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ISSUE 799 // April 18 2024

# timber & FORESTRY *e*news

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## Little seedlings growing a big timber future

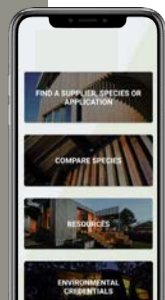
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# Award season ahead as NTHA confirms state events

THE National Timber & Hardware Association (NTHA) has confirmed the inaugural commencement of the 2024 State Awards season, inviting nominations from businesses across all states and territories.

The NTHA Timber & Hardware Industry State Awards occur bi-annually, serving as a distinguished platform to recognise outstanding contributions and inspire excellence throughout the industry.

NTHA are encouraging businesses to take the opportunity to spotlight their achievements, elevate their brand, and contribute to the advancement of the timber and hardware sector collectively.

"I am continually inspired by the exceptional calibre of

“THE AWARDS REFLECT EXCELLENCE WITHIN OUR INDUSTRY”



1/ 2023 Hardware & General (Sydney, New South Wales) Timber and Building Materials Store of the Year say the win boosted their morale and keeps them striving for more business success.



2/ 2023 National winner ITI Australia (Australia-Wide)- Timber Supplier of the Year.

our industry members. The NTHA Timber & Hardware Industry Awards stand as a testament to the relentless pursuit of excellence within our industry," NTHA CEO, David Little said.

"Through these awards, we celebrate both organisational and individual achievements, showcasing the collective brilliance that propels our industry forward. Each nominee represents a story of dedication, innovation, and unwavering commitment to excellence."

Nominations are now open for the following categories:

- NTHA Trainee/Apprentice of the Year
- NTHA Student of the Year
- Emerging Leader
- The REAL Difference Award
- 30+ Years Industry Service
- Trade Store of the Year
- Retail Store of the Year Under 2500sqm
- Retail Store of the Year Over 2500sqm
- Best Garden Centre
- Best Frame & Truss Operation
- Trade Supplier of the Year
- Retail Supplier of the Year
- Safety Culture Award

- Garden & Outdoor Supplier of the Year

NTHA say the time to nominate is limited, with deadlines varying across different states and territories.

Winners will be announced at the State or Territory Awards ceremonies they are nominated for. Winners from the NTHA State Awards will continue on to the National Awards final in 2025.

Dates and locations for the award finals are as follows:

Cont P 4

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# Grafton Nursery continues the state's legacy in timber

NESTLED in Grafton, Forestry Corporation's Nursery is dispatching almost 2.5 million hardwood and softwood seedlings to be replanted in state forests across New South Wales.

The Grafton Nursery grows a mix of eucalyptus and pine seedlings, which are replanted in state forest timber plantations that have previously been harvested for renewable timber products.

"These seedlings will be planted and grown for around 30 years to supply renewable timber for the next generation's homes and infrastructure," Forestry Corporation's District Manager for Grafton Lyndon Orpwood said.

"After timber harvest

**"TIMBER IS THE ULTIMATE RENEWABLE RESOURCE"**



**A range of softwood and hardwood species are grown from seed at Forestry Corporation's Grafton Nursery. Pictured is Nursery Supervisor Bevan Pugh.**

operations, state forests in New South Wales are regrown or replanted to continue the forest cycle into the future," Mr Orpwood said.

"Timber is the ultimate renewable resource and is crucial to the Australian construction industry.

"Almost 100 million seedlings have been raised at the Grafton nursery over the past two decades, ultimately

helping to build people's homes and to replenish vital public infrastructure including power poles, marine piers, bridges and platforms," he said.

Forestry Corporation's pine and native hardwood seedling nursery at Grafton employs a permanent workforce of 13 staff, who are assisted with the annual dispatch by a seasonal workforce.

When in full production,

the Grafton Nursery produces around 50,000 seedlings a day with all stock grown from seed.

The eucalypt and pine seedlings are being dispatched from the Grafton nursery across the state for replanting schedules in plantation forests.

For plantation forests in southern NSW, Forestry Corporation produces seedlings at its Tumut Nursery.

Since it opened in 1997, the southern NSW nursery has produced more than 176 million cold climate seedlings.

Find out more about Forestry Corporation at [www.forestrycorporation.com.au](http://www.forestrycorporation.com.au)

**On the cover: Forestry Corporation's Grafton Nursery is currently dispatching seedlings to be planted across NSW state forests. Pictured is nursery worker Tiara Mundine.**

## eNEWS Special Announcement

**timber**  
**& FORESTRY** *eNEWS*

We are very pleased to announce that next week will be the 800th issue of *Timber and Forestry eNews*! We are excited to celebrate this amazing milestone with all our readers, both old and new! Don't miss it!

From P 2

- 14 June 2024 | Victoria & Tasmania
- 27 July 2024 | Queensland
- 9 August 2024 | South Australia & Northern Territory
- 13 September 2024 | New South Wales & Australian Capital Territory
- 11 October 2024 | Western Australia

“Our 2023 award win was a great morale boost for our management team and staff. The award recognition was an encouragement to continue our journey of business transformation,” said Philip MacGregor, Managing Director, Hardware & General Supplies (Brookvale),



2023 National winner Acheson's Mitre 10 (Forbes, New South Wales), Best Hardware Garden Department.

the 2023 national award winner for Best Timber & Building Materials Store.

