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COVER STORY P4

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New forestry recruits are 'fire ready'

FORESTRY Corporation has put its new firefighting recruits through their paces at a Wauchope training camp in preparation for the bushfire season.

Over 50 staff from across the North-West, Mid North Coast, Northern Rivers, Sydney, Hunter, Central West, South Coast and southern NSW were trained in essential firefighting skills.

This included training in fire behaviour, tactics and strategy, leadership, command, control and communications and how to operate the range of appliances and equipment used at hazard reduction burns and bushfires.

"The intensive training program is designed to get new recruits nationally qualified and 'fire ready' as forest firefighters," fire training and operations officer Adrien Thompson said.

Forestry Corporation's bushfire training camps are

essential in developing a skilled and capable workforce for the bushfire season.

The training program is comprehensive, and recruits get the opportunity to learn skills like the use of four-wheel-drive-mounted hoses and reels, operation of fire tankers and pumping equipment, while also being taught lifesaving skills such as firefront first-aid, communication, how to monitor weather patterns and gauge the impact of relative humidity and changing wind gusts on forest fires.

"Safety is always at the top of this list though – our firefighters' wellbeing is our biggest concern, and it all comes back to correct

training and procedures," Mr Thompson said.

"We take our firefighting responsibilities incredibly seriously – our training ensures everyone from our most experienced firefighter through to our newest recruits are fit and ready to be deployed to the fire front.

"We also send crews to assist on large bushfires across all tenures within their local areas, interstate and even internationally, so we need to ensure we are at the top of our game," he said.

Forestry Corporation is

“SAFETY IS ALWAYS AT THE TOP”

responsible for preventing and managing fires across two million hectares of State forests across NSW.

The training was followed by NSW's 'get ready weekend', an initiative from the NSW Rural Fire Service. The weekend, designed to encourage residents to be bushfire prepared was carried out last weekend during the state's unseasonably hot spell which saw a number of early fires flare up.

Areas of the NSW Hunter Valley along with parts of Queensland experienced an early hot, dry, windy spell which resulted in several early fires in both states, indicating what is to come this season.



1/ The bushfire camps are essential for training the workforce for fire conditions.
2/ A number of early bushfires are a cause for concern across NSW and Qld



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Book now for Gottstein Understanding Wood Science course

BOOKINGS are now open for the next Gottstein Understanding Wood Science course, with those wanting to attend (individuals or companies), encouraged to register as soon as possible to ensure they do not miss out on a place.

According to organisers, 87% of people who completed the Gottstein Trust Understanding Wood Science course confirmed in the post-course survey last September, that their general knowledge had "improved a lot" due to the course.

The next chance to come along to network and learn is in mid-November 2023.

Course program planning is well underway and course convenor Helen Murray advises that it will be very similar to the very successful one last year.

"It will begin at Albury on Sunday afternoon 12th November and end at Canberra on the afternoon of



The 'look, listen and do' course will explore wood and processed from Albury to Canberra.

Friday 17th November 2023," Ms Murrays said.

One 2022 participant who was brimming with enthusiasm afterwards recorded in the survey, "I loved it all! The mix was great. Great mix of look, listen and do learning!"

The 2023 program also involves two nights based at Albury, NSW which will enable the group to dive straight into site visits to a range of leading wood processors in that wider Vic/NSW region. Northern Victorian operations to be visited include Xlam at Barnawatha and Alpine Truss at Wangaratta.

A key feature during the three-day Canberra leg of the course will be to examine the biological characteristics of wood. That component will be run by Dr Matthew

Brookhouse who is a research scientist at the Australian National University Fenner School of Environment & Society. Participants will enjoy a laboratory exercise using microscopes to look and learn about the characteristics of different types of wood.

"We are so pleased to be finalising plans to provide this opportunity once again", said course convenor Helen Murray.

A series of industry experts will be delivering guest speaker sessions and there will be plenty of time for asking questions.

Course bookings operate on a first-come-first-served basis and registration can only be done online at www.gottsteintrust.org (follow the menu options to the Wood Science course registration page).

The course fee includes two nights of accommodation at Albury, many meals including a course celebration dinner, and luxury coach transport from Albury to Canberra once

the field trip component is completed. Participants just need to book and pay for their three nights of Canberra accommodation for which the Trust has reserved and negotiated a group rate with the Mercure Canberra.

Prolonged COVID disruption to Gottstein courses in recent years motivated the Gottstein Trustees to plan for staging both of the Trust's course programs this year, instead of the usual one.

