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COVER STORY P10

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# Master Builders Australia launch industry goals

The report targets a path to sustainability for the building and construction sector, including workplace retention and secure supply.

NATIONAL peak building and construction industry body Master Builders Australia has released its *Building and Construction Industry Sustainability Goals 2050*.

MBA CEO Denita Wawn said, "These goals outline our commitment to fostering a more robust and sustainable industry in the long term.

"By addressing critical issues affecting business performance, minimising risks, and maximising opportunities through an Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) framework, we aim to shape a sustainable future for businesses, workers and communities."

Wawn noted that the report came in response to population growth and environmental issues, saying that in this climate, "adopting ESG-focused building and construction practices becomes paramount. We must look beyond immediate

concerns and make a dedicated, long-term effort to future-proof our industry and Australia's built environment.

"Through evidence-based analysis, Master Builders will continue to advocate for changes that promote sustainable and profitable outcomes. Embedding these practices into industry business models can generate more robust businesses, create more jobs, enhance the built environment, and contribute to a stronger economy."

The report notes that currently the operation of buildings accounts for half of Australia's electricity use and almost a quarter of greenhouse gas emissions.

"More sustainable building practices are part of our goal to reduce the environmental impact of the built environment," Wawn said.

"Our focus for social goals is for everyone in the



**Master Builders Australia CEO Denita Wawn has long advocated for a more sustainable industry.**

The launch of the goals is the first step, to be followed by industry and community engagement.

"We recognise that achieving these goals requires a collaborative approach. Master Builders remains committed to developing policies,

industry to embed practices that ensure a safe and productive work environment for anyone wanting to work in the building and construction industry.

"A profitable and sustainable building and construction industry requires all those along the supply chain to share risk, maximise certainty, and minimise volatility, while maintaining a positive impact on the community."

partnerships and strategies to future-proof the industry," Wawn said.

The Building and Construction Industry Sustainability Goals 2050 have specific milestones set for 2030. Supporting these goals are three-year action plans, ensuring accountability and progress towards a sustainable future.

To read the report click here.



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# Inflation is down, but rents remain high

**A larger than expected drop in inflation is good news for those hoping rates will remain on hold.**

THE June quarter CPI increase of 0.8% announced yesterday means the annual inflation rate is 6%, a slightly lower figure than most economists had forecast. It's good news for those hoping that the Reserve Bank will leave rates on hold next Tuesday.

The RBA targets an inflation rate of 2-3%, with quarterly inflation now running at an annualised pace of 3.6% on its preferred trimmed mean measure (which excludes the most volatile price changes). The ABC reported Sean Langcake from Oxford Economics saying that, even though inflation remained above target, it was coming down more quickly than the Reserve Bank expected in its most recent forecasts.

"While there are still concerns around the labour cost outlook, we think these data will buy the RBA some more time and allow them to keep rates on hold a little longer," he argued.

Financial markets agree, with the odds of a rate hike in August dropping from just over 50% to around 30%, according to Refinitiv data.

Stephen Smith from Deloitte Access Economics went further, slamming the Reserve Bank, for its response to the inflation

## SERVICES VERSES GOODS INFLATION, QUARTERLY CHANGE



**This quarter marks the first time since September 2021 that annual services inflation has been higher than goods price increases.** ABC News/Source: ABS

spike. "The inflation data released today is further evidence that the Reserve Bank has increased interest rates too far," he wrote in a note responding to the figures.

"Excessive inflation in Australia has mostly been caused by supply side factors, meaning that interest rate increases have mostly been ineffective at bringing inflation under control.

"Rather, inflation has fallen as a result of repairs to global supply chains and an easing of import prices. The Australian economy is softening dramatically, the pace of inflation has peaked and is moderating quickly, wage growth is not excessive and medium-term inflation expectations are not rising."

