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AFCA's conference reveals 'Our Future in Forestry'

COVER STORY P3



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FWPA launches the TMI

New Timber Market Index to track price movements of Australian softwood products.

FOREST & Wood Products Australia (FWPA) has announced the launch of the softwood Timber Market Index (TMI) to further support planning, growth and investment across the industry.

The Timber Market Index is a representative directory of historic price movements for different categories of softwood products, to be published quarterly. The data used to calculate the index is collected anonymously to ensure data security and accuracy.

Market indices are used to track the performance of a financial market in a standardised way, making it easier to evaluate its performance over time and to evaluate specific investments against the entire market or a market sector, such as timber.

The TMI has been developed with strong support from industry and is a collaboration between FWPA and the Australian Forest Products Association (AFPA). In 2017, AFPA commissioned



FWPA team at TMI launch: (From left) Jodie Mason, Janette Newport, Sarah Downey, Kevin Peachey, Andrew Leighton, Emmy Petersson and Erick Hansnata.

a Timber Market Index report, which reviewed the opportunity to establish a new and best-practice approach to an index.

The report recognised that establishing a TMI based on the existing FWPA softwood weighted average data series is part of a best practice approach and could be used to form the basis of new indices for the Australian softwood industry. Governance for the index will be overseen by an industry committee and independent

Chairperson, which will provide ongoing management of the tool.

“The Timber Market Index is a powerful new tool in tracking industry price movements and trends over time” said Kevin Peachey,

“GOVERNANCE FOR THE INDEX WILL BE OVERSEEN BY AN INDUSTRY COMMITTEE

Head of Built Environment Programs at FWPA.

“It’s exciting to see this great initiative launched and to be able to support our industry with increased transparency and confidence in tracking industry trends” Kevin continued.

“The development of the Timber Market Index is a great example of collaboration and will help support industry analysis as well as business planning” said Andrew Leighton, CEO of FWPA.

The TMI is independently audited by consultants to ensure that all inputs are correct, providing assurance for all parties. The index may be used by the industry and its consultants to help track price movements.

To learn more about the TMI, [click here](#).



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Ensuring a future for forestry

AFCA looked at the past and present to find a way forward for the industry at its 2023 conference.

The recent AFCA 2023 Conference genuinely lived up to its event title: 'Our Future in Forestry'. With a broad scope of speakers and topics – which makes sense given how very many parts of the industry the Australian Forest Contractors Association supports in its work – the conference focused on the continued growth and health of the sector.

AFCA's GM Tim Lester welcomed the attendees and facilitated the event throughout, keeping speakers mostly to schedule, even when the Hon Murray Watt's pre-recorded message was hit by technical gremlins.

Keynote speaker Joel Fitzgibbon, former politician and now CEO of the Australian Forest Products Association, gave the first major speech of the day, coming out swinging against anti-forestry activists. Fitzgibbon said, "I think at times we've tried to counter the campaigns of activists by not talking too much about the parts of our industry where we struggle most for a social licence. I believe that strategy is flawed. We are one industry and we need to speak and fight as one industry."

He urged engagement directly between the industry and the general public, saying that we were already good with politicians, but much weaker with the average punter, who could believe activist arguments about



1/ Joel Fitzgibbon rallied the sector to push back against anti-forestry fallacies, focusing our efforts on educating the general public.

2/ Minister Murray Watt's pre-recorded address reaffirmed Federal support for the sector..



forestry being the major source of deforestation or there being enough plantations to meet Australia's timber needs.

"We have all the facts on our side," said Fitzgibbon. "But ... in the modern political environment our elected representatives need to make the right decisions for the right reasons... And the only way to do that is to pitch straight to our communities, because all politicians are creatures of the electorates they come from."

Accepting that we lack the deep pockets of many activist groups, he urged AFCA members to use all the available resources to tell their own stories and share the truths about the industry.

Senator Murray Watt, Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, had sent in a pre-recorded address. He noted that "in 2021-22, the forest and wood products industry was worth \$26.6 billion and forest contractors are at the heart of the forest and wood products supply chain. Putting on my Minister for Emergency Management hat, I also

recognise the integral role that forest contractors play in fire management."

He flagged the \$300 million-plus suite of forest industries initiatives being made by the Albanese government, including more than \$73 million in funding to establish new plantation forests to increase domestic timber supply, a \$10 million forestry workforce training program to support the delivery of credentials, qualifications or competencies and funds to modernise and make more efficient timber mills and other processing facilities.

AFCA's Tim Lester then took a moment from hosting to give the Association's address, acknowledging this as a difficult time for the industry. But, as he pointed out, it's in difficult times that support matters most.

Lester thanked the Minister for his address and said the investment showed the power of timber's industry associations, "Because the result that was achieved in the last election for this industry was extraordinary. And it wasn't a result that was

replicated across broader rural industries or agriculture in general."

Industry closures in Victoria and WA and activist actions in NSW and Tasmania were discussed, and the fact that the driving arguments behind them were often based on emotions, not facts. He urged members to stay engaged with the process, both because that was the only way to change minds, but also because industry associations (particularly AFCA) have demonstrably improved outcomes around access or compensation, even when, as in Victoria, they haven't been able to win the battle.