"It means that people aren't having to wait so long for the next program," Ms Murray said. Normally the Trust would just hold the Understanding Forest Science program this year followed by the Understanding Wood Science course in 2024.

For more information email team@gottsteintrust.org

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Excellence recognised at Tasmanian timber's night of nights

TWELVE highly coveted awards were presented at last week's Tasmanian Timber Awards. The event, hosted by the Tasmanian Forests and Forest Products Network, included the recognition of industry stalwart Bryan Hayes' for his outstanding contribution to the sector over more than 50 years.

The biennial awards, held at the Tailrace Centre Launceston, celebrate excellence and best practice in harvesting, forest growing and management, distribution and logistics,

innovation, environmental management, design and/ or use of Tasmanian timber, workplace health and safety and tree farming.

Emily Gee and Emily Skromanis—both from Sustainable Timber

Tasmania—were awarded Trainees of the Year, while Dr Nathan Kotlarewski from the University of Tasmania took out the gong for Emerging Leader in the Tasmanian Timber Industry.

Forico's Bryan Hayes was

celebrated by the 420 attendees, deservedly winning the award for Outstanding Contribution to the Tasmanian Timber Industry. This category recognised excellence in an individual's commitment to supporting and promoting the timber industry in Tasmania.

Mr Hayes has been influential in a number of Tasmanian companies since 1972 and currently works heading up industry advocacy

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The event was a successful evening with entertainment, awards and plenty of industry networking.

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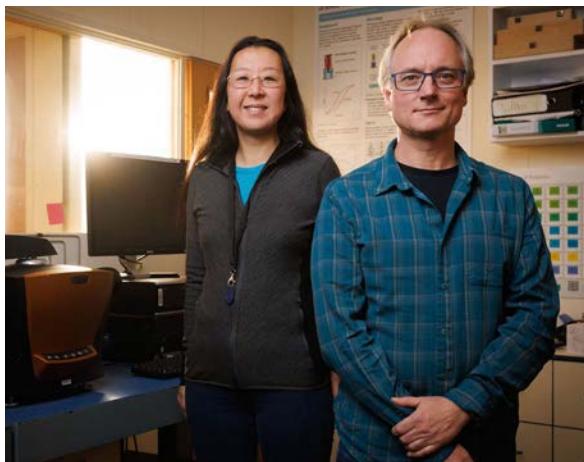
Scion scientists celebrate after earning prestigious publishing honour

SCION is toasting the success of two leading researchers after they've earned the equivalent of an Olympic gold medal in the world of science.

Drs Marie Joo Le Guen and Stefan Hill are among the authors who have contributed to a research paper published in the scientific journal *Nature Plants* – one of the most respected scientific journals in the world. *Nature* covers a wide range of disciplines, and its articles are known for their high impact and global significance.

Becoming a published author in any of the *Nature* journals is considered highly prestigious in the academic community – an achievement not lost on the Rotorua researchers.

"Getting into *Nature* is something you hope for," says Dr Hill, Scion's portfolio leader for High Value Biorefineries. "As a group, we submitted the



Drs Marie Joo Le Guen and Stefan Hill are among the authors who have contributed to a research paper published in the globally significant scientific journal *Nature Plants*.

manuscript earlier this year and, as with most journals, the reviewers were very picky, but this process felt like it was next level.

"They question all aspects of the science, so when you finally receive an email that tells you your manuscript has been accepted, you feel elated. It's nice to see that our science is of a level that is deemed worthy of being included in a journal like *Nature*."

Their research paper, titled 'Ectopic callose deposition into woody biomass modulates the nano-architecture of

macrofibrils', was led by Dr Matthieu Bourdon of the University of Cambridge and involved 33 researchers from more than 20 universities or research organisations around the world.

The research showed how trees could be genetically modified to produce wood that is easier to process

into biofuels and chemicals that can replace those made from fossil fuels. They did this by genetically changing the trees so they produced more of a type of sugar called callose in their wood. The Scion scientists were able to develop and apply new methods to help confirm if the changes were working in the way the scientists hoped.

Dr Hill said Scion was approached by Dr Bourdon following previous work with another researcher on the University of Cambridge-led team.

"Matthieu contacted us because the team needed to understand how genetic modifications had changed the walls of cells in the trees' wood. They needed to know whether modifying the trees to produce more callose in their cell walls changed the size and distribution of nanometer-scale pores in those cell walls.

"Trees have evolved strong cell walls so they can grow tall. While this is a smart idea if you're a tree, it makes it hard for us to break wood down and turn it into chemicals that can replace those made from the petroleum industry." The team needed to know whether callose was causing the changes in the wood that would make it easier to process.

