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COVER STORY P 5



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Mechlog plants 'seed' with new forestry training programme

MechLog, a leading provider of forestry services, has announced the launch of Skills Enhancement & Employee Development, a new training programme aimed at improving the skills of people entering the forestry industry in Australia and Tasmania. The programme also aims to assist the industry to attract younger people, and those from similar industries, to consider a career in the forest harvesting sector.

Speaking about the new Skills Enhancement & Employee Development (SEED) programme, MechLog's CEO, Ms Jillian Aylett Brown, said SEED is set to revolutionise the way new entrants to the forestry industry are trained. With a focus on younger participants, SEED is an innovative, customised training programme designed to support successful learning outcomes and create career development opportunities for new entrants to the industry.

"MechLog is excited to launch our Skills Enhancement & Employee Development programme. SEED is designed to improve the skills of people entering the forestry industry as well as assist the forestry



The Skills Enhancement & Employee Development programme (SEED) is designed to improve the skills of people entering the forestry industry as well as assist the forestry sector to attract new talent.

sector to attract new talent. With an ageing workforce and increasing demand for timber products, it is crucial that we invest in training and development to ensure a sustainable future for the industry," Ms Aylett Brown said.

"We believe that SEED will play a crucial role in addressing the skills gap in the forestry sector and assist MechLog to attract new talent to the company. It is an exciting time to be involved in forestry, with new technologies and innovations creating opportunities for growth and sustainability.

"SEED is offered to new employees pursuing a career in harvesting operations with MechLog, including school leavers and those looking to transition from other industries.

"While places are limited, we are always interested in hearing from suitably capable applicants who are interested in joining the MechLog team. Successful recruits will have the opportunity to gain nationally recognised qualifications in forestry, including a Certificate III in Forestry Operations. Trainees are provided with on-the-job training by industry

professionals on forestry equipment dedicated to training to ensure that their theory work has context with its practical real-world application.

"SEED is an advanced training concept that combines technical training and life-skills education to support and improve the learning experience and outcomes for new entrants to the forestry industry," she continued.

"The life skills programme is delivered alongside the forest operations qualification of a Certificate III in Forest Operations, ensuring that SEED trainees receive a comprehensive and well-rounded education. SEED also represents MechLog's commitment to safety, personal development, and enhancing skills and knowledge, with a focus on providing a targeted approach to developing a well-trained workforce for the forestry sector.

"MechLog has been delivering successful training outcomes to the forestry industry since 1994, and the

Cont P.3



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Sustainable forestry to play a part as plastics phased out

AUSTRALIA'S sustainable native and plantation forest industries are the resource solution to creating renewable everyday products from grocery bags to coffee cups, as the globe looks to phase out harmful plastic products, Acting chief executive officer of the Australian Forest Products Association (AFPA) Natasa Sikman said last week.

"Federal Environment Minister Tanya Plibersek has a leading role in developing an international agreement to end plastic pollution by 2040 which is highly commendable given the hazardous nature of many everyday plastics. It was shocking to hear from the Minister that microplastics and chemicals from plastics are turning up in the human bloodstream, in organs, in breastmilk and in the placenta," Natasa Sikman said.

"The sustainable forest sector is playing a positive role in displacing so many plastic-based everyday items with timber and fibre alternatives because they are better for the environment and our climate.

"The question the federal and state governments need to address is – if state-based native forest industries in Victoria and WA are being closed down combined with a declining plantation estate,

where will all the timber and wood fibre come from in the future to create these essential products Australians want and need?

"When you sustainably harvest native forests not only do you get the premium timber products like flooring, furniture and benchtops but the parts of the tree not suitable for sawn timber are and can be used for plastics replacements.

"We are talking about things like paper shopping bags, packaging products and cutlery – anything and everything that's made from wood fibre that has previously been made from harmful plastics," Ms Sikman continued.

"The sad answer is, the timber and wood fibre will be imported, and increasingly from places that don't have the rigid environmental regulations and sustainable forest management practices like Australia and are prone to deforestation. We have a world-class sustainable forest products sector here and it stands ready to do

“THE SUSTAINABLE FOREST SECTOR IS PLAYING A POSITIVE ROLE

managers within our own company and with other forestry companies. We believe that SEED will continue this tradition of excellence and produce a new generation of skilled and motivated forestry professionals," Ms Aylett Brown said.



AFPA's Natasa Sikman says Australia needs to keep our sustainable native forest industries open.

more, not only to boost our sovereign capability and keep communities strong, but also to lead the world in best practice for the climate and environment by ending plastics pollution earlier than 2040.

"Australia needs to keep our sustainable native forest industries open, and we also need one billion new timber production trees planted to allow us to meet future demand for timber and wood fibre products.

"Australia's push for the world to phase out harmful plastics here and around the world will make us healthier and help the environment, but without sustainable timber and fibre supplies, the transition will be difficult to achieve. To phaseout harmful plastics properly we need strong and sustainable supplies of timber and wood fibre in Australia," Natasa Sikman concluded.

