

DELIVERED
WEEKLY TO
15,200
GLOBAL
READERS*

Like and
follow us on



ISSUE 764 // July 20, 2023

timber & FORESTRY *e*news



Traditional Owners report on forest health in WA

COVER STORY P8

JOB:

- Operations Coordinator
- Forest Ranger in Charge

[Click to apply](#)

Victory Press Printing
Log and Timber Tags
for Inventory Control and Tracking
Timber Tags - Kiln Tags
Bundle Tags - Bundle Books
CCA Treatment Tags - WIP Tags
Barcodes, Large Numbers, QR Codes
www.victorypress.com.au
Call 1300 300 251
Email: info@victorypress.com.au

ForestFit
BUSINESS, SAFETY AND
ENVIRONMENTAL SYSTEMS
CERTIFICATION
www.forestfit.com.au

Wood Solutions
design and build
www.woodsolutions.com.au

Responsible Wood rw/i-10-1
Looking for sustainable forest products?
[Click here](#)

All under
one roof
**BENEFIT
FROM:**

RECRUITMENT

TRAINING

WH&S

EMPLOYMENT

IR SUPPORT

AND MORE!

NTHA
NATIONAL TIMBER &
HARDWARE ASSOCIATION

1800 822 621

New housing starts still in decline

Data from ABS shows that starts and completions are still below rates needed to help with the housing crisis, though it appears costs may be easing.

THE most recent data from the ABS is not reassuring news when it comes to housing starts.

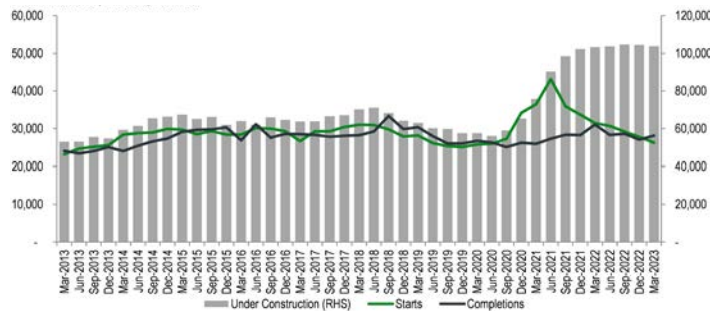
“Australia commenced 26,265 new houses in the first quarter of 2023, down by 16.4% on the same quarter last year and 39.1% fewer than during the peak in the June Quarter 2021,” said HIA Senior Economist, Tom Devitt.

“This decline in detached housing commencements is part of the ongoing cooling of the market that is expected to continue well into next year.”

This drop in starts couples with the sharp decline in new home sales since the start of the RBA’s interest rate hiking cycle.

Devitt noted that there are direct links: “This is compounding the high volume of earlier projects that are being cancelled across the nation as home buyers

SNAPSHOT OF THE BUILDING ACTIVITY PIPELINE - HOUSES



Data shows starts and completions remain low, while the number of dwellings under construction is still very high.

Source: HIA Economics, ABS 8752.0, ABS 8731.0

struggle to secure finance in the face of ballooning home building and finance costs.”

As a result, Devitt said that this was the first quarter in almost three years that Australia has completed more houses in a three-month period than it has commenced, saying, “Unfortunately, this was driven by the decline in commencements, not a pickup

in completions. There were only 28,094 detached houses completed in the first quarter of 2023, 9.6 per cent fewer completions than in the same quarter last year.

“Ongoing labour constraints continue to make it very difficult for builders to complete the significant volume of work taken on during the pandemic. There remains

almost 104,000 houses under construction in the first quarter of 2023. This has been a broadly stable volume over the last 18 months and almost double the 57,500 that were under construction heading into 2020.”

Similar uncertainties are also holding back the multi-units sector with just 19,981 commencements and 17,266 completions in the quarter, well down on the average 25-30,000 commencements per quarter of 2015-18.

On a more positive note, CoreLogic’s Cordell Construction Cost Index (CCCI), which tracks the cost to build a typical new home, showed prices increased 0.7% for the June quarter – the lowest rate since September 2020 and well below the 1.2% decade average. The annual rate is still high at 8.4%, but an improvement on recent years.

Are you following us on social media?

Please like and share our page so we can get the timber and forestry message out to a bigger audience. If you like our publication, please leave us a review.



THE CHOICE IS YOURS.

Following the awarding of a Global GreenRate Level A certification, MicroPro Wood Treatment Technology has recently been awarded a GoldHEALTH rating with its recently published Global GreenTag Level A Product Health Declaration™ (PHD™).

The GreenTag PHD is the first health transparency tool in the world to assess human health concerns directly, rating the health impacts of a final product – and not just the hazards of a product’s ingredients.

For more information call us now on 1800 088 809.



MicroPro® is a registered trademark of Koppers Inc. or its subsidiaries. MicroPro® timber products are produced by independently owned and operated wood preserving facilities. © 2019 Koppers Performance Chemicals Australia Pty Ltd. Global GreenRate, GoldHEALTH, Global GreenTag and GreenTag PHD are registered trademarks operated under licence by Global GreenTag Pty Ltd.

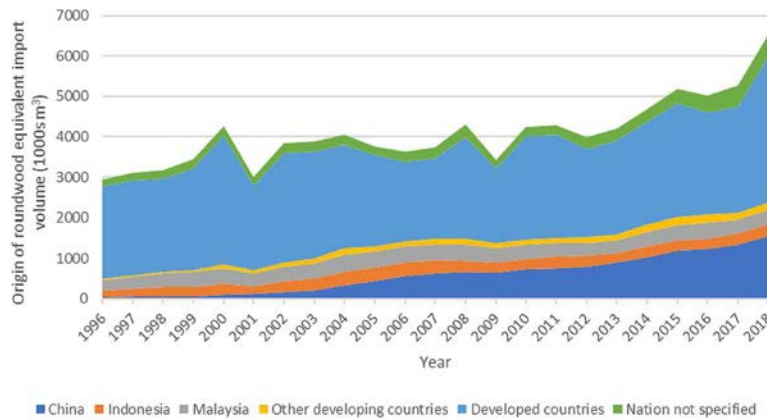
New Queensland research shows responsible native forestry delivers better outcomes

MANY environmentalists aim to stop harvesting in Australian native forests. While the forestry sector champions the environmental importance of our forests, industry has long argued that responsible management is a better alternative to importing from countries with less rigorous standards. Now, a paper published this month in *Forest Policy and Economics* shows there are clear environmental benefits for responsible native forest management – in Queensland at least.

Dr Tyron Venn from the University of Queensland's School of Agriculture and Food Sustainability reviewed more than 350 publications, studying the ecological and economic impacts of Queensland native forest management, which includes everything from fire management to timber harvesting.

"Stopping forestry in Queensland's native forests may sound like a positive outcome for the environment, but the research suggests that it would further shift our impacts offshore and increase carbon emissions, while generating little benefit for biodiversity conservation within Australia," Dr Venn said.

