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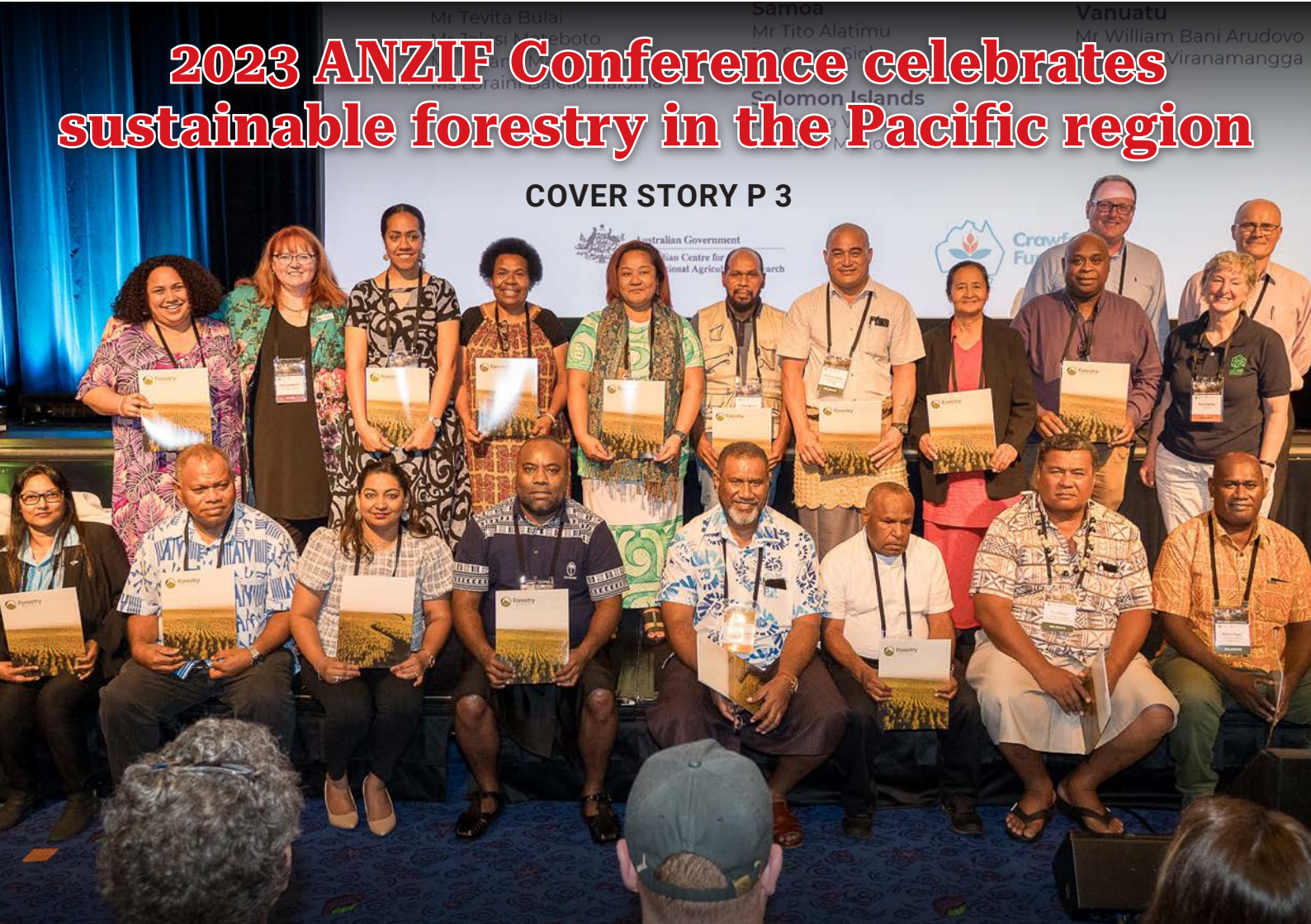


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# timber & FORESTRY *e*news

## 2023 ANZIF Conference celebrates sustainable forestry in the Pacific region

COVER STORY P 3



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# National Housing Conference wraps

Solutions are on offer after the three-day event, but it remains to be seen how many will translate into action.

BRISBANE was the focus of activity for Australia's housing and service providers last week, as well as politicians, planners, researchers and private industry, all looking for solutions to the housing crisis at the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute (AHURI) National Housing Conference.

Exasperation with decades of government inaction was a consistent undercurrent, but the clear focus was on 'a way forward', particularly for fast and effective ways to increase housing stock and make both rental costs and home ownership more affordable to the average Australian family.

Prefabricated options were discussed at length. Multiple Australian manufacturers have been specialising in this style of construction for many years, supplying to regional centres, mining camps and more around the country as well as into New Zealand's Kāinga Ora housing scheme. The Queensland government is currently rolling out more than 100 modular homes this year



**Prefabricated homes go up quickly on site with minimal interruption to the neighbourhood and can usually have their substructures adapted to suit the site.** Image: Shutterstock

as part of their response to the housing crisis and it was noted that this style of build is easily adapted for specific sites.

Fast-tracking prefab approvals though council and other legal changes to allow for multiple dwellings on suitable sites, including granny flats and tiny homes, was an important follow-up.

The other major theme was encouraging Super funds to build 'rent-to-buy' high rises. AHURI managing director Dr Michael Fotheringham

said rent-to-buy schemes allow tenants to purchase the property they live in after a specific lease period. Such schemes have been successful overseas and could be adopted in Australia, possibly with tax incentives.