The united voice for Australia's forest industries



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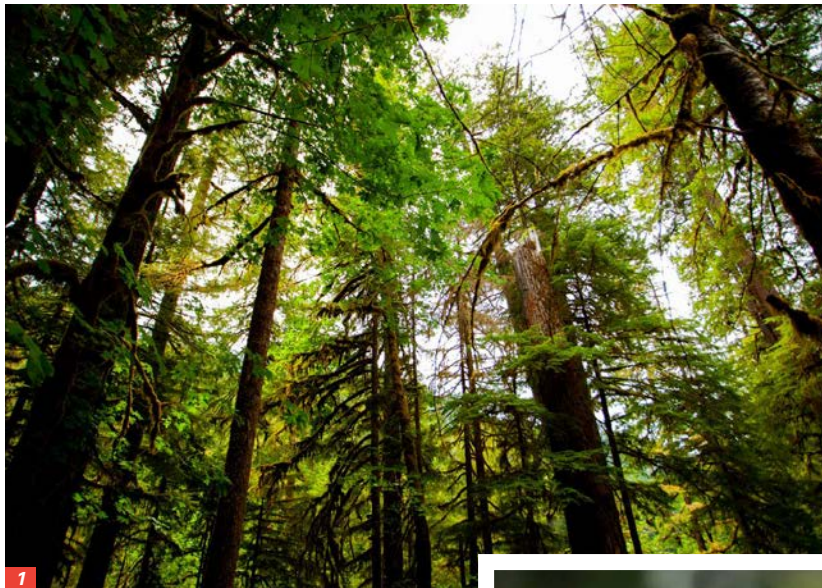
From P 2

SEED philosophy is shaped by the company's own observations and experiences. "Many of the forestry professionals we have trained over the years have advanced to become supervisors and

Forestry Australia agrees; resource is 'too important'

Blanket bans of native forest harvesting will not improve our carbon balance or recover biodiversity according to the professional association for forest scientists, growers and managers, Forestry Australia (FA).

FA President Dr Michelle Freeman said the consensus position of independent scientific experts, forest managers and researchers is that active management of forests is required to maintain forest health, mitigate fire risk,



1

1/ A spotlight has been placed on the need for forestry following the recent Victorian ban.

2/ FA President Dr Michelle Freeman... there will be many negative consequences in light of this decision.

actually risk our forests at a time when their key threats – bushfire, invasive species and climate change – are still increasing.

Additionally, the rapid exit of specialist skills, experience, knowledge and equipment from the forest management space is reducing our capacity to implement effective forest management plans and mitigate or respond effectively to bushfire emergencies.

“The serious implications of this cannot be overstated, and urgent investment in strategies to retain these people and implement strategic management programs is needed.

“In addition, a significant increase in imports of timber from overseas is already occurring – representing increased carbon emissions, reduced oversight of the sustainability of management practices yielding those products, and a shirking of our moral and ethical responsibility to meet local demand locally.

“Simply ending native forest timber harvesting will not act to solve the complex challenges facing our forests, nor act to meet society’s needs.

“These issues are too important to let politics and ideology drive decision-making.

“We need a strategy for the ongoing management of forests – one that is based on genuine science, the aspirations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and the collective knowledge and lived experiences of the people who have dedicated their lives to evidence-based care for our forests,” Dr Freeman said.



2

conserve biodiversity and maximise carbon outcomes.

“Although on face-value decisions to end native forest harvesting may appear to be a win for the environment, Victoria and Western Australia are now facing a range of unintended negative consequences,” Dr Freeman said.

“These decisions have been made without clear alternate strategies or funding for the active management and monitoring that is required. Passive approaches will

“THERE ARE A RANGE OF UNINTENDED NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES

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A DEVELOPMENT in the timber world is revolutionising construction for those in fire-prone areas across Australia with ITI and Wood Modification Technologies collaborating on a new product, FLAMEfixx dFx.

The recently developed treated pine timber product is the world's first combined wood preservative [H3] & Flame Retardant Treated Wood [FRTW] product that provides total protection against termites (insects), fungal decay, mould, rot and fire (BAL-40).

"The development of BAL-rated timbers was achieved via the patented dFx® process that was able to impregnate the wood substrate with a flame retardant and through Warrington Fire testing facility



FLAMEfixx dFx® is the product of collaboration between ITI Australia and Wood Modification Technologies.

(Melbourne) were able to meet the AS1530.8.1 (for BAL-40), the highest Bushfire Attack Level rating," managing director of Wood Modification Technologies, Ron Moon said.

dFx® is patented, industry-leading technology that

“ PROVIDES TOTAL PROTECTION INCLUDING FIRE (BAL-40)

combines a globally approved, durable wood preservative and a proprietary fire-retardant fx into a single working solution.

Once the timber is impregnated with the dFx® solution, the active ingredients are fixed in the wood for the life span of the timber.

The fire-retardant component of FLAMEfixx dFx® is based on inorganic natural ingredients that don't contain hydrocarbon

or carbon. This results in low smoke generation levels during combustion in a bushfire, wildfire or fire situation.

FLAMEfixx dFx® products have been extensively tested to ensure optimal protection against Australian Bush fires. FLAMEfixx dFx® timber products meet the

requirements of BAL-40 set out in the Australian Standard AS 3959-2018 "Construction of buildings in bushfire-prone areas."