His paper, 'Reconciling timber harvesting, biodiversity conservation and carbon sequestration in Queensland, Australia' details that, since the 1990s, Australia's annual harvest of native hardwood sawlogs has dropped by 2.2 million cubic metres, as large areas of state-owned native forests have been declared



Australian roundwood equivalent import volume by country of origin from 1996 to 2018.

National Parks or other types of conservation reserves in which harvesting is not allowed.

"Over the same time period, imports of hardwood products from less-well managed forests in Asia and the Pacific increased by a similar amount," Dr Venn said.

"In many developing countries, large international timber companies operate with disregard for the environment and often have negative impacts on traditional forest communities."

“RESEARCH SUGGESTS TO STOP FORESTRY WOULD FURTHER SHIFT OUR IMPACTS OFFSHORE

The abstract for the paper makes the problem clear, saying "Such policies have typically been implemented out of concern for the environment, but policy-makers often make poor assumptions about or ignore the associated perverse ecological and economic trade-offs that can threaten

global action to conserve biodiversity and mitigate climate risk."

The research found that Queensland's low-intensity forestry management techniques are informed by science to minimise

environmental impacts.

Queensland law allows selection harvesting in some of the state's public and private native forests, which typically removes 10 to 20 trees per hectare every 20 to 40 years.

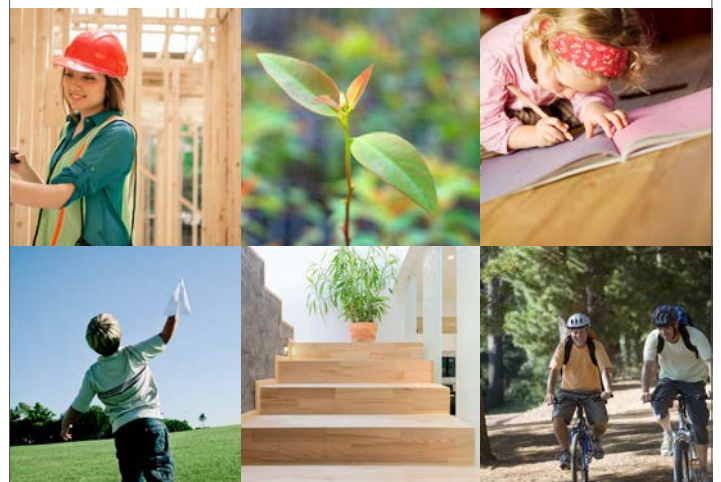
Strict rules regulate how this is conducted, such as by requiring minimum retention of trees of different sizes, including large old trees with hollows.

Dr Venn's research found that this model can provide greater long-term climate risk mitigation benefits and promote high biodiversity values.

You can read the whole paper by clicking the link here.

Source: Beef Central

The united voice for Australia's forest industries



0408 404 764
enquiries@ausfpa.com.au
www.ausfpa.com.au

Australian Forest Products Association

New decarbonisation plans meet with industry approval

Building and timber industries welcome the clear transition path to Net Zero.

FEDERAL climate and energy minister Chris Bowen this week laid out plans for decarbonising the Australian economy by sector as part of the nation's Net Zero goals.

Bowen announced to the Sydney Energy Forum on Tuesday that the federal cabinet will deliver plans specific to electricity and energy, industry, the built environment, agriculture and land, transport and resources.

The announcement has been met with approval within both sides of the timber industry with Master Builders Australia CEO Denita Wawn saying the construction



Chris Bowen announced the sector-by-sector decarbonisation plans on Tuesday.

and operation of our built environment is at the end of the energy supply chain and

therefore a major contributor to greenhouse emissions and environmental outcomes.

"The operation of buildings accounts for half of Australia's electricity use and almost a quarter of greenhouse gas emissions. More sustainable building practices reduce the environmental impact of the built environment," said Wawn.

"Master Builders aims to achieve a net-zero built environment as part of our broader goal of environmental sustainability. A clear plan with a sensible transition process from Government will assist in attracting the investment in technology needed, boosting confidence in the market and providing the support builders need to transition successfully to net-zero construction

methods.

"To support this, we are advocating for integrating necessary measures into the National Construction Code (NCC), considering the workforce, supply chain, finalised frameworks, and education processes."

Joel Fitzgibbon, CEO of the Australian Forest Products Association also welcomed the announcement. "In so many cases, growing more trees for production will be a big part of meeting our ambitions," said Fitzgibbon.

"Trees that are growing capture and store more carbon over time than do mature trees. When we harvest, that stored carbon continues to be locked up in the timber and creates space in the landscape for more carbon to be captured. There's an entire second forest of carbon stored across the built environment."

Fitzgibbon called for an expansion of timber use in housing and other industries. "By using trees to their full extent in housing and construction, plastic replacements, paper and fibre packaging, and as biofuels and bioenergies, we shift the balance in terms of relying on fossil fuels and fossil carbon," he said.

"Harnessing the power of forestry, timber and wood fibre will help Australia meet our net zero targets, help keep us supplied with essential everyday products and provide long-term secure jobs for Australians. Sustainable forestry truly is a win-win."

NTHA CAN

TRAIN AND UPSKILL YOUR EXISTING TEAM MEMBERS

- ✓ Nationally recognised qualifications and training
- ✓ Specialist industry trainers

STRENGTHEN YOUR TEAM

RETAIL, SALES, BUSINESS, SUPPLY CHAIN OPERATION AND LEADERSHIP QUALIFICATIONS

(RTO 5343)
1800 822 621
ntha.com.au

“

HARNESSING POWER OF TIMBER WILL HELP MEET NET ZERO TARGETS

Australians shine at the WCTE in Oslo

The recent bi-annual World Conference on Timber Engineering in Oslo sets the stage for Brisbane's WCTE 2025.

WOODSOLUTIONS reports that the world's timber engineering leaders recently convened in Oslo for the bi-annual World Conference on Timber Engineering (WCTE), and the Australian presence was stronger than ever, with forty-three attendees out of 850.

As part of a global trend, Japan is growing in all-timber and hybrid timber construction with their government offering strong incentives to use timber and co-organising the significant WoodRise event with France and Canada. Japanese researchers showcased their advancements, including Professor Takahiro Tsuchimoto's exploration of mid-rise and high-rise timber buildings using cross-laminated panel construction

“ANOTHER TREND IS THE DISASSEMBLY OF TIMBER STRUCTURES, TO ENABLE EFFICIENT REUSE.”



Professor Keith Crews spoke on the work of the ARC Research Hub to Advance Timber in Australia's Built Environment.

and glulam frame design.

Another remarkable trend is the significant attention of many research papers to the disassembly of timber structures, to enable an efficient reuse and recycling of their components within a circular economy approach.