**“ PREFABRICATED BUILDINGS CAN OFTEN BE EASILY ADAPTED FOR SPECIFIC SITES ”**

Additionally, the conference looked at limiting short-term rentals, helping low income earners get into the market and planning for generational change, both as Boomers seek to downsize and the demand on social housing grows.

Julie Collins, Federal Minister for Housing, announced that legislation

to establish a permanent statutory body for the National Housing Supply and Affordability Council will commence in late December, with a permanent council being appointed shortly after that.

She also thanked the interim council for their expert advice, including the first report, delivered last month, on overcoming barriers to institutional investment, finance and innovation in housing.



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# ANZIF conference highlights solutions

The event championed timber's place in our sustainable future.

Forest scientists, managers and growers from across the Asia-Pacific converged on the Tweed Heads Twin Towns Conference Centre over 15–18 October for the 2023 ANZIF Conference.

A record 475 delegates joined the event, hosted by Forestry Australia and the New Zealand Institute of Forestry, which boasted more than 130 speakers, including forest scientists, agroforesters, and traditional owners. All addressed the theme 'Embracing Our Natural Capital: The Science, Technology and Art of Managing Forests For All Values'.

"Many Australians might not realise it, but sustainable forest management is an integral solution to many of the challenges facing society – how we can minimise bushfires, combat climate change, support biodiversity and meet local demand for wood, including for housing, just to name a few," said Forestry Australia President Dr Michelle Freeman.



1/ **Nine new Fellows were admitted at the conference. Pictured above (L-R): Bob Gordon, Dr Kevin Harding, Dr Lachie McCaw, Dr Stuart Davey, Penny Wells, and Dr Michelle Freeman**

2/ **Dr Elizabeth Heagney presented extensive data to support the benefits of on-farm forestry.**



"It's so important to these discussions that we all have facts based on the best available science and evidence, and that's what we're all committed to through sustainable forest management."

Among the keynote speakers were nationally recognised identities, Dr Neil Byron and Dr Elizabeth Heagney.

Dr Byron tackled the hot-button issue of forestry in a rapidly changing world, saying: "Almost everywhere in the world, including in Australia and New Zealand, society is changing rapidly but not linearly: disruptive

technologies; ageing populations; accelerating urbanisation; the accelerating trend towards a service economy rather than meeting basic human needs for food and fibre. Above all, trying to work out what global climate change means for forests and other natural capital, and how best to respond to extreme flood, drought and fire events."

Forestry on farms was key to Dr Heagney's presentation of data from 130 livestock businesses in NSW, Victoria, Tasmania and Western Australia. She said, "Our analyses indicate that farms with high levels of natural capital are more profitable

than their peers. We identified different 'benefit pathways' through which natural capital, including trees and forested areas, can support farm businesses – including via improving productivity, and/or by reducing input costs."

Forestry Australia also awarded nine new Fellows at the Conference, celebrating the excellence and contribution of Bob Gordon, Dr Kevin Harding, Dr Lachie McCaw, Dr Michelle Freeman, Dr Stuart Davey, Ruth Ryan, Penny Wells, Peter Fagg, and Rob de Fegely.

**Pacific region delegations to the conference with Forestry Australia senior management.**

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# The long-footed potoroo seen in NSW

## Ecologists in Bondi State Forest have snapped the rare marsupial.

ECOLOGISTS are celebrating after recording the first sighting of a long-footed potoroo in NSW.

The critically endangered species had never been sighted in NSW, despite traces of hair and scat being discovered in forests 30 years ago. But infrared motion sensor cameras installed across Bondi State Forest south of Bombala have now managed to capture photos of the potoroo.

"We were a bit blown away by this unexpected record of potoroo," Forestry Corporation of NSW senior field ecologist Rohan Bilney said, describing it as a 'holy grail' moment.

"It's been a bit of an enigma as to whether they do occur here. They're listed as critically

endangered within this state because there was previously no confirmed location where they may occur."

The long-footed potoroo has been more commonly sighted in Victoria's East Gippsland region since the 1960s and the remote Barry Mountains.

Efforts to spot the species in NSW ramped up last year, with researchers setting out to test 1000 scat samples in south-east NSW.

The sighting has excited researchers and ecologists, especially because it was in an area decimated by the Black Summer bushfires



A small population of long-footed potoroos has been sighted using infrared motion sensor cameras. Photo: Forestry Corporation of NSW

at three proposed areas within Bondi State Forest due to the detection of potoroos.

Up to 88 cameras were installed at nine separate sites within Bondi State Forest, spaced 1km apart. Potoroos rely

on a diet of underground fungi, so ecologists placed truffle oil on pads pegged into the ground to attract the animals to the cameras.

The species was photographed in July and ecologists have spent the months since analysing it before declaring the first NSW sighting.

Source: abc.net.au

nearly four years ago.

"Survey work undertaken in Victoria showed that they actually survived the fire quite well," Dr Bilney said.

"[They] have been quite resilient to what was a severe wildfire event."

A spokesperson from the Forestry Corporation of NSW said it would suspend planning for future harvesting

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# Forest science too often shortchanged

## A review of long-term forestry studies in Australia says only a quarter are successfully completed

A NEW paper in *Forest Ecology and Management*, Volume 549, by Dr John Turner of Forsci forestry research consultancy flags that only about 25% of long-term studies in Eastern Australian native forests, specifically in the fields of hydrology, repeated burning and silviculture/ecology, reach a point where their initial objectives are met and published.