The development of the product opens up the option for timber products to be used in BAL 29 and BAL 40 builds meaning timber flooring, decking and more are now available.

Cont P 6

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From P 5

“Currently FLAMEfixx dFx® has introduced 3 main product categories into the Australian market, decking, screening, joists & bearers,” Ron continued.

“The market response to FLAMEfixx dFx® (since 2019 launch) has to date been good with a strong demand, especially with the sub-floors (joists & bearers).

“FLAMEfixx dFx® (BAL40) full weatherboard system, is planned for a 2024 launch, which will provide an extensive outdoor range with other products to follow,” he said.

“All FLAMEfixx dFx® products meet BAL-40 and

are CodeMark certified (CM70124) through Bureau Veritas (BV), ensuring all product/process compliances are being met.”

Ron said the for FLAMEfixx® dFx® right from the beginning, the key focus has been to develop natural wood products that provide

both future sustainable & environmental solutions.

These included the following;

- Material (Wood) had to be renewable, store carbon (sequestration), has a much lower carbon footprint than other main primary building materials.
- Energy Efficient - Wood is more energy efficient than other primary building materials - steel, concrete, plastic, fibre cement all

requiring large amounts of energy to produce.

- Health, Safety & Environmental (HSE) – in FLAMEfixx dFx® the flame retardant is an inorganic metal oxide that has no carbon or hydrocarbon present and hence generates virtually no black smoke on combustion (bushfire). Smoke is the number 1. cause of bushfire fatalities. Further FLAMEfixx dFx® HSE advantages include producing extremely low Flame Spread values plus having no adverse environmental issues with clean air emissions & residual ash.

- Technology - the dFx® process technology is water-based, non-toxic & recyclable

FLAMEfixx dFx® is harvested from plantation-grown radiata pine forests that are continuously replenished.

On the cover: In a world first, FLAMEfixx dFx® is a treated pine treated and tested for BAL 29 and 40 suitable for use in bushfire prone areas.



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Late Wellington councillor honoured with posthumous Order of Australia

FORMER Wellington Shire Councillor, the late councillor Malcolm Hole, has been awarded a posthumous Order of Australia for his service to local government, and to the community.

The honour was handed down in the King’s Birthday Awards on Monday.

Cr Hole’s Order of Australia recognition acknowledges his work across local government, including the Municipal Association of Victoria and Rural Councils Victoria, National Timber Councils Australia, Timber Towns Victoria, the Association of Apex Clubs, and the widespread impact he had

on the local timber industry in Heyfield.

Wellington Shire Council said Cr Hole was a tenacious and passionate councillor, offering steadfast leadership to his community up until his passing in 2021.

“This prestigious honour is a testament to his dedication and contributions to Wellington Shire.”

“Cr Hole’s legacy continues to be felt throughout the local community, as the Heyfield native timber industry continues to grapple with its early closure, and what this will mean for hundreds of timber families.”

JUNE

11-17: WoodSolutions 2023 six-day Study Tour – Falkenberg, Sweden, to Oslo, Norway (by luxury coach).

WoodSolutions will be hosting a select group of architects, engineers, developers and building professionals on Timber Construction Study Tour to Sweden and Norway. The tour is scheduled to take place ahead of the World Conference of Timber. Get ready for six days and six nights of outstanding inspiration, information and fun as you travel from Falkenberg, Sweden to Oslo, Norway. Your tour leaders are Andrew Dunn, timber engineer and CEO of the Timber Development Association and

Eileen Newbury, Head of the WoodSolutions Program. For more information visit <https://www.woodsolutions.com.au/events/woodsolutions-2023-study-tour-sweden-and-norway>

18-20: Malaysian Wood Expo – Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Malaysian Timber Council, International Wood & Woodworking Expo. For further information see: www.malaysianwoodexpo.com.my or email: info@malaysianwoodexpo.com.my

JULY

16-21: Understanding Forest Course, Gottstein Trust – Pacific Bay Resort, Coffs Harbour, NSW. A week-long forest science course that

provides an understanding of sustainable Australian forest management, the economics of growing trees for wood production and other forest services. The course covers both planted and natural forests and provides an appreciation of environmental issues and international strategic trends in the forestry industry. For further information see: <https://gottsteintrust.org/grants-courses/understanding-forest-science-course>

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 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.timberoffsitestructure.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.>

<h2 style="margin: 0;">Australian Timber Supply Summit</h2>	<p style="font-size: 1.2em; font-weight: normal;">Discuss, network and understand the Australian Timber Supply Industry</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CROWN PROMENADE MELBOURNE • 29 - 30 AUGUST, 2023 • CLICK OR SCAN CODE TO REGISTER 	
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Who will put out the fires?

AUSTRALIAN Forest Contractors Association (AFCA) says dire predictions and outcomes for the upcoming fire season from the Bureau of Meteorology are an even greater concern for Victorians as the shutdown of the State native forest eliminates the necessary employees and equipment provided by forest contracting businesses for firefighting.

