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COVER STORY P3

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Hope for giant pine scale treatment

New research into biocontrols has identified a potential nemesis for this invasive insect.

RESEARCH in Australia and Europe is moving closer to identifying an effective solution to the damage to forests caused by giant pine scale (GPS).

The research project aims to boost our understanding of the effectiveness of the various available biological control strategies.

GPS poses a particular threat to *Pinus radiata* – a species that makes up 75% of Australia’s \$1.16 billion softwood plantation estate – but also infests other softwood conifers such as spruce, cedar and fir.

The scale sucks the sap of pine, fir and spruce trees and heavily infested trees can be so badly affected that they die, either from loss of vigour or from opportunistic infections entering through the scale sites.

The scales locate themselves in groups on the tree trunks and are covered in protective white wax, which they secrete. Infested trees look as though they have



Giant pine scale on the trunk of a pine tree. Note the ‘cotton wool’ like blobs on the trunk, these are the scales’ protective waxy secretions.

pieces of cotton wool stuck to their trunks, where the GPS are usually found, and also sometimes branches and exposed roots.

The yellowish adults grow up to 12 millimetres in length and each female produces over 300 eggs between November and January, which then hatch into crawlers. These can move to new trees or further infest the same tree.

GPS is native to Greece and Turkey and was first detected in Australia in 2014. Following its initial

establishment in urban and peri-urban Melbourne, it has been determined to be non-eradicable, though active containment programs are still being run in Victoria according to Agriculture Victoria.

Greg Lefoe of Agriculture Victoria Research (AVR), which is leading the project, said GPS poses a major economic threat to the softwood timber industry: “GPS is difficult and costly to control with insecticides, therefore biological control is considered a priority.

“Successful biological control programs have a high return on investment for government and industry because, once established, biocontrol agents will continue to control the pest year on year.”



Biological control is also considered to be an environmentally friendly approach to pest mitigation.

AVR is conducting the research with the support of local industry partners including FWPA and various forest growers, as well as researchers in Greece, Switzerland and New Zealand. The project has already identified the predator *Neoleucopis kartliana* as the most promising biocontrol agent in the pest’s native Greece.

Subsequent native range and molecular studies conducted by the research team found that *N.kartliana* is actually made up of three predatory species, two of which were previously undescribed.

Cont P 8

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Tilling Townsville opening

Pull on your party shoes: you're invited to Tilling's latest launch.

"PEOPLE have been having a bit of a rough year with everything going on in the economy," says Rita Fisher, Tilling territory manager for Far North Queensland. "So we thought we all deserved a fun, old-fashioned party!"

And the occasion for that party is certainly big enough. Tilling is opening a new outlet in the major FNQ hub, serving the region's more than 200,000 people and cutting waiting times to FNQ merchants and their builder customers significantly (the Brisbane site is a 15-hour drive away).

With the last touches being put onto the facility as we speak, the Grand Opening night will be held on 15 May at the new Tilling Townsville at 8–10 Jay St, Mount St John from 5–9pm, with all welcome to join in the festivities.

"We're expecting Aaron Harper, the local Queensland MP, to officially open the site," says Fisher. "Tilling managing director Glen Tilling and GM – North Rob Howley are coming and we know that some more colleagues from the other Tilling teams in Brisbane and beyond are hoping to join us.

"Locally, we've invited merchants, builders, architects and engineers, so it looks as though it'll be quite an interesting cross section of attendees. And we'll be able to show them the range of Tilling products that can make their jobs easier, as well as celebrate with food trucks, wood-fired pizza, Chinese dumplings, a bar and live music."

At Glenn Tilling's request, there'll even be an ice-cream van on site!



1/ The racks are filling up at Tilling Townsville, ready for the grand opening in a fortnight.
2/ The new facility has ample truck and ute space, wide racking for easy order picking and a central Townsville location.

Townsville is one of the regional cities tipped to lead property price growth across Australia in coming years as both investors and owners compete for a dwindling existing supply. Major local projects are drawing more people to an already tight market, including Project Green Poly, a \$7.8 billion investment that will create one of Australia's first integrated mine-to-manufacturing polysilicon supply chains; the \$25 million Cleveland Bay Recycled Water Treatment Facility; the half-billion-dollar Houghton Pipeline Project and more.

