supports alternative thinking".** Photo: Charlotte Curd

its lifespan."

He also notes that limiting the use of adhesives and sealants will reduce the release of VOCs (volatile organic compounds) into the environment, and allow for building disassembly, reuse, and recycling at end of life.

"Building waste is a massive legacy issue for the construction sector, so to complete a project that seeks to address the issue very much aligns with BOON's driving values," he said.

## 496 wildfires rip through Alberta, Canada

A LARGE plume of smoke is blowing across North America as wildfires burning across western Canada force thousands of people to evacuate their homes.

So far fires have burned about 478,000 hectares, or 1,800 square miles, across Alberta, British Columbia and Saskatchewan — 10 times the average area burned for this time of year, according to the NASA Earth Observatory.

Approximately 90 fires are burning in the province of Alberta, a quarter of which are expected to get larger, according to the Canadian Wildland Fire Information System. So far than 20,000 people have had to evacuate their homes.

The fires have had a notable impact on the region's oil industry, as some drillers were forced to halt a small percentage of production in a precautionary measure due

to shifting fire conditions. According to CNBC, this week, benchmark Canadian heavy crude prices tightened to multi-month highs over concerns about the blazes.

Nearly 2.7 million barrels of daily oil sands production in Alberta is in "very high" or "extreme" wildfire danger zones, according to Rystad Energy, an energy consulting firm.

"We are in unprecedented

drought conditions," said Scott Rennick, the incident commander at the North Peace Complex, who noted that aggressive fire behavior is occurring amid higher-than-average temperatures.

The Canadian military and firefighters from Canada and the U.S. are working to combat the blazes, but changes in wind direction that switch the path of the blazes could create problems for responders.



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# Carlie Porteous steps back from AFCA

FOLLOWING on the announcement of a new position for Carlie Porteous (see page 2), with a forward focus on the strategic opportunities and operational challenges for forest contracting businesses, peak body Australian Forest Contractors Association (AFCA) is restructuring.

“AFCA has experienced considerable growth in its membership base,” says Adan Taylor, Chair AFCA.

“To continue advocating on behalf of members to improve their business outcomes as well as the

sustainability of our working forests the AFCA board is establishing two new positions that will replace the existing General Manager role.”

In the first instance, leveraging the work of current General Manager Carlie Porteous, the new General Manager – Policy and Engagement will continue developing policies and strengthening relationships with State and Federal Ministers on matters of importance for AFCA members. This also includes key stakeholder engagement and partnerships with other industry bodies and associations.

Secondly, reporting to the new General Manager role, the Manager – Member Services and Programs will



Adan Taylor, Chair AFCA says they will replace the GM role.

focus on the professional programs and training that AFCA provides for the benefit of its members. They will be responsible for the coordination and establishment of working groups that are addressing such issues as staff shortages, rising costs and contract fairness. Importantly

they will also focus on delivering tangible value-add inclusions for members.

“We appreciate Carlie’s support during the recruitment process and transition period; and congratulate her on her new role as the Manager, Murray Region Forestry Hub and the Softwoods Working Group,” says Mr Taylor.

Ms Porteous will continue in her role until 30 June, and then afterwards, provide strategic oversight for a day a week during the transition period to “bed in” the new roles and ensure the new AFCA team engages successfully with members, sponsors and partners.

“AFCA HAS EXPERIENCED CONSIDERABLE GROWTH

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# Cliff-hugging house named 'home of the year'

SPOTTED gum timber cladding is a key feature of the house being described by Housing Industry Association (HIA) judges as 'a once-in-a-lifetime build'.

The cliff-hugging home by Tasmanian builder Lane Group Construction has been named the 2023 HIA-CSR Australian Home of the Year – the highest residential building award bestowed each year by HIA.

The winners of the 2023 HIA-CSR Australian Housing Awards were unveiled before 550 industry leaders at the prestigious awards ceremony held as the final night of the HIA 2023 National Conference on Hamilton Island.

The spectacular single-level winning home is anchored to its windswept, bushland



**Spotted Gum cladding was a key feature in the award-winning build.**

location by a series of heavysset stone pavilions.

An abundance of floor-length glass windows create a serene atmosphere for the owners and their guests to enjoy, connecting them to the magnificent, rugged coastline of the Derwent River from all

public and private living areas.