Turner evaluated 46 studies (all but one within commercial forests) and found a high rate of failure to complete the studies' stated outcomes.

In his abstract to the paper, he notes "The reasons for failure relate to loss of key researchers, re-structuring of research organisations and changes in tenure of the study areas, usually from commercial forest to conservation status. A key issue relates to maintenance and management data and information and probably over 70% of information collected is not accessible."

As Turner also notes, long-term studies in forestry



**Studies of the successional cycle of Jarrah forest take about 140 years, well beyond the typical working life period of a researcher, says Turner.** Image: Shutterstock

are essential to maintain and improve forest management. The paper shows that such studies have been carried out since the early 1960s, often funded by government agencies. In the past, public-managed forestry organisations supported undergraduate and postgraduate students and were keen originators and supporters of research themselves. In those studies, students were taught that forests were to be managed

sustainably for the people of the state.

As those government bodies disappeared or were broken up, that focus was diluted, despite the same needs remaining and new ones arising, including social licence to conduct commercial forestry.

One finding noted in the paper was that a large amount of additional information was known to have been gathered but could no longer be located, with estimates suggesting

probably 60–70% of data and information gathered in the studies are not readily accessible and could be considered as lost.

While the paper is more concerned with describing the issues rather than prescribing solutions, suggested improvements were made along the way, including ensuring that

project funding and scope is connected to the events being studied rather than the careers of individual researchers (with some successional cycles being longer than the human lifespan) and centralised data storage, as well as publishing data and archiving data sets with journals, where it will be accessible to the largest number of organisations.

**Source: *Forest Ecology and Management***

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# Tasmanian hardwood plantation future concerns

**Evan Rolley from Private Forests Tasmania described worries about declining private hardwood resources.**

FOLLOWING on from last week's release of new ABARES data showing the national plantation forestry estate had fallen to its lowest levels in 20 years (see T&F Enews 776), Tasmanian foresters have flagged their worries about the significant decline in hardwood plantations in that state.

The chair of Private Forests Tasmania, Evan Rolley spoke with ABC's Tasmanian Country Hour on the weekend and outlined what he described as a significant risk for meeting future construction supply, as well as outlining ways to make plantations more attractive investments.



1

**1/ Mixing trees with stock and crops has been shown to lead to farm productivity increases up to 30% before the value of the carbon storage or wood fibre is added.**

**2/ Evan Rolley, chair of Private Forests Tasmania, has 40 years' experience in the forestry sector and worries hardwood plantation resources are going backwards.**



Rolley explained that as some of those schemes have concluded with the harvesting of trees, some of the land previously reserved for plantations is now being converted to other agricultural activity. Over the

12 months through to the last data collection in December 2022 there has been a net drop in the Tasmanian private plantation

resource of around 4000 ha.

"There's been a net reduction in hardwood of around 7000ha and increase in softwood of around 3000," Rolley said.

He acknowledged that there

"Private Forest annually gathers the data for all of the Tasmanian categories of plantation and the national data reflects what's been happening in Tasmania as the MIS [managed investment schemes] where farmlands were either leased or under some joint venture agreement wrapped," he told the ABC's Fiona Breen.

Cont P 10



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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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**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](http://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](http://www.sustainablebuildingawards.com.au/#s-summit)

[com.au/#s-summit](http://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](mailto:team@gottsteintrust.org)

# Expression of interest sought for purchase of Western Australian pine industrial wood

THE WA Government's Forest Products Commission is inviting interested parties to submit their expression of interest for the purchase of pine industrial wood supply from 2026 to 2033. Industrial wood is the portion of the tree not suitable for posts, milling or veneering, and typically processed as a fibre source for pulp, paper, fibreboard, wood composites, or energy production.

The sale will encourage ongoing investment in softwood processing capacity and support the State Government's commitment of \$350 million into Western Australia's softwood estate.

The State Government's investment in the plantation estate will help ensure the

supply of essential timber products for the housing and construction industry in WA and contribute to the capture and storage of carbon to meet the challenges of climate change.

Full details are available in the EOI document, which can be downloaded from Tenders WA.

If you are interested in this opportunity, please respond through Tenders WA by 3:00 pm AWST on 1 December 2023.

A non-mandatory online briefing session regarding the process is scheduled



**Industrial wood makes use of pine supply that would otherwise go to low-value use or be wasted.**

at 10:00 am AWST on 24 October 2023. Potential respondents wishing to attend must register their interest by emailing Mike Lobb at [eoipine@fpc.wa.gov.au](mailto:eoipine@fpc.wa.gov.au) by COB Friday 20 October 2023. Once registered, you will receive an invitation.

Please note that the meeting will occur through Microsoft Teams. Would-be

attendees are encouraged to become familiar with Microsoft Teams to avoid technical difficulties on that day.

Respondents must not contact any other person within Government,

or any consultant engaged by the FPC in relation to this EOI to discuss this EOI.

Enquiries for technical issues should be addressed to Mike Lobb at the details above.

For advice on using Tenders WA, call the Procurement Systems Support on (08) 6551 2020.

