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Perth tall timber building gets green light

After 17 months of wrangling, C6 is now approved.

VICTORIAN developer Grange Development Consulting first submitted plans for C6, its \$350 million hybrid timber tower with 237 apartments over 51 storeys/191.2m last April.

The proposed building at 6 Charles Street is named C6 after the periodic table's symbol for carbon and would become the State's first carbon-negative building.

The City of South Perth had recommended against its approval as it believed the development did not meet "design excellence" in relation to amenity, legibility, and safety.

But the project was approved unanimously at last Thursday's Metro Inner-South Joint Development Assessment Meeting after negotiations and redesigns.

Grange Development founder and director James Dibble said timber as a building material had been around for centuries but mass timber construction and fabrication methods had made



C6 is the tallest hybrid timber tower currently planned in Australia.

it a viable option to use in tall structures such as residential towers only recently.

"C6 represents the future of what is possible, except we will deliver it now," he said last year.

"If we get this right, we should never have to rely on building another solely concrete or steel tower in our lifetime."

Timber will make up 42% of South Perth's C6 building, including the tower's beams,



The design by Fraser & Partners highlights timber in the interiors, showcasing its biophilic benefits.

floor panels, studs, joinery and linings, with sustainably farmed CLT and glulam the main wood products

used.

While there is as yet no finalised build schedule, post-construction, Grange Development has committed to sharing its C6 research, design and construction documentation as a call to arms for other developers to take up, evolve and develop the building methodology.

"We as a company are not driven solely by profit: we are driven by the need to urgently

reduce our carbon footprint whilst delivering happier, healthier homes," Dibble said.

"We want to encourage other developers to see what we have delivered with C6 and start to incorporate the methodology across other projects.

"If we can accelerate a paradigm shift into the use of more renewable building materials such as mass timber in a hybrid nature and see even 10, 15 or 20 per cent of future projects use mass timber in their construction in the next few years, we will have succeeded."

Source: Perthnow.com.au



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New rules for slash management in NZ forestry

Changes designed to improve safety come into force this November.

Destruction, property damage and the death of a child caused by forestry slash after extreme weather events in Aotearoa New Zealand in recent years have led to new regulations being enacted.

Environment Minister David Parker announced on Tuesday that local councils will have more power to decide where new commercial forests – including carbon forests – are located, to reduce impacts on communities and the environment.

“New national standards give councils greater control over commercial forestry, including clear rules on harvesting practices and new requirements to remove slash from erosion-prone land” Parker said.

“Under the changes, non-indigenous forests planted for carbon sequestration will now be managed in the same way as plantation forests.”

Forestry Minister Peeni Henare said slash provisions have been tightened to



Forestry slash washed ashore on Sponge Bay beach, Gisborne, North Island.

Photo: Shutterstock/ S Curtis

reduce the risks of damage to downstream communities as experienced in Tairāwhiti and Wairoa during Cyclone Gabrielle.

“Under the new regulations, slash longer than two metres and with a large-end diameter of more than 10cm must be removed after harvesting from erosion-prone land unless it is unsafe to do so,” said Henare. “This is a minimum standard across the country, and councils can apply more stringent requirements if they choose.

“Where foresters are unable to meet these national standards, they will need to obtain resource consent, meaning councils consider the risks and impacts on a site-by site basis,” he added.

Parker said councils will be

“**NEW NATIONAL STANDARDS GIVE GREATER COUNCIL CONTROL OVER COMMERCIAL FORESTRY**”

able to have rules in their plans controlling where new commercial forests are located, developed in consultation with their communities.

“There has been a big increase in carbon forests since the forestry regulations were introduced in 2018. Carbon foresters will now need to meet the same environmental standards as plantation foresters.”

The regulations, to be gazetted this week, will be known as the National Environmental Standards for Commercial Forestry (previously the National Environmental Standards for Plantation Forestry), to reflect the inclusion of carbon forests.

The changes come into force from 2 November this year. The Ministry for the Environment and councils will work together to implement the changes, while Te Uru Rākau – New Zealand Forest Service is developing risk assessment and management tools for landowners and councils.

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Victorian support package closing soon

Applications for the Highly Impacted Manufacturers Stream – Timber Supply Chain Resilience Package close at the end of this month.

WHEN the Victorian state government decided to close native timber forestry six years early, it also announced a series of packages to assist those affected by the decision.

Currently, the Highly Impacted Manufacturers Stream – Timber Supply Chain Resilience Package is open for applications, but the closing date is 31 October, so would-be applicants need to get moving.

The scheme delivers up to \$145,000 worth of grants and services, to develop and implement a Business Transition Plan, including vouchers valued at up to \$25,000 to access advice



Manufacturers who have lost out with the closure of Victorian native timber harvesting are invited to apply. Photo: Shutterstock

and services from a service provider appointed by the Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions (DJSIR).