Professor Keith Crews from the University of Queensland, chair of the next WCTE 2025 in Brisbane and director of the ARC Research Hub to Advance Timber in Australia's Built Environment, delivered a keynote address, emphasising Australia's commitment to advancing timber through

the Research Hub. The hub is instrumental to developing the resources, enablers and drivers to advance timber as a natural resource and to be the material of choice leading towards a net zero future for Australia's built environment.

WoodSolutions' contribution came from Paolo Lavisci as a co-author with CEFC's Christina Wijeratne, on the subject of "Investing in mass timber construction in Australia: The Clean Energy Finance Corporation Timber Building Program."

Boris Iskra, FWPA's National Standards and Codes

Manager reported on "Fire-Protected Timber Elements of Construction – Response During Fire Decay and Cooling Phase" leading to key changes in the National Construction Code for buildings up to 8-storeys high.

Ralph Belperio from Aurecon presented "A case study on the use of robotics in constructing the award-winning Boola Katatjin mass timber building in Western Australia."

Cristian Maluk, Felix Wiesner, Jeronimo Carrascal Tirado and Kim Barber of the University of Queensland delivered a paper about "Exploring the influence of heating conditions in the charring profile of bare timber and timber protected with a thin intumescent coating".

The camaraderie among Australian delegates and global collaborations set the stage for an exceptional WCTE 2025 edition in Brisbane.

The full body of papers is available for free download at: www.proceedings.com

Sustainability brands you can trust...



Globally recognised standards, developed for national operating conditions that are based on science.

responsiblewood.org.au



Tasmanian forest industries fear knock-on effects from Victorian changes

The early closure of Victorian native forestry risks businesses moving their operations to other states.

IN the wake of the early closure of Victorian native forestry and its attendant compensation, Tasmanian forestry businesses are worried that cashed-up operators from their northern neighbour are moving in.

Tammy Bennett, Business Manager at TP Bennett & Sons, a forest harvesting and haulage company based in southern Tasmania, spoke up about her concerns when STT (Tasmanian government-owned entity, Sustainable Timbers Tasmania) suddenly changed the terms of their contract.

She told ABC Radio Hobart



A Bennett's vehicle readying logs for transport in Southern Tasmania.

that Bennett's had originally taken on the job at very short notice. "They said 'can you fill

this void?' at 3pm on a Friday and at 6am on Monday, we had the trucks rolling."

Bennett's did the job with sterling feedback. In April, they were told there would be a variation to the existing agreement. As a result, they invested in more staff and equipment. Four weeks later, STT told the company they had to go to tender.

Despite Bennett's submitting a tender that met the conditions and showed the importance of the company to the region, the winner was

a Victorian company that told STT they could do the job for less (against state policies that prioritise local jobs).

Bennett told the ABC that Victorian trucks would be paying \$20,000 a year registration per truck to the Victorian government, while damaging Tasmanian roads.

Matthew Torenus of the Tasmanian Sawmillers Association said the issues reach across the sector: "One of our biggest competitors from Victoria has the Victorian government as its major shareholder. How do Tasmanian companies compete?"

Felix Ellis MP, Tasmanian Minister for Resources, had previously slammed the Andrews Government's decision and declared Tasmania's support for local industry, saying on 23 May that "The Tasmanian Liberal Government makes no apology for our continued support of our world class sustainable forestry industry

Cont P 9



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.

ForestWorks works with industry, government and the education and training sectors to improve skills standards and qualifications and support the development of forestry-related industries, their people, and enterprises.

To find out more:

Email: forestworks@forestworks.com.au

Phone: 1800 177 001

www.forestworks.com.au

Premium quality structural framing timber

VIGIDAS
P A C K

www.vigidas.com.au
Phone +61290984323
e-mail: sales@vigidas.com.au
Origin Lithuania

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

27-3 SEPT: Malaysian Timber Council Trade and Marketing Mission to Australia – Melbourne & Brisbane. Including visits to Melbourne and Brisbane. To participate and for further information contact John Halkett at john.halkett@forestlands.com.au or 0417 421 187

SEPTEMBER

9: Women in Forest & Timber Network Charity Cocktail Fundraiser – Rose Room, Brisbane. 3:00 pm to 6:00 pm. Annual charity cocktail fundraiser in support of the Brisbane Domestic Violence Service (BDVS). This event will raise much-needed funds to help BDVS respond to women, children and families experiencing domestic and family violence and to continue achieving safer families, free from abuse. For further information and sponsorship opportunities contact Jacinta. Colley@vidawood.com

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

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/>

Australian Timber Supply Summit

Discuss, network and understand the Australian Timber Supply Industry

- CROWN PROMENADE MELBOURNE
- 29 - 30 AUGUST, 2023
- CLICK OR SCAN CODE TO REGISTER



Have you registered for the “Australian Timber Supply Summit?”

THANK YOU to our sponsors and supporting partners of the Australian Timber Supply Summit to be held in Melbourne on 29-30 August 2023.

This event will be a fantastic opportunity to discuss, network and understand this essential component of the supply industry.

Contact sponsorship@corp-comm.com.au for information on sponsoring this event. Scan the QR code and register today!



WOOD BASED PRODUCTS

Do you crosscut timber packs at ±1mm accuracy

OR cut structural timber, panel products (MDF & LVL), paper rolls

OR produce pallet dimensions or studs on fixed lengths

HOLTEC has a solution for you

For more information contact:

Ph: +64 9 416 8294
 Fax: +64 9 416 8296
 Email: sales@holtec.org
 Web: www.holtec.org




Our Scope of Supply:

- Mobile and stationary chainsaws
- Mechanisation
- Timber crosscut stations
- Sorting lines
- Log cutting stations
- Scanning and optimising systems
- Circular saws
- Special systems

New WA project sees Traditional Owners assess forest health

The South West Timber Hub has asked Traditional Owners for input into forest conditions and management, with encouraging results.

A NOONGAR forest health assessment has been undertaken on two key areas of ecological thinning, with the results launched at an event attended by Traditional Owners and industry figures.

As part of a groundbreaking project by the South West Timber Hub, Traditional Owners were engaged to develop a framework for assessing Djarlma concepts and forest management. Djarlma is a Noongar concept which reflects the interconnected relationship of people with forests and woodlands.

The report, Assessment of Noongar Cultural Values to Inform Forest Management, was launched last week at an event in Kirup, which included an on-country presentation by two of the Traditional Owners involved in the project, Whadjuk Noongar Elder Gail Wynne and Phillip Ugle Senior.

The report was commissioned as part of the Hub's work responding to the impacts of acute water stress on regional forests thanks to falling water tables and climate change. The broader project has produced a wide body of research out of a working group with members drawn from the community, Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions, Forest Products Commission, Department of Fire and Emergency Services and industry, with support from the South West Timber Hub. The group began work in 2019, trialling thinning projects to increase forest



1/ Traditional owners involved in the project, Gail Wynne and Phillip Ugle Senior, explain the importance of forest thinning and of significant trees like this jarrah.