Climate change impacts can currently be seen globally as Canada experiences a historical spring fire season causing states of emergency across the country. Australia is also expected to have an early "supercharged" start to the bushfire season.

As reported by The Guardian former commissioner of Fire and Rescue NSW, Greg Mullins, said all levels of government "need to understand the

escalating risk of devastating fires and ramp up preparedness now."

"Communities across Gippsland, who have already been through Black Saturday and the Black Summer Bushfires, have raised concerns regarding what will happen when the very industry that protects their families, communities and other key assets such as plantations from bushfires ceases to exist," explains Ms Carlie Porteous, General Manager Australian Forest Contractors Association (AFCA).

"It was so dry, everything



Australian Forest Contractors Association says Victorians are concerned that the experience associated with the industry may not be guaranteed.

support of the timber industry to protect communities, assets and natural forests," she said.

"Families and communities across Victoria are rightly concerned as the experienced workforce and specialised equipment that is local to their

was so dry. The machines were in the cut over in a plantation operation. Not a tree in sight and the wind came through. It was too late to move the gear." Says local plantation and native contractor, Daryl Hutton.

AFCA believes this is what Victoria will see this year, but without the skilled

communities is no longer guaranteed," they said in a statement.

"The government needs to recognise the historic efforts of this workforce and they need to come to the table in a meaningful way to negotiate a long-term outcome to secure this resource."

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Home building to slow as rate rises hit hard

"HOME building activity today reflects rate increases a year ago." Those are the words of HIA's Chief Economist, Tim Reardon who has confirmed demand will continue to slow as interest rate rises hit the back pocket of Aussies.

"This month's decision is going to see an ongoing slowdown in home building, while demand for new homes continues to grow," stated HIA's Chief Economist, Tim Reardon.

The rate increase earlier this month was the 12th rate increase since the RBA began this cycle in May 2022 and the impact of these early rate increases are only just emerging in official data.

Mr Reardon said downturn leading indicators includes:

- New home sales down almost 50 per cent since the first increase in the cash rate. The number of loans issued for the purchase or construction of a new home has fallen to its lowest level since September 2008.
- Loans issued to first-home buyers have recently fallen to six-year lows.
- Detached house approvals are around decade lows, and likely to continue to decline for the next year.
- Multi-unit approvals are barely a third of what they were at their 2016 peak.
- Commencement of new homes has not yet slowed under the weight of this record increase in the cash



The HIA economist says it will take a further 12 months for the full impact to be felt by the construction industry.

rate, but a downturn in activity will emerge in coming months.

"There was a large pool of work yet to commence construction in May 2022 which has obscured the adverse impact of rate rises to date. The lags in this cycle are significantly longer than previous cycles," Reardon continued.

"The impact of rate increases to date are starting to emerge in official housing data, but it will take a further 12 months for this slowdown to be apparent in work on the ground, and the wider economy.

"This will see the number of homes commencing construction slow, as population growth accelerates.

"In addition to the increase in rates, home building is also set to decline as regulatory costs continue to add to the cost of new home construction. If governments continue to make building new homes more expensive, fewer new homes will be built.

"The RBA's recognition that the housing issue is due to a failure to build enough homes is a welcome move, but it remains to be seen how this would influence future cash rate decisions."

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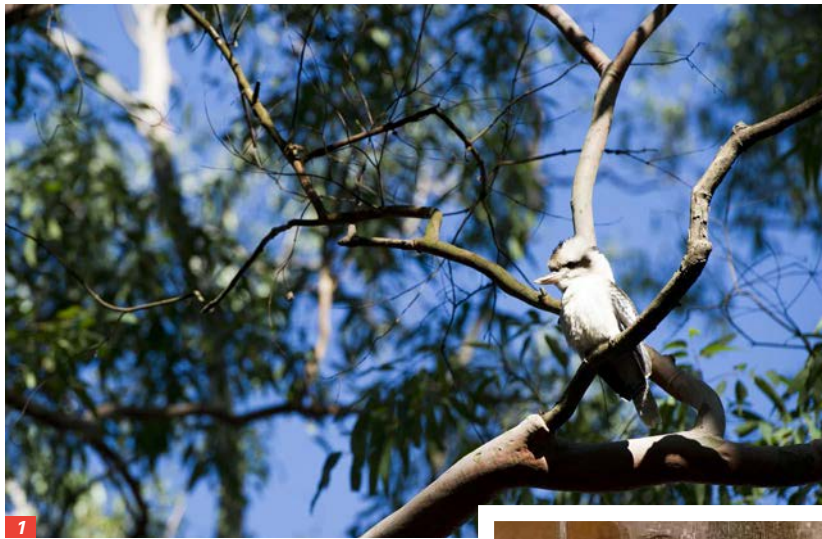
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Time running out to lock your spot for Understanding Forest Science course

THE time is fast running out to book a place on the Understanding Forest Science run by the Gottstein Trust next month.

The course will be held in Coffs Harbour on the NSW mid-north coast from Sunday 16th to Friday 21st July and features some promising new program inclusions.

There are only six places left, due to the long wait list built up during the COVID disruption which meant the



1

1/ **Understanding Forest Science course registrations closing soon.**
 2/ **Helen Murray said only limited places remain to attend the course in July.**

2021 course was not able to proceed. The course normally runs every two years. If you are interested then you need to move fast to register before its booked out.