Services will involve a Preliminary Business

Diagnostic and Future Opportunities Assessment, including a financial health check. A full Business Transition Plan will also be provided if required.

Businesses that have completed a Business Transition Plan may be invited to apply for a grant of up to \$120,000 to implement the steps outlined in their plan.

To be eligible for support through the Highly Impacted Manufacturers Stream, the business must:

- be highly impacted by the end of native timber harvesting in Victoria, with:
 - o at least 40% of the business's material inputs (measured by cost) used in the manufacturing process are derived from native hardwood sourced from Victorian state

Cont P 7

national safe work month

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Wombat State Forest salvage harvest halted

Environment groups have succeeded in obtaining a court injunction.

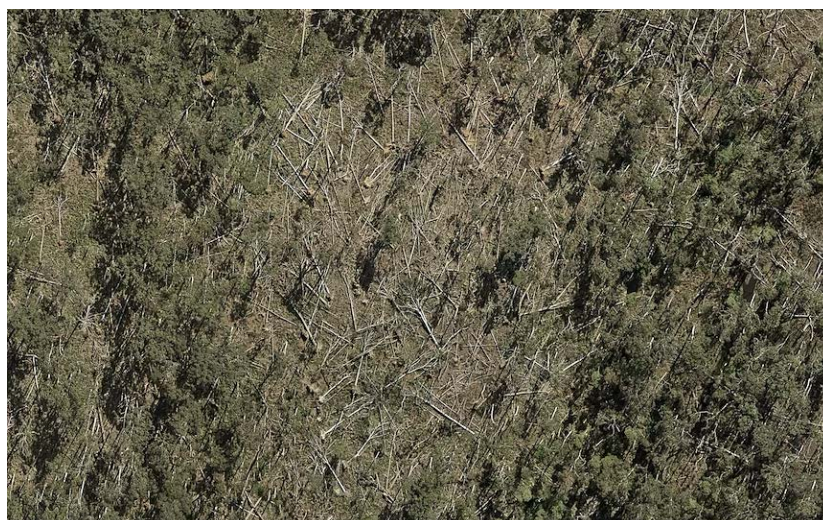
AFTER massive storms knocked over substantial stands of trees in Wombat State Forest in 2021, local forest management groups made the understandable assumption that they would conduct salvage harvesting and other retrieval actions to lower the fire risk from the dead timber and clear the way for regeneration in the west Victorian forest.

Recent action in the Victorian Courts has determined otherwise.

Last week, Supreme Court Justice Melinda Richards ordered VicForests to temporarily halt the harvesting of fallen trees at the site, after community group Wombat Forestcare alleged it had not surveyed for threatened species, including owls, quolls and reptiles.

Justice Richards ordered VicForests and its contractor to stop any work in the harvesting area, near Daylesford, until 31 October.

She said Wombat Forestcare had established "serious questions to be tried" that planned timber harvesting in the coupe would



VicForests says storms in June and October 2021 caused a significant amount of debris in Wombat State Forest. Photo: VicForests

not comply with VicForests' code, in relation to surveying for endangered mountain skink and three species of forest owls.

Justice Richards said she did not accept VicForests' argument that the planned operations in the coupe were necessary to reduce fire hazard in Wombat State Forest.

Wombat Forestcare provided written expert evidence to the court that said the removal of wind-thrown trees was highly

likely to cause irreparable damage to native animal habitat. "Logs are valuable habitat components to threatened species," the expert statement said. "They should not be disturbed if serious and environmental damage to these species and their environments are to be avoided."

“NO EVIDENCE OF THE SPECIES BEING FOUND IN THIS COUPE

The expert statement said that without VicForests conducting "proper" surveys, including using cameras on site, it was not clear whether the species were present in the harvesting area.

VicForests said it had not surveyed for reptiles or quolls, because there was no evidence of the species being

found in this coupe.

"You don't find them in this part of Victoria," said VicForests barrister Fiona Hudgson in reference to the skink.

"It is a reptile that doesn't move very far, Your Honour," she said.

Tiley Industries, the contractor VicForests licenced to complete operations in the coupe, has been allowed to remove its machinery from the site using existing tracks.

Source: abc.net.au

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National Throws Centre building better athletes

A new Xlam Australasia video shows the practical difference good design is making for Australian athletes.

WHEN the new National Throws Centre of Excellence was opened back in February, much was made of the fact that the complex was carbon-neutral. This was the first step in Queensland's commitment to delivering the world's first climate positive Games in 2032.

This week, Xlam, whose glulam is featured throughout the centre, has released a video showing the centre in use and it is clear how important that design decision has been in not only ticking a sustainability goal, but in creating an inviting, comfortable and highly usable space.



The new National Throws Centre of Excellence is designed with sports performance front and centre.