Burnished caramel concrete floors and spotted gum timber cladding serve to perfectly match the earthy tones of the expertly wrought stonework featured so prominently in the home, while the cantilevered indoor/outdoor infinity pool, spa and sauna are an indulgent addition to this entertainer's domain.

The home also won HIA Australian Custom Built Home, partnered by ActronAir.

HIA's managing director Graham Wolfe said the HIA-CSR Australian Housing Awards recognise the best in Australia's residential building industry.

"HIA is committed to recognising the outstanding achievements of our members. The HIA-CSR Australian Housing Awards allow us to acknowledge their skill and their commitment to quality in design, material selection and construction. Our Awards' program brings together members who excel in building exceptional homes, kitchens and bathrooms and run highly successful businesses.

"HIA Award winners build with exceptional workmanship; demonstrated in projects that push the boundaries

in design and innovation. It is my absolute pleasure to congratulate each winner for their hard work and commitment to excellence," Mr Wolfe added.

The HIA-CSR Australian Housing Awards recognise exceptional projects, businesses and people from all around Australia.

Apprentice Bethany Mercieca from NSW was named the HIA Jim Brookes Australian Apprentice of the Year for a strong work ethic and dedication to her craft. She has built meaningful relationships with co-workers, suppliers and clients through excellent communication. The category is partnered by Stratco.

A sophisticated restoration and addition of a heritage-listed bluestone residence by Victorian builder BCG Constructions won HIA Australian Renovation / Addition Project, partnered by COLORBOND steel.

The home is a breathtaking fusion of old-world glamour and ultramodern elegance.

There were a number of other award winners acknowledged during the event including: Western Australia's Ultimo Constructions named HIA Australian Professional Small Builder / Renovator for the fourth time. Craig Linke Bespoke Building from South Australia took out the HIA Australian Kitchen of the Year and Hunter Valley builder Greenbuild Constructions won HIA Australian Bathroom of the Year.

The HIA-CSR Australian Housing Awards are the ultimate platform to showcase the talents of the nation's top builders and designers.

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# Timber supply at centre of housing crisis in Harbour City

**Australia's horror housing market is set to continue with extreme pain hitting renters and the shortage of homes set to drag out for years.**

RURAL folk have endured fires, floods, and pestilence continuously it seems in recent years, but it's all becomes a bit of a ho-hum for the city-centric media.

However, when an issue for the pampered darlings in Sin City emerges the media really get excited.

Perhaps too boring those country bumkins? despite that rural folk and industries just happen to have been, and continue to be, the engine room of the nation's economy.

Therefore, an absence of rental properties in Sydney and rental prices skyrocketing has become a tragedy.

The underlying issue; a housing shortage, and of course, behind that, as we out here know too well, is the ability of the country to supply timber products so houses can be built for the poor, 'hard-done-by' Sydneysiders.

"There's no debate on the need – everyone agrees housing affordability is Sydney's greatest immediate threat," said Gabriel Metcalf the former head of the Committee for Sydney.

According to The National Housing Finance and Investment Corporation (NHFIC), the horror housing market is set to continue with



**A combination of increased costs and investment well below what is needed in a typical year of population growth will mean that the shortage of housing will continue to get worse.**

extreme pain hitting renters and the shortage of homes set to drag out for years. An alarming new report has revealed that there will be a serious shortage of homes across Australia by 2027 as a result of skyrocketing interest rates, soaring immigration, a lack of building capacity, and community opposition to development.

Meanwhile, the Centre for Population estimates net overseas migration to increase by 268,000 a year between 2022 and 2024, with recent data suggesting that this could be considerably higher – adding to the pain already felt in the housing market.

The country is already facing challenges in housing conditions, with rental

for its \$10 billion Housing Australia Future Fund. Anyway, experts have warned that the Government is set to fall well short of its goal of building one million homes over the next five years.

Tim Reardon, Housing Industry Association chief economist, said that the under-

supply of housing is set to worsen as demand continues to outpace supply.

"Every state and territory needs to take action to attract more investment in the housing sector to improve the supply of new homes," he said.