Smith argued that further

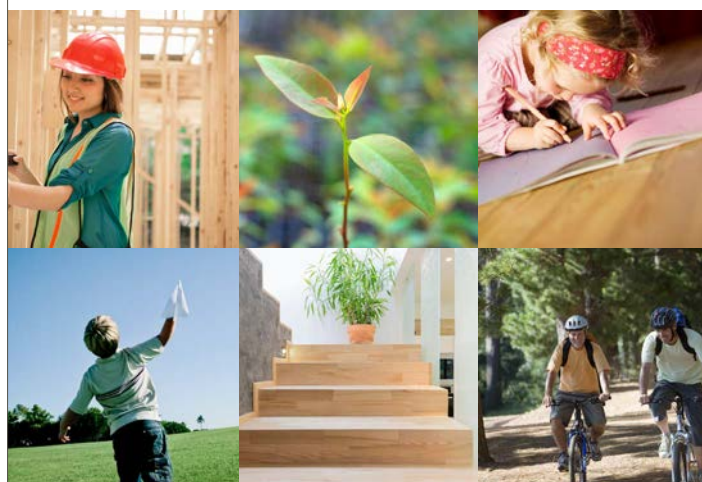
interest rate rises could even reinforce some of the current drivers of inflation, particularly housing and energy costs.

This was echoed by Master Builders Australia CEO Denita Wawn, who said the rental market has passed another grim milestone and shows no signs of easing.

"There is a continued escalation in rental costs which have just seen their sharpest quarterly jump since 1988," she said. "Rents are continuing to accelerate because landlords' mortgage interest costs have risen so substantially over the past 14 months, and we simply aren't building enough new higher-density homes to meet rental demand."

Source: abc.net.au

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# Australian spotlight shines on Malaysian timber once more

**Marketing mission to underscore commitment to strengthen close ties and mutually beneficial relationships with the Australian supply chain.**

MALAYSIAN timber industries will be under the spotlight with an upcoming trade and marketing mission to Australia from 27 August to 2 September by a high-level Malaysian Timber Council (MTC) delegation that will include leading Malaysian timber and manufacturing business executives.

Supported by Australian timber trade bodies, the trade mission will seek to underscore the commitment of Malaysian timber and its downstream industries to strengthen the already close ties and mutually beneficial



**Noraihan Abdul Rahman, Chief Executive Officer, is confident that this timely and important event will step up MTC's promotional efforts in Australia.**

economic relationships with the Australian timber supply chain companies.

The timber and related industries in Malaysia are a key sector of the country's economy. The industry has a goal of transforming itself to become the leading manufacturer and exporter of high-value-added products. Notably, the Malaysian forestry and timber sector provides employment opportunities to over 100,000 people. The major export markets for Malaysian timber products are the US, Japan, China, Singapore, Australia, India, the UK, the Netherlands, the Philippines, and South Korea.

Timber and related product exports to Australia amounted to over US\$263 million (AU\$378.7 million) in 2022. Major items imported into Australia included

wooden furniture, joinery, plywood, and mouldings.

MTC's Chief Executive Officer Noraihan Abdul Rahman is confident that this timely and important event will step up MTC's promotional efforts in Australia given the predicted positive outlook over the next several years.

"It is my hope that both governments and business communities will continue to work together for the mutual benefit of our countries," said Noraihan. "I firmly believe that this mission provides the optimal avenue for our industry players to network with the Australian counterparts, particularly during the Australian Timber Supply Summit 2023 and a Business-to-Business (B2B) matching session, which are the two main highlights of the timber fraternity's program in the country.

"About 10.68 million hectares of the total forested area have been gazetted as Permanent Reserved Forest managed under sustainable forest management policies and practices for key economic, social, and conservation goals. Malaysia is among the world's biggest exporters of timber products trading with about 170 countries worldwide," she added.

Meanwhile, MTC's Director of International Business Development Khairul Anwar

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EVENT WILL STEP UP MTC'S PROMOTIONAL EFFORTS IN AUSTRALIA

Cont P 9

# Bob Gordon thanked for industry service

## After a long period of overseeing successful initiatives, Bob Gordon has stepped down from the Forestry Australia board.

FORESTRY Australia has thanked Bob Gordon for his many years of service to the organisation on news he has resigned as a director.

Current president, Dr Michelle Freeman has paid tribute to former president, Bob Gordon after his storied term on the leadership body of the professional association for forest scientists, managers and growers. Mr Gordon has served as Board member and President of the Institute of Foresters of Australia (IFA) and Forestry Australia over the last eight years.