Craig Stack, Knight Frank senior partner Townsville and Mackay, told realestate.com that "Townsville's median house price may become one of the strongest in Australia due to the demand-supply imbalance, with demand to grow exponentially as people move to the region to work on major projects commencing in 2024."

Knight Frank believe 1150 new homes a year will be needed to meet demand over the next decade. However, the entirety of North Queensland has seen a significant drop, not rise, in completed builds since the Covid shortages.

Despite this being a slow period for building material sales with the twin and ongoing impacts of the cost-of-living crisis and labour shortages, Fisher was happy to take the risk on the new role. "I was managing a timber yard up here before," she says, "and that was a great business, but the breadth and depth of the offer from Tilling is something else again, so when the opportunity to jump across into this role came up, I was very happy to take it.

"There's a real need for this sort of support for merchants, fabricators and builders in this

area, and Tilling will be extremely well placed to meet that, both now and also as demand inevitably goes up when economic conditions improve."

Meanwhile, the Tilling team will be sharing the range of products and services on offer with the Townsville market – and also sharing a good feed and a great night.

To join the celebrations, RSVP to Rita Fisher on RitaF@tilling.com.au by Monday, 6 May.

On the cover: Tilling Timber is expanding its operations and opening a new facility in Townsville.

Gottstein Trust is looking for two new trustees

The education-focused trust is looking for new members to join its board of trustees.

THE Gottstein Trust is the national educational trust of Australia's forest and forest products industry. The purpose of the Trust is to create opportunities for people to acquire knowledge that will promote the interests of the Australian industries which grow and use sustainably managed forest resources.

Through its annual awarding of Scholarships, Fellowships and Skills Development grants, the Trust provides financial assistance for individuals across the forest and forest products industry. The aim of the Trust is to support individuals to gain knowledge and skills as well as developing domestic and international

networks in ways that also advance our industry.

The Trust also runs well-established Wood Science and Forest Science courses.

The Trust is governed and administered by up to eight trustees, operating in a voluntary capacity, who have significant experience in the Australian forest and forest products industry.

Expressions of Interest are sought from experienced forest and forest products industry members to join the Board of Trustees. Some or all of the following skills would be well regarded:

1. A capacity to promote and champion the Trust and its endeavours.



The Trust runs educational courses including Understanding Forest Science, which this year will run in late July at Mooloolaba on Queensland's Sunshine Coast.

2. Experience in governance.
3. An awareness of industry research needs and emerging issues.
4. Education or training experience.
5. Fundraising, legal or communications expertise.

Further information about the Trust can be accessed at www.gottsteintrust.org. The Trust Deed is available under the 'About Us' section of the website.

If you would like to contribute to the important work that the Gottstein Trust undertakes, we welcome your Expression of Interest. For further information and a discussion about the Trustee roles, please contact Suzette Weeding, Chair of the Gottstein Trust on 0439-384-736.

Please forward your Expression of Interest consisting of a brief letter and CV, to team@gottsteintrust.org by midnight 20th May 2024.

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No simple answers for housing

From a need to house families fleeing violence, to calls for tax breaks, to practical action from the FWPA, housing is leading the news this week.

IF it seems like every second news story this week has been about housing, you're not far off. National home prices lifted 0.23% in April to hit a new record, with the national median dwelling value now \$774,000. That's up 6.6% year-on-year and up 40% over the four years since the start of Covid. (Click here for a full report.)

Homelessness advocates have tied the lack of affordable housing to the spike in domestic violence affecting the country, saying that particularly women often choose to stay in violent situations rather than risk homelessness for them and their children (hear an ABC report with Kate Colvin here).

Meanwhile the YIMBY (Yes in my backyard) movement is picking up pace with young urbanites running social media campaigns that are pro-good development, such as support for a Coles development on a Neutral Bay site that previously held a one-storey supermarket but now is proposed to hold a retail precinct, supermarket



1/ **Melisa Neighbour from Sydney YIMBY.** Photo: LinkedIn

2/ **HIA managing director, Jocelyn Martin says the shortage of trades is affecting our ability to catch up to housing needs.**



and 72-apartments in a three-storey block. Melissa Neighbour, a town planner and co-founder of Sydney YIMBY told the ABC that this was the sort of development that is in keeping with the area and liable to improve access to the city for younger people.

"I would love to buy in the city, but I don't think that will be possible for me," she said. "And even more frightening is that I worry that my son may not be able to afford to live in this city one day.