“We have used the award in our advertising to our customers. We have used the award as evidence to our staff that we are going in the right direction, a customer-focused business aiming to make it a great place to work and a great place to shop, to consolidate our profitability and to lead our markets.”

NOMINATE NOW

To nominate for one or more of the 2024 award categories, visit: <https://www.ntha.com.au/events/2024-state-awards/>

NTHA's Timber & Hardware Industry Awards not only celebrate the dedication and innovation of recipients but amplify their brand visibility, fostering trust and respect within the industry and their communities.

Mass timber becomes more cost-effective

Constructing a hybrid mass timber high-rise is now nearly as cost-effective as constructing a comparable concrete tower, states a study co-authored by PCL Construction, DCI Engineers, and Weber Thompson.

The Hybrid Tall Timber: Mass Timber Residential High-Rise Study highlights the potential of mass timber to expand residential space in densely populated urban areas. The study suggests that mass timber construction could pave the way for developing more buildings in the intermediate tower height range. Intermediate high-rise towers are said to be often not built to their full potential due to cost and code constraints. The study indicates that mass timber, a renewable material made from fast-growing lumber, could be more economical under certain conditions.

# WA's largest timber frame apartment complex a boost for housing

WESTERN Australia's largest timber frame apartment complex is a step closer with the Cook Government, through DevelopmentWA finalising the sale of key land within Midland's high-profile urban renewal precinct to Bluerock Projects.

In what is being hailed as a boost to Western Australia's long-term housing supply, the 51 residence, Tuohy Gardens, will be hailed as the Western state's largest timber project.

The affordable build-to-rent model provides secure, long-term, affordable rental accommodation.

Tuohy Garden Apartments is the potential catalyst for future projects across Western Australia to address housing affordability.

Located within one of the biggest redevelopments and urban renewal projects undertaken by DevelopmentWA on behalf of the State Government.

In a boost to Western Australia's long-term housing supply the Cook Government, through DevelopmentWA, has finalised the sale of key land within Midland's high-profile



**Bluerock Projects are executing the timber-focused project.** Photo: Bluerock

urban renewal precinct to Bluerock Projects.

Tuohy Garden Apartments will yield up to 51 apartments and will be available through an affordable build-to-rent initiative.

Bluerock Projects will both develop and operate as a professional landlord for the site. This new model aims to provide secure, long-term, affordable rental accommodation and will act as a next step in the scaling up of delivery across Western Australia.

Development approval has already been obtained for the site with construction

anticipated to commence in the first half of 2024, with the first residents expected to be welcomed towards the end of 2025. The development will also incorporate 650 square meters of ground-floor commercial space.

The Midland Town Centre, where the apartment site is being developed, is an exciting urban renewal program within walking distance of the future Midland METRONET station and in the heart of Midland.

"With more than 50 new apartments expected to be brought to the market through the innovative build-to-rent model, this development will

add to the growing local vibrant precinct," Housing and Lands Minister John Carey said.

"Tuohy Garden Apartments is expected to be Western Australia's largest timber frame apartment complex and will feature a range of sustainability features to further reduce the cost of living such as the inclusion of solar panels and a smart metering system, alongside batteries utilising Powerledger Artificial Intelligence power trading technology.

"Other sustainable technologies include permeable paving systems for natural drainage, low carbon concrete and EV charging bays for visitors and residents."

"Tuohy Garden Apartments will provide tenants with a modern home in the heart of the State Government's Midland Town Centre urban renewal program," Midland MLA Michelle Roberts said.

"This is another example of the Cook Government and private industry working together to deliver innovative solutions to boost housing affordability right here in Midland."

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RW/1-10-1

# Fire risk extended for NZ as dry conditions continue

WITH elevated fire danger levels predicted in certain regions until the end of April, researchers at Scion are calling for greater public awareness about the hazard posed by tinder-dry grasses.

The fire hazard posed by cured (dry brown) grass is quick ignition and fast-moving fire.

The fire season is generally October to March but dry conditions in northern and eastern parts of the North Island, Wairarapa, Marlborough, Canterbury and Otago are keeping fire authorities on alert.

Dry conditions have created low soil and fuel moisture levels and, with high pressure favoured for at least the first half of April, these same parts of the country are expected to further cure (brown off) grass. As curing increases, the moisture content decreases further, making grass easier to ignite and more likely to burn with higher rates of spread and intensity.

Fire and Atmospheric Science Team researcher Shana Gross says it is important for the public to know that dry grasses are still highly flammable at this



**Cured grazed grass is a fire hazard.**

time of year, even though temperatures have dropped.

"Grass is one of the most common fuels in New Zealand," she says. "It's superabundant and can ignite quickly, spreading fast. People need to think about grasses, tussock, and grazed and ungrazed pasture (that is dry and/or isn't irrigated), as a potential fire hazard and be aware of the elevated risk to property and lives when grass is very dry."

Scientists at Scion have been studying the behaviour of wildfire in New Zealand for decades, analysing how different fuels behave and spread under various conditions.

Over the past 30 years, data

shows that most wildfires in New Zealand started in grass fuels. Of the 50,097 wildfires recorded, 40,736 or 81% of wildfires started in dry grass.

Typically, grasses and scrub fuels will dry out first in the fire season and become a hazard earlier than large fuels, such as trees. These fuels are likely to remain hazardous over much of the fire season and even sometimes through the winter.

Although grass fires are typically less intense and shorter-lived than forest fires, they can spread exponentially faster, outrun firefighting resources and put more property and lives at risk.