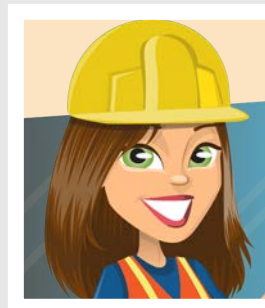
So, a major housing crisis has developed in Sydney, and in other major cities.

A common essential ingredient is an availability of building product supplies – notably timber. And on this issue governments and the media are silent.

Enews will be continuing to explore the timber supply situation during the year – stay tuned.

See you again next month.  
Cheryl

## TRUNK LINES



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vacancies sitting below one percent, a construction sector in crisis with major players collapsing, and costs soaring, while bad weather has also contributed to the delay in building up to 30,000 homes in 2022.

Yet, there is little relief in sight as the Federal Government is struggling to find support in the Senate

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# No takeaway - chopsticks recycled to home furniture

ARMED with the mindset that one man's trash is another man's treasure, businessman Felix Böck built a company centered around an item that's commonly thrown away: the wooden chopstick.

Böck's company, ChopValue, has a simple concept: upcycle used chopsticks into fashionable and functional pieces of home decor and furniture. As of April 3, 7-year-old ChopValue has recycled 100 million chopsticks to build everything from coasters to desks, according to an announcement posted on Twitter.

ChopValue started in Vancouver, Canada, but now has facilities in cities around the world, including Bali, Boston, Las Vegas, Mexico City, Singapore and more. Each location has a microfactory, a small factory established via a franchise program that helps minimize the costs and environmental impacts of shipping materials and products for processing and construction to one large central facility, Fast Company reports.

**“OUR GOALS ARE TO MAKE MONEY AND BE CARBON NEUTRAL**

Böck told Apartment Therapy the idea for ChopValue came to him back in 2016 while he was enjoying sushi at a restaurant in Vancouver. He started thinking about how many pairs of chopsticks get



**ChopValue has recycled more than 100 million chopsticks to build everything from desks to cutting boards.**

tossed each day. After doing some research, the numbers shocked him.

“In Vancouver alone, we're throwing out 100,000 chopsticks a day,” he said in the interview.

“They're traveling 6,000 or 7,000 miles from where they're manufactured in Asia to end up on our lunch table for 30 minutes.”

And that's only a fraction

of the single-use chopsticks that get used and discarded around the world each year. Approximately 80 billion pairs are made and exported to restaurants globally. This mass consumption of single-use chopsticks has environmental impacts such as deforestation and massive landfill consumption.

“Our two main goals are to make money and be carbon neutral, and we are proving

that there are solutions out there to do that,” Böck told Globalshakers.com.

So, how do you make beautiful furniture out of old chopsticks?

Evelyn Hew, co-owner of the ChopValue microfactory in Singapore explained the company's partnership with local restaurants — which enables it to collect up to 99,000 pairs of chopsticks each week — to Yahoo News.

“Our team provides them the convenience of free collection and recycling bins for chopsticks,” Hew said.

“This reduces their waste and trips to waste collection points.”

Once the chopsticks arrive at the local microfactory, they go through a rigorous preparation process, including sterilization and then reformulation into pressed wooden tiles. These tiles get assembled into the products the company sells in its shops and online.

Böck hopes his business model inspires others to find ways to upcycle commonly disposed items from restaurants and other locations.

“I think change starts small, and change can be a very relatable thing that we all know from daily life,” Böck told Apartment Therapy.

“Right now, we're focusing on the chopstick because it's a very powerful story, but I think there are so many other urban resources where we can make this work.”

**Source: Simplemost**



**Elaine from ChopValue picking up your used chopsticks at a cafe to upcycle**



# AFPA welcomes new forest partnership

THE Australian Forest Products Association (AFPA) welcomes Agriculture Minister Murray Watt's announcement establishing a new Strategic Forest and Renewable Materials Partnership to work with the Albanese Government on issues facing the forest products sector, Chief Executive Officer of AFPA Joel Fitzgibbon said today.

Co-chaired by AFPA Chair Diana Gibbs and CFMEU Manufacturing Secretary Michael O'Connor, the Partnership aims to help the Government achieve its own goals around climate, the environment, and sovereign capability through engagement with

all relevant stakeholders.