Hill and Le Guen used a technique called differential scanning calorimetry to precisely measure how changes in the freezing point of water in the wood samples related to the differences in nano-pore size and distribution resulting from the genetic changes to the trees. The pair's results ultimately supported

Cont P 11

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CLT Toolbox founder the Emerging Professional of the Year

The Engineers Australia Excellence Awards celebrates innovation in engineering with an increasing focus on more sustainable building solutions.

ADAM Jones, the founder of CLT Toolbox, has been awarded the Engineers Australia Emerging Professional of the Year Award, for contributions to the advancement of sustainable construction practices.

The top engineers of Victoria shared their accolades at the 2023 Engineers Australia Excellence Awards held in Melbourne recently.

The CLT Toolbox overcomes a key bottleneck preventing the important transition from high carbon emission materials like concrete to low emission



1/ Adam Jones, the founder of CLT Toolbox, has been awarded the Engineers Australia Emerging Professional of the Year Award, for contributions to the advancement of sustainable construction practices.
2/ Award winner Adam Jones said, "we're on a mission to bring sustainable building materials into the mainstream".



timber by providing education and design infrastructure in an agnostic software platform.

The honor serves as a

humbling recognition of his ongoing efforts to promote environmentally friendly building methods.

Jones' team is leading the growth of a network of contributors working to make mass timber a more available choice for engineers across the country.

Despite a heightened national interest in a timber transition, Adam identified that a lack of education and access to easy-to-understand templates was preventing engineers from choosing sustainable building materials

over concrete and steel.

"We're on a mission to bring sustainable building materials into the mainstream. CLT Toolbox aims to make mass timber the path of least resistance, making it easier than concrete or steel. I'm deeply grateful for the acknowledgement and excited for the path ahead," Adam said, who shared that the launch of the software wouldn't be possible without the CLT Toolbox Team's support.

Cont P 7



Develop our future workforce

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

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SEPTEMBER

28: Wood You Like To Know Summit - ONLINE EVENT. The event promises to 'transform the way you approach design'. Multiple streams of panel discussions on topics shaping the future of the industry will be headed by industry experts. Topics include Digital Evolution In The Building Industry: BIM, Robots & Prefab Homes; Unpacking the Latest NCC Changes and Designing for Bushfire Prone Areas. Online expo and networking sessions included, with exhibitors including ITI Australia, Intergrain and Weathertex. Tickets from \$49 for half day live to \$99 for full day and on demand, earn up to 10 CPD points. For more, visit www.event.woodyouliketoknow.com.au

OCTOBER

2-6: 30th Session of the Asia-Pacific Forestry Commission (APFC) – Hyatt Regency Sydney Hotel. Formulation of

forest policy and to review and coordinate its implementation on the regional scale; to exchange information and advice on suitable practices and action in regard to technical problems. Further details www.fao.org/events/detail/apfc-30/

11-12: 71st International Softwood Conference – Hilton Vienna Park Hotel Vienna.

The conference will offer the opportunity to scrutinise trends in the timber market focusing on facts and figures showing softwood production as well as consumption. Further more info visit <https://isc2023.com/>

15-18: 2023 ANZIF Conference – Twin Towns Conference Centre, Tweed Heads, NSW.

The Conference is an exciting joint event from both Forestry Australia and The New Zealand Institute of Forestry. The theme of the conference, "Embracing Our Natural Capital: The Science, Technology and Art of Managing Forests For All Values", will

facilitate conversation and collaboration – highlighting the need for active and adaptive management of our natural capital using evidence-based and emerging innovation, technology, skills and knowledge to support our forests and secure our future. For full details, visit www.forestryconference.com.au

23-25: Global Woodchip And Biomass Trade Conference And Networking Event – Singapore.

Following on from the inaugural 2022 DANA-Gingko event last year, the organisers are once again bringing together international experts to discuss the issues facing the trade. The three-day event includes comprehensive networking opportunities and will be followed by a post-conference field trip. For more details and to book, visit <https://danaevents.co.nz/2023singapore/home>

NOVEMBER

9-10: Sustainability summit and awards 2023 – Sydney.

The event begins with the summit, with its topics ranging from the Brisbane 2032 Olympics builds to Designing for Resilience and Sustainability Certification and Compliance, held at Allianz Stadium in Sydney and online. Then on Day 2, the prestigious awards will be held at the Sydney Cricket Ground. Tickets start at \$149. Visit www.sustainablebuildingawards.com.au/#s-summit

12-17: Gottstein Understanding Wood Science Course – Canberra.