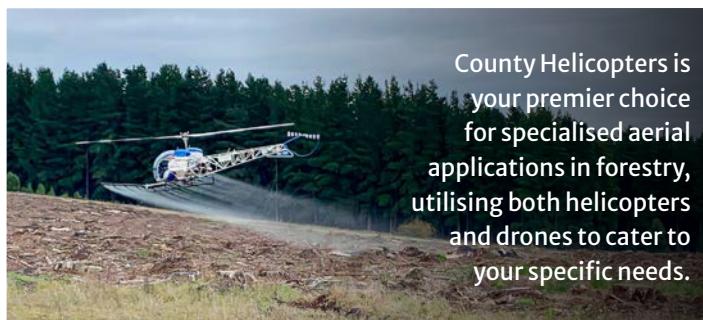
Based on the predicted weather conditions for the next

couple of weeks, a grass fire could spread 8km per hour on the flat and even faster uphill.

"Of all the fuel types, fires travelling in grass fuels are a major cause of firefighter injuries or fatalities due to people underestimating how fast-moving grass fires can travel," says Gross.

Education plays a pivotal role in reducing fire risks, with Scion advocating for public awareness and proactive measures that encourage people, especially in rural areas or in semi-rural subdivisions, to think twice before engaging in activities that could generate sparks near cured grass, such as mowing tall brown grass which can cause a spark and ignite a fire. Best practice is to reduce activities that creates sparks.

"Anyone cutting through stubble or long grass using mowers, chainsaws or brushcutters needs to be aware about the current fire danger level and other conditions before starting. Fire and Emergency New Zealand (FENZ) provides a handy website to make checking easy," she says.



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**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. For more information, visit [www.sydneybuildexpo.com](http://www.sydneybuildexpo.com)

**1-2: International Forest Investment Conference – New York City.** For more information, visit [www.getfea.com](http://www.getfea.com)

**20-21: IV International Forest Business Conference – Sheraton Sopot Hotel, Poland.** A two-day conference on megatrends that shape responsible forest and wood industry investments. The conference aims to bring together leading timberland investment management organizations, investors interested in forestry asset class and sustainable wood industry representatives in order to exchange and share experiences and ideas about new forest business frontiers. Register at [www.fba-events.com](http://www.fba-events.com) or contact [rafal@forest-analytics.com](mailto:rafal@forest-analytics.com)

**22-23: Wood Transport & Logistics 2024 – Rotorua, NZ and online.** With an international focus and a rich understanding based in the forestry expertise of New Zealand, this regular conference delivers insights into

wood handling and transport innovations, automation, log scheduling and logistics being employed by leading forestry, wood harvesting and log transport companies. Topics include transitions to new electric, hydrogen and diesel-hybrid powered heavy vehicles, including the integration of truck automation and platooning, as well as new innovations in log measurement, scheduling and logistics. For more and to register, visit <https://innovatek.co.nz/event/wood-transport-logistics-2024/>

**JUNE**

**14: NTHA Vic/Tas State Awards.** More details to follow. Sponsorship opportunities available. Contact [alicia@ntha.com.au](mailto:alicia@ntha.com.au)

**25-26: Fire Summit – Melbourne Connect, The University of Melbourne, Parkville, VIC.** Theme: Prescribed fire: Exploring science, culture and practice. This Summit will review and discuss cultural fire practices, evidence from recent wildfires, fire science, lived experience and current prescribed fire practices. The Summit will also look to the future and consider more effective use of prescribed fire, health impacts of fire and smoke and how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and forest scientists can encourage two-way capacity building to support healthy and resilient forests. For more information, visit <https://www.forestry.org.au/2024-fire-summit-prescribed-fire-exploring-the-science-practice-and-culture/>

org.au/2024-fire-summit-prescribed-fire-exploring-the-science-practice-and-culture/

**JULY**

**27: NTHA Qld State Awards.** More details to follow. Sponsorship opportunities available. Contact [alicia@ntha.com.au](mailto:alicia@ntha.com.au)

**AUGUST**

**9: NTHA SA State Awards.** More details to follow. Sponsorship opportunities available. Contact [alicia@ntha.com.au](mailto:alicia@ntha.com.au)

**12-13: Timber Construct Conference – Rydges, Melbourne.** The Timber Offsite Construction Conference and Exhibition has been rebranded as the Timber Construct Conference to encompass the full spectrum of timber building. The conference provides an invaluable forum to address pressing challenges and opportunities influencing timber's role across the built landscape. Technical sessions will cover research updates, emerging products, building code enhancements, and best practice case studies. For more information, visit <https://timberoffsiteconstruction.com>

**SEPTEMBER**

**13: NTHA NSW State Awards.** More details to follow. Sponsorship opportunities available. Contact [alicia@ntha.com.au](mailto:alicia@ntha.com.au)

**23: Latin America Forest Investment Conference –**

**Porto Alegre, Brazil.**

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

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

**OCTOBER**

**11: NTHA WA State Awards.** More details to follow. Sponsorship opportunities available. Contact [alicia@ntha.com.au](mailto:alicia@ntha.com.au)

**22-23: International Woodchip and Biomass Seminar and Networking Event – Singapore.**

**29-31: Forestry Australia's 2024 Symposium – Mercure Ballarat Convention Centre, Golden Point, VIC.** Theme: Healthy and resilient forests for our future, will facilitate conversation and collaboration that regardless of land tenure and ownership, healthy and resilient forests should be the objective for all forest and land managers. The Symposium is a focused three-day gathering, consisting of two days of plenary and concurrent sessions, and a day of Field Trips. The two-day program will feature a range of Keynote and Invited Speakers, who are experts and thought leaders in their field. The Symposium will also feature several social functions, facilitating networking and collaboration in an informal and relaxed environment. For more information, visit <https://www.forestryconference.com.au/>

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# New home commencements lowest in a decade

“THERE were only 163,836 new homes that commenced construction in 2023, the lowest volume of starts in over a decade, and far from the 240,000 required each year to meet the Australian government’s target of 1.2 million new homes over the next five years,” stated HIA Chief Economist, Tim Reardon.