"There's a real divide that's been created through this housing crisis and

the inequality across the demographics."

(To read the full story, including the NIMBY side, click here.)

Meanwhile, the darker side of the media has resorted to racism in its coverage, with radio shock jocks blaring that 25% of social housing in NSW has gone to people who were

“THERE'S A REAL DIVIDE THAT'S BEEN CREATED THROUGH THIS HOUSING CRISIS

not born in Australia, ignoring the fact that since 35% of citizens and permanent residents of NSW were born overseas, this is actually an under-representation.

Happily, the people working on the solution side outnumber the rabble rousers. HIA have come out saying that the problem needs tackling with both a strong call for more support for trades and cuts to taxes on housing.

"There has always been a problem of supplying the industry with enough skilled trades people, but recently infrastructure projects have absorbed a lot of skilled trades, as has mining and other non-residential projects, resulting in shortages," HIA managing director, Jocelyn Martin said earlier this week.

"The government needs to address this shortage, through either financial incentives or through addressing weaknesses in the skilled trade visa system.

Cont P 10

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Responsible Wood



Calls for more prefab grow

Offsite manufacturers are delivering, but the market needs educating.

IN March, Federal Minister for Science Ed Husic told a press conference ahead of a national Building Ministers' meeting that prefab and modular housing could play "a big part" in getting homes built more quickly.

"That's why I'll be talking with state and territory colleagues about identifying obstacles that might be holding back the rollout of these types of houses," he said.

As the communiqué that came out after the meeting laid out: "Ministers committed to improving regulatory certainty for the sector. To this end, they have tasked the ABCB to work with industry and local governments to clarify existing regulatory pathways through a new guidance paper and undertake a comprehensive review of regulation improvements to reduce red tape."

Surely that's good news when it comes to hitting the nation's target of 1.2 million new home builds over the next five years? But the ABC's Jon Daly recently filed a radio story talking with experts in the field who say that consumer nervousness will



WA's Offsite Construction delivered these seven townhouses to lockup stage in under a month, allowing their client Inspired Homes WA to complete its Sienna Woods development in record time.

also need to be addressed before prefabrication grows to the levels that will see us hit our targets. Currently, the prefab market sits somewhere around 5% of residential builds in Australia.

Many of those current builds are in niche markets, including luxury holiday homes made of CLT and glulam, environmentally aware Passive Houses and social and industry housing (including mining camps and quarantine centres now used as emergency housing), where people need to be housed quickly.

Offsite Construction is a Perth-based company that declares its mission "to automate the construction

of low-carbon homes in Australia". The business has delivered multiple projects into the WA market, working mostly with volume residential developers. Successful builds include multi-res with luxury penthouses, single dwellings, townhouses and more.

Cathal Quinn, senior development manager at Offsite Construction, told Daly, "It's like a car manufacturing plant. We can deliver four to five homes a week out of the manufacturing facility."

Their method is classic prefab: walls and floors are manufactured in the factory then trucked out and assembled on site. The company is now producing timber-framed units as social and affordable housing for the WA Government. Eight to ten units can be finished within six months, compared to 18 months for a single double-bricked unit built on site.

"We believe we're at the

forefront of helping the likes of those guys in social and affordable housing markets get these numbers," said Quinn, referencing the targets needed to reach the required additional dwellings.

Daly spoke with the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute's Michael Fotheringham. "We need to use every possible trick in the book to get us there," said Fotheringham. "And prefabricated housing or offsite construction is a really important ingredient in that – and has the potential to deliver homes more quickly.

"One of the things that holds back offsite construction in Australia is a perception that we're talking about effectively caravans without wheels. And the reality is that the life cycle of offsite construction these days is as good or better."

Daly also spoke with Housing Industry Association's Chief Economist Tim Reardon, who argued different market factors are driving offsite's popularity in Europe and the US.

"What happens in the United States, for example, is that almost 100% of their homes are built then sold," said Reardon.

"If we move to that model of build then sell, prefabrication starts to become a more viable option. But customers would have to accept lower level of customisation."

You can hear the entire program by clicking this link.



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“ PREFABRICATED HOUSING HAS THE POTENTIAL TO DELIVER HOMES MORE QUICKLY

MAY

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 or contact 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/>

www.fba-events.com or contact rafal@forest-analytics.com

JUNE

14: NTHA Vic/Tas State Awards. More details to follow. Sponsorship opportunities available. Contact alicia@ntha.com.au

26-27: 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/>

JULY

27: NTHA Qld State Awards. More details to follow. Sponsorship opportunities available. Contact alicia@ntha.com.au

28-2 AUG: Gottstein Understanding Forest Science Course – Sunshine Coast, QLD.