Companies and interested individuals are encouraged to register their place/s soon to ensure they do not miss out on this respected learning opportunity. Full details at <https://gottsteintrust.org/grants-courses/understanding-wood-science-course> or email team@gottsteintrust.org

From P 6

The Emerging Professional of the Year Award, celebrating innovation in projects delivering low-carbon solutions, comes at a time when the Australian government is doubling down on decarbonising the construction industry and reducing the country's embodied carbon footprint.

The award also recognised Adam's extensive career and contributions to

structural engineering and sustainability, including his role in the "Rethinking Cement Report" with Beyond Zero Emissions and his educational contributions through interviewing leading timber global experts on the Timber Talks Podcast.

Adam was also previously recognised as Future Green Leader of the Year by the Green Building Council of Australia in 2019. He's deeply passionate about making timber a mainstream option

for emerging markets in construction.

"Adam has been dedicated to helping engineers find a visible route to contributing to a more sustainable construction industry, helping engineers become champions of the decarbonization movement at a critical time," shared Ringo Thomas, co-founder of CLT Toolbox.

Beyond his professional pursuits, Adam has also made educational contributions

through his popular podcast, "What You Will Learn," with over 9 million downloads and is a bestselling author of the book "The Sh*t They Never Taught You," further illustrating his commitment to broad-based education and personal growth.

"It's a collective effort, and the award is a reflection of the hard work put in by our team, and the openness of the industry to new, sustainable solutions," Adam added.

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Historic farm forestry site getting a makeover

VICTORIA'S oldest farm forestry demonstration site is being restored through a partnership between VicForests, Gippsland Agroforestry Network and Lardner Park.

The site, established in 1978, occupies six hectares at the northern end of Lardner Park and was initially planted by APM Forests, Forests Commission Victoria, Warragul Technical School and the Department of Agriculture, with support from other companies and organisations servicing agriculture and forestry.

VicForests Senior Farm Forestry Officer Trevor Nicklen said once completed, the site would be home to a series of farm forest plantation plots.

"These plots will demonstrate the management and performance of farm



Once completed, the historic Victorian site will be home to a series of farm forest plantation plots.

forestry species that are known or thought to establish and grow successfully on a range of sites in West and South Gippsland," Mr Nicklen said.

"VicForests, along with the Gippsland Agroforestry Network, will then create opportunities to educate farmers about the benefits of farm forestry through various field days, forums and publications."

With support from the Gippsland Agroforestry Network and Lardner Park, VicForests is restoring the site

by investing about \$80,000 into the management of the site.

The completed restoration will see:

- a 10-year management plan for the site
- new species planted
- upgrades and management of existing plantations
- development of new interpretation boards.

Site preparation has already commenced to prepare for planting of a Spotted Gum tree and pasture site, Spotted Gum and Black Wattle timber-belt and a Sheoak environmental belt that will commence in early September.

Soil tests have been conducted on the planting site to measure nutritional

status and determine fertilizer requirements specific to growing trees.

Since 2021, VicForests has awarded grants through its Gippsland Farm Forestry Program to 26 landholders across Gippsland to assist in planning, establishing and managing a total of 361 hectares of new farm forests.

The Gippsland-based program seeks to support the integration of timber trees within the context of a whole farm plan, ensuring these trees play a vital role in improving the broad range of economic, environmental, social, and cultural values within and around the farming landscape.

The grants are funded by the Victorian Government, which is incentivising tree planting at the farm scale through to much larger commercial plantations.

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From P 4

and projects at Forico.

“My vision for the forest industry has always been for a united, focused and collaborative sector that is respected for creating and sharing value in the communities in which it operates,” Mr Hayes said.

Network Convenor, Sue Grau said the calibre of award entries was very high this year, which is a true reflection of—and testament to—the hard work of those in the sector.

“The TFFPN’s Tasmanian Timber Awards recognises and celebrates excellence and best practice within our industry and acknowledges those who are leaders in their fields,” Ms Grau said.

“Last night’s event showcased our industry in the best possible way. It truly was

a celebration of industry, by industry.”

On the cover: Wayne Denny from Pentarch Forestry presenting the award for Outstanding Contribution to the Tasmanian Timber Industry to Forico’s Bryan Hayes.



1/ Sustainable Timber Tasmania’s CEO, Steve Whitely presenting the Innovation Award to Jamie Lawrence from Indicium Dynamics.

2/ Midway Tasmania’s Mark Sweet presenting the awards for Trainees of the Year to Emily Gee and Emily Skromanis, both from Sustainable Timber Tasmania.