The ABS last week released its building activity data for the December Quarter 2023, data that provides estimates of the value of building work and the number of dwellings commenced, completed and under construction across Australia and its states and territories.

“There were 30,062 detached houses that completed construction in the December Quarter 2023, but

only 23,893 new houses commencing construction,” Mr Reardon said.

“This was one of the strongest quarters of house completions of the last five years, up by 4.3 per cent compared to the previous quarter to produce a total of 114,178 completions in 2023 calendar year.

“New house commencements, however, have been declining for over two years, with a small 2.9 per cent uptick in the December quarter after an unexpectedly weak September quarter. This resulted in just 99,708 new detached house commencements in 2023, the lowest in a calendar year for a decade.

“With commencements at a decade low and completions at elevated levels, the result



**A further blow to housing stats with new commencements the lowest in a decade.**

years for multi-unit commencements since 2012.

“This slowing in home building will drag on national economic growth in 2024.

“This has been an incredibly well-broadcast housing downturn, with

a 2024 trough in detached housing commencements predicted back in May 2022 when the RBA first started increasing interest rates.

is that the volume of houses under construction is falling rapidly. The volume of homes under construction fell by 7.9 per cent in the December quarter albeit from record high levels over recent years.

“Commencement of multi-units also remains around decade lows, with a 2.1 per cent decline in the December quarter bringing the calendar year to 63,004, even lower than the 63,022 in 2022. These are the two weakest

“This lack of new work entering the pipeline is occurring at the same time that Australia is experiencing record population growth on top of a pre-existing and acute shortage of housing,” concluded Mr Reardon.



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# Exploring the potential of African Mahogany in the Northern Territory

IN the heart of the Northern Territory, an ambitious project has been quietly growing for the last two decades.

The African mahogany (*Khaya senegalensis*) plantations, meticulously nurtured and tended to, are now on the cusp of a significant milestone. As these majestic trees reach maturity, the potential of African mahogany to capture the interest of discerning consumers and industries worldwide is immense.

Originally native to the semi-deciduous forests of the northern savannah belt of tropical Africa, from Senegal in the west to Uganda in the east, African mahogany has found a new home in the Northern Territory, where its adaptability and growth potential have been harnessed to create thriving plantations.

This endeavour stands as the largest African mahogany plantation in Australia, a testament to the pioneering spirit of African Mahogany Australia (AMA). They have been at the forefront of testing various silviculture regimes, pushing the boundaries of knowledge and innovation in sustainable forestry practices to determine the best ways to manage the species in the unforgiving NT climate.

Over the past 15 years, the managers of these estates have diligently overseen the growth of these valuable hardwoods. Now, with only several years remaining until the estate reaches its maturity, the focus has shifted towards unlocking the



1/ Meticulously nurtured and tended to, the African mahogany plantations are reaching maturity.

2/ African mahogany (*Khaya senegalensis*)... its potential has yet to be fully discovered.

3/ The range of hues from pale pinks to deep reds, adds a touch of elegance to any finished product.



full potential of the African mahogany timber.

Exciting developments are underway as the company delves into testing the timber properties for various product options. While much of this testing has been conducted with young trees and juvenile timber, the results are promising. This crucial phase involves meticulous examination and experimentation to determine the most suitable applications for this prized resource. From cabinetry to fine furniture-making, boat-building and musical instruments, the versatility of African



mahogany opens up a plethora of possibilities.

One particularly intriguing aspect that has garnered

attention is the exquisite colouring of the timber. African mahogany boasts rich, warm hues from pale pink to deep red that add a touch of elegance to any finished product.

This natural beauty makes it highly desirable for appearance-grade end products, elevating the

aesthetic appeal of furniture, flooring, and decorative items.

The journey of African mahogany in the Northern Territory is a testament to the power of foresight, dedication, and sustainable management practices. It serves as a reminder of the untapped potential that lies within our natural resources and the opportunities they present for economic growth and environmental stewardship.

As we look ahead to the final maturation of these remarkable plantations, there is a sense of optimism and excitement for what the future holds. With African mahogany poised to make its mark in the timber markets, it holds promise for the economic prospects of the Northern Territory forestry industry.

“EXCITED TO UNLOCK THE FULL POTENTIAL OF AFRICAN MAHOGANY”

# New study confirms FSC-certified forests help wildlife thrive in the Congo Basin

A NEW study has revealed compelling evidence that forests certified by the Forest Stewardship Council® (FSC®) in Gabon and the Republic of Congo harbour a higher abundance of larger mammals and critically endangered species, such as gorillas and elephants, compared to non-FSC-certified forests.