Dr Freeman said during his time with the organisation, Gordon oversaw significant change including modernising the constitution, relocation of the National office to Melbourne and the engagement of current CEO Jacque Martin.

"Not only did we see the introduction of the successful webinar program, the appointment of the Science Policy position and a sustained period of growth that saw Forestry Australia



**Bob Gordon has concluded his role on the Forestry Australia board.**

reach the 1200-member milestone at the end of June but also the development of the Future Foresters Initiative," Dr Freeman said.

Further to this, over the past 16 years, Gordon has also been assisting Indigenous landowners establish forest management, sawmilling and furniture processing in their communities.

"From March 2015 to August 2017, Bob also served as interim CEO of the Institute of Foresters Australia and worked with the Board on a strategic review, identified revenue opportunities and

IFA's priorities," Freeman said.

"It has been a privilege serving with Bob who has been generous with his time and knowledge."

AFPA CEO Joel Fitzgibbon agreed that Gordon would leave a lasting legacy, saying, "Bob's leadership

**“IT HAS BEEN A PRIVILEGE SERVING WITH BOB WHO HAS BEEN GENEROUS WITH HIS TIME AND KNOWLEDGE**

and commitment to forestry in Australia has been unwavering. I've had the privilege of working with Bob over the course of the last 20 years.

"On behalf of AFPA, we wish him well in all his future endeavours."

Gordon said Forestry Australia has gone through some significant changes since he was first appointed to the Board.

"I am sure the current leadership team will keep the organisation in good stead and will have my full support," Mr Gordon said.

"I will continue to be involved with Forestry Australia but not at board level.

"It has been an honour and a privilege to serve on the board and as president of Forestry Australia for the last few years and I would like to thank my fellow board members and also the staff of Forestry Australia for their support, guidance and enjoyable company over that time," Gordon concluded.

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# New site manager at Tumbarumba Mill

## Hyne has appointed Kristina Kaminski as the new site manager of the Hyne Tumbarumba Mill.

IT'S an unusual path from quality management for hip replacements to site managing a Hyne's Tumbarumba Mill, but it's one that Kristina Kaminski has trod with skill, relying on her details-oriented skill set and people-oriented work style.

Kaminski has been the mill's operations manager since joining the company in February 2023. It's notable for Hyne that this recent promotion to site manager makes Kaminski the first woman to ever to hold the role.

In making the announcement, Hyne's general manager of supply, Joe Trevaskis, said Kaminski brings extensive experience in



**Kristina Kaminski, Hyne's new site manager at its Tumbarumba Mill.**

high-paced manufacturing, "Kristina has been working with Hyne for several months, learning the industry and effectively building relationships during that time. She is a biomedical engineer

having gone from quality managing the manufacture of hip, knee and shoulder implants to, more recently, as operations manager for Visy then Hyne Timber.

"In addition to this manufacturing experience, Kristina demonstrates a genuine care for people development and was a stand-out to lead our Tumbarumba team into the future. I would like to congratulate Kristina on this promotion and value

her contribution for the best interests of the Tumbarumba Mill."

Trevaskis noted that the mill has been a great place for Hyne staff to develop their skills before moving on to other roles, saying: "I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Darren Wright who held the Site Manager role previously and will now be taking on the role of National Projects and Reliability Manager."

Originally from Germany, Kaminski relocated her family to Tumbarumba at the start of the year and very quickly grew to love the timber town.

"Tumbarumba is my home now and I am very proud to take on the role at the helm of the mill which is such a significant part of our community," she said.

"People are my focus with the benefit of working for a family-owned company with family values.

"As the site manager, I also look forward to my increased community and industry engagement as well as leading the team on site," Kaminski said.



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**AUGUST**

**29-30: Timber & Forestry news 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](http://www.timberoffsiteconstruction.com)

**OCTOBER**

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

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# Timber remilling project helping Gippslanders needs funds

NEIL Smith coordinates a unique timber-milling project that's putting a community-purchased portable sawmill to good use to salvage trees damaged in the Black Summer fires.

Timber from fallen trees is milled onsite at no cost to the property owner and can be used for anything from house framing, cladding and stockyard fence posts to rebuilding farm sheds.