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# Vale Kevin Tolhurst

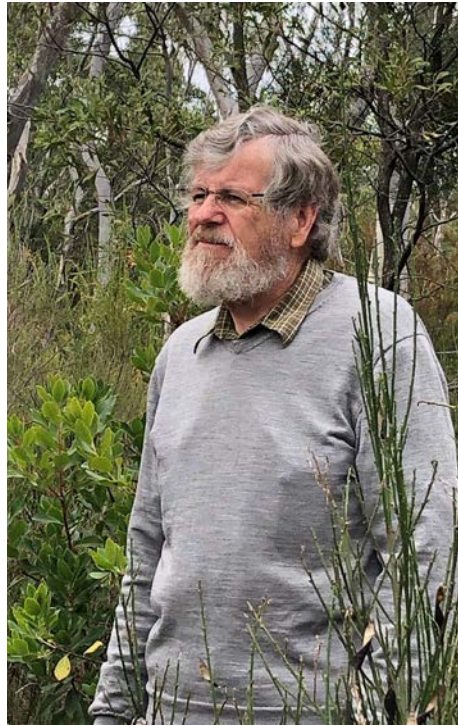
The world-renowned forest fire expert has died at 67.

ASSOCIATE Professor Kevin Tolhurst has died of a heart attack shortly after presenting an expert report to a public meeting in Mallacoota. Dr Tolhurst was Associate Professor in Fire Ecology and Management in the Department of Forest and Ecosystem Science, University of Melbourne.

He attended the Victorian School of Forestry at Creswick and later achieved a PhD at the University of Melbourne, where he also taught, meeting his wife, Rosemary, as a fellow student. His interest in fire behaviour in the bush began early and from 1984 he became a recognised expert in fire ecology. As well as publishing widely on the topic, he took an active role in

public education and policy reform. Recently, he led the development of a new national bushfire framework to assist governments and private organisations to tackle Australia's growing bushfire problem and save lives, land and property.

Kevin reached international prominence in his field, though his name only became familiar to the general public after his work during Black Saturday,




Associate Professor Kevin Tolhurst in the bush he loved and spent his life protecting.

where his predictions proved tragically accurate, followed by his expert appearances during the 2009 Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission and his many media appearances in the years afterwards where he attempted to explain the science behind bushfire reduction and behaviour to a wider audience.

Michael Tolhurst spoke at his father's funeral this week about Kevin growing up visiting the farm of family friends John and Anita Hickey and being encouraged by a local nun at primary school to pursue academic education, both of which experiences were formative in guiding his later career

Cont P 9




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From P 8

"The smell of bushfire smoke in the spring will always remind me of Dad coming home in his overalls after bushfire reduction burns in the bush," said Michael.

"He was proud of the work he did and he got great satisfaction in sharing his knowledge to help rural communities prepare themselves for bushfires – and he was passionate about managing forests for their long-term health."

Kevin was a diligent and practical academic who sought to share an understanding of his work with all stakeholders, as well as a generous volunteer for a range of community causes, but his patience wasn't infinite. He told Narelle Groenhout in a 2021 interview for The Local about his frustration with populist opinions trumping the science of forestry, saying "There are many who are ill-informed and a lot of what we hear and read in the media is simply not science-based. Often the credibility of those that are most vocal is simply not questioned."

Kevin's tremendous contributions were recognised in 2015 when he received a Member of the Order of Australia for his contributions to science and the community, particularly in the area of bushfires. This week he was also posthumously awarded

“KEVIN INSPIRED AND INFLUENCED GENERATIONS OF FORESTERS AND FORESTRY SCIENTISTS



**Kevin Tolhurst was one of the most important expert witnesses at the 2009 Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission with his testimony having an immediate impact on bushfire management in Australia.**

the N.W. Jolly Medal, Forestry Australia's highest honour for outstanding service to the forest science profession in Australia.

Forestry Australia President Dr Michelle Freeman said, "The loss of Kevin has been felt deeply by many in our community and beyond. Kevin's contribution to forest and fire management has been phenomenal, and his knowledge and passion were truly awe inspiring."

"Generations of foresters and forestry scientists were inspired and influenced by Kevin. He was generous with his knowledge and time, and ever the gentleman who was always considerate and kind."

The Mallacoota meeting had been organised by the Howitt Society. President Peter Flinn said, "His knowledge of forest fire management was unsurpassed and he had the ability to pass that knowledge on to others."

"It was fitting that all those attending the meeting, who were keen to gain more knowledge about fire prevention and management techniques to keep communities safe, were the final beneficiaries of Dr Tolhurst's expertise. Australians – and the forest that Dr Tolhurst loved – will be the poorer for his passing."

*Associate Professor Kevin Gerard Tolhurst, 11/12/1955 to 5/10/2023.*

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From P 6

was very strong competition for land, particularly with the higher prices for most of the livestock categories, but also flagged that the strong housing infrastructure investment plans from state and federal governments

would lead to a requirement for additional timber for those new house builds and other infrastructure projects nationally, so the ongoing demand for timber is certainly there.

“Farmers are looking at their various options but I suspect that, particularly now that the carbon price is important, many farmers are looking at the opportunity to plant,” said Rolley.

One of the factors that he suspects has led to farmers in particular moving out of timber in the past has been the whole-of-farm approach that many MIS ventures took, where entire fields or farms were assigned to timber, locking up their productivity for decades and not always with the best



**Rolley says he believes mixed-use plantations are likely to play a stronger role in future.**

planning.