The research was led by Utrecht University with support from WWF and the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) and was published in Nature on 10 April 2024. It underscores the effectiveness of measures implemented in FSC-certified forest concessions to safeguard wildlife.

By meticulously



Individual animal counts were meticulously counted through cameras. Around 1.3 million images captured approximately 55 mammals.

documenting individual animal counts and strategically positioning camera traps, the research conducted by Joeri Zwerts affirmed that certified concessions notably harbour

Clear link between hunting and biodiversity loss

The research emphasizes the pivotal role of hunting in biodiversity loss, highlighting the reduced number of hunting signs and increased wildlife observations in FSC-certified concessions. Certified forestry entities' proactive measures, such as blocking old logging roads, establishing checkpoints, and supporting alternative protein sources for local populations, have significantly curbed



a bigger population of large mammals – 2.7 times more for mammals over 100 kg, such as gorillas and forests elephants, and 2.5 times more for mammals from 30–100 kg such as leopards and chimpanzees when compared to non-FSC-certified forest concessions. The number of smaller mammals observed was similar between FSC- and non-FSC-certified concessions, painting a picture of less biodiversity in the latter forests.

The effects were similar in both Gabon and the Republic of Congo. In addition, the encounter rates observed of large mammals in FSC-certified forests were comparable to published data from recently monitored protected areas in the Congo Basin region.

illegal hunting.

Beyond wildlife conservation, the study highlights the broader positive impact of FSC certification. The conservation of large mammals positively influences seed dispersal, nutrient cycling, and forest carbon storage. Previous research (published in Nature Geoscience) has shown that tropical forests would potentially store 7% less carbon without the presence of elephants.

This study, the first to compare so many different forest areas at the same time – “was a large and ambitious project that took five years and involved hundreds of local employees. We had to convince both certified and



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From P 10

non-FSC-certified companies to participate in the study. It was hard work under challenging conditions, but the knowledge we gained will make an important contribution to the protection of animals in tropical forests," said Utrecht University's Joeri Zwerts, who led the study.

Fran Price, Leader, WWF Forest Practice, said these results were inspiring.

"It's an indication that FSC continues to be an effective tool in tropical forests and that its standards translate into tangible impacts. Solutions that benefit both



**Ecologists have known for some time that FSC certification is helpful for maintaining large-bodied mammal populations.**

people and nature do exist, and responsible forest management certification is one of those vital solutions," Fran said.

Study co-author Fiona Maisels, a research scientist working with the WCS, said tropical ecologists have known for some time that FSC certification is helpful for maintaining large-bodied

mammal populations, based on studies that compare a single protected area to adjacent concessions.

"However, this is the first time that a set of paired FSC and non-FSC management concessions have been included in a carefully designed study over an enormous geographical area. The results are crystal clear:

large animals of conservation concern (such as forest elephants and the great apes) are unquestionably far better off in FSC-certified forests."

Conducted by Joeri Zwerts and his team, the study published in the science journal Nature employed 474 camera traps across 14 logging concessions – seven FSC-certified

and seven non-FSC-certified – in the Congo Basin. Over three to four years of fieldwork (two to three months monitoring period per concession) these traps snapped 1.3 million images, capturing approximately 55 mammal species including leopards and gorillas, as well as various endangered species.

**“RESULTS ARE CLEAR: LARGE ANIMALS UNDER THREAT ARE BETTER OFF IN FSC-CERTIFIED FORESTS**

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# Chinese paulownia trees in Australia

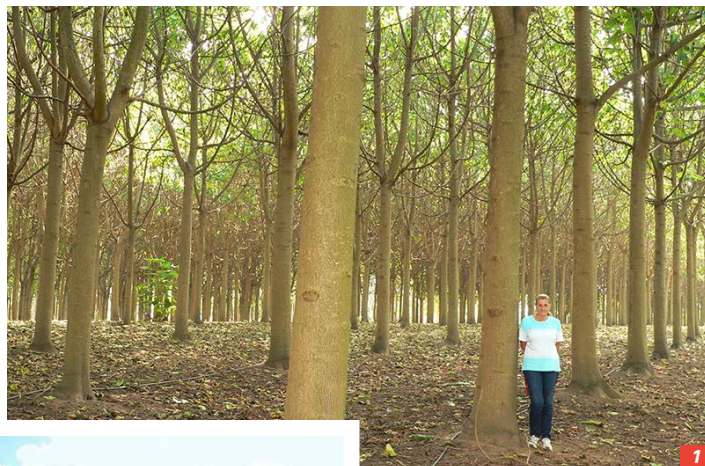
PAULOWNIA is a deciduous hardwood tree native to parts of Asia, notably China, and is well known for its vigorous growth and capacity to be grown over short rotations. Its timber is also noted for its workability and outstanding strength-to-weight ratio.

Paulownia timber is light in colour, with a gradual transition from sapwood to heartwood. The timber has a low density (260-350 kilograms per cubic metre, at 15% moisture content).

It is a straight-grained, soft timber which is easy to air dry. After drying the timber is stable unless a notable proportion of pith is present.

Paulownia timber has good working characteristics, being easy to sew and finish. It also has good coating properties. However, it is prone to surface bruising and needs to be handled carefully during processing, finishing and use.