2/ Traditional owner Phillip Ugle Senior explains cultural indicators used to assess forest health.

health and resilience.

South West Timber Hub project manager Wendy Perdon said the project was one she was particularly passionate about.

"This project is so important and engaging the Traditional Owners to assess forest health seems like such a logical step given the depth of their knowledge," Perdon said.

"One of the interesting

outcomes from this report, is the correlations between Noongar and industry perspectives.

"There are things we can learn and implement from the outcomes of this project, but, in many ways, industry is on the same track with a similar custodian approach to forest management."

The report stated that all Elders involved were very clear that ecologically thinned

forest was healthier than forest which had not been thinned.

One of the reasons for this was that thinned bush burns slower, is favourable for hunting and is similar to traditional Noongar forest management, which was thinned mainly through the use of fire.

Anthropologist Myles Mitchell, Archae-Aus, was commissioned to undertake the project and engaged eight Traditional Owners to survey the two forest sites, both of which had been treated with different methods of ecological thinning.

Mr Mitchell said he had learned a lot from being involved, both from the Traditional Owners and from a forestry perspective.

"I must admit, I had some preconceived notions of forestry but this project helped to dispel those," Mr Mitchell said.

"To me, the most important thing in this report is what the Elders have said.

"We can all learn from the concept of listening to country more broadly for the benefit of forest health."

The full report can be found, along with supporting research, at www.swtimberhub.com.au/ecological-thinning

On the cover: Dignitaries and industry experts were among the attendees – from left, Ian Telfer, CEO at WA Plantation Resources; Federal Senator Louise Pratt; Whadjuk Noongar Elder Gail Wynne and South West Timber Hub's Wendy Perdon.



Tasmanian Labor leader Rebecca White at a press conference with Terry Edwards, former head of the Forest Industries Association of Tasmania.

From P 6

and the many Tasmanian families it supports.”

However, by 9 July it had become clear that these impacts would be harder to manage than expected. His office released a statement saying that the change posed a significant challenge for Tasmania, ‘even with our strong Buy Local Policy’.

“While the contract reported in recent media was signed by STT at arm’s length from Government, we are already seeking advice around how we can best support Tasmanian forestry from the fallout of Victorian Labor’s catastrophic decision,” Ellis was quoted as saying.

On Friday 14 July, STT wrote to the Bennetts to inform them the contract would be suspended while a review takes place.

Independent Member for Lyons, John Tucker MP, took no prisoners in slamming his former Liberal colleagues, saying: “The inept response of Minister Ellis is not only disheartening but also a stark display of incompetence. While six precious weeks slipped away, from my first question in parliament on May 31, 2023, until today, government inaction has afforded Victorian companies the time to undercut Tasmanian competitors and jeopardise an entire

industry. Such a lackadaisical approach is unacceptable, especially considering the significant impact it has on the livelihoods of hardworking Tasmanians.”

Tucker condemned the lack of transparency and flawed evaluation procedures in the STT tender process, and echoed concerns that it failed to uphold the Buy Local Policy.

Tasmanian Labor leader Rebecca White met with a delegation from the forest sector last Friday. “There is a real fear that the Minister and Sustainable Timbers Tasmania are preparing to award a major plantation sawlog contract to a mainland sawmiller,” she said after that meeting.

“They plan to do this by bringing forward sales of plantation sawlogs that sawmillers had previously been assured would form part of their resource security from 2027 when the amount of native timber sawlog production reduces by more than half. The sawmillers supported the RFA and the TFA reduction in native sawlog supply based on the promise of the plantation resource being made available to them in 2027.

“If the plantation resource [is sold] to a mainland saw miller, then intergenerational businesses will be forced to reduce jobs or even close.”

Two major reports highlight builder risks

Both the ABC and a major industry body have shone a light on problems in the building industry this week.

“I THINK it’s no secret that the current state of the building and construction sector is dire,” said insolvency lawyer Natasha Toholka at the start of this week’s 4 Corners on the ABC.

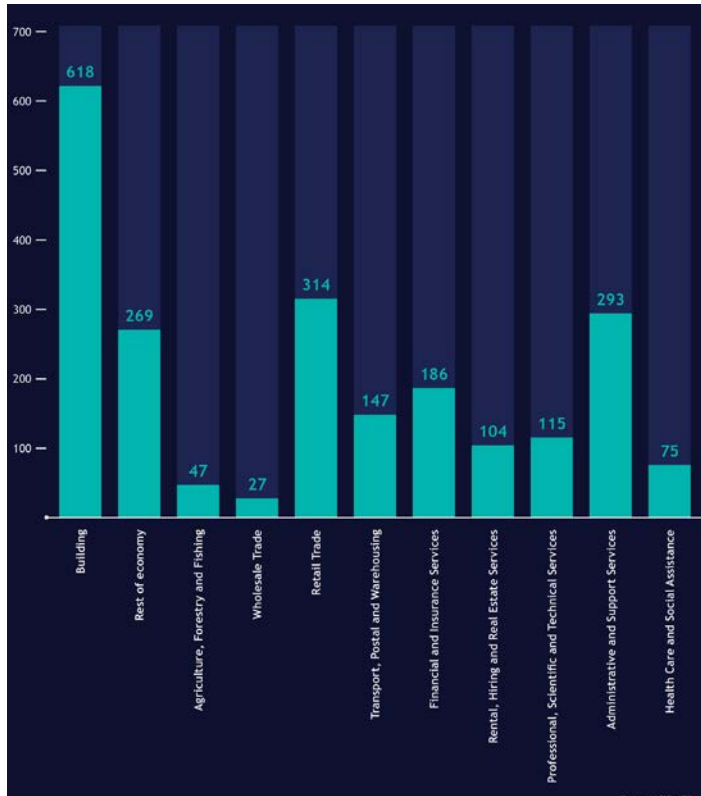
The episode ran through recent builder collapses, being fairly even handed in showing that some were the consequences of unprecedented economic circumstances, including the impacts of HomeBuilder, while others related to corrupt phoenixing practices.

The show called for a significant crackdown by ASIC on known problem builders, and for a raft of consumer and contractor protections. These calls were met with cautious support within the industry, with Master Builders Australia CEO Denita Wawn saying: “The actions of those who break the law need to be held to account by the full force of the law and those who act unethically need to be held to account by their industry peers.

“4 Corners correctly identifies significant difficulties have been confronting the industry including supply chain issues, fixed price contracts, low profit margins, labour shortages, increased demand for renovations and building projects, rising inflation, higher interest rates, weather events and economic uncertainty. It is essential to focus on preventing issues before they arise, rather than dealing with the consequences when it’s too late.”