The Throws Centre is located at the Queensland Sport and Athletics Centre (QSAC) in Nathan, south of Brisbane's centre. Built by

Hutchinson Builders and designed by Phillips Smith Conwell (who won a Jury citation in the Award for Public Architecture at the Queensland Institute of Architecture Awards for this design), it uses beams that began life in HQP's Queensland pine plantation before being sawn at Hyne Timber's Tuan Mill near Maryborough and manufactured into glulam at the Hyne plant in Maryborough and supplied through sister company Xlam. Framed in tin, the building also substitutes a low-carbon concrete mix for cement, further reducing its embodied carbon.

It's a very Queensland affair, one that is reflected in the structure itself which, like a typical Queensland house, uses passive cooling and lighting to lower energy requirements. Translucent panels allow daylight through while protecting athletes and the high ceilings and fully openable sections of the centre's three major zones provide ample natural ventilation, which also lowers the operating costs.

Throwing sports are divided into three major types and each has its own part of the centre: a strip for the javelin linear runup and throw; a cone for the helical spin of the discus and hammer; and a flat plane for the push of the shot-put. The form of each part echoes the needs of the athletes. Xlam's new video features interviews with those who have been using the centre, who describe the real-world implications of the design choices.

Kelsey-Lee Barber, World Champion javelin thrower (with a Commonwealth gold medal and Olympic bronze also to her name), said: "Having a facility purpose-built for throws means we get to come in each and every day and build consistent training and that gives us the best platform going into our competition season."

Throwing sports are typically performed out in the field and athletes on average lose 32 days' training a year to bad weather. The new centre can be partially or fully closed off, and its advanced facilities



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Cont P 9

OCTOBER

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

17: MGA TMA 2023 Final Industry Event – The Views, Life Saving Victoria, 200 The Boulevard, Port Melbourne.

MGA TMA's final industry event for 2023 will feature industry presentations and networking for members and non-members alike. Guest speakers Boris Iskra, Director, Wood Products Victoria and Kevin Peachey, Head of Built Environment Programs, Forest and Wood Products Australia will be presenting while breakfast is served. For details, visit <https://www.trybooking.com/events/landing/1119848>.

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>

27: GTTIA Gala Dinner and Awards Night – The Barn, Mt Gambier, SA.

Tickets now on sale at www.gttia.com

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 4

forests. This figure must be for the financial year either 2021-22 or 2022-23 OR

- o at least 40% of the business' revenue is derived from sales of products made with native Victorian hardwood.
- be a legally structured business with an active Australian Business Number (ABN) and have held that

ABN on and from 1 July 2021

- be an employing business located in Victoria that is registered with WorkSafe Victoria
- be a business in the manufacturing industry classified under one of the following Australia and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classifications (ANZSIC) codes as of 23 May 2023, unless otherwise agreed by DJSIR:

- o 1413 Timber Resawing and Dressing
- o 1492 Wooden Structural Fitting and Component Manufacturing
- o 1499 Other Wood Product Manufacturing n.e.c.
- o 2511 Wooden Furniture and Upholstered Seat Manufacturing.

Material input costs include expenses incurred specifically on the materials used to manufacture a

product. It includes the cost of all raw materials and any other components needed for manufacturing. It does not include non-material costs, such as wages, utilities, and services.

Manufacturers who have had impacts to their material inputs of less than 40%, may be eligible for support under the Impacted Manufacturers Stream (click for link).

For full details and how to apply, click here.

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Basix changes blasted

THE blindingly hot start to summer in Western Sydney has seen experts slamming this and the previous government's changes to new BASIX requirements.

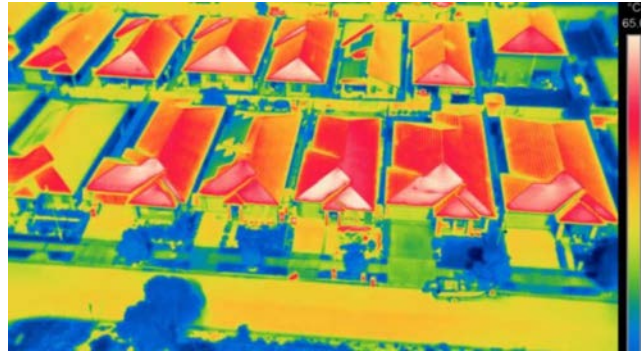
In 2021, Liberal Planning Minister Rob Stokes took steps to ban dark roofs on new homes under a sweeping update to building standards, known as BASIX, aimed at slashing thermal energy use by 20%, reducing heat inside a home and saving residents money on cooling costs.

Dark roofs attract and retain heat and can be 40°C hotter on the surface than the air temperature during a heatwave, raising the temperature of the surrounding region.

The updated BASIX provisions wouldn't have banned far roofs outright,

but if someone building a new home wanted one, they were to be required to offset the increased cooling energy needs.