It is well suited for products such as lightweight furniture, joinery, mouldings, jointed board, acoustic wall and ceiling panelling, veneer, blinds and shutters, door cores, fibreglass cores, caskets,



1/ Paulownia timber is primarily found in parts of Asia.  
 2/ Logs from 12-year old Paulownia plantation.  
 3/ Sawmilling paulownia... part of the first significant operational scale harvesting, sawmilling and kiln drying of paulownia timber in Australia.

boat building, caravans, toys, hobbies, some sporting goods and surfboards.

The establishment of paulownia plantations in Australia was popular during the 1980s and 1990s. Plantations were established, notably in small woodlots,

uptake, commercial utilisation of domestically-grown paulownia plantations has proved elusive. This reality has been a major disappointment for plantation owners and has resulted in some plantations being prematurely cleared to permit the land to be used for other purposes.

In the two years since 2015, significant time and resources have been invested in identifying commercially viable uses for domestically-grown paulownia timber in manufacturing applications. This has proven to be challenging, particularly because of difficulties in matching prices with imported Chinese paulownia timber products.

However, after concerted collaborative efforts across the 'supply chain', the prospects of finding domestic manufacturing applications for Australian-grown paulownia timber have emerged. This effort has resulted in what may be the first significant operational scale harvesting, sawmilling and kiln drying of paulownia timber in Australia, based on a paulownia plantation at Richmond on the western outskirts of Sydney.

Thanks to collaborative and continuing efforts prospects have been emerging for developing a commercially viable market for domestically-grown paulownia timber in Australia.

## TALKING TREES



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from the central west of NSW, up along the east coast into southeast Queensland, central Queensland and north Queensland to beyond Bundaberg, plus a few in Western Australia. Some plantations were also established under managed investment schemes. In some instances, growth rates, tree form and yields have been lower than initial expectations.

Whilst paulownia timber continues to be imported from China, other than very modest



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# How long will China need New Zealand wood?

By DENNIS NEILSON

AUSTRALIA floats on the receipts of hundreds of billions of dollars of revenue from iron ore (especially coal) and other mineral exports that are mostly shipped to China.

But recently, plummeting prices of iron ore and other minerals (especially nickel and cobalt) have raised serious doubts about how long Australia's 'golden goose' (China) can continue to lay enough eggs to keep Australia afloat.

Unlike in Australia, New Zealand rabid Greens have long since all but shut down ALL MINING "across the ditch".

Instead, the Shaky Isles have survived on dairy (especially), red meat and forestry exports, again mostly to China, to pay the bills.

But these trades are now being questioned.

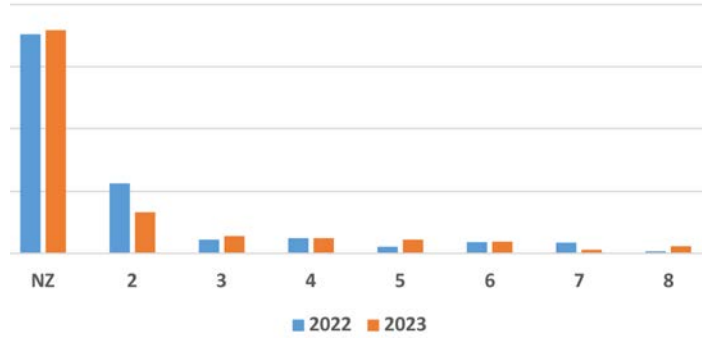
Indeed a headline in the New Zealand Herald on April 2 was 'How long will China need of dairy products?'

China's imports of whole milk powder (a major NZ dairy export product) dropped a massive 39% in 2023, and China is rapidly building up to be the world's third-largest milk producer in its own right

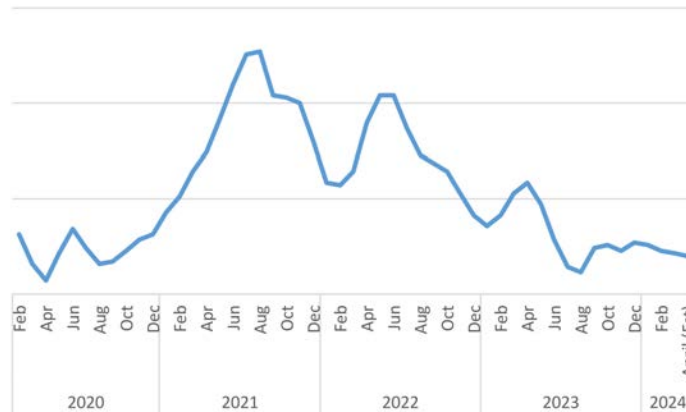
Beef and especially lamb price depressions in New Zealand are surpassed only by the sad mental depression being suffered by many New Zealand sheep farmers.

**REDUCTION IN DEMAND FROM CHINA**

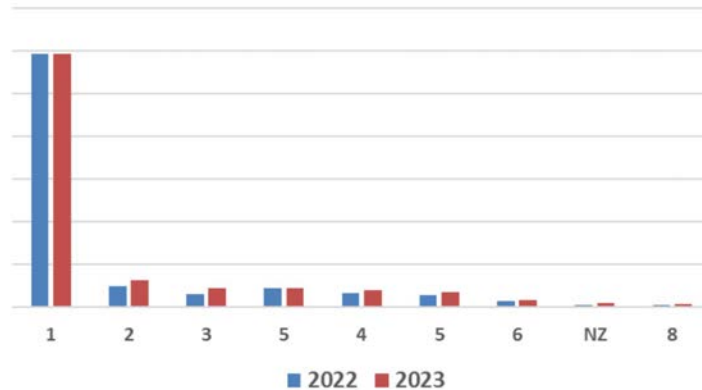
**Major China SW Log Suppliers, 2022 & 2023 : JAS CM**  
In 2023 NZ held its own - but at what cost?