Calls for the establishment of trusts to protect subcontractor payments were left in the too-hard basket, with Metricon’s CEO Brad Duggan

INSOLVENCIES PER 100,000 FIRMS – YEAR TO MARCH 2023



Australian insolvency data shows that rates for builders are far worse than the rest of the economy. Source: ASIC, ABS

telling reporter Stephen Long in the program that builders need that money to fund cash flow – the precise issue subcontractors have complained about.

This week the Australian Constructors Association (ACA) has also released All risk, no reward – a report shining a spotlight on the poor health of the building industry and the need for urgent action.

ACA CEO Jon Davies said the message is clear – the industry is in deep trouble, and government must act now to stop the contagion and create a more sustainable industry able to build the housing and infrastructure the nation requires.

“Building firms are entering administration at more than twice the rate of other industries,” said Davies.

“Building sector profit margins have fallen from around 3% to below 1% and liquidity has collapsed from 15% to below 5%. Most concerningly, over half of all large builders are now carrying current liabilities in excess of current assets—a technical definition of insolvency.”

Davies said the building industry is a textbook example of market failure: “The basic lesson is simple: fixed price contracts work well when the buyer knows exactly what they want, and the seller knows exactly how much it costs to

produce. That market is not construction.

“In the building industry, all the uncertainty and risks are the responsibility of the contractor and, when those risks are realised, they are funded out of the contractor’s already razor thin profits. This practice of transferring all the risks to contractors under fixed price contracts has led to a deeply unstable industry.”

All risk, no reward, proposes government clients lead the way by committing to new rules of engagement.

The new guidelines recommend that building contracts become less transactional and involve the builder at the earliest opportunity to ensure an accurate price can be determined. This is to the benefit not only of the contractor but also the client who can be confident the builder will survive the delivery of their project.

“Changing current practices will create the conditions for improved productivity and a healthier industry,” said Mr Davies.

“A profitable construction industry is in everyone’s interests and should be a key priority for all governments.

“No contract can account for all the unexpected events that will complicate a building project as it unfolds, but it can incorporate mechanisms to encourage the client and contractor to resolve them fairly and reasonably.”

You can watch the 4 Corners report on iView or click here for it on YouTube. Download All Risk No Reward by clicking on this link.

Mt Gambier smell blamed on timber industry

AN unexplained foul odour that has hung over Mount Gambier in recent weeks remains a mystery, but fingers are being pointed at the local timber industry.

Descriptions of the smell have ranged from fermented grapes to spoilt milk and burning plastic.

City of Mount Gambier general manager corporate and regulatory services Jane Fetherstonhaugh said despite the conversation in the community, the council had not received any complaints.

However, local social media had been abuzz, particularly on Facebook.



The local timber industry has been named as a suspect in the mystery smell.

"We smelled it last night — reminds me of fermented grapes," Helen said.

"I'm so glad it's not just me, I thought I was losing the plot," Jennifer wrote.

"I thought it was just someone burning plastic or nappies in a wood fire," Colleen said.

Fetherstonhaugh said

the council's preliminary investigations pointed to the local timber industry as a possible cause. "These investigations are ongoing and we've reported this to the EPA (Environmental Protection Authority) as they regulate

those type of industrial smells," she said.

An EPA spokesperson said a report of an odour in Mount Gambier had been received through the council and staff had attended the area in an attempt to identify the source.

"The EPA requires

licensed facilities to take all reasonable and practicable measures to prevent or minimise odour," they said.

"Other odour issues within the community are regulated by local councils under the Local Nuisance and Litter Control Act 2016."

With the direct source of the smell still unknown, Fetherstonhaugh said, "We're hoping with the weather conditions, the smell will dissipate in the next couple of days.

"We really don't know at this stage, but we're hoping the EPA can have a look and get to the bottom of this. They're looking into it and hopefully we'll hear from them today and get some more information out."

Source: abc.net.au

arxada

Always in demand

TRUST Ecowood®

TREATED TIMBER PRODUCTS

Ecowood® is a registered trademark of Arxada or its subsidiaries. ©2022 Arxada

Canada and Europe warn of a dangerous Australian fire season

While the BOM is yet to officially declare an El Niño, all the signs are for a high-risk summer. Is it time to rethink fire management?

NO ONE wants to break records like 'worst fire season in history', but Canada has just done so as its blazes continue, having destroyed over 10,193,171 hectares at the time of writing. Currently, more than 200 Australian specialists are assisting with active firefighting and management of the response, using skills gained in our own recent horror fire seasons.

Meanwhile, the US and Europe are baking through record heatwaves and fires are burning out of control across Southern Europe.

Soaring sea temperatures in the Pacific off the west coast of the US have led to the NOAA Climate Prediction Centre to declare an El Niño in progress, while back home, the Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) is yet to follow suit because their model requires other changes that have not yet been seen. Indeed, the Southern Oscillation Index, which is traditionally negative during an El Niño event, is currently at +4. However, the BOM is currently at Alert status for El Niño.

It all bodes poorly for the upcoming summer, and fire experts are raising the alarms early, as well as calling for fresh approaches.

Greg Mullins, Climate Councillor and former Fire and Rescue NSW Commissioner



Record fires in Canada have destroyed homes and forests as well as sent air quality plummeting for millions.

and an international expert in responding to major bushfires and natural disasters, has warned Australia is in "unchartered territory".

He told Sky News that "Decades ago, you couldn't have a bad fire season without the intensifying effect of El Niño. Since the Black Saturday fires in 2009 in Victoria that killed 173 people, you haven't needed El Niño to have a bad fire season."

Mullins is among many experts calling for a rethink in how Australians approach bushfire management.

Kevin Tolhurst AM, Hon Assoc Prof Fire Ecology and Management at the University of Melbourne, recently wrote a piece for The Conversation calling for a fundamental shift.

"When it comes to fire management, Australia must be much smarter than it has been for the past 200 years," he wrote. "This means changing the focus to holistic fire management. Throwing huge amounts of money and resources at controlling bushfires – such

as purchasing more and larger firefighting aircraft – is not sustainable or sensible.

"Fire is as fundamental to our environment as wind and rain. And the amount of energy released from a large bushfire will never be matched by any level of resources humans can muster."

He compared the different approaches on the two sides of the US-Mexico border, where the US spent hundreds of millions on fire suppression, which resulted in fewer fires on the US side of the border than in Mexico, but the ones that did occur being larger and more severe.

Tolhurst wrote: "Similar patterns have occurred in Australia. For example, a study of burn patterns in the Western Desert region showed that after the exodus of Traditional Owners, the number of fires reduced substantially, but the fires became far bigger.

"Damaging bushfires will return to Australia in the near future. The expected return of another El Niño should

heighten efforts to create a more considered and sustainable fire management regime – particularly in southern Australia."

Like Mullins, he called for better community engagement, and also more reliance on Indigenous Owners (see the story on page

8 in this issue) and better coordination across land, fire and emergency management agencies to ensure fire management is based on 'best practice' approaches.

As if we weren't all conscious enough of the risks, scientists have discovered that record fires are very likely a causal factor in record flood years, too.