The course is open to everyone associated with the timber and forestry products sector in some way. For full details, visit <https://gottsteintrust.org/grants-courses/understanding-forest-science-course>

AUGUST

9: NTHA SA State Awards. More details to follow. Sponsorship opportunities available. Contact 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

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

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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From P 2

One of these species, designated *Neoleucopis* sp. *B*, was subjected to preliminary testing against native Australian scale insects. The results to date show the new species to be highly prey-specific, and therefore likely to be suitable for introduction into Australia.

Based on these results, an application for the release of *Neoleucopis* sp. *B* is being prepared by the team. Further research is needed to determine its suitability for long-term, sustainable management of GPS in Australia.

"*Neoleucopis* sp. *B* has proven its potential as an important GPS predator, and we have found no evidence of off-target attacks that might pose a threat to other insect species," Lefoe said.

The team has worked to



The scale lay their eggs on the trunks (here on radiata pine) and protect them under wax as well. Larvae can move into unaffected parts of the same tree or to other trees. Photo: Agriculture Victoria website

demonstrate this proposed biocontrol agent will not threaten Australian agriculture or biodiversity. A main area of focus has been on exposing *Neoleucopis* sp. *B* to a range of native scale insects through lab experiments.

"A major challenge of this research project has been the limited knowledge of Australian native scale insects that could be at risk from an

introduced biocontrol agent," Lefoe said.

"To address this knowledge gap, we partnered with a native scale specialist at the

“THE PREDATOR *NEOLEUCOPIS* *KARTLIANA* IS THE MOST PROMISING BIOCONTROL AGENT

University of Queensland. During this research, the distribution, biology, ecology and phylogeny of native Australian scale insects was studied, leading to vastly improved knowledge of this group of native invertebrates."

The scientists believe the three *Neoleucopis* species may work together to target GPS, meaning the introduction of all three species could offer full season control under a range of climatic conditions. Again, further research is required to confirm this to be the case.

FWPA recently extended this project through to early 2025 to allow for further field and lab studies of the three *Neoleucopis* species in Greece, and to re-import one of the species into Australian quarantine for further testing.



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Strengthening ties

Local leaders help Chinese delegation explore opportunities in Australia's timber industry.

By **MATT DE JONGH**

LAST week marked a significant milestone as a delegation of senior Chinese timber industry players from the China Timber & Wood Products Distribution Association (CTWPDA) visited Australia. With stops in Canberra, Tasmania, and Sydney, the delegation was on a mission to forge partnerships and explore opportunities in Australia's vibrant timber sector.

Matt de Jongh, Sustainability Manager at Responsible Wood, was enthusiastic about the potential of the visit. He said, "We're thrilled to present to the CTWPDA delegation and showcase the sustainability and quality of Australia's timber products. This presents a unique opportunity to strengthen bilateral ties and foster collaboration in sustainable forestry practices."

James Jooste, CEO of the Australian Forest Products Association NSW, highlighted the significance of the delegation's visit. "Australia's timber industry is renowned for its high standards of sustainability and innovation," he said.

"Hosting the CTWPDA delegation allows us to showcase our capabilities and explore mutually beneficial partnerships."

Investment NSW also emphasised the economic opportunities presented by the visit, noting China is a key market for Australia's timber exports and that strengthening trade relations with Chinese industry leaders not only benefits the NSW timber sector but also contributes



- 1/ **The delegation's itinerary included Sydney, Canberra, Tasmania and site visits.**
- 2/ **Local timber industry leaders presented to the Chinese delegation on their Sydney visit.**
- 3/ **Matt de Jongh presented details on Responsible Wood's certification process to the delegation.**

to economic growth and job creation.

Daniel Parkin from the Pentarch Forestry Group underscored the importance of collaboration in sustainable forestry management.

"By sharing knowledge and best practices, we can work together to ensure the long-term viability of our forests. Collaboration with international partners like the CTWPDA is essential for advancing sustainable forestry initiatives," Parkin said.