2

“An outstanding group of experts will be delivering presentations”, said course convenor Helen Murray.

“Highlights will include Dr Christine Stone speaking on the rapid development of new technology for forest monitoring and management – she is a Forest Australia NM Jolly Medallist with vast research experience. Also highly respected ecologist Dr Brad Law will present on his research team’s ground-breaking acoustic koala population detection work in NSW forest areas,” she said.

Among other interesting topics and sub-topics will be forest soils and water, biodiversity, native forest management, softwood and hardwood plantation management, farm forestry,

Cont P 11

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From P 10

indigenous partnerships, biosecurity and the carbon equation of forests and wood products from certified sustainably managed forests. The process of certification which verifies sustainable forest management practices, and forest economics and investment also remain key program elements. The latter will be delivered by Rob de Fegely, a former president of Forestry Australia and also a NM Jolly Medallist.

“Dr Steve Read from ABARES will speak about Australia’s national and global reporting obligations and the State of the Forests Report.

These involve data collection and a lot of rigour yet attract little public attention,” said Ms Murray.

“A very special activity promises to be a two-hour Aboriginal cultural interpretative walk at Sealy’s Lookout at the Orara East State Forest. This will be led by the local Giingan Gumbaynggirr First Nation guides,” Ms Murray said.

The Gottstein course is proven to be a great way to learn a lot from leaders on their fields, in a compressed time. The networking is really valued by participants - we always get feedback on how the Gottstein week has expanded people’s network of

colleagues in the sector.”

The 2023 course program has a bigger emphasis on going out into the field with forest experts to see softwood plantations and native forests and the Forestry Corporation of NSW Grafton seedling nursery which came into its own for restoration of forest areas after the mammoth 2019/20 bushfires.

Ms Murray expressed appreciation for the support of Forestry Corporation of NSW in making the field trips possible adding, “participants will have plenty of opportunity to ask questions from the experts in the field on these very interesting field trips.”

The course celebration

dinner on Thursday 20th July will be hosted by the Gottstein Trust chair Suzette Weeding. Course attendees, presenters and other guests will have the opportunity to hear from dinner speaker Gottstein Fellow Jason Ross about his recently finalised Fellowship Project which explored the relationship between forestry science, sustainable forest management principles and the perceptions of local forestry amongst Australian audiences.

To register in the course go to <https://gottsteintrust.org/grants-courses/understanding-forest-science-course> . To obtain more information email team@gottsteintrust.org



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North America's first underground mass timber parking lot to be built

A NEW mid-rise, mixed-use building project on the Sunshine Coast of British Columbia will boast North America's first underground mass timber structure for vehicle parking, according to Massive Canada Building Systems.

The Port Moody-based company specializes in fabricating mass timber materials and modular building manufacturing. It has just secured the contract to design and build a single-level underground mass timber parkade at the 1.3-acre development site of 718 North Road in Gibsons.

Of course, underground parkades are typically built as reinforced concrete structures, but Massive Canada says it wants to challenge that assumption. They state that if mass timber structures — such as the tall trestle bridges in BC's interior — are able to carry the weight of locomotives and freight trains and still stand a century later, a mass timber parkade can support a six-storey building.

The underground parking level's roof, which forms



Artistic rendering of the building development and underground mass timber parkade at 718 North Road, Gibsons. Drawing: CityState Consulting Group

the slab for the building structures above, will be supported by band beams over wooden posts. The slab and posts will be built using engineered wood, creating a rigid structural diaphragm, which will be attached to the interior walls around the elevator shaft, staircases, and perimeter walls.

This mass timber parking slab will support the six-storey rental housing building, two-storey townhouses, a childcare facility with a playground, and a courtyard with a lawn, landscaping, trees, and walkways.

A development permit application is expected to

be submitted in the coming months.

"As part of Massive Canada's goal to develop a better way to build, we decided to rethink the design of parking garages," said Gaetan Royer, CEO of Massive Canada.

"The BC government is encouraging the industry to find new applications for engineered wood. As far as new applications go, this is a big one."

The company also notes it is taking extra measures to carefully review fire separation and protection for the parkade design while emphasizing that mass timber already has a proven fire resistance.

They are also planning to use non-combustible MgO/So4 boards in areas where additional fire protection is needed, which are non-combustible. The company indicates it has already secured an independent certification for ASTM E-119 wall assembly using this non-combustible product, which means the materials can resist the exposure of a typical fire exposure for one hour.

Not only will a mass timber design for the parkade reduce emissions related to the construction process, but it will also carry a lower construction cost compared to a similarly-sized parkade using the conventional concrete construction method.

The provincial government has been encouraging the construction industry to push the limits with mass timber construction, most notably its 2019 enactment to changes to the BC Building Code, allowing the construction of taller wood buildings of 12 storeys — up from the previous limit of six storeys.