But, it's a race against time as residents have a five-year window to salvage their timber before the wood deteriorates in the elements. And the government disaster funding is fast drying up.

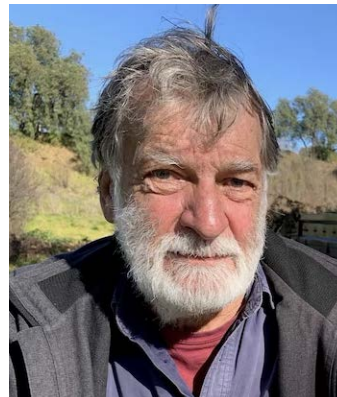
Smith said, "The recovery is nowhere near complete in

East Gippsland. I go out on to properties now and people still end up in tears."

Three small, motorised portable Lucas sawmills were purchased with funds from the East Gippsland Community Foundation; state and federal governments; and the solutions-focused Minderoo Foundation, after prodding from community members and the Bruthen Lions Club.

Milling contractors were trained up with the necessary operational and safety licenses to use the machinery. The mobile mills can travel to wherever they are needed and mill trees at least 400mm in diameter.

The service has saved locals many thousands of



**Neil Smith believes the project could become a social enterprise helping in other disasters.**

Photo: ABC Gippsland/Rachael Lucas

dollars and helped with timely supply. About 70 properties have been assisted so far, but the project waiting list has grown to more than 180 properties. And the grant money for paying wages,

insurance and repairs has dried up.

Smith estimates the project would require a budget of \$1.4 million over three years to work through the properties on the waiting list.

He believes the project is worth continuing for future fires, cyclones and storms, as it makes roads and residential areas safer as well as delivering valuable timbers.

"For the next disaster whether it is in East Gippsland or somewhere else in Victoria, New South Wales or wherever, the equipment and the knowledge could be sent to that place to assist them to recover," Smith said.

Read the full story by Rachael Lucas at [abc.net.au](http://abc.net.au)

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During the 2022 Malaysian trade and marketing mission. This year, delegations will be visiting trade facilities and holding a seminar in Melbourne.

From P 4

stated that he was confident the bilateral trade between Malaysia and Australia will continue to flourish.

"This marketing mission is a continuation of the successful mission carried out last year, where the delegates expressed great satisfaction with the prepared program. They believe that this program should be continued in the future," he said.

"While trading has been the traditional business activity between the timber-based sectors of Malaysia and Australia, I believe that other initiatives, such as potential discussions on joint ventures in the manufacturing of timber products and tree plantation programmes could be further developed."

During the MTC trade mission, delegates will be participating in the premier Timber Supply Summit in Melbourne and joining the related field trips.

**“MALAYSIA IS ABLE TO PROVIDE STRONG AND ONGOING SUPPORT FOR THE TIMBER SUPPLY CHAIN HERE**

The delegation will also be visiting trade facilities and holding a seminar in Brisbane that will provide an opportunity to update the Australian timber industry on the latest Malaysia export performance, timber sector business development, and collaborative marketing.

Australia Timber Importers Federation’s General Manager John Halkett asserted that Malaysia was now recognised as a standout leader in tropical timber production, innovation and compliance, and increasingly regarded as leading the tropical forestry industry in areas such as third-party forest and product certification, building standards compliance and product innovation.

"Malaysia recognises the importance of the Australian market and is able to provide strong and ongoing support for the timber supply chain here and is able to offer Australian importers and manufacturers a wide range of sophisticated, fit-for-purpose timber products," Halkett said.

Inquiries regarding the upcoming MTC trade and marketing mission should be directed to Campbell McInnes at 0406 223 007.

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# National Tree Day returns this Sunday

Get your hands dirty and show your community the importance of trees.

IT'S the one weekend a year when all around Australia communities focus on trees. There's no better time to be out lending a hand and reminding people that for every hectare harvested by the forestry sector in Australia, 1000 trees are planted.

This year Planet Ark is again spreading the event over two days, Schools Tree Day on this Friday, 28 July, and National Tree Day on Sunday. School children are encouraged to plant trees on their school grounds and in local community locations such as parks and sports fields. The annual event, run since 1996, has helped generations of kids understand the importance of trees to their communities and added 26 million trees to the Australian environment.