Lester finished by reminding everyone that the opposition to forestry isn't deep in the community, citing the case in Clarence River, Northern NSW where the council recently proposed an end to native forestry, only to be met by a broad community backlash.

Next was Tim Woods, managing director of IndustryEdge, leading wood products market analysts. He

On the cover: Emma Morgan from Mercer Marsh Benefits with AFCA's Tim Lester and Louise Clarke from Marsh (right) at the conference.

New board members for Master Builders Australia

THE peak building and construction industry association Master Builders Australia announced the appointment of two new board members following its annual general meeting on Saturday.

Effective immediately, Simon Pilcher from New South Wales and Brett Johnston from Queensland have been welcomed as the newest additions to the national Board. Pilcher has had a storied set of roles including as vice president and president of MBA NSW, while Johnston is a sitting member of the board of Master Builders Queensland and managing director of Paynters.

Master Builders Australia President Craig Edmunds said their extensive industry experience, leadership qualities, and commitment to excellence will undoubtedly



1/ **Simon Pilcher is the new MBA board member from NSW.**
 2/ **Brett Johnston celebrating 25 years with Paynters last year.**



contribute to the continued success and growth of the organisation.

“These appointments come as part of the regular board renewal process, with Mr Pilcher and Mr Johnston succeeding outgoing directors Mr Ralf Dutton from Queensland and Mr Ross Mitchell from New South Wales.

“On behalf of the industry and Master Builders Australia, we extend our sincere appreciation to Mr Dutton and Mr Mitchell for their dedicated service and valuable contributions during their tenure,” Edmunds said.

In addition to the new appointments, Master Builders Australia has reappointed Steve Margetic from the

Northern Territory and Clr Lisa Hollingsworth from Victoria to the board.

Edmunds added: “The reappointment of Steve Margetic and the formal appointment of Lisa Hollingsworth further solidifies our commitment to fostering a diverse and skilled board. We look forward to their contributions as we navigate the challenges and opportunities facing the building and construction industry.”

The four directors will join the existing members of the National Board: David Gates from Tasmania, Grace Ferreira from the Australian Capital Territory, Peter Salvesson from South Australia, Robert Shaw from Western Australia, and Peter Di Prinzie from Newcastle.

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Murray region forestry hailed

New report shows forestry is a significant regional contributor but has challenges ahead.

A SOCIO-ECONOMIC report completed by the University of Canberra clearly demonstrates the significant economic and employment contribution of the forestry and wood processing industry to the Murray Region, but the industry is not out of the woods yet with a looming resource constraint ahead, Softwoods Working Group (SWG) chair Peter Crowe OAM, said.

“The industry continues to be a valuable contributor to the region, directly and indirectly employing more than 11,000 locals in the financial year 2021. That’s income straight into the household of the Murray Region community,” he said.

SWG executive officer Carlie Porteous, commended the Murray Region Forestry Hub, its committee and the University of Canberra for their thorough study.

“The study is a world first. The industry has not previously examined the socio-economic impacts of a successful post-bushfire



Carlie Porteous, Softwoods Working Group executive officer (right) with the Hon Murray Watt.

recovery process,” she said.

“The industry should be truly congratulated for its efforts to salvage more than 98% of recoverable aged timber during such a difficult time.

“The report unequivocally demonstrates the positive impacts of the collaboration of the industry and its community during this salvage period. It was so successful that wood fibre was being recovered up to two years after the devastating 2019/2020 bushfires.”

The report highlights the

significant contribution of the NSW, Victorian and Federal governments for their quick response to the needs of the industry, through a number of grants that enabled better wood storage outcomes and further processing efficiencies to deal with the challenges ahead.

“INDUSTRY CONTINUES TO BE A VALUABLE CONTRIBUTOR TO THE REGION

“The industry could not have achieved what it did and continues to do so, without the significant contribution of the NSW, Victorian and Federal governments,” Porteous said.

Porteous cautioned against becoming blasé about the industry’s future, indicating the fires have had a significant impact on resource availability and further support may be required.

Looking ahead, she emphasised the need for preventative measures, reforms and deeper engagement with government entities to protect the remaining plantation estate. Porteous warned of potential industry closures if these measures are not implemented.

“A number of preventative measures and reforms are required... and a deeper level of engagement with the Government will be necessary to avoid industry closures,” Porteous said.

[Click here for the full report.](#)

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Sustainability in Western Australia's timber industry

WA locals welcomed a Responsible Wood visit.

IN a recent visit to Bunbury and Perth, Western Australia, Matt de Jongh, sustainability manager at Responsible Wood, embarked on a journey to explore and understand the various facets of sustainability within the region's forestry sector. One of the highlights of de Jongh's trip was his participation in the Brunswick Show, a prominent event showcasing the region's agricultural and forestry sectors.

Community events are an important part of Responsible Wood's remit, de Jongh said, "It's vital to engage with local communities and stakeholders to create awareness about responsible timber sourcing and sustainable forestry practices."

He also visited the Leschenhault Timber Industry Club Dinner, a part of the International Order of Hoo-Hoo, which provided an opportunity to engage with key stakeholders in the industry.