Source: Dailyhive



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Famed upas tree; a metaphor for anything deadly poisonous or toxic

A tree so abhorrently toxic that just looking at it was gravely dangerous

THE upas tree, *Antiaris toxicaria*, is in the mulberry and fig family, Moraceae of trees. It is the only species currently recognized in the genus *Antiaris*. The genus *Antiaris* was at one time considered to consist of several species but is now regarded as just one variable species which can be further divided into five subspecies.

Upas trees grow widely in Africa, across Asia, and in northern Australia. The upas is a massive, tall deciduous tree that is happiest in tropical rainforests.

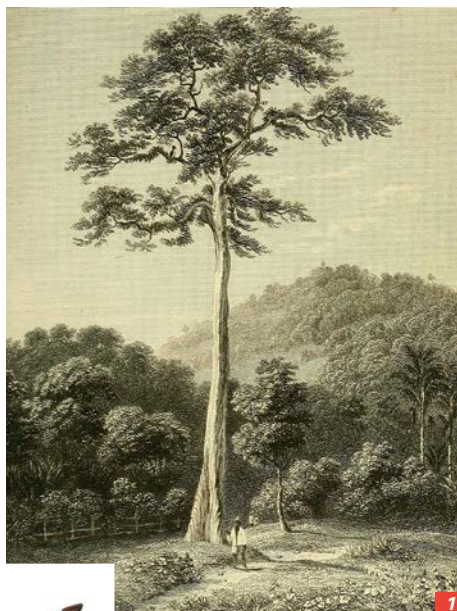
Its buttressed trunk is straight and smooth, and like many rainforest trees, it has no branches up to where the crown begins. Upas trees can reach heights of 40 metres.

The upas tree was known as: "one of the deadliest vegetable products of creation". From the Middle Ages to the nineteenth century, European travellers to South East Asia returned with consistent reports of a tree so abhorrently toxic that just looking at it was gravely dangerous. Birds perching on branches would keel over dead, they said, and the merest touch would kill animals and

people. In popular journalism, and eventually, through well-known writers such as Dickens and Pushkin, the upas became a widely used metaphor for the dangerously evil and deadly.

While this very well could have been true at the time, the other legends of the deadly upas tree

are harder to believe. It was said that the tree lived in plains devoid of all other vegetation and that no living creature could live within three leagues (16 kilometres) of it due to the noxious, poisonous vapours that left the ground littered with the skeletal remains of man and creature alike. This has all the makings of a



1/ The upas is a massive, tall deciduous tree that is happiest in tropical rainforests.
2/ In colonial times poison darts were a weapon deployed against incursions by foreigners.

hardly sounds like the most treacherous tree on the planet.

The upas legend started with a grain of truth, though. In what is now Malaysia and Indonesia, upas means poison and the tree's latex does contain deadly cardiac glycosides. These chemicals, if they enter the bloodstream, interfere with the heart, making the beats weak and irregular before stopping the heart altogether. The latex was collected, heated to a viscous paste and applied to blowpipes darts that are still used today by tribal people.

In colonial times poison darts were a weapon deployed against incursions by foreigners, principally the Dutch. Understandably indigenous people wanted to protect the source of the poison from European invaders so they concocted the upas legend. They claimed that all manner of special precautions and protection were needed even to approach the tree, such as always having the wind at one's back in order to carry the poison away.

The famed upas tree was so well known that it was a common metaphor for anything poisonous or toxic, and was used many times in political cartoons of the 1800s.

TALKING TREES

With JOHN HALKETT

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Stephen King novel.

Surprisingly, given the upas's reputation, the fruits are eaten by birds, bats and mammals, and local people used the beaten inner bark for making clothing. That



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New timber Serpentine Pavilion revealed in London

THE first image of this year's Serpentine Pavilion in London, which was designed by French-Lebanese architect Lina Ghotmeh, has been revealed. Tom Ravenscroft has reported for Dezeen.

Set to open to the public this Friday, June 9, the pavilion in London's Kensington Garden is a circular timber structure that shelters a "concentric table". Named À Table, the pavilion was designed as a space for exchange and celebration.

"The pavilion emerges around this concentric table that allows people to get together," said Ghotmeh in an exclusive video published by Dezeen last week.

"[It's] named À Table, which is the French call to get



1/ This year's pavilion was designed by Lina Ghotmeh. Photo: Gilbert Hage

2/ Ghotmeh is the 22nd architect to be commissioned for the Serpentine Pavilion.

together around the same table," she explained.

"When you're young your parents would tell you to come down and get together to eat, discuss."

Ghotmeh is the 22nd architect to be commissioned

for the Serpentine Pavilion since the first structure was designed by architect Zaha Hadid in 2000.

The 2023 pavilion has a timber frame with multiple gables radiating out from its

centre, which was described as "echoing the structures of tree leaves". It is surrounded by a screen to create a semi-enclosed space and wrapped by a colonnade.

"The structure is like a leaf," said Ghotmeh. "If you look in a microscope at a leaf, if you will see this main vein."



Ghotmeh is the latest Serpentine Pavilion to be built in Kensington Garden in central London. It follows last year's Black Chapel, which was designed by artist and designer Theaster Gates. Previous Serpentine Pavilions have been built by architects such as Frida Escobedo, Bjarke Ingels and Sou Fujimoto.