Although National Tree Day has a decidedly green tinge, Planet Ark has long supported environmentally sustainable forestry in

Australia, working with FWPA on research that has shown the health and wellbeing benefits of wood in the built environment. Around the country, major forestry operations have historically supported National Tree Day with donations of trees and coordinating plantings, as have local councils, who use the day as a chance to encourage the use of local plants, which birds and insects rely on for food and habitat.

Various local groups have special themes to their plantings, with koala feed trees being given away for NSW Mid-North Coast residents to plant in their gardens – a lot of new

housing developments are located in koala corridors. The National Landcare Network is using the day to host events around the country aimed at revitalising various ecosystems, from urban green spaces to rural wetlands.

In South Gippsland, the Kongwak Hills Landcare Group is celebrating a day early with a community tree planting event in the Kongwak Pioneer Reserve on Saturday 29 July from 10am to 4pm, with seven other events to follow on the Sunday in the region.

Every capital city, except Darwin, has events listed on the National Tree Day official website and even

Alice Springs is running a planting at Blatherskite Park on Len Kittle Drive to plant more shade trees on the park, as well as create a natural barrier from its less-than-glam neighbours, the local refuse tip and water treatment facility.

For people who live in the North, don't forget that Tropical Tree Day will be on Sunday 3 December, when you can get your hands dirty all over again.

For more and to find your local events on a clickable map, visit <https://treeday.planetark.org>

**On the cover: National Tree Day Ambassador and legendary AFL player Adam Goodes lends a hand.**



1/ Friday 28 July is Schools Tree Day ahead of National Tree Day this Sunday.



2/ Adam Goodes reprises his 10-year-plus role as National Tree Day Ambassador for Planet Ark.

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# Handcrafted wooden rocking horses bring joy

TOMMY Besant, a 77-year-old Mount Larcom craftsman, fell in love with rocking horses as a boy but didn't pursue his passion until retirement. Now he is rarely without a tool in his hand at his central Queensland home, spending up to six weeks bringing a single horse to life.

Besant grew up in Gordonvale. "My father was a carpenter in the Mulgrave Mill and they made the horses for the [local] merry-go-round," he remembers.

"While they were making those horses, the old man made one for us.

"We rode it when we were small, then it got put out of the house and into the shed, and then out into the drip line of the shed ... it finished up buggered."

The handy woodworker made his first rocking horse



**Mount Larcom-based woodworker Tommy Besant has been fascinated with rocking horses since childhood.** Photo: SM Photography

30-odd years ago when his daughter was born — a rougher design than his current output, hewn from a chunk of timber he slabbed using a chainsaw. But he was too busy with paid work to make more at that time.

"It wasn't until now that I decided, 'Well, I'll try this' ... and I've been pretty busy."

He has a backlog of rocking horse orders long enough to keep him going for months, as well as rocking bulls.

The process is painstaking: Besant cuts out multiple layers of hardwood ply to a desired shape, glues and carves them, then rasps, sands, and sands them again.

The sculptures then get two coats of fibreglass resin and two layers of clear-coat automotive paint, with a backbreaking amount of wet-and-dry sanding in between.

Then there are the frames, swinging bars, saddles and stirrups and manes and tails.

"The saddles are made as though I'm making a proper saddle," Besant says.

"I make a fibreglass tree, then I build the saddle on the tree."

It's a lot of work, but the real gift is in the finishing touch.

"I've always had a saying that you can be rough, as long as you finish properly," Besant says.

"I'd just love to be there when these kids open their Christmas presents."

**Source: abc.net.au**

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# New cloud-based log inventory system

Trimble has launched a cloud-based version of its log inventory and management system, making it more affordable and accessible.

OVER 500 large forestry companies worldwide currently use Trimble's Log Inventory and Management System (LIMS). It's a complex and powerful software tool that allows them to connect, manage and leverage data across their entire operation, from contracts to receiving, inventory management to financial settlements.

Now the company has launched LIMS PRO, a new cloud-hosted version of LIMS. It enables small- and medium-sized forest product companies to realize productivity and growth gains that only large companies have historically been able to afford by digitising supply chain workflows and improving operational visibility for mills.