Earlier this year, the US National Center for Atmospheric Research reported that smoke from Australia's Black Summer fires had likely contributed to the rare triple La Niña weather event that has delivered major flooding here and around the world. Its research suggests smoke emissions led to the formation of clouds over the southeastern Pacific Ocean, which absorbed radiation from the sun and cooled surface water temperatures, triggering the long La Niña period and associated heavy rainfall.

You can read all of Tolhurst's paper by clicking here.

Foodbank benefits from timber grants program

FOODBANK SA is a not-for-profit organisation that supports people across the state. Its Foodbank Mount Gambier food hub is the largest food relief organisation on the Limestone Coast and works with more than 130 local charities, community groups and schools. Over the past 12 months, it has delivered over 400,000 meals in the last 12 months to people in the region.

The organisation runs very lean, with just two full-time staff members and 40 volunteers contributing countless hours to take care of people in need throughout the Mount Gambier region.

Now, thanks to a donation from OneFortyOne's PINE Community Grants program, things are a little bit easier. The grant has meant Foodbank Mount Gambier could purchase a new multi-function printer and laptop. Regional branch manager Lynne Neshoda says it's made a world of difference as the organisation had previously had to outsource a lot of their printing, which ended up being a timely and costly task.

"We've been lucky enough to have a lot of help from local printing businesses, or we would rely on our Adelaide office to print our documents and send them to us either in our grocery delivery or post them out to us, but the wait can be hard," Neshoda said.

"Our old office printer didn't print in colour; it didn't print front and back and it was quite old. Having the new one has made a huge difference. We use the printer for so much – day to day



1/ The Foodbank Food Hub is set up for people to shop for groceries at a fraction of the cost.
2 Foodbank Regional Branch Manager Lynne Neshoda, and the new multi-function printer and laptop supported by a OneFortyOne PINE Community Grant.

for grocery items in the same way as a mini supermarket – but at a fraction of the cost. Fruit, vegetables and bread are free.

At the other end is the warehouse, where the

organisation picks orders and delivers to agencies, charities and schools. The warehouse stores pallets of canned goods and other pantry items, as well as a huge cool room and freezer to store their fruit and veg and frozen bread and meat. Some are donated by local businesses and individuals, others purchased with donated funds.

"We've come a long way out here" Neshoda said. "When I first started here, there was just a shed. No hub, and nothing outside.

"We're so lucky to have so many great local supporters and sponsors. We couldn't do it without the help of our community – we have such a strong community. That's what it's all about really, locals supporting locals to help feed people in need in our region – that's the beauty of it."

admin, recipes for meal packs, online orders from our Schools and Agencies, posters, and signage for around the Hub and Warehouse."

Foodbank SA rely on support from the local business community, grants and fundraising and are very thankful to One Forty One, for this grant opportunity.

The Mount Gambier Foodbank branch consists of two main areas. At one end is the Food Hub, where people can shop

IN SUPPORT OF

wftn
women in forests
 and timber network

SAFER LIVES
 SAFER COMMUNITIES

AN ACTIVITY OF MICAH PROJECTS

Brisbane
 Domestic
 Violence
 Service

INVITES YOU TO

COCKTAILS FOR CHARITY

SATURDAY, 9TH SEPTEMBER 2023 THE ROSE ROOM, 14/20 CONSTANCE ST
 AT 3 PM IN THE AFTERNOON FORTITUDE VALLEY, QLD 4006

TICKETS \$65

SUPPORTED BY OUR ANNUAL PARTNER

ITI Australia
Innovative Timber Ideas

PLATINUM SPONSOR

Tilling

RSVP BY 28TH AUGUST 2023

Sticking with forest contractors in challenging times

Carlie Porteous will be much missed as she steps down from the helm of the Australian Forest Contractors Association.

THERE are some things that really get up my goat and make me depressed. Turning up for work on a frosty winter's Monday morning to find a flat tyre on the forwarder is one and the blip blip chain coming off the cutter bar in the felling head is another. I can add to that list the recent news that Carlie Porteous is stepping down from the helm of the Australian Forest Contractors Association.

Carlie will of course be sadly missed when she moves on to bigger and better things which I guess was inevitable. But a bit of salvation – I hear on the grapevine that she will be sticking around the forest contracting business and association to provide guidance and advice into the future. So, thank goodness for that. Carlie Porteous has been an inspiration to the association and the forest contracting industry since she took over the role. She has raised the profile of the forest contracting community and of the association.

Not only has Carlie seen an expansion of the influence of forest contracting and a substantial growth of the association, but she has also seen good work done on log transport safety and the implementation and success



1/ Forest contracts gather ... contracting remains central to regional towns and their prosperity.
2 Carlie Porteous ... has been an inspiration in raising the profile of the forest contracting community and of the association.

of the now much-acclaimed ForestFit program.

Along with Deb Kerr of the Victorian Forest Products Association, Carlie has also been playing a critical role in advocating for the native forest-based sector in Victoria – a massively challenging and vital task for the wider industry.

It's with pleasure that I say that Carlie has become a prominent member of an increasingly strong cadre of woman in leading positions

TRUNK LINES



With **CHERYL FORREST**

across the forest industry with recent editions such as Diana Gibbs as chair and Natalie Sikman as acting chief executive leading the important work of the Australian Forest Products Association.

As I can well attest forest contracting is a tough, demanding gig with safety, staffing, automation and productivity quotas all presenting daily challenges, not to mention the ever-present oversight of the bank manager – courage and tenacity are required to continue in this industry.

Clearly, forest contractors are central to regional towns and their prosperity. Economists say that for everyone out at the pointy end of the contracting game, more than three are employed assisting in supporting roles as suppliers and a wide range of service providers. Fair to say that many regional communities would simply disappear if contractors were not there on the front line.

This reality makes a travesty of the decisions in Victoria by the Labor Government to shut down native forest operations and terminate a number of regional businesses and communities right across the state to secure inner city green preference votes.

Stick with us Carlie – our brothers and sister, especially those in Victoria need your continuing help.

See you again next month.

Cheryl

ForestFit

Industry developed training and certification for forest contracting businesses

www.forestfit.com.au

KOMATSU

Komatsu 895.2

SpeedShift



New Intelligent Transmissions for Increased Productivity

The new Komatsu 895.2 Forwarder offers increased productivity with two unique transmission options;

- SpeedShift ... gear change "on the fly" with high 262 kN torque
- Xtreme ... severe/steep conditions with very high 307 kN torque
- New Maxi XT Control System

Komatsu Forwarders lead the way in production

KOMATSU
Creating value together

Komatsu Forest Pty Ltd.
11/4 Avenue of Americas
Newington NSW 2127 Australia
T: +61 2 9647 3600
E: info.au@komatsuforest.com

Fireproof cladding from fungi

What grows in the dark, retards fires and could be a game-changing invention for construction? It's cladding made of mycelium.