Source: Dezeen



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Australian firefighters head to Canada to provide support

A FURTHER six Forestry Corporation firefighters will fly out of Sydney today to assist with the country's wildfire emergency.

Already 220 Australasian firefighters and incident controllers have been deployed to Canada where this season more than 2,200 fires have burnt across 3.3 million hectares of land.

Of the 49 personnel deploying today 28 are from the Rural Fire Service, 10 from the National Parks and Wildlife Service, six from Forestry Corporation, four from Fire and Rescue NSW and one from the NSW State Emergency Service.

Forestry Corporation firefighters being sent abroad include Jamie Harris from Wauchope, Matt Model from Bonny Hills, Vince Bolton from Grafton, Dave Anderson from Bathurst, Jarod Addinsall from Eden and Anthony Post from Tumut.

Anthony Post has worked with Forestry Corporation in the Snowy Region for 39 years having attended countless fires across the state during that time.

"Canadian crews have often been part of these campaigns in Australia as summer term employees and this is my chance to give back and assist in their firefighting effort," Anthony said.

"I am looking forward to experiencing their different firefighting techniques and methods and sharing ours," he said.

Jarod Addinsall said it was a great privilege and opportunity to apply his firefighting skill set and knowledge in another country.

"I am really excited for the opportunity to travel to Canada and contribute to the firefighting campaign," Jarod said.

"I expect to learn a great deal, experience different forests and culture whilst helping Canadian communities through a very challenging time.

"I am grateful that FCNSW has provided us this opportunity to represent the business and my community abroad, it is a privilege that I do not take lightly," he said.

Dave Anderson said it was a great opportunity for Australian fire specialists to repay the Canadian crews that assisted Australia during the Black Saturday bushfire season in 2019/20.

"This will be a great learning experience and the opportunity for us to work with Canadian firefighters again," Dave said.

"We have employed seasonal staff from Canada for many seasons now and value their work ethic and skills.

"I have deployed within New South Wales and interstate in the past, but never overseas. This is a first for me," he said.

Vince Bolton has worked with Forestry Corporation for 11 years and has worked on the ground leading crews in many different fire situations including the North Coast's 2019/20 bushfire emergency.



1/ Experience Australian firefighters are in Canada to assist battling the raging wildfires that have destroyed more than 25,000 hectares. Photo: Reuters

2/ Heavy smoke has covered New York City as wildfires north continue to rage.

"I am looking forward to using the skills I have learnt over the years to help out in Canada," Vince said.

"Some of the challenges will be adapting to working in native conifer forests unlike our eucalyptus forests in Australia with different fire behaviour, working in very remote locations and lots of hand tool work. Long days and hard work ahead," he said.

For East Timor veteran Matt Model, the Canadian deployment follows closely on the back of his return from the United Kingdom where he represented Australia at the World Military Rowing Competiti

Matt, an Invictus Games champion, won three gold medals for Australia in the 500m, 1km and 2km

rowing events for competitors aged 30 to 39 years.

From representing Australia on the oars, he'll do his country proud on the Canadian firefronts where crews are battling 416 uncontained fires.

"I had only just landed in Sydney last Wednesday from the UK and had a message from the fire branch that a second deployment to Canada was happening and I jumped at the chance," Matt said.

"We will fly out for Canada on Wednesday after attending a briefing with the RFS in Sydney on Tuesday learning more about the current fire situation in Alberta.

"I think the wildfires in Canada will present a lot of challenges and different dynamics to the way we fight fires here in Australia.

"I've heard from some of our guys over there already that it involves a lot of arduous activity.

"Heaps of dry firefighting with hand tools and strenuous activity on foot in elevated terrain eight to 12 hours a day."

Australian crews are currently assisting Canadian fire authorities to battle 416 uncontained fires.

Forestry Corporation's fire specialists will undertake a 42-day deployment in Canada.

Forestry Commission on the brink

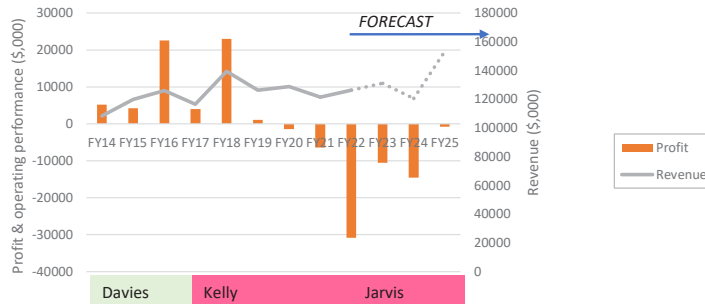
Budget papers reveal the commercial agency in difficulty

IT'S not only the timber industry that's in decline, the Western Australian Government's forestry agency, the Forest Products Commission (FPC) is also sinking fast. The 2023 Budget Papers indicate that this commercial business is failing under the Labor Government. It is predicted to continue to make losses in coming years.

When Mia Davies handed the Ministerial responsibilities for forestry to Dave Kelly the FPC was a highly profitable operation with a healthy cash balance, but under the dead hand of this government the agency has fallen into hard times. It has produced a series of devastating losses which are predicted to continue for the foreseeable future.