3/ Scott Carter from E.E.Muir and Sons presenting the award for Emerging Leader in the Tasmanian Timber Industry to Dr Nathan Kotlarewski.

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NZ research paper suggests more diverse forestry models needed

By MICHAEL SMITH

RESEARCHERS at Scion recently released a discussion document on the concept of 'transitional forestry' – a reappraisal of what forests are for and how they are being used.

Timber & Forestry enews invited lead author Dr Alan Jones to outline how New Zealand could benefit from a shift away from the current binary management focus of production and conservation.

Dr Jones and his colleagues are proposing that we also think about the opportunities "in the middle". In other words, as a country looking to plant more trees to lock in carbon and meet our net-zero emissions goals by 2050, they are challenging us to not be so black and white in our approach.

Right on Scion's doorstep is Whakarewarewa Forest, which simultaneously serves recreational users, a citizen scientist pest control community, iwi relationships and the planted forestry industry – thus delivering multiple benefits.

Although primarily managed for its export-quality radiata pine, the forest also features a range of indigenous plants and other exotic tree species.

For Dr Jones, it's proof that a mixed-use, mixed species

“WE WANT TO INVEST HEAVILY IN HIGH THROUGHPUT CLEARFELL FORESTRY



1/ Whakarewarewa Forest: "... an example of the range of values we could attach to New Zealand's forestry landscapes in the future."

2/ Scion's Dr Alan Jones says we need to rethink how we design, manage and value our forests.

and mixed-age forestry model works well.

"Looking out my window, the forest is a useful case study and is an example of the range of values we could attach to New Zealand's forestry landscapes in the future."

The Scion paper considers the challenges involved in transitioning existing monoculture forestry into something more diverse, and the need to better understand forest dynamics and how different species might interact in a productive commercial forestry setting.

Dr Jones says that, currently, it is difficult to determine what combinations of exotics and natives might work in a New Zealand context because of the limited research available.

"However, international forest research has shown



that mixing coniferous and deciduous, or non-deciduous broad-leaved trees can have benefits," he continued.

"For example, mixed plantings may be able to store and retain soil carbon more effectively; may be more resilient to drought; more effective at nutrient recycling; more biodiverse across a range of taxa; and have greater productivity than monoculture stands. These major tree groups possess complementary functional traits that can provide beneficial outcomes for forests and the environment when managed correctly."

He acknowledges that

"transitioning even-aged monoculture pine forestry stands to uneven-aged stands that feature a mix of exotic and native species would take multiple harvest rotations and several decades for successful establishment – potentially with initial reductions to timber yields".

But he adds that despite the ability of pine forests to sequester carbon and reduce erosion, there are growing calls for New Zealand's forestry sector to become less reliant on one species for revenue.

"Climate change or biosecurity impacts [due to expanding international trade and travel] may eventually necessitate rapid changes away from a *Pinus radiata*-focused model.

"In this paper, we're not saying highly productive forests aren't needed. In fact, we see a future where production efficiencies will be enhanced with the increasing adoption of precision forestry techniques – think data-gathering technologies and automation.

"The transitional forestry model we illustrate in our paper describes a future where high-intensity, high-output clearfell forestry exists alongside a diverse array of other forest management types.

Cont P 11

From P 10

"There is good reason for this ... because by doing everything we can to maximise production in select areas of land where high-intensity clearfell forestry

is suitable, this will 'free up' other areas and resources for less intensive use. These less intensive uses include dedicated forest conservation, native afforestation, or continuous cover forestry.

"The key is that we need

to recognise where each of these forms of management is appropriate. We want to invest heavily in high throughput clearfell forestry on land that will provide the greatest returns and minimal environmental risks.

"Alongside this we should maximise diverse types of slow-growth forest management in other locations where social, environmental and economic factors favour alternative forms of forest practice."

From P 5

the overall outcomes of the research.

Dr Le Guen says the experience shows that Scion can collaborate with the top-tier universities in the world.

"Cambridge University is still the number one university globally, and they invited us to participate, which is a wonderful recognition of our science capabilities at Scion, as well as an opportunity to learn from the best.

"What's more, the analysis work we've set up from this project is really useful for all the other science that

Scion is doing. It gives us a whole new way of looking at cell wall architecture, which complements all our work to understand biomass better.

"This is critical to our mission to support New Zealand's transition to a circular bioeconomy."

Another benefit is that it has opened up further collaboration with Biomata, a new international associated laboratory, led by Scion and French research organisation INRAE.

Dr Bourdon says Scion's research was an essential part of the overall study.