During his visit, de Jongh had the opportunity to

witness sustainable forest management in action, catching up with Wespine, the Forest Products Commission (FPC) and the Department of Biodiversity Conservation and Attractions (DBCA). This included a close examination of pine plantation trials and karri and jarrah thinning trials. These trials provide essential insights into the long-term sustainability of timber resources, which de Jongh described as "crucial for preserving our natural environment while meeting the demands of a growing timber industry".

de Jongh also visited the Source Certain facility, where he delved into the concept of traceability within the timber supply chain. Responsible

Wood places a strong emphasis on ensuring the traceability and provenance of timber products, as de Jongh explained, "Knowing where your timber comes from is a fundamental aspect of responsible sourcing, and initiatives like Source Certain help us achieve transparency."

A significant part of de Jongh's visit involved conducting a workshop at the Western Australian Plantation Resources (WAPRES) office in Bunbury. He shared his expertise on sustainability and responsible sourcing with local stakeholders, further strengthening the commitment to sustainable practices in the region. "Education and collaboration are key drivers of change

in the timber industry," de Jongh said, underlining the importance of sharing knowledge and fostering a sense of responsibility among industry participants.

As part of his exploration of the Western Australian timber industry, de Jongh met with Bunnings staff to discuss sustainability and responsible sourcing within their supply chains. Bunnings, a major player in the retail industry, holds significant influence in promoting responsible wood sourcing practices. de Jongh said, "Engaging with retailers like Bunnings is pivotal because they have the capacity to drive market demand for sustainably

Cont P 7



1/ Gavin Butcher (left) and Matt de Jongh at the Leschenhault Timber Industry Club Dinner.



2/ At the Brunswick Show with the team from the South West Timber Hub, including project manager Wendy Perdon (second from left)

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30: NTHA TRAINING – Timber Knowledge Beginner – St Mary’s NSW. Registrations open. For more information and to register, visit <https://www.ntha.com.au/events/training/>

DECEMBER

15: International Conference on Community Forestry and Conservation (ICCFC - 23) – Melbourne. Hosted by one of the most trusted organizations, SAIRAP, the conference provides a premier global platform for exchanging ideas and insights on the latest developments

across various fields. Our goal is to offer a competitive venue for industry professionals and academic researchers to showcase and discuss cutting-edge advancements in their respective fields. More details <https://sairap.org/conf/index.php?id=1871959>

SAVE THE DATES 2024

APRIL 23-24: Planned International Forest Investment Conference – New York City. TBC

MAY 1-2: Sydney Build Expo – Sydney. Sydney Build is the only event in Australia to offer 300+ accredited presentations,

500+ exhibitors and incredible networking opportunities for all of Australia’s construction, architecture, engineering and infrastructure industries.

SEPTEMBER 23: Latin America Forest Investment Conference – Porto Alegre, Brazil.

SEPTEMBER 24-25: International Woodchip and Biomass Trade Conference – Porto Alegre, Brazil.

SEPTEMBER 25-27: Field Trip – Rio Grande do Sul State, Brazil.

OCTOBER 22-23: International Woodchip and Biomass

Seminar and Networking Event – Singapore.

SAVE THE DATES 2025

JUNE 22-26: World Conference on Timber Engineering – Brisbane. WCTE is the world’s leading scientific forum for the presentation of the latest technical and architectural solutions and innovations in timber construction.

OCTOBER 20-22: International Woodchip and Biomass Seminar and Networking Event – Singapore.

OCTOBER 23-24: Field Trip – Vietnam.

From P 6

sourced timber products.”

In all, de Jongh’s journey to Bunbury and Perth brought to the forefront the essential elements of sustainability in the timber industry. With an emphasis on community engagement, forest management, traceability, and collaboration, this trip serves as a reminder of the ongoing efforts to ensure a responsible and sustainable future for the timber industry in Western Australia and beyond.

“Sustainability isn’t just a buzzword,” said de Jongh. “It’s a commitment to preserving our natural resources for future generations, and every step we take toward responsible sourcing makes a significant impact.”



1/ A karri forest is thinned to help maintain its health.
 2/ Brad Barr, resource manager at Wespine (left), showed de Jongh around the company’s pine trials.
 3/ The WAPRES team were engaged workshop participants.
 4/ With Charlie Watkinson (right), general manager, technical and commercialisation at Source Certain.

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Combilift celebrations continue

The renowned lifting company celebrated its 25 years at the State Library of New South Wales.

COMBILIFT has been celebrating its 25th year in business and last Friday the Irish firm brought the party to Sydney, in the gallery rooms of the State Library of New South Wales. Co-founder and CEO Martin McVicar flew in to attend the celebration. Around 60 people attended, including reps and customers from Western Australia, South Australia, Victoria and Queensland, creating an opportunity to catch up and network with other Combilift users.