The delegation's itinerary included meetings with key industry stakeholders and a site visit to a timber processing facility in Sydney. The purpose of the meetings was to provide the CTWPDA delegation with insights into the NSW timber sector, including a commitment to responsible

forestry practices and the quality of our timber products.

The exchange of ideas and expertise during the visit is expected to pave the way for future collaborations. Jooste commented, "Building strong relationships with international partners is crucial for the growth and sustainability of Australia's timber industry. The visit presents an opportunity to explore avenues for cooperation and expand market access."

The sentiment was echoed by de Jongh, who added, "Australia offers a wealth of opportunities for investment and trade in the timber sector. Strengthening ties with Chinese industry players opens doors for increased cooperation and mutually beneficial partnerships."

As the conclusion of the

delegation's visit to Australia, the stage is set for enhanced collaboration between the two countries' timber industries. Parkin emphasised the importance of long-term engagement: "Sustainable forestry management requires ongoing dialogue and cooperation," he said.

"The CTWPDA visit marks the beginning of a promising partnership aimed at driving positive change in the global timber industry."

In conclusion, the visit of the CTWPDA delegation underscores the importance of international collaboration in advancing sustainable forestry practices and fostering economic growth. By working together, Australia and China can unlock new opportunities and create a more sustainable future for generations to come.

From P 5

“Financial incentives that encourage the employment of an apprentice and improve retention have proved invaluable to helping the construction industry to access more workers,” she added.

Her comments come as part of a long pre-Budget campaign by HIA to increase skilled migration and attract new apprentices and other workers to increase the supply of new housing.

HIA chief economist Tim Reardon has been looking at the problem from the opposite end. “Government taxes and charges account for as much

“GOVERNMENTS ARE THE BIGGEST IMPEDIMENT TO HOME BUILDING IN AUSTRALIA



The proposed Coles development in Neutral Bay.

as 50 per cent of the cost of a new house and land package,” he said.

“Governments are the biggest impediment to home building in Australia. They cannot continue to blame the consequence of their decisions on foreigners or investors who build homes and make them available for rent or sale.

“State governments increased the taxes on foreign investors a decade ago and

we have seen the volume of apartments fall by around 50 per cent. The consequence of increasing taxes on homes is that we will get fewer homes built.

“If politicians want to increase the supply of housing, then they should look at proposals to reduce taxes on housing.”

PRACTICAL HELP

In the face of all this need, FWPA is offering some firm direction, with a new

webinar series to address ongoing housing challenges in Australia and support the forestry industry in responding to supply chain challenges to plan for future housing needs.

The three-part webinar series covers presentations, panel discussions, and interactive Q&A sessions, offering participants the opportunity to engage with leading experts and contribute to the dialogue on shaping the future of housing and sustainable construction.

“We are looking forward to hosting this webinar series to facilitate meaningful conversations through insights and challenges around the future of housing and the vital role the wood products industry plays,” said FWPA statistics and economics manager Erick Hansnata.

For details of the webinars and to register for sessions, click here.

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Clients left in limbo get a helping hand

Patterson Construction has stepped up to complete unfinished Perth homes.

It's not easy stepping in to complete someone else's half-done building project. There's almost never a simple transfer of designs and the passage of time while the work is in limbo can have a noticeable effect.

But that hasn't stopped Perth builder Patterson Construction from providing a path to hope for distressed WA homeowners. Multiple construction companies in the city have collapsed in recent years, leaving numerous residential projects incomplete. Patterson Construction has made the business decision to use its resources to help these families achieve their dream homes.

Founded by industry veteran Lucas Patterson,

Patterson Construction was initially established to craft bespoke dream homes for clients. However, witnessing the distressing trend of builders entering liquidation over the past two years, Lucas shifted the company's focus towards salvaging unfinished projects. This pivot aligns with his lifelong commitment to serving the community and helping families in need.

"Seeing a family's dream crumble midway is heartbreaking. Many come to us distraught, with their homes in limbo," said Patterson. "Our mission has always been about more than just building houses. It's about creating homes and fostering



Lucas Patterson and his company have provided a beacon of hope to would-be home owners left in limbo after builder collapses.

communities. Stepping in to help these families is not just our duty; it's a privilege."

Patterson Construction has successfully completed dozens of homes that were left in various stages of completion. With a team experienced in crisis management and a deep understanding of quality construction, the company

is uniquely equipped to handle the challenges presented by half-built structures.