Taking the power of LIMS and creating a more

## Log Inventory and Management System



The new software can be accessed anywhere with reception, by phone, tablet or laptop.

accessible Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) version, this robust business management software streamlines contracts, receiving, inventory and settlement processes into a single platform, providing forestry companies with a complete picture of their

operations. In addition, the software assists with mobile ticketing in the woods before the logs make their way to sawmills, eliminating the need for manual recordkeeping.

Comprised of a mobile application, web-based applications and an onsite

receiving application connected to the weigh scale, LIMS PRO provides an easily accessible reporting dashboard that shows exactly what is happening from forest to sawmill. Whether in the woods or at the weighing scale, this new software simplifies the complete process for sawmills – taking it from days to hours through improved data accuracy, real-time reconciliation, minimisation of processing errors and faster truck turn times.

“At Trimble, we work closely with our customers to digitise their supply chain data,” said Kevin Toohill, general manager of Trimble Forestry. “LIMS PRO enables partners and others along the value chain to digitally transform their operations: moving from paper tickets, log sheets and manual data entry to modern workflows. This means increased accuracy and less time spent tracking down paper copies or entering data multiple times.”

The new system is built on the experience gained in running LIMS.

“Leveraging our work with more than 500 large forestry customers, we have developed a hosted, cloud-based solution that gives small- and medium-sized businesses the opportunity to benefit from our enterprise expertise while having digital workflows tailored to meet their needs,” said Toohill. “This takes the complexity out of managing and maintaining a dedicated on-prem log and inventory management system.”

In addition to digitising the supply chain, this new software enables forestry organizations to: simplify load reconciliation by syncing the weigh scale to the settlement system within minutes; automate invoicing and financial settlements; track yard inventory while monitoring costs to procure timber inventory; manage key performance indicators and assess the overall health of the business; seamlessly share data with partners and more.

For full details, visit: [forestry.trimble.com/solutions/cfbusiness](https://forestry.trimble.com/solutions/cfbusiness).



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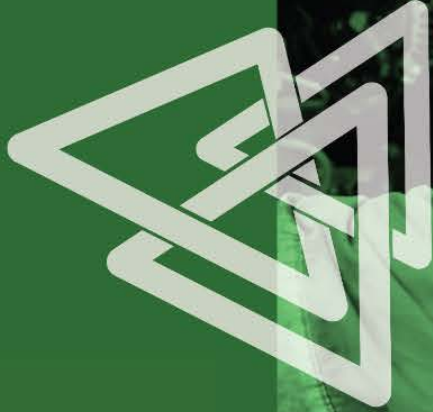
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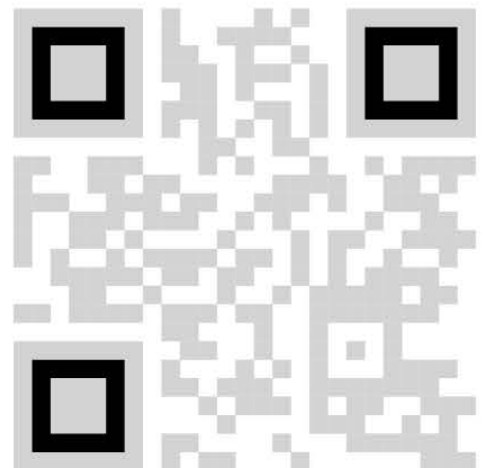
# 2023 Nominations Open

June 16- August 6

Nominate and Celebrate someone who deserves to be recognised for their contribution to the Timber Industry in 2023. To view the Nominations categories and criteria, visit [www.gttia.com](http://www.gttia.com) via the QR code.

## KEY DATES

June 16- Nominations open  
August 6- Nominations close  
September - Judging Process  
October 27 - Green Triangle Timber Industries Awards



# Trialling camera-based fire detection

This new tech offers early detection – essential in preventing bushfires from growing to sizes that threaten plantations and homes.

IN the face of a climate likely to become hotter and drier, and with bushfires continuing to pose a significant threat, a variety of forestry-related research initiatives are underway across Australia. Forestry is particularly vulnerable to bushfire threat, with the associated risks having the potential to affect plantation companies, native forest managers, wood processors and manufacturers in a variety of ways.