In the lead-up to the last election, then-Premier Dominic Perrottet replaced Stokes in his portfolio with Anthony Roberts, who immediately dumped the proposed dark roof ban. Last month, the new state government's Planning Minister Paul Scully shelved the plan for at least nine months, blaming the cost impact on new builds in the midst of housing and cost-of-living crises.



The heat trapped by dark roofs (shown as red in this thermal image) can raise the temperature of the surrounding streets by 10°C.

Image: Climate Council

All credible projections point towards more heat and in the recent past, Western Sydney was already twice the hottest place on the planet."

Minister Scully defended the decision,

"They've effectively thrown the tools they developed to combat urban overheating in the gutter," Associate Professor Sebastian Pfautsch from Western Sydney University told news.com.au.

"It is common knowledge that heat is the silent killer in Australia that costs more lives than those lost in all other natural disasters combined.

saying, "While we remain committed to the introduction of BASIX, the [delay] will reduce the financial impact of increased standards on homebuyers who have already signed building contracts under the current BASIX requirements, which includes some 6000 contracts in Western Sydney alone."

Source: news.com.au

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From P 6

allow training to go on indoors.

“Missing training days for an elite athlete is quite significant,” said Chelsea Warr, CEO, Queensland Academy of Sport. “Every day counts.

“Usually, they would have to cease training, they don’t now. They come in and operate as usual.”

Barber agreed: “It’s not just about wet weather training: it’s hot weather, it’s facility access and it’s maintenance days. We get all of those back.”

Shane Robertson, General Manager of XLam

talked about the centre as a model for what can be achieved, saying: “From carbon sequestration to locally grown and manufactured timber, mass timber solutions for

Athletes Villages, stadiums and other Olympic infrastructure are the perfect solution to deliver a carbon-positive Games with a lasting legacy.”

He noted that: “Timber needs to be specified from the onset followed by the engagement of experts in the field. You can’t design a building in concrete and steel then attempt to convert it to timber and still gain the many benefits including design and cost efficiencies which largely come from the prefabrication, lighter weight material and speed of construction.

“Working with Stadiums Queensland to supply the National Throws Centre of Excellence from glulam beams certainly sets a standard of what can be demonstrably



Each part of the facility is specialised to the type of throw.



Glulam and tin reference classic Queensland construction materials.

achieved, and we thank them for the opportunity to be part of this award-winning building.”

For the athletes, the difference is clear. “This is where my last few months of training have been and I can honestly say they have been the most consistent of my career to date,” said Barber.


Warr agreed. “Without a doubt, it’s had an almost instant performance improvement,” she said, saying that the centre would play a real role in the advancement of throwing sports in the lead-up to Brisbane 2032.

To watch the video, click here.


On the cover: Queensland Sport Minister Stirling Hinchliffe at the centre’s opening, with Kelsey-Lee Barber and other athletes.

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Timber company fined after worker's death

An avoidable death has attracted a hefty fine in Victoria.

A TIMBER processor has been convicted and fined \$350,000 after a worker died when he became entangled in a conveyor belt drive shaft at a Benalla timber mill in May 2018.

D&R Henderson Pty Ltd was sentenced in the Melbourne County Court last week after pleading guilty to two charges under the Occupational Health and Safety Act for failing, so far as reasonably practicable, to provide and maintain a safe workplace.

The company was fined \$275,000 for failing to maintain systems of work that were safe and without risks to health and \$75,000 for failing to provide information, instruction and training to enable workers to perform their work safely and without risks to health.

The court heard the worker was unloading timber from conveyor belts when his



The worker's clothes were caught in a conveyor belt (unrelated file image).
Photo: Shutterstock

clothes were caught on a pin protruding from the belts' rotating drive shaft and he was dragged into the plant and impaled on a nearby stillage.

A WorkSafe investigation found it was reasonably practicable for D&R Henderson to eliminate the risk to workers by fitting a cover over the drive shaft or repositioning it so workers could not come into contact with it.

Investigators also found that there was no safe system of work for realigning conveyor belts, with workers undertaking this task while the machine was powered, when it was reasonably practicable to first lock out the machine.

WorkSafe investigators found that it would have been reasonably practicable for the company to instruct employees about the risk

of becoming entangled on the rotating shaft, where to position themselves to avoid this, and to contact a supervisor to arrange repairs if the belts came off the conveyors.

WorkSafe executive director health and safety Dr Narelle Beer said the risks of plant and moving machinery are well known as it is a major cause of workplace deaths and serious injury in Victoria.

"Employers and duty holders must do everything they can to eliminate or reduce the risks to workers from moving machinery, including guarding or physical separation and instructing workers in their safe operation," Beer said.

"Tragically, in this case a worker has lost his life in an incident which could have been avoided had proper safety measures been in place."