"Lucas and his team were lifesavers. He and his team took on our build when our first builder went into liquidation," said Jean Tan. "Thanks to him, our home has almost been finished. The quality of his work has been fantastic – can't wait to move in!"

The company is cognisant that some of the collapses have been due to transparency issues, so has also engaged with local suppliers and contractors to ensure the stability and sustainability of the local construction ecosystem.

For more, click here.

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Surveying for the giant freshwater crayfish

A new technique using environmental DNA is helping foresters to accurately locate this enigmatic invertebrate and protect its habitat.

FOREST & Wood Products Australia (FWPA) is pleased to announce groundbreaking research that benefits the conservation of the threatened giant freshwater crayfish (*Astacopsis gouldi*) whilst supporting planning and harvesting practices for the forestry industry in Tasmania.

Led by a team of researchers, including Amelia Koch, Leon Barmuta, and Alejandro Trujillo Gonzalez, this study has developed a genetic assay utilising environmental DNA (eDNA) to detect the presence of *A. gouldi* in water samples. These findings will not only help streamline monitoring efforts for the crayfish, which is listed as vulnerable on both the State and National Threatened Species Protection Acts, but also offer valuable insights for forestry management practices.

"Although the giant freshwater crayfish is the world's largest freshwater invertebrate, the species is cryptic in nature," said Jodie Mason, FWPA's Head of



The giant freshwater crayfish can be hard to survey, so eDNA testing is a more accurate tool for finding waterways that need extra protections.
Image: Karl Wotherspoon

Forest Research, "preferring well-shaded waterway habitat with undercut banks. This research has the potential to underpin new monitoring methods that replace time-consuming and difficult manual monitoring, reducing costs and improving the safety of people undertaking the fieldwork."

A. gouldi is the largest freshwater invertebrate in the world and found across the north of Tasmania in a wide range of streams. Adults typically occur in slower flowing sections of stream and pools, often sheltering



Nearby forestry practices can affect Tasmanian waterways in ways that impact species like the crayfish, so determining its range is vital.

under decaying logs and undercut banks. Juveniles are more likely to shelter under cobbles and boulders in flowing sections of stream.

Forestry operations have the potential to create adverse impacts on *A. gouldi* through the loss of riparian canopy cover, increased runoff, sedimentation, changes in hydrology and chemical spraying. Because of the crayfish's habits, surveys are time-consuming and may not be accurate, whereas eDNA studies sample the water and effectively determine the presence or absence of crayfish species, including *A. gouldi*.

"This technique can facilitate the development of a population monitoring program, be used to conduct research on habitat

associations of the species or the effectiveness of management actions, or to update management tools such as the habitat availability map used by the Tasmanian forest industry," said researcher Amelia Koch from Forest Practices Authority.

The research is part of a larger project aimed

at enhancing biodiversity conservation and sustainable forestry practices in Tasmania, and includes research on wedge-tailed eagles, masked owls, grey goshawks, Tasmanian devils and quolls.

This comprehensive project (Project number: VNC457-1718 Sub-report 3), funded by FWPA through funds from Tasmanian forest managers, the Forest Practices Authority and the Australian Government, focuses on integrating innovative scientific techniques, such as eDNA analysis, to improve monitoring and management strategies for threatened species.

To learn more about the project, click here and follow the links.



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From dump to delight

Sydney Park is an oasis of green in the city's Inner West and now has more native trees.

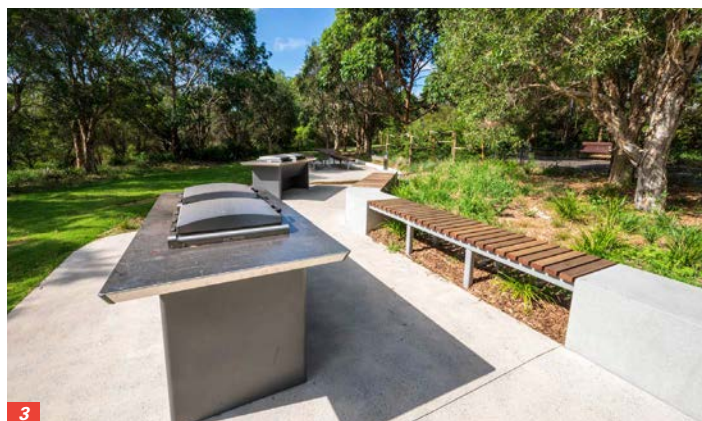
IF you've ever come through Sydney's Alexandria or Newtown to head down the Princes Highway, you'll have driven by Sydney Park. This large, award-winning park is a welcome stretch of urban green after the terraces and high-rise flats of nearby suburbs and provides a major recreational zone for humans and dogs, as well as a welcome habitat for wildlife.