“Some of the early sites that were established under the MIS schemes were not as productive and at the end, farmers, landowners and investors are all looking for the return on their investment, Rolley said. “[They] really were trying to meet area targets rather than productivity targets ... The focus is very much now on trying to get the right trees in the right place and getting productivity to ensure there are good returns from investing in tree growing.”

The most significant change in approach to the MIS days is seeing trees as part of farm infrastructure, where they work to protect livestock or raise water tables and prevent erosion for crops as well as deliver value in themselves.

“Farmers now are looking at the opportunities for putting in windbreaks and woodlots, seeing those trees as infrastructure on their farms and getting a return both from the carbon and also from the wood value,” Rolley said. “I think it is a turn in the approach and what will help this commercially is as the prices for the various wood products increase, the better returns will stimulate that investment.

“There are leasing

**“ SOPHISTICATED MARKET ENVIRONMENT DEVELOPING FOR HARDWOOD PLANTATIONS ”**

opportunities and the carbon opportunity is one where you can get some earlier returns if you get the assessments made and commit to the process. So while the timber product returns will depend on the rotation age and can be 15, 20, 30 years, there are intermediate returns from either thinning in those planted forests or from the carbon that is being stored. There is a more sophisticated market environment developing and the important driver for that certainly will be these targets of achieving net zero by 2030.”

While the Tasmanian private plantation capacity remains sorely underutilised (Rolley estimated there are 300,000 ha of private native forest suitable for thinning right now), he described it as a real opportunity for Tasmanian farmers and for the state’s growth. Recent advances, including Forestry Australia working with PSC Insurance Brokers and the Forest Growers Committee to develop a new insurance cover, Plantation Protect, for small-scale growers can only help.

To listen to the full interview, click here and forward to about 13.00. To learn more about Private Forests Tasmania, click here.

## EWPA certification for ASH MASSLAM

Australian Sustainable Hardwoods Pty Ltd (ASH) proudly announced this week that MASSLAM SL35 and MASSLAM 45 have become the only mass timber glulam (large section glue laminated timber) in Australia to hold Engineered Wood Products Association of Australasia (EWPA) product certification.

Achieving this demanding and rigorous EWPA certification is part of the ASH teams to deliver a dependable engineered glulam product that exceeds Australian Standards

and is suitable for use under heavy load in multi-storey applications. The EWPA product certification is a Type 5 Certification Scheme under the globally recognised standard ISO/IEC 17067:2016 ‘Conformity assessment – Fundamentals of product certification and guidelines for product certification schemes’ and includes a Deemed to Satisfy component.

The EWPA Deemed to Satisfy requirements for product certification exceed the requirements of Australian



**ASH’s first Masslam facility, including the world’s largest Hundegger K2i.**

Standard AS1328 Glue Laminated Structural Timber. It requires ongoing inspection and testing in factory and the market, auditing of the manufacturing process and

management systems, together with continuous monitoring and independent verification testing.

In addition to EWPA certification, MASSLAM has also undergone extensive fire

and acoustic testing. The MASSLAM team has successfully delivered over 40 projects in Australia over the past three years.

# Simpler solar design

New tool from RMIT makes it easier to design buildings with integrated photovoltaics.

DESIGNING buildings with solar cleverly incorporated into the design has just become easier, thanks to software developed at RMIT University.

Building-integrated photovoltaics, or BIPV, are building features such as roof tiles, cladding and windows that double as solar panels. Depending on the dwelling, BIPVs can cover a greater area of a building, generating solar energy from different angles. They also look smart and can be customised.

Despite the potential of BIPVs, conventional roof-mounted panels continue to account for the lion's share of new installations in Australia due to the extra complexity in predicting performance and sourcing BIPV technology.

Now a team at RMIT has

created software to help architects and engineers incorporate, source and cost BIPV in a building's conceptual design phase. The software, funded by RMIT and the Australian Renewable Energy Agency, is the first of its kind to be designed using Australian data.

Project lead Associate Professor Rebecca Yang from RMIT's Solar Energy Application Group said she hoped the tool, called BIPV Enabler, would help make buildings greener.

"This is the perfect solution for building designers and developers looking to select the right solar option to suit their design," said Yang.

"We're making integrated-solar a more attractive option to developers, slicing the



RMIT student Aminath Samaha using the BIPV Enabler during class.

time it would normally take to research and implement incognito solar devices.

"This isn't just for new buildings either. Those looking to retrofit integrated solar into existing buildings will benefit too."

The tool integrates product, regulation, technical, economic and construction data to create 3D models and

detailed lifecycle simulations tailored to each building's planned location.

Yang said BIPV Enabler also worked with computer-aided design programs and could be scaled and customised to incorporate other

open-source datasets to suit changing needs.

"We hope to see more buildings capable of generating solar electricity, while maintaining good design standards – a win for the planet and aesthetics," Yang said.

To try BIPV Enabler, contact the Solar Energy Application Group.

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# Combilift's month of celebrations

Hot on the heels of its 25th birthday party comes a major award for the Irish lifting specialist firm.

LATE last month, 200 people converged on Combilift's global headquarters in Monaghan, Ireland, including politicians, Combilift dealers and media from around the world – all ready to celebrate the company's 25th anniversary.

The days-long party itself was spectacular, with facility tours and product demonstrations happening alongside displays by Irish dancers, acrobats swinging from forklifts, addresses from leading politicians and an open day for local people to come inside and see this major employer at work, all capped with a dinner at the nearby Castle Leslie where Combilift's longest-standing employees were recognised for their years of service and dedication to the company.