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Sandalwood plantations sold off

After a precipitous price drop, sandalwood resources are being sold to cattle farmers.

ABC Rural has reported that sandalwood giant Quintis has sold 363 hectares of its Kununurra sandalwood portfolio to northern cattle identity Sterling Buntine. It is the second time this year the company has offloaded land in the Ord River Irrigation Area (ORIA) in northern Western Australia, with wheat farmer Ron Greentree purchasing 517ha of sandalwood from Quintis in August for \$7.675 million.

In a statement a spokesperson from Quintis told the ABC the company "is transitioning from its traditional, capital intensive 'set and forget' land ownership model to a more dynamic model where real estate in

sandalwood growing areas is traded in and out".

This will be done "according to the company's own plantations requirements, the requirements of its customers, and macro factors affecting real estate values," it said.

The sale of Quintis' Packsaddle plantation to Buntine includes more than 165,000 Indian sandalwood trees and 476,000 host trees planted 12 months ago in what was then seen as a new cycle of longevity for the company.



Piles of harvested sandalwood logs. Previously attracting a premium for use in cosmetics and furniture, prices have recently crashed.

Sandalwood takes 15 to 20 years before it is ready for harvest for use in a range of fragrances, cosmetics, traditional medicines, furniture, and handicrafts.

Last year's planting marked the first time the producer of

exotic timber, which manages the largest Indian sandalwood plantation area in the world, planted new trees since it entered administration in 2018.

After recapitalising as a private company later in 2018 and recording a record harvest in 2021, Quintis CEO Richard Henfrey said the price of heartwood dropped significantly.

"I've been in the role three years and in that time it's probably come down by 50 per cent," Mr Henfrey said.

After speaking to industry sources, the ABC understands Buntine plans to clear the land of sandalwood and repurpose it for broadacre farming.

Source: abc.net.au

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FWPA Board in the Northern Territory

IN late September, board members of Forest & Wood Products Australia (FWPA) along with key members of the FWPA leadership team, visited several locations in the Northern Territory, including the Tiwi Islands, to learn from and spend time on the ground with local representatives of the industry.

A key focus was to increase Indigenous engagement, which included an in-depth workshop with Cissy Gore-Birch from Kimberley Cultural Connections on challenges and opportunities for longer term business development, decision-making and the importance of cultural competency for workplaces and the broader industry.

The team also had the opportunity to meet with the Department of Industry, Tourism and Trade (DITT) for discussions around past and current forestry initiatives. Key areas covered were developments in biosecurity, insights from the Developing East Arnhem project (DEAL) and further partnerships with other Rural Research and Development Corporations (RDC's).

An information and experience sharing session was held with NT Ord Valley Forestry Hub (NTOVFH), which gave attendees an opportunity to more deeply understand workplans and linkages between the Northern Territory forestry initiatives and FWPA



Local forest managers discuss the growth opportunities for both Northern forestry and Indigenous employment with the FWPA board.

programs of work Australia-wide.

"We would like to thank all involved for the opportunity to listen to and learn from the incredibly dedicated local representatives of our industry" said Craig Taylor, Chair of the FWPA Board.

"We were thrilled to showcase the existing estates along with the growing opportunities the forest industry presents. The industry thanks the FWPA Board for this initiative and looks forward to working closely to add value and realise opportunities for existing plantation estates and traditional owners throughout the NT" said Frank Miller, Chair of NTOVFH and the Forest Industry Association NT (FIANT).

"This visit helped us gain a deeper understanding of the challenges and successes in northern Australian forestry, which will help inform future research opportunities to support both the local and broader industry" said Andrew Leighton, CEO of FWPA.

FWPA would like to especially thank Kim

Puruntameri, Gibson Farmer Illortaminni, Dennis Tipakalippa, Patricia Puruntameri and Andy Bubb from the Tiwi Plantations Corporation, Muhammed Sohail Mazhar from NT Department of Industry, Tourism and Trade, Frank Miller and Hanna Lillicrap from the NT Ord Valley Forestry Hub, Troy Sawyer and Ken Robson from Quintis for their support and insights during this valuable visit.

The insights and experiences from this study tour will inform further FWPA research and strategic development needs to support forestry and wood products across Australia.

NT and Tiwi Islands forestry has been growing both in scope and expertise in recent years and currently comprises some 60,000

hectares of plantations and 80–90 million ha of Indigenous owned or native forestry. With forestry uses ranging from cultural to profit-driven harvesting, the managers coordinate a range of stakeholder requirements with respect and hope to expand the employment opportunities in the region.

NTOVFH grew out of a successful Commonwealth

grant for a regional forestry hub in 2021. Tiwi Plantations Corporation began its work in 2003 and is the largest Indigenous agricultural venture in northern Australia, managing over 30,000ha of plantation estate on Melville Island and 100% owned by the Tiwi people. Lessons from its Tropical Hardwood Plantation Productivity program are forming the basis of the Northern Forestry Industry Growth model and there are also programs underway to find other forest species for diversification on the islands.