To keep the agency afloat the government has had to pump in a bundle of cash, \$25 million to be precise, over the past 2 years. Nothing more is being set aside this year, but there is little doubt that the FPC's financials are diabolical and there will need to be handouts for several years. The housing industry, the mainstay of the FPC's pine business, is sinking like a stone, so Treasury will need to get its checkbook ready.

FPC FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE 2014 TO 2025



Financial performance graph.

The FPC's financial forecasts are hard to believe. With the closure of the native forest industry, FPC's sales revenue is estimated to drop to \$120 million next year. Then like Lazarus it leaps by 25% in subsequent years. This recovery is fiction. The budget notes admit that the government has no idea what revenue will be generated in subsequent years. Why the government presents obviously false figures is highly questionable. There is little doubt there will be no significant revenue from native timber sales and the native business will need to be heavily subsidised to operate.

With such a hit to its bottom line responsible managers would have cut back on corporate costs and staffing. Not the FPC. As the ship is filling with water it is

taking on 30 more staff!

The FPC has the dubious honour of managing one of the State's most significant financial risks. The government has admitted to a possible shortfall in pine logs to meet contracts (Budget Paper 3 p59/60), but they claim this shortfall can't be quantified. If you check the FPC's Annual Reports since 2013 it has repeatedly made this statement. If this liability were so significant to appear in the State budget you'd think someone at FPC would have got round to calculating it.

The FPC is stumbling in other parts of its operations as well. With an industry wracked with uncertainty, there would be an expectation of leadership from the State's forestry agency. Unfortunately, the FPC is silent in planning for the industry's future. Its

most recent Strategic Plan was published in 2017, and since then its focus is on social media rather than engaging with the industry. The FPC is a monopoly supplier of many log products in the State, yet its customers and suppliers are in the dark as to its expectations. There has been no commitment from the FPC or central government as to when future volumes and contracts will be known. It is little wonder that it is struggling to find contractors willing to continue to work for it.

Even in the area of expansion the \$350 million for new pine plantings is clouded in mystery. No plan for the rollout of these funds has been published.

The capacity of the team of Commissioners heading FPC should also be questioned as there appears to be a lack of recent forest industry experience to give oversight to the functions of the agency in such a difficult time.

As an operating model the FPC is failing, one can only wonder how long it can pretend to be a commercial business and a support for the local industry.

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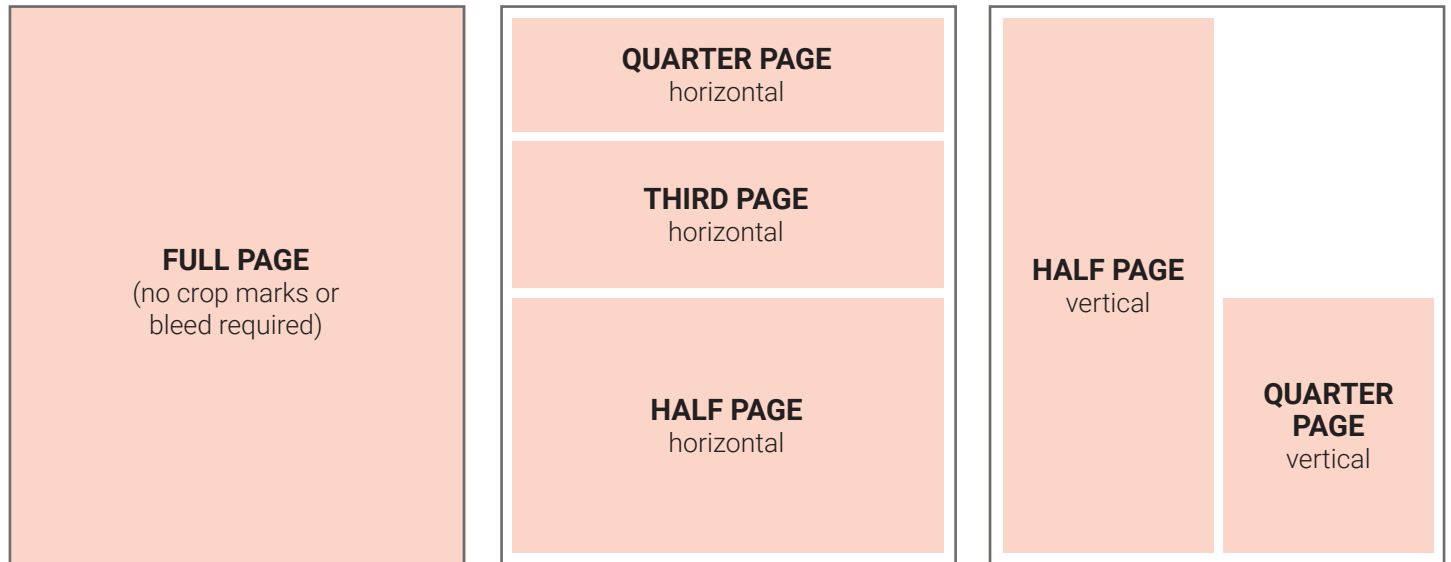
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