**NZ Radiata Pine 3.9 Metre A Grade CIF China Prices: Feb 2020 to April 2024**  
Are the good times over? For good?



**Major China Lumber Suppliers, 2022 and 2023 : CM**  
NZ is a "bit player". Why?



Lamb prices are being crushed by a flood of cheap Australian lamb exports – and wool now costs more thy shear than it is worth.

The same question could

be asked about NZ's huge log trade to China: 'How long will China need our wood?'

In 2023 New Zealand log prices held up well in the face of a major wood demand

reduction in China. But at a cost in prices. New Zealand lumber exports to China are now hardly a blip on the radar.

In its late- March "Wood Matters" magazine, the New Zealand/Australian consulting firm PF Olsen reported on a growing 2024 softwood log oversupply in China: " --- log exporters from New Zealand don't seem to understand the relationship between price and the supply curve."

The question of 'how long, and/or how much' related to wood exports may be answered by a major seminar being held in New Zealand in September this year. The main presenter will be Gavin Hao, Director of Shanghai-based Gingko Consulting, he will be joined by junior presenter Dennis Neilson of DANA NZ (who started the log export trade to China from New Zealand way back in 1985).

The seminar will present the findings of a new multi-client Review: 'China softwood supply and demand outlook review', due to be published by DANA-Gingko in August. It will predict demand and supply balances for softwood logs and lumber in China, in 2024/25, 2029 and 2034.

The seminar is being held at the New Sycamore Conference Centre at the New Zealand Timber Museum at Putaruru.

Information on the seminar can be obtained from Linda at info@dana.co.nz

# Sandalwood giant enters receivership; update

Following our article earlier this year (issue 787), the world's largest producer of Indian sandalwood has been placed in receivership, the ABC reports, following years of uncertainty and falling prices.



**The price of sandalwood fell by roughly 50 per cent between 2020 and 2023.** Photo: Courtesy of Quintis

Quintis Australia and its subsidiaries, including Sandalwood Properties Limited and Quintis Leasing, have appointed FTI Consulting as receivers.

The firm will have control of the majority of the company's assets and operations.

"The receivers will urgently call for expressions of interest in the sale and/or recapitalisation of the

business," a spokesperson for FTI Consulting said in a statement.

"[We] are currently working closely with key stakeholders to quickly conduct an independent assessment of the financial position of the entities."

Indian sandalwood takes 15 to 20 years to mature for harvest and is used in a range of fragrances, cosmetics,

traditional medicines, furniture, and handicrafts.

A sign that reads "Quintis Sandalwood Album" on the side of a shed.

Quintis runs vast Indian sandalwood operations in WA and the NT. (ABC Rural: Matt Brann)

Quintis owns thousands of hectares of sandalwood plantations and real estate across northern Australia, plus an oil distillation facility and shop near Albany in southern Western Australia.

The company has endured years of turmoil and 2022 marked the first time the exotic wood producer planted new trees since it entered

administration in 2018.

Earlier in 2018, United States short-seller Glaucus Research Group accused the company of inflating prices for heartwood and sandalwood oil and preventing outsiders from accurate price information.

After recapitalising as a private company later in 2018 and reaping a record harvest in 2021, Quintis chief executive Richard Henfrey told the ABC in 2023 the price of heartwood had dropped significantly.

The news of the receivership comes after an assessment by KMPG late last year found Quintis' managed investment schemes were not financially viable and were dumped, leaving northern Australian landholders more than \$1 million in debt.

**Source: ABC**

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# Mass timber skates into Canadian ice rink

MASS timber is one of the key features of an enormous, new ice rink in Canada.

The much-anticipated Rosemary Brown Recreation Centre finally opened its doors to the public recently, marking a significant milestone for the City of Burnaby's network of community and recreation centre facilities.

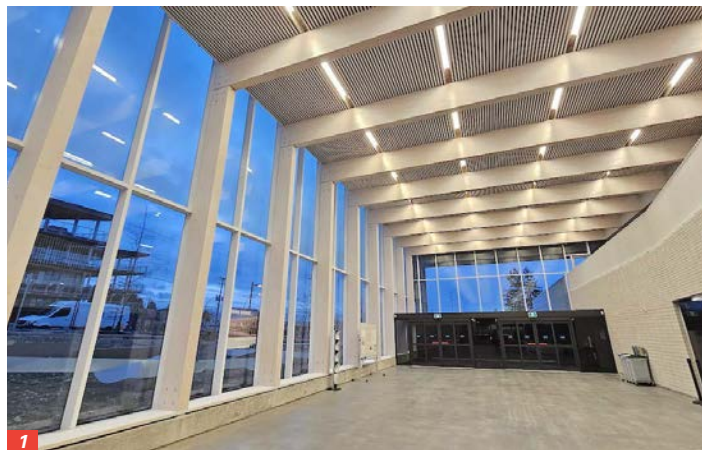
The \$54 million facility is located on the City-owned lot of 7789 18th Street — right next to Byrne Creek Community Secondary School, and within walking distance of SkyTrain's Edmonds Station.