FIRE-RESISTANT cladding has been top of mind since the Grenfell Tower disaster in 2017. Now, newly published research from RMIT University may be delivering a solution that is effective, sustainable and will quite possibly be very economical.

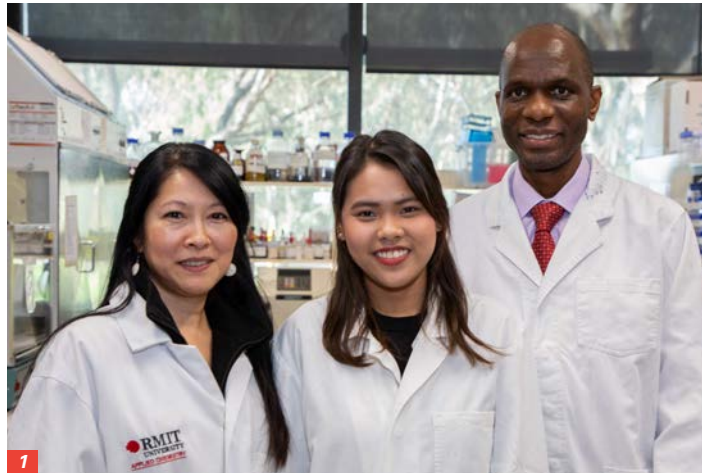
The proposed new cladding product is based on mycelium, a network of fungal strands that can thrive on organic waste and in darkness. A group of RMIT researchers are chemically manipulating its composition to harness its fire-retardant properties.

Associate Professor Tien Huynh, an expert in biotechnology and mycology, said they've shown that mycelium can be grown from renewable organic waste.

"Fungi are usually found in a composite form mixed with residual feed material, but we found a way to grow pure mycelium sheets that can be layered and engineered into different uses – from flat panels for the building industry to a leather-like material for the fashion industry," said Huynh, from the School of Science.

The novel method of creating mycelium sheets that are paper-thin, like wallpaper, works without pulverising the mycelium's filament network. Instead, they used different growth conditions and chemicals to make the thin, uniform and – importantly – fire resistant, material.

Associate Professor



1/ The research team, from left, Nattanan (Becky) Chulikavit, Associate Professor Tien Huynh and Associate Professor Everson Kandare in their lab at RMIT's Bundoora campus.

2/ Compressed mycelium sheets and some of the fungi that are related to them.

Everson Kandare, an expert in the flammability and thermal properties of biomaterials and co-author of the paper, said the mycelium has strong potential as a fireproofing material.

"The great thing about mycelium is that it forms a thermal protective char layer when exposed to fire or radiant heat. The longer and the higher temperature at which mycelium char survives, the better its use as a fireproof material," said Kandare.

Beyond being effective, mycelium-based cladding can be produced from renewable organic waste and is not harmful to the environment when burned, he explained.

Where composite cladding panels are used, they usually contain plastics – which

produce toxic fumes and heavy smoke when they burn.

"Bromide, iodide, phosphorus and nitrogen-containing fire retardants are effective, but have adverse health and environmental effects. They pose health and environmental concerns, as carcinogens and neurotoxins that can escape and persist in the environment cause harm to plant and animal life," said Kandare.

"Bioderived mycelium produces naturally occurring water and carbon dioxide."

This research could eventually lead to improved and eco-friendly cladding for buildings and support from industry may help the research make the leap from paper to product by making trials and

manufacture much cheaper than the academics originally expected.

"Plastics are quick and easy to produce, whereas fungi is slow to grow and relatively harder to produce at scale," said Huynh.

"However, we've been approached by the mushroom industry about using their fungal-incorporated waste products. Collaborating with the mushroom industry would remove the need for new farms while producing products that meet fire safety needs in a sustainable way."

The researchers are now looking to create fungal mats reinforced by engineering fibres to delay ignition, reduce the flaming intensity and improve fire safety ranking.

Their paper, "Fireproofing flammable composites using mycelium: Investigating the effect of deacetylation on the thermal stability and fire reaction properties of mycelium" (<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.polyimdegradstab.2023.110419>, lead author Nattanan Chulikavit), is published in the journal *Polymer Degradation and Stability*.

It builds on preliminary research published by the experts in high-ranked international journals, *Polymer Degradation and Stability* and *Nature's Scientific Reports*.

This project is a major collaboration involving RMIT University, the University of New South Wales, the Hong Kong Polytechnic University and the Australian Research Council Training Centre in Fire Retardant Materials and Safety Technologies.

An 'extinct' Texas tree is making a comeback

Twelve years after the last known *Quercus tardifolia* disappeared, conservationists at the San Antonio Botanical Garden are bringing the species back.

WESLEY Knapp and Michael Eason were on day four of a hunt through the Chisos Mountains of Big Bend National Park in Texas. Their quarry was a tree: *Quercus tardifolia*. This uniquely Texas oak grew only in that area and the single known specimen had died in 2011. Since then, botanists had been wondering if that was an extinction or could other trees exist in the wilds?

Knapp is chief botanist for the conservation group NatureServe. "It must have been late 2020," Knapp said, "the word came that, 'Alright, we've got some funding from the US Botanic Garden to help do some survey work for this thing – do you want to go?' And I was like, 'Yeah – I'll take vacation to make this thing happen.' The stakes can't be higher for conservation than rediscovering something like this."

It was Eason who found



1/ The research group stands beside the *Quercus tardifolia* in Big Bend National Park.

Photo: US Botanic Garden

2/ One of the botanists collecting grafting materials.

Photo: Michael Eason



it. "We looked at thousands if not tens of thousands of oak trees," Eason said, "and you're going up to almost every one

and looking at it – if it looks a little different, we'd talk about it. But there was no question with this one. It was so distinctly different, that everyone as soon as they walked up was like, "This is it – we found it."

Adam Black is a rare-plant specialist, who was part of the team and recalled the moment: "I still remember

the tone in Michael Eason's voice coming over the radio, 'Hey Adam, get over here.'"

The 9m tree was not in good shape, scarred by fire and infected with fungus.

"I would say its days are numbered," Black said. "I used to work for the forest pathology lab at University of Florida, so I've done a lot of tree assessments, and if this was in someone's backyard or in a commercial landscape, I would recommend it be removed, because it's a hazard."

The team and their colleagues from the San Antonio Botanical Garden has since taken cuttings for propagation and for future acorn pollination as well as gathering materials for grafting and subtly altering the environment of the original tree to protect it and help to improve its health in hopes it will survive long enough to be joined by its offspring.

"It gives us a second chance," says Eason, "to save this tree, and to save the millennia upon millennia of evolution that brought us to this point."

Sources: Nature Notes on Marfa Public Radio and Texas Monthly

Timber & Forestry enews is the most authoritative and quickest deliverer of news and special features to the forest and forest products industries in Australia, New Zealand and internationally. Enews is delivered weekly, every Thursday, 48 weeks of the year. Advertising rates are competitive with any industry magazine. Timber&Forestry enews hits your target market – every week, every Thursday!