Early Tiwi plantations were mostly acacia, but feedback from monitoring and research has seen that shift to *Eucalyptus pellita*, which performs better and is more resistant to the severe weather and pests on the island.

Earlier this year, the Tiwi Plantations team also worked with Plant Health Australia (PHA) as part of a Commonwealth-funded project, *Safeguarding Indigenous-led forestry in northern Australia*.

“VISIT GAVE DEEPER UNDERSTANDING OF CHALLENGES AND SUCCESSSES IN NORTH AUSTRALIAN FORESTRY

Native forest management under the spotlight

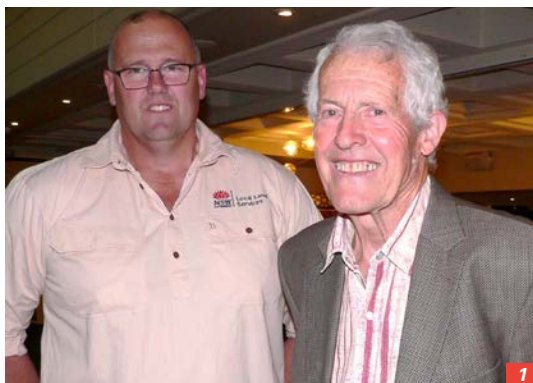
Victorian forest closure, Northeast NSW social license and an increasing role for NSW Local Land Services all under discussion.

THE focus was on the future of native forest management at a seminar evening held recently in Sydney by the NSW Branch of Forestry Australia. The audience was privileged to hear a courageous presentation from Bill Paul, director, forest management at VicForests. Paul provided a sobering account of the reasons behind the decision of the Victorian Government to bring forward the closure of the native forest-based timber industry to the end of this year, rather than the previously announced date of 2030.

This, he said, was a culmination of repetitive and ongoing court cases by third parties, and associated injunctions that meant that VicForests could not reasonably continue significant forest harvesting operations.

Paul stated that the courts had placed particular emphasis on the 'precautionary principle' related to threatened species in relevant legislation. The ongoing need for VicForests to continue to defend its position in court, the conservative position of the courts, and the protracted injunctions issued had all become too onerous.

All this combined with a lack of appetite on the part of the government to support ongoing timber production collectively meant that the cessation of native forest-based operations was brought forward by the government despite strong protests by the timber industry, dependent businesses and regional communities.



1/ Jeff Boyd, Local Land Services, with seminar organiser Ron Wilson.



2/ Matt de Jongh, Responsible Wood Sustainability Manager; Neil Stollznaw social license consultant; Nick Cameron, North East NSW Forestry Hub manager; and Katrina Evans, Dungog.

A more positive note was struck by Neil Stollznaw, founder of Stollznaw Research & Insights Advisory, who summarised a detailed research project undertaken on behalf of the North-East NSW Forestry Hub to test the social license that underpinned ongoing forest management operations in native forests in the northeast of NSW. The research project tested whether or not a social license existed by surveying a cross-section of the wider NSW community, plus key influencers. The research study concluded that wide community support did exist for ongoing timber harvesting and related industry activity. These findings offered encouragement for the forest industry in the future.

These research findings have been summarised and presented to politicians. However, despite clear community support for ongoing native forest-based operations, the study also highlighted that some key decision-makers continued to oppose the management of native forest for timber production.

Discussion around the proposed Great Koala National Park has been a good example of the political pressures involved. In mid-September, all logging was stopped within parts of the proposed park covering 106 koala 'hubs' and more than 8400 hectares. The state government said the decision was made as part of a consultation process, but it followed hard on the heels of concerted lobbying by crossbenchers and environmental groups that had seen headlines such as "Scientists shocked at extreme logging in proposed national park" run by major news outlets.

At the same time, the Minns government has made solid commitments that the process to establish the park will involve the establishment of industry, community and Aboriginal advisory panels. This has been received as a welcome move by industry organisations including the Australian Forest Products Association NSW, who have been presenting the case for 9000 timber workers involved in native hardwoods harvesting in the region.

The increasing prominence of private property in supporting the hardwood industry across NSW was reinforced by an uplifting presentation from Jeff Boyd, Local Land Services Operations Manager, Forbes. He detailed the emphasis that Local Land Services was placing on the management of forests on private land and stressed that the aim was to prioritise "active forest management" with the goal of sustainable management of native forest on private land.

Boyd noted the significance of the 40% of the 22 million hectares of native forest in NSW that was privately owned and the more than 4200 private native forestry plans currently active across the state. He acknowledged that the practical and technical capacity of Local Land Services staff was responsible for the current critical supply of harvested logs. He acknowledged that private property forest management was seen as the future of the native forest industry in the state, given the changing political views in relation to publicly owned native forests.