"We managed to genetically introduce callose into wood, but our prior analysis surprised us by suggesting that this polymer did not interact with other wood components. However, some experiments showed that the modified wood was able to absorb more water, which we thought could be because we had also changed the wood's nanopores.

"From there, the collaboration with Scion was paramount to experimentally confirm this hypothesis and nail down the physical effect of callose introduction on the engineered wood

ultrastructure. This final piece of data allowed us to finalise our model of action describing how callose introduction can mediate an increase in wood digestibility for wood biorefinery pipelines."

Nature has been published in the United Kingdom since 1869. The journal has a long and prestigious history of featuring ground-breaking scientific research. Just as winning an Olympic gold medal is the pinnacle of athletic success, so is publishing in Nature for scientists. Both achievements represent reaching the very top of their respective fields.

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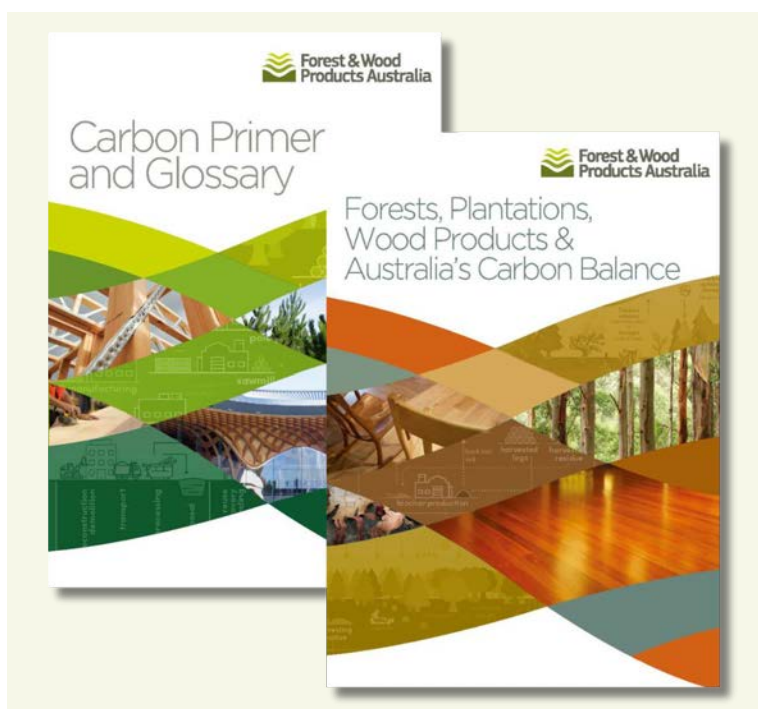
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FWPA's Carbon Guides: Leading Australia's timber industry towards a low-carbon future

FOREST & Wood Products Australia have released two of their new carbon guides with the third and final instalment coming soon.

In 2022, Australia's Government set emissions reduction targets aiming for a 43% emission cut by 2030 (from 2005 levels) and net-zero emissions by 2050. To reach these goals, every industry must play its part and make significant contributions to reduce the emission of greenhouse gases. Forest & Wood Products Australia (FWPA) is leading this charge for the industry by releasing three new carbon guides that serve as a source of knowledge, deftly extending the understanding of the role forest and wood products can play in the carbon economy.

Forests are a significant actor in the global carbon cycle and continue to play a key role in how we address the changing climate. As we work to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, the resource-rich forest and wood products industry continues to emerge as a key player that can bolster the ongoing effort through the timber-building materials produced from sustainably managed forests.



The new carbon guides are available through their website.

Amidst the building sector's drive towards decarbonisation and the growing influence of emissions in forestry, plantation management, and material selection for construction, this trilogy of documents by FWPA explains key carbon-related terms spanning the lifecycle of wood products and the buildings they go into.

Success in hitting emissions reduction targets hinges on collaboration. The forest and wood products industry must align with the growing carbon-consciousness of

the construction sector, understanding concepts and frameworks, engaging with initiatives and advocacy opportunities, and exploring incentives that highlight why timber stands out as a low-carbon alternative that can effectively contribute to Australia's sustainable built environment.

FWPA's Carbon Guides have been created in collaboration with Thinkstep

“KEY CARBON-RELATED TERMS EXPLAINED AND MORE

ANZ and Senior Research Scientist, Dr Fabiano Ximines. The guides shed light on the multifaceted impact of plantations, commercial forests, and the resulting wood products on Australia's carbon balance. Notably, the guides illustrate not only the widely acknowledged carbon sequestration capabilities of forests but also the often-underestimated role that wood, both during its service life and after disposal, plays in carbon storage.