Chris Littlewood, Australian representative for Combilift arranged the evening and presented a short video on Combilift with some of their innovative products. The



Co-founder and CEO of Combilift, Martin Mc Vicar's presentation to Colin Massey. From left: Martin McVicar, Colin Massey, Gareth Massey and Philip Graham.

list included highlights of this year's five new releases, the COMBI-CUBE, a highly manoeuvrable electronic forklift with leading driver comfort; the Combi-CB70E, the latest addition to Combilift's ever-expanding electric model

line-up and shortest 7-tonne capacity counterbalance truck in the market; the Combi-LC, which has been specially designed for wind turbine towers and blades; the Combi-AGT, which stands for Autonomous Guided forklift

Truck and is engineered to revolutionise the way long loads are handled in narrow aisles; and Combi Connect, a telematics software product designed to provide customers with invaluable insights into fleet management and usage.

Enterprise Ireland assisted Combilift with the evening and the newly appointed Australian/New Zealand country manager Lydia Rogers was present, along with a few more staff from County Monaghan to support the success of the Irish and Australian relationship with Combilift.

McVicar addressed the room, noting that export

Cont P 9

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From P 8

markets have been an integral part for Combilift from day one. In their first year Combilift produced 18 truck products, 17 of these were exported.

To be successful in business you need customers who want your products. Colin Massey from Power Forklifts visited Combilift in Monaghan, Ireland some 23-odd years ago, seeking a solution for the needs of some of his Australian customers.

Colin was able to find the right solutions after talking with McVicar and his team. Massey was the person who initiated the Australian sales with an order for three Combilift trucks. McVicar made a presentation in appreciation for his assistance in bringing Combilift to Australia.

More than 4000 items have been sold in Australia and Australia accounts for more than 5% of the Combilift's total business. It remains one of the top 10 markets for Combilift and is a key part of the business. McVicar advised that while there are both big and small customers here in Australia, they are all equally important and McVicar thanked the customers for their support.

With Australia being so vast, McVicar knew they would need to work with a distributor who would be able to perform the ongoing after sales service, which is very important to Combilift. Peter Whiffen with wife Barbara from Adapalift, visited Combilift and were keen to look after Australia in sales and service. McVicar advised that one of the main factors



1/ **McVicar also made a presentation to Peter Whiffen and his son Lindsay of Adapalift, with staff of Adapalift and Chris Littlewood of Combilift.**

2/ **Martin McVicar talked about the importance of Australia in driving Combilift's safety focus.**

that drew Combilift to Adapalift was their footprint across all states. McVicar presented Peter and son Lindsay with an award in appreciation for their long and ongoing work with Combilift.

McVicar went on to say that a lot of their products are produced around customer needs and they have a big focus on safety. He added the top three worldwide countries concerned about safety would be the US, UK and Australia. He went into specifics: the US likes to talk about safety, the UK has a focus on safety but McVicar said that in his opinion the Australian market is the top country in the world when it comes to safety. This has helped Combilift with its drive on safety in their products and is at the forefront of their minds when developing new products.

McVicar finished with thanking the customers for making the effort in attending the night and for their support. It was a great chance for everyone to meet Lydia Rogers and her team as well as Chris Littlewood, the rest of the Combilift team and McVicar himself.

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New carbon design guide aims at Net Zero

FWPA's new WoodSolutions Technical Design Guide will help design professionals to incorporate sustainable materials.

WHILE bigwigs debate the climate future in Dubai over the next fortnight, here on the ground, we know that no Net Zero goals will be achieved without substantial decarbonisation of the construction industry.

Earlier this week, the third and final installation in FWPA's carbon series was released. WoodSolutions Technical Design Guide 55 is a valuable resource for design professionals who aim to incorporate sustainable materials. The guide offers insights into the potential of timber and wood products in Australia's construction industry and specifically addresses the contribution of



The new design guide is the final part of the carbon story from FWPA and WoodSolutions.

wood products to zero-carbon buildings.

This new guide aims to provide high-level guidance on diverse topics related to the built environment, including carbon in wood products,

biogenic and fossil carbon, embodied greenhouse gas emissions in buildings and designing for net zero. It also covers embodied carbon policies, green building frameworks and tools, and emphasises the importance of reducing embodied emissions in materials and construction as a crucial step in decarbonising Australia's built environment.

The commentary on embodied carbon spans various stages of the building life cycle, explaining its significance, measurement and the value of considering whole-of-life carbon in design decisions. This provides context on the global carbon cycle, sustainable forest management and the distinction between biogenic and fossil carbon, aiding decisions regarding bio-based and fossil-based building materials.

Highlighting the ability of wood products to store carbon for extended periods, both in the built environment and landfill, this guide underscores the importance of life cycle assessments and environmental product declarations. It discusses accounting for biogenic carbon during use and at the end of life, along with approaches to biogenic carbon in green building frameworks in Australia and New Zealand.

Various design options for reducing embodied carbon throughout a building's life cycle are surveyed, including pathways to carbon-zero design, the potential of engineered timber, and end-of-life options for timber building components. The guide concludes that strategic design using wood products in structural systems can decrease fossil fuel use and greenhouse gas emissions. Additionally, it briefly explores carbon-reduction opportunities through digital fabrication and modular construction.

The guide summarises Australia's embodied carbon policies, frameworks, green building certifications and tools. Three recent Australian case studies illustrate key topics, showcasing how wood products can contribute significantly to the shift towards zero-carbon buildings.