A recent episode of FWPA's WoodChat podcast series focused on various research projects aimed at increasing the industry's capacity to minimise the impacts of bushfires.

One of the four interviewees featured in the episode was David Bowman, Professor of Pyrogeography and Fire Science at the University of Tasmania. Professor Bowman shared details of a sophisticated fire detection tool known as FireHawk, which was trialled by SFM on Lenah Estate in Tasmania.

SFM has a strong reputation for implementing technological advancements in Tasmania's forestry sector, of which FireHawk is just one example. Another example trialled by SFM during a



Similar camera-based fire detection systems have been installed on old fire watch towers in California.

more recent fire season was ForestWatch. This ultimately superseded FireHawk due to its ability to offer increased client-facing information and content.

Both are camera-based fire detection systems that have the potential to enhance fire management practices, improve the protection of assets, and safeguard the broader community.

Each camera incorporates a 360-degree rotation combining high-definition imaging systems with purpose-built image processing software.

ForestWatch uses mathematical and image processing algorithms to optically scan wide areas and detect the earliest signs of

smoke. Every 100 seconds, the camera takes a new image and compares it with the previous image. Where a change is detected, such as visible smoke, the person monitoring the system will receive an alert and can initiate a speedy response.

"The ForestWatch technology is essentially the 21st century version of a fire tower," Bowman said.

"It was understood very early on that identifying fires in the landscape was critical step in fire management. Building lookouts, with

people getting up early in the morning during the summer months and scanning the horizon into the evening, recording the distance and angle to any observed fire, was a primitive means of fire detection.

"Being able to do that in an automated way by using sensors and other technological means cuts out labour costs, improves health and safety for staff, and reduces the risk of human error."

Bowman said it's important to explore these kinds of fire-mitigation measures because, as the climate changes, landscapes and live fuels are turning from non-flammable to flammable, creating additional risk to plantations.

"There's an insurance element to that risk, because if an insured asset such as a plantation is under threat, your insurance company will want to be confident the plantation owner is taking the necessary steps to help protect that asset from damage," he said.

You can listen to the entire episode of WoodChat focused on current fire management and mitigation projects around Australia by clicking here.

“FORESTWATCH TECHNOLOGY IS THE 21ST CENTURY FIRE TOWER”



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# Casual conversion made easier in ALP changes

The industrial relations reforms promised by Labor before the last election are kicking off with an easier path for casuals to become permanent.

WORKPLACE relations minister Tony Burke has announced changes that will make it easier for casuals to convert to full-time work in medium and large enterprises if they so choose. It's the first major announcement in a tranche of workplace reforms that will be rolled out over coming months.

"No casual will be forced to become a permanent employee. But for those who desperately want security – and are being rostered as though they were permanent – for the first time, job security will be in sight," said Burke in a speech to The Sydney Institute on Monday.

In the speech, Burke made it clear that the change was in response to issues brought up by workers who have been disadvantaged by contracts that allow them to be treated as full-time employees with none of the benefits of permanent roles. He accepted that for many casuals, there would be no desire to make the change.

"Many casuals won't want a permanent job," Burke said. "If you're a student or just working a casual job to make some extra money, this change won't matter to you.

"But there are casual workers who are trying to support households. They're being used as though they're permanent workers and the employer is double dipping – taking all the advantages of a reliable workforce and not providing any of the job security in return.

"That loophole needs to be closed."

The changes would enshrine conversion as a right in the Fair Work Act, defining casual employment by the substance of the work being done rather than just what's on a contract and allowing conversion after six months of working as a de-facto full-time employee. There is no facility for obtaining back pay or other entitlements retrospectively.

Under the current rules, employers are compelled to ask casual workers if they would like to convert to permanent employment if those workers have been on the job for more than 12 months, and have worked a stable, predictable pattern of hours for the past six months. But if that is rejected there is no opportunity for workers to apply again. The new scheme would leave that option open for workers whose circumstances change to make conversion more desirable.

Trent Hancock, a workplace lawyer and principal at Jewell Hancock, told *The New Daily* that it was a common sense change, saying current rules were "very susceptible to manipulation" by employers.