Now, a major rectification project has seen nearly 200 new native trees, more electric barbecues, picnic areas, seating and toilets added by the City of Sydney. The project has also seen accessibility greatly improved along Euston Road, following the state government's previous acquisition of land, removal of trees and demolition of park assets to create the Westconnex motorway.

"With so many people in our area living in apartments, public parkland is our backyard. Sydney Park is the City of Sydney's biggest park, providing a green lung and vital room for exercise and fun," Lord Mayor of Sydney, Clover Moore AO said.

"Since 2005, we have invested over \$45 million in the renewal of Sydney Park, completing its transformation from a former brick making site and rubbish tip into a 41.6-hectare inner city oasis. It is home to Sydney's largest stormwater harvesting system, inclusive playgrounds, the City Farm and world class cycling and skating facilities.

"The state government's Westconnex motorway increased noise and air pollution around the parklands, but we've done what we can to



1/ The new entrance to Sydney Park features added plantings, including new native trees. Over 23,000 new plants have been added to its greenery.

2/ The park has an extensive tapestry of local and introduced trees that provide a varied feed source for birds throughout the year.

3/ Free electric barbecues mean families can hold birthdays and get together in the park, taking advantage of the green space.

maximise green infrastructure and combat its worst impacts. There is now more space for people to sit and enjoy the health benefits being in nature provides. A great new picnic and barbecue area will encourage people to come

together and connect with each other outdoors."

As part of the works, a fresh entry point to the park has been added at the corner of Sydney Park and Euston roads with new trees, landscaped

gardens and illuminated signs. These plantings are part of an overall increase, with 180 new native trees, 23,000 new plants and more grassed areas for the park.

Drainage was also enhanced and the natural amphitheatre was returned giving people more green space to enjoy. The works mean that AFL and cricket teams will also be able to enjoy more playable hours at Alan Davidson Oval, following drainage improvements to the natural turf playing field.

The Sydney Park site has a large clay-based area, and was a working brickworks for Sydney from the late 19th century through to 1970 – smoke stacks from those days remain at the entrance nearest St Peters Station. From 1948 to 1976 the excavated clay pits were used as a tip by local councils, but after the closure of the tip that rubbish was sealed with layers of building rubble and soil and the park began to be restored to the marshy heath that it had been before European settlement over the following decades.

Now the park features wetlands that are home to many birds, including breeding black swans, children's adventure play areas, a popular local café, official dog exercise areas (away from the wetlands, but with their own splashing adventure zone), a city farm, sports fields, skate and bike areas and a wide range of art and cultural events.

The new trees will add to the existing wildlife corridor that has encouraged native birdlife, into Sydney and helped to keep an increasingly busy city having a chance for a breath of fresh air.

Notre Dame rebuilds with certified oak

PEFC certification has been awarded to the project rebuilding the celebrated timber roof.

THE rebâtir (rebuilding) of Notre-Dame de Paris may be the biggest historical restoration happening in the world at the moment, and it's certainly the most heavily scrutinised. Which is but one reason last week's awarding of PEFC project certification by the FCBA Institute of Technology, along with PEFC France, to public establishment Rebâtir Notre-Dame de Paris, the contracting authority for the restoration project, is so important.

Recently completed, the rebuilding project of the roof structure has focused on the sustainable origin of the solid oak wood materials used, and the responsible nature of the work carried out by the contracting authority, chief architects of historic monuments and project managers.

The old roof's destruction by fire on April 2019 was watched around the world. Known as 'the forest', the majestic timber roof frames over the nave and choir had been built in the 13th century, with the Viollet-le-Duc spire and both arms of the transept added in the 19th century. At the time, the forest was undergoing restoration works – one of the most dangerous times for an historic building as the devastating loss of the Mackintosh timber structures at the Glasgow School of Art had shown just the year before.