The date palm: cultivated since remote antiquity

Dates are emblematic of oasis agriculture and highly symbolic in Muslim, Christian, and Jewish religions.

DATE palm (*Phoenix dactylifera*) has been prized from remotest antiquity and may have originated in what is now Iraq. The fruit has long been the staple food and chief source of wealth in the irrigable deserts of North Africa and the Middle East. Spanish missionaries carried the tree to the New World in the 18th and early 19th centuries. Date palms are now also grown in the Canary Islands, Pakistan, India, Mexico and California.

There is archaeological evidence of date cultivation in Arabia from the 6th millennium BC. The palm has great significance in the cultures of the Middle East and North Africa and provides a food source that has been useful in providing energy for nomadic herders on their desert travels. Dates are emblematic of oasis agriculture and highly symbolic in Muslim, Christian and Jewish religions. They are mentioned in both the Quran and the Bible, with the latter referencing them as symbols of prosperity and triumph.

Although the trees tolerate fierce heat, they require moist soil to survive. They are generally planted by rivers so they can survive and grow. They can reach a height of 15–25m and are known to



1/ Although they tolerate fierce heat, date palms require moist soil to survive. They can reach a height of 15–25m and are known to live more than 100 years.

2/ Dates have a long shelf life and many varieties. The dried fruit is more than 50% sugar by weight and contains about 2% each of protein, fat and mineral matter.

live more than 100 years.

Even though these palms are mostly used as a food source the feather-like leaves can grow to 5m in length and are often used to make huts and other items such as baskets, mats and brooms.

The date palm is dioecious, having separate male and female plants. They can be easily grown from seed, but

hand-pollinated in traditional oasis horticulture and modern commercial orchards. With assistance, one male can pollinate up to 100 females. Since the males are of value only as pollinators some growers don't maintain any male plants, as male flowers become available at local markets at pollination time. Manual pollination is done by skilled labourers on ladders or by use of a wind machine.

The total annual world production of dates is now about to 8.5 million tonnes, with countries of the Middle East and North Africa still the largest producers and consumers.

Dates have a long shelf life and many varieties. The dried fruit is more than 50% sugar by weight and contains about 2% each of protein, fat and mineral matter.

All parts of the date palm yield products of economic value. Its trunk provides timber; the midribs of the leaves supply material for crates and furniture; the leaflets for basketry; the leaf bases for fuel; the fruit stalks for rope and fuel; and the fibre for cordage and packing material. Syrup, alcohol, vinegar, and a strong liquor are derived from the fruit. The sap is also used as a beverage, either fresh or fermented. When a palm is cut down, the tender terminal bud is eaten as a salad.

TALKING TREES

With JOHN HALKETT

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only 50% of seedlings will be female and fruit-bearing. Dates from seedling plants are often smaller and of poorer quality. Most commercial plantations use cuttings of heavily cropping cultivars. Plants grown from cuttings will fruit two to three years earlier than seedling plants, with the best yields around 10 years.

Dates are naturally wind-pollinated, but they are entirely



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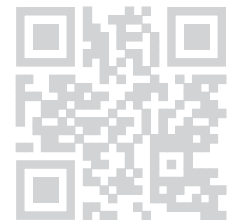
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New housing tool quantifies benefits of social housing

National housing plans have had a cost-benefit figure attached to them thanks to research from Swinburne University.

TOO often, public housing programs are treated in a manner unlike other infrastructure projects. Instead of being evaluated on a cost-benefit basis, they are looked in terms of morality, whether that be through a positive or negative lens.

Recently, that's been changing as both governments and housing organisations instead look at the economic data around housing. The NSW Productivity Commissioner has released two papers this year looking at the impacts of where and how new developments are managed. Now, a new peer-reviewed tool from Swinburne puts a price tag on the benefits of social and affordable housing.

The new tool is called the Social Infrastructure and Green Measures for Affordable Housing (SIGMAH) calculator and it uses a defined set of parameters to estimate the social and economic benefits of delivering social and affordable housing.

The information produces allows decision makers such as federal, state and local governments as well as housing services to understand how much less public expenditure a government will incur from areas such as health, policing, and community services by making homes available to those who need them. The calculator also estimates private benefits such as higher consumption, income and educational attainment.



Wendy Hayhurst (right) with Janet Spouse at an earlier community housing function in Adelaide.

Wendy Hayhurst, CEO of the Community Housing Industry Association (CHIA) leads the team that commissioned the tool. She told *The Wire*, "What we're trying to do is convince government that spending money on social and affordable housing is a good thing, that it isn't just money frittered away: you get a return on that investment. Not just the housing asset itself, but also that when people move into stable, secure, affordable homes, they generally do better, so they're using fewer public services and their children will do better and later in life hold down good jobs."