That's because changes under the former Coalition government defined casuals by the type of contract a worker signed with a company rather than what their work actually ended up looking like, Hancock said.



Tony Burke, Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations, announced the changes in a speech earlier this week.

That, in turn, limited how courts and the Fair Work Commission could consider whether a casual worker should be permanent. The changes to the definition were made to put an end to court cases that awarded large payouts to casual employees who had been underpaid for many years..

"We have a definition now of casual employment in the Fair Work Act, which says a court cannot consider the conduct of the parties after employment commences," Mr Hancock told *The New Daily*.

"The minister is seeking to return us to a state of affairs where a court or tribunal can make that assessment."

Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry chief

**“FOR THOSE WHO DESPERATELY WANT SECURITY, FOR THE FIRST TIME, JOB SECURITY WILL BE IN SIGHT**

executive Andrew McKellar told the *AFR* the change "really does move the needle away from the fundamental test established around the primacy of the employment contract".

"It means it will be much more difficult to know whether the businesses'

circumstances are going to change," he said.

"If the employee is working regular shifts or hours, [businesses are] at risk that person will have the whip hand in determining whether or not they convert – that means a lot of flexibility that many small businesses currently enjoy will be gone."

Unions are mostly supportive. "What the government is proposing is sensible and fair, it will put the decision in the hands of workers," ACTU secretary Sally McManus, said.

Burke said that the new rule should come at no additional cost to employers, as the costs of leave and other entitlements for full-time staff were equivalent to the casual loading. On Tuesday, he clarified that the changes would not apply to small businesses, with the current exemptions to casual conversion programs for 15 or fewer employees remaining in place.



# Timber leads in architectural awards

## WAFX celebrates architecture's ability to tackle global issues.

THE World Architecture Festival (WAF) is held annually and is the biggest global event devoted exclusively to architecture. In the lead-up to this year's event in Singapore (29 November–1 December), WAF has just announced the winners of its WAFX Prize categories.

The WAFX Prize awards projects that best use design and architecture to tackle major world issues, including health, climate change, technology, ethics and values. The winning projects are chosen by judges from the WAF Future Projects shortlist with no additional cost or material needed from the entrants. An overall WAFX 2023 winner will be chosen from the category winners and be announced during the festival in Singapore.

Timber features heavily as a material for the category winners, particularly for the Building Technology awardees.

RTA Studio's Fisher and Paykel Global Headquarters in Auckland reflects the appliance brand's commitment to radically reducing its Scope 3 supply chain emissions. The building will be embodied carbon zero in its construction and almost net zero operational, framed



on a three-storey engineered timber diagrid (diagonal grid) and will be the largest mass timber building in NZ when completed.

The wider campus development will comprise an office building, product development workshops and laboratories with car parking and end of trip facilities to assist workers and visitors. The balance of the post-industrial site will be regenerated with pre-European

**1/ The new Fisher and Paykel Global Headquarters will be the largest mass timber building in NZ when completed.**

**1/ A diagrid of engineered timber ties together the three storeys of the Fisher and Paykel Global Headquarters.**

**3/ Arkansas's reputation as a centre of timber design excellence will gain a boost from The Anthony Timberlands Center for Design and Materials Innovation.**

flora and fauna with consultation with the indigenous Māori custodians of the land.

Irish architects Grafton Architects with modus studio

lived up to the name of The Anthony Timberlands Center for Design and Materials Innovation at The University of Arkansas. Fittingly for the eighth-largest timber producing state in the US, this building will be the home for ongoing design-build and graduate programs, collaborative efforts with partners in the state's forest industries and outreach programs that address critical

issues including housing inequality; all major goals of the university's design school.

The architects describe the glulam-rich design as having been conceived as a 'Story Book of Timber', saying the finished building will showcase the "versatility of timber, both as the structural bones and the enclosing skin of this new building" and that "the building itself is a teaching tool, displaying the strength, colour, grain, texture and beauty of the various timbers used."

For the full list of winners, including a revitalised traditional Chinese timber and earth building, biobased housing and a tower that absorbs local CO<sub>2</sub>, [click here](#).

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