Joining FWPA's Carbon Primer & Glossary and Forests, Plantations, Wood Products & Australia's Carbon Balance, it completes the carbon picture.

To download the three-part series click here.


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“GUIDE ADDRESSES THE CONTRIBUTION OF WOOD PRODUCTS TO ZERO-CARBON BUILDINGS”

Tasmania forestry economic questions

IT'S a big week for the question of Tasmanian timber harvesting and the economics behind it.

Artist and curator Kirsha Kaechele, wife of MONA owner David Walsh, has convened forestry, Indigenous, policy, conservation and economic figures for a three-day Forest Economics Conference seeking consensus on how to extract the greatest value from native forests.

As Kaechele wrote on the MONA blog in August, she was shocked by the anger on both sides of the Tasmanian forestry debate. But, she wondered: "what happens if we take all the emotion out of it? ... What if we look at forestry through a purely economic lens? I've decided to pose a question: what is

the *actual value* of Tasmania's forests? And how can this value be translated into outcomes that work for the state as a whole, with longevity?

"I don't have the answer, obviously. Luckily, 120 of the smartest people in the world are coming to figure it out ... [It's] about imagining and modelling an optimal future; one that includes everyone."

On Wednesday, the Blueprint Institute released its report 'Seeing the Forest for the Trees'. The independent but traditionally



Kirsha Kaechele argues we should be using more wood and paying more for it: let's hope some of the economists at her conference can make the maths of that work.

Liberal-Party aligned group's report found that by immediately ceasing STT's state-run native timber harvesting, Tasmania would, on the most generous to the timber industry interpretation on the figures, deliver a net economic benefit of \$72 million to the state's coffers.

The maths relies on carbon sequestration values, and the report needs a thorough read, but one notable comment in the introduction stands out: "we must comment upon the unusual and declining transparency in STT's annual

reports. Other state-run forestry corporations that we have studied were noticeably less opaque..."

If the industry is to retain its social license to operate, transparency will be key.

Click here to read the full Monna blog post and click here to download the report.

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Forestry a focus at COP 28

Lowering carbon in construction, stamping out unsustainable practices and more are all on the climate conference agenda.

AS this newsletter goes out, the COP 28 climate summit will be about to start officially in the UAE.

Forestry is already slated as a major topic. In the lead-up, multiple countries have been working to resolve details over how to establish international trading for carbon offset credits. Plans for setting up a multilateral trading scheme under the UN have been rocky, with negotiators and a recently formed supervisory body debating rules for issuing credits and how to account for them in trading. Several countries have launched their own schemes in advance and will work them into the agreed international one on its launch, hoped for 2024 but expected in 2025.

Brazil's top climate diplomat André Corrêa do Lago announced plans to propose a "huge" fund to pay for the conservation of tropical forests.

"It's a conceptual proposal with a view to create a fund to help conserve tropical forests around the world... in 80 countries," Corrêa do Lago said.

The fund would not value forest conservation in terms of carbon, like many existing schemes, since protecting forests would primarily prevent further greenhouse gas emissions rather than absorbing additional carbon dioxide already in the atmosphere, Corrêa do Lago said.

He said the value would likely instead be linked to the area of forest measured in



Ambassador André Corrêa do Lago, Vice-Minister for Climate, Energy, and Environment, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Brazil.

hectares, or units of 0.01km².

Brazil also will launch plans at COP28 for an "Arc of Restoration" to counter the so-called arc of deforestation that is advancing ever deeper into the Amazon. National development bank BNDES will run the project, Corrêa do Lago said.

A delegation from the Australian Forest Products Association (AFPA) will represent the interests of Australia's forestry and forest products in Dubai. Acting CEO Natasa Sikman said today: "AFPA is an official observer to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and we will use our observer status to showcase to Australian and global policy decision makers the real and tangible climate, social and economic benefits of the forest products value chain and how it can be utilised to meet Australia's net zero targets and sovereign capability ambitions."

"Australia's land sector will play a significant role in reducing and sequestering emissions needed to meet

the goals of the Paris Agreement. Sustainable forestry management needs to play a larger role in emissions reduction and decision makers need to better understand that the carbon captured by production trees is transferred into the built environment. Decision makers and the broader public want the forest products sector's renewable, sustainable and recyclable paper, packaging and fibre products, and sustainable resource security is critical for these products."

AFPA Chair Joel Fitzgibbon said, "The importance of being on the ground at COP28 cannot be overstated for a sector like ours which has greater potential than most to be part of Australia's climate change solution, which at present is often

taken for granted. We will be on ground promoting the benefits that forestry and forest products provide to the transition to a low carbon bioeconomy. In addition to our key events the AFPA team will be participating in bilateral meetings with key stakeholders who want to engage with the sector."

AFPA will take part in and lead a number COP28 events, including hosting a panel discussion on *Sensitive afforestation: winning solutions for the climate and communities* on 9 December in the Australian Government Pavilion. AFPA's official UNFCCC side event *Design Thinking, Global Standards, & Integrative Solutions for a Net Zero Built Environment* will be held in conjunction with both the American and British Architect Institutes and will showcase the real impact forest products have in reducing emissions in the construction sector, which currently accounts for approximately 40% of global emissions.