HEAD OFFICE

Timber & Forestry eNews
PO Box 69, Potts Point, NSW 1335,
Australia
Phone // +61 (0) 417 421 187

PUBLISHERS

John Halkett // +61 (0) 417 421 187
johnh@timberandforestryenews.com
Dennis Neilson // +64 (0)7 349 2764
dana@dana.co.nz

EDITORS

Nicky Ainley // +61 (0) 410 538 034
news@timberandforestryenews.com
Donyale Harrison // +61 (0) 417 487 497
edit@timberandforestryenews.com

ADVERTISING

Campbell McInnes // +61 (0) 406 223 007
campbellm@timberandforestryenews.com
advertising@timberandforestryenews.com

The information contained in this publication has been obtained from sources assumed to be reliable. However, the publishers disclaim all warranties as to the accuracy, completeness, reliability or adequacy of the information displayed. Opinions expressed in Timber & Forestry e news are not necessarily the opinions of the publisher or staff. We do not accept responsibility for any damage resulting from inaccuracies in editorial or advertising. The publishers are therefore indemnified against all actions, suits, claims or damages resulting from content in this enews.

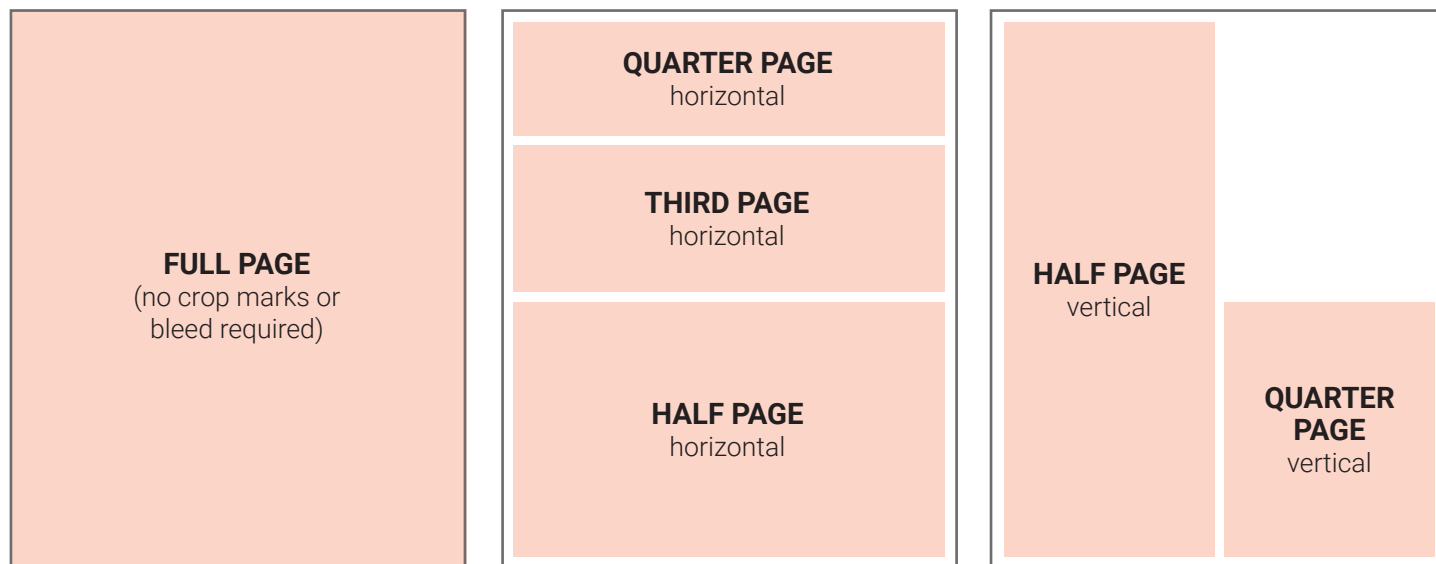
DELIVERED
WEEKLY TO
15,200
GLOBAL
READERS*

ADVERTISING RATES

timber
& FORESTRY *e*NEWS

Now in its 15th year, Timber & Forestry eNews has grown to be the Number ONE online weekly news journal for the forest and forest products industries – across Australia, New Zealand and internationally.

ADVERTISING SPECIFICATIONS



DISPLAY AD RATES

All pricing below is excluding GST and are based on a weekly booking. Overseas bookings are exempt from GST.

FULL PAGE: \$510

297mmH x 210 mmW

HALF PAGE: \$305

Vertical • 256mmH x 93mmW

Horizontal • 125mmH x 190mmW

QUARTER PAGE: \$195

Vertical • 125mmH x 93mmW

Horizontal • 63mmH x 190mmW

THIRD PAGE: \$225

Horizontal • 73mmH x 190mmW

PAGE 1 Front cover strip: Contract booking
Horizontal • 32mmH x 200mmW

PAGE 1 Front cover module: Contract booking
Horizontal • 45mmH x 50mmW

PAGE 2 below story: Contract booking
Horizontal • 73mmH x 190mmW

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING JOB ADS: ONLINE BOOKINGS ONLY

BUY & SELL ADS: ONLINE BOOKINGS ONLY
744pxH x 720pxW

TERM DISCOUNTS

12 WEEKS: 7.5% 24 WEEKS: 10% 48 WEEKS: 15%

Timber & Forestry eNews is published by Timber Media Australasia
PO Box 69, Potts Point, NSW 1335, Australia. Phone: 0417 421 187.

Delivered every Thursday, 48 weeks of the year to industry decision
makers in Australia, New Zealand, the Asia-Pacific, North America, UK
and Europe.

DEADLINES

Display ads: Book by 9am Tuesday prior to publication

Supplied artwork: Wednesday 12 noon prior to publication. Supply hi-
res jpg or pdf to our specifications. **NO crop marks or bleed required.**

Classified advertising: JOB ADS ARE COMPLETELY ONLINE.

Go to www.timberandforestrynews.com/post-a-job/ to place a job
vacancy. **Book by 12noon Wednesday prior to publication.** Job ads are
for individual positions. If more than one position is to be advertised,
separate ads will need to be created and advertised accordingly.

BUY & SELL ADS ARE ONLINE AND IN THE PUBLICATION. Go to
www.timberandforestrynews.com/product/buy-sell-advertisement/
to place an ad. **Book by 5.00pm Tuesday prior to publication.**

TERMS

New clients invoiced on booking. Existing clients 14 days.

WHO TO CONTACT

Media releases and editorial: Nicky Ainley e: news@timberandforestrynews.com and Donyale Harrison e: edit@timberandforestrynews.com

Display ad bookings: Campbell McInnes e: campbellm@timberandforestrynews.com // **Accounts:** Chris Parker e: cparker@ttnews.com.au