During the celebrations, Combilift launched and demonstrated the new Combi-LC Blade, which is designed for the wind energy industry and able to handle wind turbine blades up to 115m and weights of 70 tonnes, as well as introducing Combi-Connect, which offers customers access to all of their fleet's data at the touch of a button.

For most companies, that would be enough success in one month, but less than a fortnight later, Combilift was at the GIS Expo in Italy where its CB70E won the coveted Italian Terminal and Logistics Award for Product Innovation.



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- 1/ EA Group's Stefano Chimentin (left) alongside Combilift CEO Martin McVicar at the Italian Terminal and Logistics Awards.
- 2/ The COMBI-CB 70E won the coveted Italian Terminal and Logistics Award for Product Innovation.
- 3/ Acrobats were among the entertainment at Combilift's 25th birthday party.
- 4/ A dinner to honour Combilift's longest-serving staff was held at Castle Leslie.

This prestigious accolade recognises innovation in the operational field and Combilift's commitment to operator training and safety.

The Italian Terminal and Logistics Awards are significant industry recognitions, presented annually in a range of categories to highlight the skills of operators in port, intermodal and logistics terminals both in Italy and abroad.

The citation for the award applauded the COMBI-CB 70E's top performance and

full electric power supply and noted "this multi-directional forklift represents the pinnacle of technology in the sector, with numerous solutions that improve both operation and safety of use."

Martin Mc Vicar, CEO and co-founder of Combilift, accepted the award alongside

**“ THE CB70E WON A COVETED ITALIAN INNOVATION AWARD ”**

the company's EA Group partners and said: "We are honoured to receive the Italian Terminal and Logistics Award for the CB70E. This recognition validates our unwavering commitment to innovation, safety, and training in the material handling industry. The CB70E is a perfect example of our dedication to providing our customers with efficient, eco-friendly, and safe solutions."

For more information on the Combi-CB70E click here, and for the full list of awards, click here.

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# FWPA welcomes Erick Hansnata as the new Statistics and Economics program manager

## The accomplished economist takes over the reins as Kevin Peachy moves to head FWPA's Built Environment Programs.

FOREST & Wood Products Australia (FWPA) are pleased to welcome Erick Hansnata as the new Statistics and Economics Program Manager. Erick is an accomplished economist with more than 10 years' experience working in academia, government, and the private sector.

Kevin Peachey, previously the Statistics and Economics Program Manager, recently moved into the role of Head of Built Environment Programs and WoodSolutions Program Lead at FWPA.

FWPA's Statistics and Economics Program was developed in 2013 in response to industry concerns regarding limitations and gaps in the economic information available for forest and wood products. Since then, the program has grown to be a much relied upon source of information for industry and other stakeholders. As an example, the FWPA public data portal provides access to regularly updated domestic data and is publicly available to assist with planning and forecasting. Further information about the industry is provided in the FWPA company data portal. These include details about softwood and hardwood

benchmarking, such as financial measures, productivity metrics and safety data.

Erick's work is strongly evidence-based and has focused around environmental and energy policies. His research includes analysing agricultural and migration activities in the Murray-Darling Basin. Before joining FWPA, he was a Research Fellow at the National Centre for Social Economic Modelling and a Senior Economist at KPMG. Erick holds a Master's degree in International and Development Economics from the ANU Crawford School of Public Policy and a PhD in Economics from the University of Canberra. He is also an active member of the Economic Society of Australia (ESA) as well as the American Economic Association (AEA).

"I am looking forward to working with the FWPA team and our members to unlock data and insights for improved decision-making



**Erick Hansnata's experience as an academic and then public and private sector economist includes work in the environmental and energy fields and solid regional understanding.**

and planning across the industry," said Erick.

"Erick's wealth of experience in economic modelling and environmental economics is a key asset to further expand the FWPA Statistics and Economics Program," said Kevin Peachey.

Erick's expansion plans are highly practical: "At the moment, most of our members use the industry data we provide to not only navigate the current market condition, but also identify opportunities and challenges for the future market," he said.

"There are suggestions

to link our information and data with other data from related industries. For example, some members are really interested in details information about wood products use in Australian dwellings.

"Additionally, we're looking at ways to provide better access and utilisation of the data for our members. These include improving data visualisation

and providing interactive tools to get more insightful information. The next stage potentially is extending our capabilities, and that process will proceed by actively seeking inputs from our members."

It's hoped that in the future, the Statistics and Economics Program will become a tool more widely used by both policy makers and media to understand the real value and potential of Australia's wood products sector.

Learn more about the public data dashboard via this link.



An industry services company working to grow the forest and wood products market  
Visit us at [fwpa.com.au](http://fwpa.com.au)

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27 October 2023

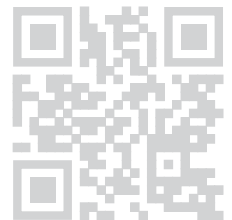
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# Precision aerial solutions

## County Helicopters is increasing its forestry workload.



DRONES have proven their worth as tools in forestry over recent years, but when it comes to managing a large survey or administering broadscale aerial spraying and fertilisers, helicopters are still valuable aids.

Until recently, that has meant employing multiple contractors across the lifecycle of a forestry crop to manage both needs, but County Helicopters is now providing drone as well as helicopter services and expanding its existing services within the forestry sector.