"As demonstrated by the release of this week's UN Environment Programme emissions gap report, the world is still falling short of progress required to meet the Paris Agreement goals," Sikman said.

New Zealand will also be at COP 28, with environmental charity Pure Advantage announcing A new mātauranga Māori-led initiative to help restore, enhance and plant 2.1 million hectares of diverse indigenous forest across New Zealand.

“THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING ON THE GROUND AT COP28 CANNOT BE OVERSTATED FOR A SECTOR LIKE OURS

From P 3

reminded those assembled of their centrality to the Australian economy, saying “You build the nation. The Australian housing market is a trillion-dollar industry and you are 85% of the domestic house frames.”

Woods said the housing crisis is now a genuine crisis, and the proposition of building 1.2 million new dwellings in the next five years is a great goal, but one that will be difficult to achieve. There is no Magic Pudding of global fibre supply: population growth has been outstripping timber resources for some time and other nations have become concerned with their sovereign capacities for wood products.

This isn't news, Woods pointed out the same pattern had been a significant driver of price increases over the pandemic. Similarly, the housing crisis isn't news, but he emphasised that it would be foolish to pretend it was due to external factors like migration: it is due to a shortfall in building and has been for some time.

The good news takeaway was that things look as though they may start improving next year. The bad news was that meeting our housing goals will take an effort we've never achieved before. “We need 240,000 dwellings per annum,” said Woods. “This country has never built more than 231,000 dwellings in a year. And that was back when we didn't have a labour shortage, back when we didn't have material shortages and other challenges ... I reckon that's going to be a bit tricky.”

Woods said the majority of investment would be in small to medium multires, often in regional hubs, conducted mainly through government



1/ Industry Edge's Tim Woods called for a rethink in the way we build, with timber taking a leading role in offsite construction.
2/ Tim Lester in white shirt with other members of the AFCA team and members who made the event a success.
3 & 4/ Paul Mahoney's talk covered the technology of early NZ sawmilling, but also the relationships, like Jim and Violet Petrie whose 50-plus years together started in a forestry camp where she cooked and he cut.

co-investment along with build-to-rent models, which allow for decades-long leases.

He called for a radical shortening of the building pipeline without lowering build quality. That starts with approvals but the key to the change is offsite construction with prefabrication finally maturing as a model in this country. Alongside that is innovation in materials. Woods talked about plantation hardwoods in EWP and hybrid hardwood-softwood LVLs being part of that future, and ended by reminding everyone that this was really an opportunity for timber to take a lead role in the challenges facing us, if we can be responsive to them.

Industry services leaders spoke as the meal was served, with Karen Locandro from Adroit discussing the complexities of arranging insurance for the sector; First Super's Tony Papantoniou flagging changes that will help with unpaid super, particularly payday super, and issues around greenwashing super

funds and inadequate super for women; Jason Steinke, finance broker at Linx Finance, described how the loss of industry expertise in many financial institutions was making borrowing harder at the same time machinery was becoming more sophisticated and hence more expensive; and Emma Morgan from Mercer Marsh Benefits gave a raft of useful tips, many available on the Marsh website, for keeping teams healthier and fitter and thus reducing our need for her services at all.

Remaining topics included ForestFit training, a recap of machinery advances from Onetrak/Tigercat and Komatsu and a discussion of roadside forest waste residue processing from Adan Taylor of GMT Logging. PACCAR's

Jonathan Crellin – “yes, we build trucks in Australia” – talked about the future of transport fuelling systems, emphasising that the sheer weight of current batteries meant that fully electric trucks weren't a great idea yet, but offering a range of hybrid fuel options that hit the sweet spot for cost and distance.

Finally, historian Paul Mahoney gave a wonderful talk on the history of New Zealand forestry, reminding the attendees that ours has always been a sustainable industry with slides showing the disappearance of old forestry camps under regrowth. He talked a way of life long gone where young lovers would literally climb mountains for a chance to see each other, and literal manpower winched carts and logs up inclines too steep for train or horse.

He concluded his talk, and the event, with a plea for anyone expert in early 20th century sawmill technology to contact him via AFCA, as he has questions!

“THE RESULT ACHIEVED IN THE LAST ELECTION FOR THIS INDUSTRY WAS EXTRAORDINARY”

The monkey puzzle and its stolen seeds

Araucaria trees feature in the Paris of the South, but made their way to Europe thanks to a botanist's smuggling.

DRIVING around the streets of Buenos Aires, the capital of Argentina, as you do, it is easy to see why it is called the Paris of the South: wide boulevards, extensive parklike gardens, and heaps of statues. Striking, and so South American, are the frequent mature *Araucaria* trees.

A distinguishing feature of many South American landscapes, *Araucaria araucana* trees – commonly called monkey puzzles, or Chilean pines – are an evergreen tree native to central and southern Chile and western Argentina. They grow to 1-1.5m in trunk diameter and up to 40m in height.