These new FWPA-funded Carbon Guides provide industry stakeholders with the knowledge necessary to steer towards a sustainable future, playing a pivotal role in the carbon dialogue and positioning the industry to shape a future where timber assumes a vital role in curbing carbon emissions and driving sustainable growth.

The first two guides are available now; the Carbon Primer and Glossary and Forests, Plantations, Wood Products and Australia's Carbon Balance. Access the first two guides in the series here; <https://fwpa.com.au/resources/>

The final guide will be released soon.



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Supply summit timely

Impressive lineup of international speakers, politicians and leading Australian industry representatives.

BUSY times and limited space have meant that reporting on the well-attended enews hosted Timber Supply Summit held recently in Melbourne has been delayed. Here are some images from the summit that boasted an impressive lineup of international speakers, politicians, and leading Australian industry representatives.

The summit was extremely timely given the national focus on the crisis in the shortage of public, social, and affordable housing and the financial stimulus being thrown at this challenge by the Federal and state governments.

However, accelerating building activity will obviously be contingent on the availability of building products, notably timber.

The greater focus on this future supply of a whole suite of timber products will need to be part of the equation if national policy goals around home building and construction activity more broadly are going to be realised.

The success of the conference has generated enthusiasm for staging a further event in 2025 and preliminary planning is now underway. More details from the timber supply summit will appear in coming editions.



- 1/ Senator Jonathon Duniam, Shadow Environment, Fisheries and Forestry and Deputy Manager of Opposition Business delivering an energetic opening address.
- 2/ Leading Australian independent economist Harley Dale talks housing demand.
- 3/ Summit delegated break for afternoon tea.
- 4/ Catching up over a beer are Darren Benn and Darren Hargreaves, Big River Group with Kevin Labrooy, Multinail and Phil McCormack, McCormack Australia.
- 5/ Trying their hand at breaking the chocolate slab are Marie-Claire McKiernan, Timber Merchant Australia and the CEO of the Malaysia Timber Council Madam Noraihan Abdul Rahman.
- 6/ Catching up for some friendly networking are Julia Hall, McCormacks Australia and Heath Caddy, Lamcal Builders Supplies..



“ THE SUCCESSFUL CONFERENCE HAS GENERATED ENTHUSIASM

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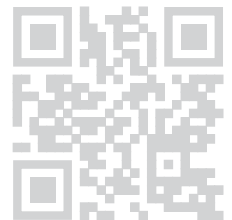
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Housing Australia Future Fund legislation passed

THE Housing Australia Future Fund legislation has passed through the Senate. The Housing Australia Future Fund will receive funding of \$10 billion and is tasked with supplying 30,000 new social and affordable homes.

According to HIA, while the Housing Australia Future Fund is the headline policy measure of this Bill, the Bill also included legislation necessary to implement several other elements of the housing package that Labor took to the 2022 federal election.

These include:

- Creating the National Housing Supply and Affordability Council to inform the Government of gaps in the supply and affordability of housing in Australia and assisting the Government to make evidence-based policy and funding decisions. Passage of the Bill formalises arrangements for the Council chaired by Susan Lloyd-Hurwitz which has been operating on an interim basis;
- Re-branding the National Housing Finance and Investment Corporation to 'Housing Australia';
- Defining the responsibilities of Housing Australia, which expand the remit of the entity to assist in the implementation of the work undertaken by the Housing Australia Future Fund, alongside its existing responsibilities which include the Home Guarantee Scheme, the new Regional First Home Buyer Guarantee, the Bond Aggregator and the National Housing Infrastructure Facility;
- The Bill also extends the duration of the Government's



The Housing Australia Future fund will receive funding of \$10 billion and is tasked with supplying 30,000 new social and affordable homes.

guarantee of securities issued by the Bond Aggregator.

Following the successful passage of the Housing Australia Future Fund Bill, HIA said it will continue working with the Australian Government as the policy focus now shifts towards identifying and implementing reforms to support the State and Territory Governments, Local Governments, and industry to achieve the goal of building 1.2 million new homes over the next five years.

Last week when it was announced that the Government had gained the numbers in the Senate to pass the Housing Australia Future Fund legislation, HIA made the following statement:

"The fact that the Albanese government and the Greens have finally reached an agreement means we are a step closer to getting on with the job of supplying Australians with the housing they need," HIA Managing Director Jocelyn Martin said.

"The arrangements mean there is a commitment for a \$10 billion investment towards

the construction of at least 30,000 social and affordable housing over a five-year period. The announcement of an additional \$1 billion will be invested in the National Housing Infrastructure Facility to support new homes also signals the Government's recognition of the need to deliver homes to those who need them.