For 27 years, County Helicopters – based at Ballarat in Victoria and Clare and Virginia in SA – has been providing agricultural services, particularly spraying. Since 2005, the business has also been conducting aerial surveys for forestry and in recent years they have added two drones to their six-helicopter fleet.

“We specialise in aerial agricultural services,” said owner Ashley Dickson. “For both foresters and farmers, inputs are costly and regulations are tight when it comes to overspraying onto neighbours or waterways.

“We ensure that we add value to our customers’ operations through accurate delivery and maximum target coverage. To achieve that, we utilise the latest technology and pay close attention to minimising any impact on the surrounding environment.”

Pilots manage precise chemical placement using a variety of Accuflow Nozzles to meet differing water rates and to maximise coverage of target species. All pilots and ground crew are also fully certified and Spraysafe accredited with the Aerial Application Association of Australia whose mission is to ‘promote, foster, encourage and support a sustainable aerial application industry based on the professionalism of operators, pilots, and staff and the pursuit of industry best practice’.

The ability to offer both helicopter and drone services is ideal for forestry applications. Helicopters are used for larger jobs, such as surveying wide areas and broad applications of fertilisers. For more precise jobs, such as surveying areas that helicopters can’t reach (including at canopy level) and tasks that require detailed control

**1/ The XAG P100 Pro agricultural drone spraying drone can also seed and map and is one of the most advanced drones on the market.**  
**2/ County Helicopters delivery accurate dispersal of broadleaf weed herbicides to help plantation regrowth thrive, as well as fertiliser application and aerial surveys.**

(such as dripline herbicide applications), drone operations are managed by Dickson’s son, William.

County Helicopters drone fleet is based around two XAG models, the P30, which is a reliable spray unit that can cover up to 14ha/hour, and the state-of-the-art P100, which can cover up to 28 ha/hour as well as broadcasting fertiliser or seed and accurately mapping and monitoring.

The fleet of six helicopters is managed by four highly experienced pilots. “Most of our work is in the South Australian and Victorian markets,” said Dickson, “however we service areas in New South Wales as well and are very capable of working across all of Australia as required, since our equipment

is easily transportable.”

A lot of recent work has been carried out in the Adelaide Hills. “There are a lot of vineyards there, and a large South Australian water catchment area,” said Dickson. “Needless to say, there are many restrictions, laws and requirements that need to be observed in such areas. County Helicopters are very familiar with the requirements and able to work within such tight restrictions. All applications are applied using the latest technology in DGPS satellite guidance, flow control and data capture. Extensive spray pattern testing droplet spectrum and new technology capture testing is carried out on an annual basis to ensure precision applications. That’s how we’ve established our reputation as a trusted partner in forestry and agriculture, and we’re ready to help more businesses benefit from our skills.

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“ABILITY TO OFFER BOTH HELICOPTER AND DRONE SERVICES IS IDEAL FOR FORESTRY APPLICATIONS”



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HELICOPTERS** 



# John Halkett remembered by industry and friends

**In the wake of the unexpected death of John last week, Timber & Forestry Enews has received an outpouring of condolences and memories from his industry and personal friends. Here is a sample of those messages.**

With the sudden passing of John Halkett the Australian forestry community has lost a passionate and articulate giant. John was larger than life. In his good natured, arm-twisting way, he would always have you smiling even as he pressed you to accept a point of view which might be contrary to your own – the whole time with a cheeky grin as if you were all part of a great adventure.

John was a forceful advocate for the things he believed in and irrepensible in that pursuit.

He was a great and staunch friend and I will miss him. My thoughts and prayers go to his family and those closest to him.

Ross Hampton – London  
Executive Director  
International Sustainable Forestry Coalition

Like many, I was stunned yesterday to hear of John's sudden passing. It was all the more shocking given I spent time with him just last week in Sydney.

On that Tuesday, John and I sat down in a Sydney hotel foyer on the sidelines of the Asia-Pacific Forestry Commission events. In between our roughly hour-long discussion about organising future forestry conferences, John was taking phone calls on a whole range of different matters, before coming back to our discussion.

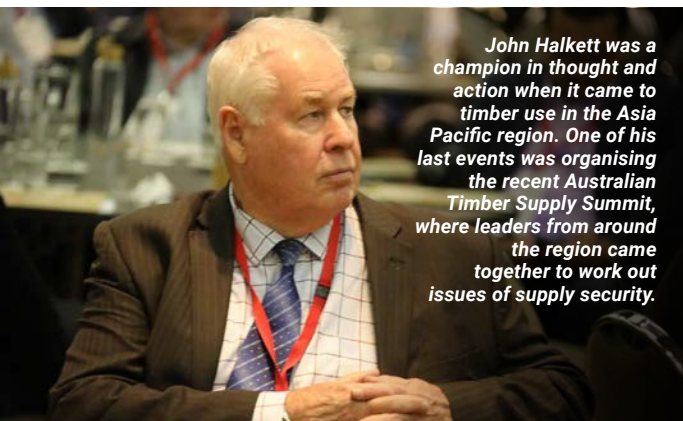
I thought to myself, how good is this guy? juggling a whole lot of balls in the air, while positively generating new ideas in business and advocacy, at an age when many would be winding down. John's strong work ethic was a testament to him, and his record across many decades demonstrates that.