Araucaria araucana is the hardiest species in the conifer genus *Araucaria*. Their natural habitat is the lower slopes of the Chilean and Argentinean south-central Andes Mountains, typically above 1000 metres. Juvenile trees exhibit a broadly pyramidal or conical habit which develops into the distinctive umbrella form as trees mature.

The genus *Araucaria* has a long and noble ancestry, and still consists of 25 species, all in the Southern Hemisphere.



1/ Juvenile *Araucaria araucana* trees have a broadly conical habit.
2/ The thick, scaly leaves and rough bark would 'puzzle a monkey' to climb, giving the tree its common name.

Palaeobotanists have found little difference between the modern tree and its recent ancestors in prehistoric times, accordingly, it's often described as a living fossil. Common to all 25 of the species is the regimented geometry associated with the time of the dinosaurs. The trunk is covered in 'reptilian' bark and it radiates whorls of branches stiffer and spiker than those of any other conifers. Each scale-like leaf

The species was 'discovered' by Archibald Menzies and brought to Europe at the end of the 18th century. Menzies was the surgeon-naturalist onboard *Discovery*, named after Cook's ship, and under the command of Captain Vancouver. In 1791 the British Admiralty sent Vancouver to explore the Pacific coast of North and South America.

The ship visited Valparaiso Harbour in Chile and there the crew was hosted at a banquet by the Spanish authorities. One of the delicacies on the table was a plate of nuts which they heard were the staple diet of the local Araucano Indians. Menzies slipped some of these mysterious nuts into his pocket. After the ship sailed, he planted them as an experiment. When the *Discovery* docked in England the following year, Menzies had five seedling trees, christened after the Araucano Indians growing in pots in his cabin.

It was these five that became the first monkey puzzle trees introduced into Europe. One of them is planted in Kew Gardens and helped launch the tree's 'career'. The name 'monkey puzzle' was coined in the 1840s, recognising the difficulty of climbing the tree.

TALKING TREES

With the late **JOHN HALKETT**

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can live about 24 years.

The great majority of the genus *Araucaria* is confined to the tropical forests of New Caledonia. But four species (*A. excelsa*, *A. bidwillii*, *A. columnaris* and *A. cunninghamii*) originate from cooler lands further south, including the rainforests of Queensland and the distinctive Norfolk Island pine.



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Free Christmas trees and job advice from OneFortyOne

TWO things are true every December: young people will be thinking about their future careers and families will be urgently planning Christmas. OneFortyOne has thought of both.

The first is covered with a new resource, the OneFortyOne Careers Program Booklet, which shares the stories of previous Apprenticeship, Scholarship, and Graduate Program participants and provides insight into the benefits OneFortyOne can provide to someone starting their career.

"OneFortyOne is passionate about creating a diverse work force, and we need more young



OneFortyOne's Robyn, Lily and Desmond show how to fancy up a plantation tree.

people to make this happen," said Deon Kriek, Green Triangle Forests General Manager. "Our Career Programs are a great opportunity for young people to enter the industry and receive support as they develop their career.

"The booklet is one way that we can encourage young

people to enter and remain in the industry."

It also provides introductory information about working at OneFortyOne and its apprenticeships, scholarships and graduate programs as well as summer work in both Australia and New Zealand.

To download the booklet, click Apprentices,

Students and Graduates – OneFortyOne.

For families near OneFortyOne plantations, next weekend will be their annual chance to pick up a free Christmas tree.

"The trees we give away are basically rogues who grow out

of place in our plantations," Kriek said.

"This will be my first Christmas in the region and to celebrate I'll have one of our trees taking pride of place in our family room."

Hundreds of radiata pine trees have been donated to the local community over the years.

Trees will be available from 8am on 7–8 of December, on a first come first served basis.

Locals are welcome to collect a tree from the Glencoe Nursery, on Mile Hill Road, OneFortyOne depots in Nangwarry and Mount Burr, and Blue Lake Sports Park in Mount Gambier.

If you're planning on picking up a tree, please follow all safety signage at pickup locations, and ensure you can safely and legally secure your tree on the journey home.

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Temple Complex wins at Wood Awards

This spiritual centre embraces light and nature.

THE UK's Wood Awards has been running for 52 years and celebrates the best in timber-based design, craftsmanship and installation. It's a prestigious not-for-profit scheme, with an independent judging panel of highly regarded experts who visit every entry in person (much easier to do in the UK than Australia...)

Last week, the 2023 winners were announced and the Gold Award Winner is New Temple Complex in Hampshire, designed by James Gorst Architects.

Commissioned by The White Eagle Lodge, a multi-faith spiritual organisation, the new building is a series of orthogonal timber-framed pavilions, connected by a cloistered walkway and facing onto a central courtyard garden. They house a temple, library, chapels, community hall, public foyer and kitchen and have been designed with passive principles and long-term sustainability in mind.

Internally, the plan moves from secular, practical spaces that begin with a social foyer in the east, through to more spiritual zones that end with the temple in the west.

The building's frame was constructed offsite from glulam that was digitally sorted to eliminate knots and so give the visible frame consistency, with timber products, light brick and lime mortar forming

the external and internal skins of the complex and reflecting the building's South Downs location.

The timbers used are all PEFC & FSC certified, reflecting the organisation's ethical commitments and include Siberian larch, European spruce, white ash from the UK, and birch plywood.