A total of 15 representatives from across the industry, unions, indigenous, environmental and other stakeholder groups will sit on the Strategic Partnership to advise, consult and cooperate with the Government on plans to ensure the sector realises its full potential and to further enhance its role in addressing climate change and building sovereign capability in the resourcing and manufacture of sustainable and renewable timber and wood fibre products.

"Today I thank the Government and Minister Watt for fulfilling a key pre-election commitment by announcing this new Strategic Partnership. With the right strategy and government guidance, the forest products sector can employ more people, make



**Agriculture Minister Murray Watt's announced the establishment of a new Strategic Forest and Renewable Materials Partnership to work with the Albanese Government.**



**AFPA Chair Diana Gibbs also welcomed the collaboration.**

a larger contribution to the economy, make more things here and play an even greater role in addressing the climate change," Joel Fitzgibbon said.

AFPA Chair Diana Gibbs also welcomed the collaboration the Strategic Partnership will provide.

"This is an exciting opportunity for all voices to support the important role of the forest products sector in Australia's future. Not just of course for the climate and achieving sovereign capability, but also in providing employment and value-adding in the regions," Diana Gibbs said.

"I truly believe we have a key role providing sustainable products to replace plastics and carbon-intensive building materials and it will be exciting to get the Partnership operating to help achieve the outcomes we all need," Diana Gibbs concluded.

**"PARTNERSHIP AIMS TO HELP THE GOVERNMENT ACHIEVE ITS OWN GOALS"**



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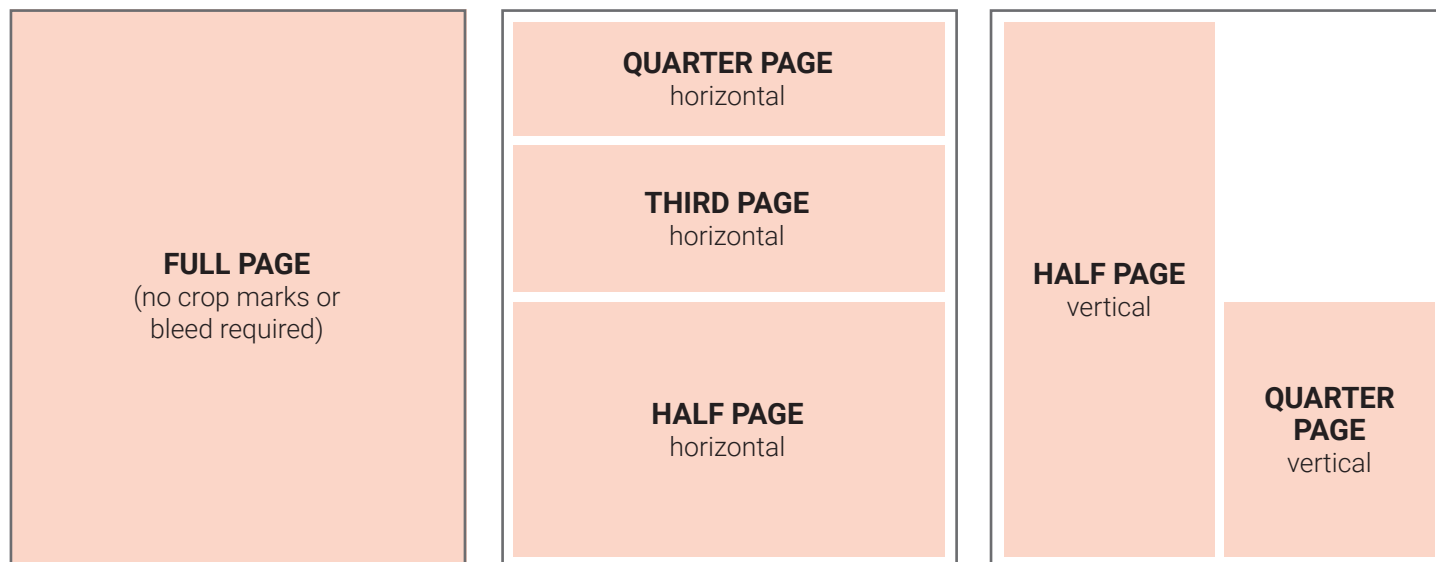
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