He is the type of entrepreneur we don't see enough of in the modern day.

And just a note on John's publications. They provide an enormous community service for Australia's forestry sector, in keeping everyone involved, informed on industry happenings.

Well done John and Rest In Peace.

Joe Prevedello  
Communications Director  
Australian Forest Products Association



*John Halkett was a champion in thought and action when it came to timber use in the Asia Pacific region. One of his last events was organising the recent Australian Timber Supply Summit, where leaders from around the region came together to work out issues of supply security.*

It's hard to find the right words to express the shock and sadness I felt upon hearing the news of John's passing. I can't help but think back to our conversations, the laughter we shared, and the bond we formed over our mutual interests in the timber and forestry industry, our shared passion for green energy, and, of course, our love for charcoal chicken.

Our discussions about making noise around conflict timber and non-complying building products were not just professional exchanges but reflections of his dedication to creating a better industry, one that stood for integrity and sustainability. John's insights and commitment were not just inspiring, they were also a driving force behind positive change. We had a shared vision for a future powered by green and hydrogen energy, and his enthusiasm was infectious.

Saying goodbye to John at the NTHA conference earlier this year, I never imagined it would be our last farewell. The industry has lost not just a professional ally but a good man whose impact will be felt for years to come. His legacy of passion, dedication, and unwavering commitment to making a difference will continue to inspire us all.

Rest in peace, John. You will be deeply missed, but your spirit will live on in the work we do and the lives you touched.

The industry has lost a good man.

Stephen Chehab  
Allied Forest Products



*Dennis Neilsen (left), was John's partner on multiple ventures, including this publication. The two sometimes appended 'in crime' to the title, but nothing that could be proven in a court of law! Here with Senator Jonathan Duniam.*

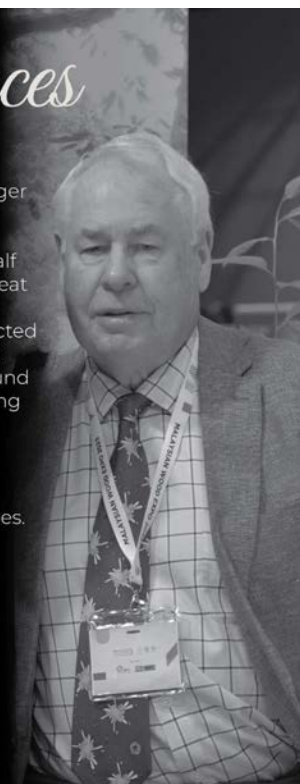
# Condolences

We are deeply saddened to learn about the passing of **Mr. John Halkett**, General Manager of the Australian Timber Importers Federation.

Please accept our sincere condolences on behalf of the Malaysian Timber Council. John was a great friend to our organisation and a remarkable individual, who was deeply admired and respected for his unwavering dedication and outstanding contributions to the timber industry. His profound impact reached beyond borders, fostering strong ties and collaborative efforts within the global timber community, including the Malaysian Timber Council.

Our thoughts and prayers are with his loved ones.

Sincerely from the Board of Trustees,  
Management Team and Staff of Malaysian  
Timber Council.



John at the Asia-Pacific Forestry Commission Marketplace with AFPAs Joel Fitzgibbon (centre) and Responsible Wood's Simon Dorries (right).

The AFPA team is saddened to hear of the passing of John Halkett, a long-term and well respected entrepreneur, publisher, author and advocate across Australia's and New Zealand's forestry sectors.

John was a key figure for decades and more recently was known as the General Manager of the Australian Timber Importers Federation and co-publisher of Timber and Forestry enews.

The AFPA team spent time with John just last week at the Asia-Pacific Forestry Commission (APFC) Marketplace in Sydney and at our most recent Members Dinner in Canberra, where John carried out photography and reporting duties for his publication, in the interest of keeping our broader industries informed.

We took this picture of John, just last week at the APFC Marketplace, alongside AFPAs Joel Fitzgibbon and Responsible Wood's Simon Dorries.

Our heartfelt condolences go to John's family and friends.

Natasa Sikman  
Hon. Joel Fitzgibbon GAICD  
Joe Prevedello  
Richard Hyett  
Sara Bray

Of the Australian Forest Products Association



I was deeply saddened to read the news of John's sudden passing. He will be sadly missed, and with this news, it brings back many wonderful memories of when we were team mates with another publisher.

I learnt so much from time spent with John, as his knowledge of the industry, and drive for accuracy and perfection in his articles, will always be remembered as informative and a pleasure to read.

His management of the timber import side of the industry will be especially remembered, by not only myself, but all of those involved in importing over the years.

Although I have been retired for some time, I will always value the time I spent with John and other associates involved in the industry.

To his family and other friends, my sincere condolences.

Norm Nelsen  
Formerly of Australian & New Zealand Timberman

So sad to hear today of the passing of John Halkett during the past week. I worked with him for a short period in the early 1970s amongst the Kauri in Northland. His book, written with EV Sale, *The World of the Kauri*, is a valued addition on my bookshelf and his contribution to native forest management and conservation in New Zealand prior to heading for Australia around the time of the turmoil dished out to forestry in the mid-1980s was significant. He has since contributed in a huge way to the Australian forest industry and forestry people on both sides of the Tasman will remember him fondly.

John Schrider  
NZ Institute of Forestry  
Registered Forestry Consultant  
(via LinkedIn)



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