She went on to list cost of living benefits that also flow on to the families in this type of housing and then how they have arrived at their figure. "We took the Federal Government's current initiative, altogether that's about 40,000 social and affordable homes, and we ran it through the tool," Hayhurst

said. "We made predictions about who would get those houses and from those 40,000 homes, over the next 40 years there would be an additional \$4.4 bn [directly] generated and then on top of that, there's also a very big figure – \$16.2 bn – in terms of that cost of living relief to the people who go into those homes as well."

The cost of living figure is based on the differences between private rents and affordable housing along with expected energy efficiencies in the new social housing builds.

The researchers – Associate Professor Christian Nygaard and Dr Trevor Kollmann – plugged in the 40,000 social and affordable houses promised through the government's National Housing Accord and Housing Australia Future Fund into their calculator and found it estimated \$4.4 billion worth of wider benefit over the next four decades.

"You can build social and

affordable housing just on the basis of the rents that you would achieve from these properties," said Dr Nygaard.

"What we're trying to show is that in addition to those rents, you're actually getting all of this social value as well.

"We hope it's going to make better economic cases for investing in social affordable housing."

Hayhurst says that the results are in line with CHIA's observations when they have seen people move into stable, affordable accommodation and that the tool provides more quantifiable figures for planning purposes, rather than their anecdotal accounts.

The tool will be downloadable and it's envisioned that when community housing groups are bidding for government support on projects, they will fill it out and be able to show clear benefits to the relevant authorities.

It's hoped that governments will also use the tool as it allows calculations that demonstrate the benefits of new schools, rail lines and so on for local populations so that the gains from other infrastructure projects can be more clearly seen. Additionally, the calculator includes the benefits of green space, showing that living near trees and parks has direct, quantifiable benefits for residents that also have monetary figures attached.

To listen to the interview, [click here](#).

Bringing back an ice age mallee

Scientists are racing to save the species, which has only six known survivors.



1/ John Briggs and Genevieve Wright hope to grow Mongarlowe mallees from seed to assist the species' conservation
Photo: ABC News: Craig Allen

2/ The shrub only flowers occasionally and it has been a 20 year wait to have two flowering simultaneously for cross-pollination Photo: ABC News: Craig Allen

DURING the last ice age, you may have found examples of the Mongarlowe mallee (*Eucalyptus recurva*) across the Southern Tablelands of NSW. In the 19,000 years since, it hasn't fared as well and now the tall shrub with clusters of white flowers is down to just six known specimens in the wild.

Ecologists from the NSW Department of Environment are hoping they can turn its fortunes around using the same model that saw home gardeners happy to welcome the Wollemi pine into their collections.

Threatened species officer with department, Genevieve Wright, said the number of the trees is at critically low levels. To make matters worse, those six trees are spread over a 30km range – just far enough apart to never naturally reproduce.

"Because they're so far apart the insects don't go between plants, so there's no pollination occurring," Wright said.

"This species has a nickname, the 'ice age gum'. But since the climate has changed over time, the environment for the species is less suitable."

The Mongarlowe mallee is

known from only two southern NSW populations – one near Braidwood, and another east of Tarago.

It owes its tenuous survival to the fact that it grows on shallow rocky soil that sheep and cattle avoid.

NSW environment ecologist John Briggs said, "I believe it's one of the rare cases of a species headed for natural extinction that we're actually able to see because all known individuals occur in this heathland which is not suitable for grazing.

"So we think in fact there hasn't been any loss following European settlement for this species."

Briggs and the NSW government's 'Saving our Species' team has been working to conserve the mallee for more than two decades and now believe they are one of Australia's oldest trees. While only growing around 2.5–4.5m, this mallee species resprouts from an underground 'lignotuber' after fire or die-back, so never reaches towering heights. One of the trees is estimated at around 3000 years old and its base has spread across 12m of ground with multiple trunks.

Because the trees have been separated for a long time, there have been no new seedlings in many years. A previous attempt at reviving the species in the early 2000s produced viable seed, but it was hybridised with other eucalypts.

Last year, after 20 years wait, two trees finally flowered at the same time, allowing officers to cross-pollinate them by hand. Now, several of the Mongarlowe mallee trees are now bearing seeds, which have been sent to the Australian National Botanic Gardens in Canberra for cultivation.

If their pioneering project is successful, ecologists want to repopulate the wild to offer surviving plants a chance to naturally multiply and gardeners are also seen as a source of both funding and extra homes for the plant.

Wright said it would be a "fantastic garden plant. Like the Wollemi pine, *Eucalyptus recurva* has a beautiful leaf shape to it.

"This is the rarest eucalypt in Australia, we've only got six known plants. I think it would be fantastic in people's gardens."

Source: abc.net.au



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