The use of glulam meant a significant reduction in the weight of the frame, allowing for a 12m-circle that lifts into a large, light-filled dome atop the square temple space, connecting visitors with the natural world outside.

The design of the building had two notable constraints: the first was spiritual, with the



Glulam ribs lift a dome above the square room of the main temple, with light streaming in from both the top lantern and clerestory windows. Photo: Rory Gardiner

location atop the old temple chosen by a medium in the 1930s (a previous building had to be demolished due to water damage, but the rubble was retained in the groundworks) and a series of geometrical requirements with spiritual significance to the White Eagle Lodge governing the layout.

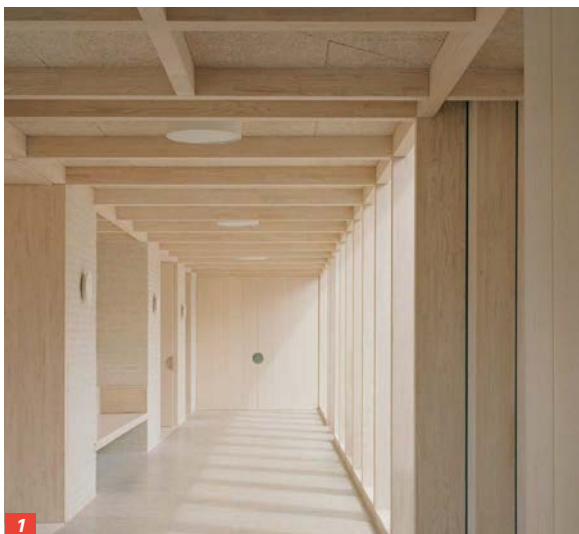
The second was

sustainability, with the design working to minimise the building's need to consume resources. Heating is provided by a ground source heat pump buried in the landscape and powered by a photovoltaic panel array. An innovative raised floor slab provides passive cooling to the internal spaces, with fresh air supplied by two underground labyrinth ventilation systems, while high-level actuators in the temple clerestory allow warm air

to escape. Even the waste generated onsite is purified in a biomass treatment plant before being discharged into the landscape.

A worthy winner, the Temple Complex is as good for the woods that surround it as it is for the people who find solace within it.

To see the full list of winners, click here.



1/ The timber framing is visually expressed in multiple parts of the complex; digital scanning made sure the glulam used was all knot-free and consistent. Image: Rory Gardiner



2/ The Temple Complex is sited in the rural South Downs, which meant the offsite construction used for the frame made construction easier and less damaging.. Image: Rory Gardiner

From timber to tea

A family enterprise that began as a way of securing wood resources has become a thriving tea producer.

ABC's *Landline* program specialises in hunting down innovative primary producers. But even for a show that focuses on the daring, a leap from rainforest timbers to green tea production was a first.

Father and son Brendon and Darryl Collins produce about one tonne of tea annually on their farm about 20km south-west of Maleny, on Queensland's Sunshine Coast hinterland.

Arakai estate is made up of 12,000 tea bushes, grown in 5km of hedgerows.

"We went into the tea-making thing fairly – well very – naively thinking, 'Oh this will be easy'. It certainly isn't," Darryl said.

Darryl and his wife Lorraine Collins bought the 140-hectare property in 1999. "I ran a cabinet timber business, and we bought this place primarily to establish plantations," Darryl Collins said.

"Mostly local or north Queensland rainforest species like silver quandong, silky oaks, Queensland maple, white beech – all of the timbers that are traditionally used for fine furniture, or for boat building or for joinery work."

But when Mr Collins sold his timber business in 2004, he no longer had a need for the property.

"We were actually going to sell this place," he said. "And he [Brendon] very rightly said, 'You'll never get it again...'"

The father and son went searching for a new crop. Another *Landline* program



featuring a WA tea-producing team sent the family to China and later Taiwan, to source machinery and share ideas with master tea producers.

"We sat down with them and told them what we wanted to do, and they basically shook their head and said that's not how you do it," Brendon said.

"We went ahead anyway.

"You're supposed to know what you're going to grow before you plant but we did everything backwards."

The plantation took five years of tending to before becoming productive. Which may sound slow but not compared to 30–150 years for trees.

They had to invent some of their early machinery and refine their processing – an oolong-style – but the first commercial harvest in 2015 took out the major prize at the Golden Leaf Awards – a national competition ranking



1/ **Brendon, Kristie, Lachlan and Zahlia with Darryl and Lorraine on the family farm.** Image: ABC Landline - Courtney Wilson

2/ **The farm was originally a rainforest timber plantation; now much of that crop will be harvested by future generations.** Image: ABC Landline - Courtney Wilson

the best in the business.

Now the Collins family sends tea all over the world.

But the timber plantation isn't forgotten. There are big plans for harnessing its value into the future.

"I'm really just looking after the trees, to a certain degree," Darryl said. "There'll be things that my kids might not ever even see harvested."

He hopes he has created something that will last generations.

"The trend in farming these days is to give it to your next generation better than what you had, and that's what we aim for," he said.

Source: abc.net.au



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