"The need for greater housing supply in Australia has become more acutely apparent in recent years.

"The rebound in immigration, acute rental shortages and tight labour markets are fuelling demand for housing across Australia, driving rents and dwelling prices ever upwards.

"It is a relief to see this important enabling legislation has passed through parliament and that the need for greater housing supply across the housing continuum is being taken seriously.

“WITHOUT REFORM THE PRESSURE OF HOUSING WILL INCREASE

"The Australian government recently announced that it wants to see 1.2 million homes built over the five years starting July 2024, as part of its National Housing Accord.

"It is important to recognise that the commitment to supply 30,000 social and affordable homes via the Housing Australia Future Fund represents only 2.5 per cent of this aspirational target.

"The private sector will still have to do most of the heavy lifting in terms of meeting Australia's housing needs, and it is being constrained by policy that inflates the costs of home construction and finance.

"Broader reforms are required to reduce these costs and aid the private sector in enabling the delivery of these targets:

- Planning systems need to facilitate more higher density residential development in existing suburbs near jobs and transport.
- The release of greenfield land and provision of infrastructure needs to be expedited.
- Punitive taxes on both investors and owner occupiers need to be abolished and replaced with fairer and broader sources of revenue.

Financial regulations need to make it easier for banks to lend and potential home buyers to borrow.

"Without these broader reforms, the pressure on social and affordable housing will only increase, and the government's latest announcement will prove inadequate," concluded Ms Martin.

Timber takes a prominent place in Newcastle development

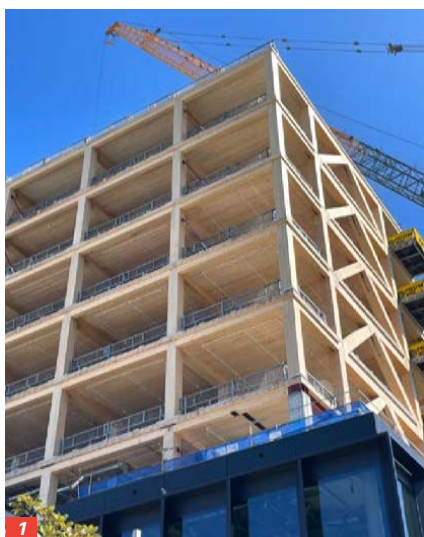
LARGE cross-laminated beams dominating over one of Newcastle's most popular roads is a key feature of a new development which is under construction.

Canberra-based construction group DOMA has commenced development of 42 Honeysuckle Drive, a project that includes both a hotel and office space in the heart of Newcastle in NSW.

Initially, plans were lodged to build a 140-room hotel in the fast-growing area of the city, however, this was later expanded to include more rooms and office space.

It is one of seven projects the construction group has underway in the area with further developments using elements of cross-laminated timber underway in Canberra and even Adelaide.

"Doma has a long-term commitment to Newcastle, reflected by the fact we have seven projects either underway or completed to date," Doma Managing Director, Jure Domazet said.



1/ the large cross-laminated beams can be seen dominating over Newcastle's Honeysuckle drive.

2/ The office and apartment building should be open in 2024.



"We believe an opportunity exists to help draw more visitors and jobs to the region.

"The outlook for local tourism and the economy are positive and it is important to us to ensure our plans move with the times to provide the infrastructure that will best position the city for the future."

Under new designs, the site at 42 Honeysuckle Drive will become a mixed-use vertical precinct containing a 181-room Little National Hotel and a boutique office block of 4,700 sqm.

"The number of rooms in

the Little National Hotel has increased by 29," Mr Domazet said.

"Plans for the site previously included 60 serviced apartments, but we believe the local tourism market will be better served through our addition of affordable, business/leisure hotel rooms."

The new office building on the eastern side of the site will enjoy the facilities and amenities provided by the

Little National Hotel, including a co-working lounge and library area, gym and access to the north-facing upper terrace with rooftop bar.

According to Mr Domazet, "This is part of a global move where hotels start offering services that will also be enjoyed by office occupiers. The public spaces of hotels have always been used as "third spaces" by businesses and linking our hotel and

office buildings optimises this relationship.

"There is a natural blurring of hotel and office spaces that will see hotels providing more of the co-working spaces currently being developed around the world".

The office floors being created will have efficient and flexible floorplates with a great outlook and natural daylight.

Doma is undertaking studies on building it out of sustainable timber, with a commitment to a 5 Star Greenstar and a 5 Star NABERS Energy rating.

“ POSITIONING THE CITY FOR THE FUTURE

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