Contained under a mass-timber roof, the 92,000 sq ft building features two NHL-sized ice rinks, each rink containing about 200 seats. All seating areas inside the cool-climate spaces are equipped with overhead heaters to provide spectators with added comfort. Alternatively, there are also warm-side viewing areas behind concealed glass on the second level, overlooking the arena areas below.

For safety from high-flying pucks and other stray projectiles, the entire perimeters of both rinks are protected by safety netting, which almost reaches the ceiling. Pockets of skylights and other exterior windows enable some natural light to stream into the arena spaces.

Supporting uses include

**“MASS-TIMBER MATERIALS ARE EXPOSED ON THE CEILING, WALLS, AND OTHER SURFACES**



1/ Rosemary Brown Recreation Centre in Burnaby, BC.

2/ The 92,000 sq ft building is contained under a mass-timber roof.

3/ The first-of-its-kind building encountered a number of delays due to supply-chain issues. All images: Kenneth Chan/Daily Hive

a skate shop, concession, meeting and multi-purpose rooms, and an outdoor rooftop patio.

A large lobby space featuring expansive northeast-facing windows creates a common area that connects all interior areas.

Mass-timber materials are exposed on the ceiling, walls, and other surfaces. The complex is designed by architectural firm HCMA.

Just outside the lobby's expansive windows, a public art piece called "Gliding Edge" by local artist Jill Anholt is in the final stages of installation

and is expected to reach completion later this spring.

Singular metal blade-like sculptural forms rising from the ground are inspired by the persistence and determination required to learn the skill of ice skating. During nighttime, the blades are illuminated by LED lights to create shifting shadows on the ground that are "evocative of the temporal carvings of skate blade patterns in the ice."

The arena is named after Rosemary Brown, a prominent local BC NDP MLA between 1972 and 1986 and the first Black woman elected to a provincial legislature in Canada. Brown won the MLA seat in the riding of Vancouver-Burrard in 1972, and after that riding was dissolved, she picked up the seat for Burnaby-Edmonds in 1979, serving in the arena site's riding until 1986. She is credited for her work in human rights and for addressing racial and gender discrimination in housing and employment before, during, and after her time in office. She passed away in 2003.

Rosemary Brown Recreation Centre represents the first completed project of the City of Burnaby's building boom this decade of new municipally owned and operated major community and recreation facilities to better meet the needs of the growing population.

But some patience was required — this facility saw extensive delays due to construction issues, initially due to supply-chain issues early on in the pandemic, such as delays in the shipment of the pre-fabricated mass-timber components.



# Spotlight on new areas at Spanish conference

FIMMA + Maderalia 2024 is adding yet more new spaces to their show event focusing on trends and innovation. The upcoming edition of the Materials, Technology and Solutions biennial conference, geared to the Furniture, Wood and Contract sectors, runs from 14th to 17th May at Feria Valencia, Spain and will feature two exclusive areas showing technology, materials and innovative and disruptive products, whilst promoting the R+D that is going on in these sectors through talks and technical sessions with a distinctly practical focus.

The two spaces, titled the 'Innovation Essentials Show' and 'FIMMA Future', are two disruptive initiatives conceived and coordinated by the AIDIMME Technology Institute. AIDIMME is the driving force behind the scheme, which is designed to promote a broad segment of the value chain of the sectors of industry represented at the fair. The initiatives embrace everything from materials and the raw materials used to make them, products and production processes, to industry regulations covering the quality and safety of goods while they are being used, mandatory compliance with legislation, laboratory trials and certifications, R+D and training.

## 'INNOVATION ESSENTIALS SHOW'

This exhibition area will



**The conference/trade show will be in Valencia Spain with a number of new spaces available next month.**

showcase the product innovations that exhibitors are showing at the fair and will comprise a selection of around a hundred components, elements and finished products that are about to be launched onto the market.

The technical details of the items selected will be displayed alongside each item, together with the stand number of the exhibitor concerned. In addition, technical advisors from AIDIMME will be available to answer any queries visitors may have.

The other AIDIMME initiative at FIMMA + Maderalia is the new 'FIMMA Future' space. It will show the new manufacturing processes using layering technologies – commonly referred to as 3D-printing – that are used to make products or parts with amazing geometric lines, in both metal and polymers.

'FIMMA Future' will focus

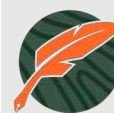
on technologies that can be deployed in manufacturing and for products that are already being used in sectors such as aviation, aeronautics, the automotive and naval industries and, in this instance, the furniture, wood and carpentry sectors.

Another highlight of the programme being put together by the Technology Institute for the fair is the series of guided visits to emblematic buildings where wood is a major feature. For the 'València Open Wood' initiative, AIDIMME has scheduled visits to significant historic buildings such as Valencia's 'San Vicente Ferrer' Faculty of Theology, built at the end of the 18th century, and the Palau de la Generalitat Valenciana, which dates back to the early 15th century.

The times for these visits will be confirmed soon and will be posted on the fair's website. Visits to more contemporary buildings are set to be added, to show how wood can still play a key part in a building's structure.

Launching these three initiatives is not the full measure of the value proposition AIDIMME will be delivering for FIMMA + Maderalia to mark its special, 40th anniversary, edition. The Technology Institute – which since it came into being as AIDIMME has always had strong links with the fair – will also be playing an active part in all the events relating to wood construction such as, for example, the talks its specialists will be giving in the 'Casa Hábitat Mediterráneo' zone.

For more details visit <https://fimma-maderalia.feriavalencia.com/>



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