Since then, the restoration has been painstaking, using the same techniques and materials as the original, solid oak. The French team noted



1/ PEFC project certification has been awarded to the roof restoration at Notre-Dame de Paris; (L-R) Christine de Neuville, Philippe Jost and Rémi Fromont, one of the project's chief architects. Photo: © David Bordes - Rebâtir Notre-Dame de Paris



2/ The youngest carpenter at Ateliers Perrault in Maine-et-Loire places a bouquet atop the rebuilt choir frame of Notre-Dame Cathedral to mark its completion in January. Image: courtesy of Friends of Notre-Dame de Paris

that: "By rebuilding Notre-Dame de Paris' roof structure in wood, the shared history of the cathedral and French forests will continue to be written for centuries to come.

"Like Notre-Dame de Paris, France's forests are living symbols of our cultural, tangible and intangible heritage, so it's important to preserve them to ensure their longevity for future generations."

In the wake of the devastating fire, the entire French forestry and timber industry mobilised in a show of solidarity to supply the wood needed to meet the specifications of this exceptional project.

State-owned forests, community forests, forestry cooperatives, forestry experts, private

owners and processing companies were all involved in ensuring that each stage of the reconstruction of the structure was carried out using a sustainable forest management approach, maintaining the balance between the economic, social and environmental dimensions of the forest.

This systemic approach enables the renewal of the forests from which the timber was sourced. Not only does this ensure the forests will regenerate time and again, it allows for them to fulfil multiple roles now: as working timber sources, places of recreation and wildlife habitat and part of the diverse, vital French ecosystem. The approach also ensured the project met the criteria for certification.

Project certification, developed by PEFC, certifies that at least 70% of the total volume of wood used is PEFC-certified, meeting PEFC's forest certification requirements, which define and control a set of forest management rules applicable to all forest stakeholders (forest owners, forest managers, forest operators, forestry contractors).

Additionally, the implementation of PEFC chain of custody in project certification certifies that all parties involved in a construction or renovation project, whether certified companies or subcontractors, have applied the control principles defined by PEFC, making it possible to track the flow of certified wood at every

Cont P 15

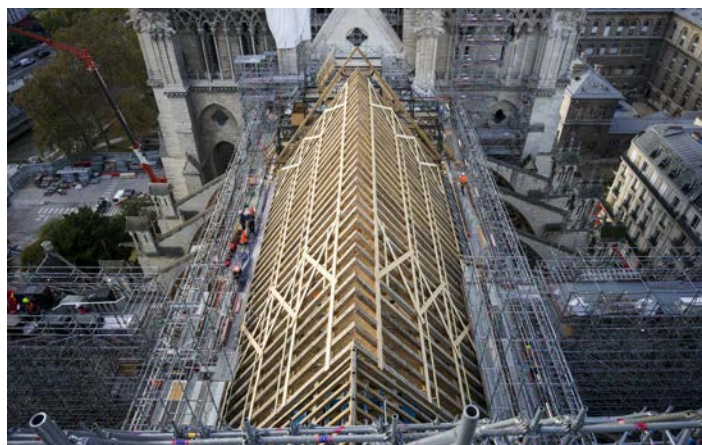
From P 14

stage of the supply chain.

Thanks to the 35 PEFC-certified sawmills involved in the project, the majority of which are PEFC-certified, 175 PEFC-certified forests and the use of over 80% PEFC-certified logs, the entire framework of Notre-Dame de Paris cathedral achieved PEFC project certification.

Rebâtir Notre-Dame de Paris was created in late 2019 to lead, coordinate and carry out studies and operations contributing to the conservation and restoration of the cathedral, in particular its scheduled reopening later this year. This public body, part of the Ministry of Culture, is also responsible for promoting the project and the trades and expertise involved.

"I would like to thank PEFC France and the FCBA Institute of Technology for this certification," said Philippe



The new roof has been recreated in the same timbers and using the same techniques as its mediaeval and 19th-century predecessors. Photo: © David Bordes - Rebâtir Notre-Dame de Paris

Jost, President of Rebâtir Notre-Dame de Paris. "It recognises the remarkable commitment and strong support of all the players in the forestry and timber industry: the ONF, France Bois Forêt and its members, the mayors of forest communities, private owners and their representatives, and sawmillers all over France, who donated trees and

processed the timber. I extend my warmest thanks to them, as well as to the hewers, squarers and carpenters who have placed their expertise at the service of the cathedral's rebirth, as part of an exemplary restoration project."

Christine de Neuville, President of PEFC France, added: "Awarding this certification today recognises the commitment of not only

the client, Rebâtir Notre-Dame de Paris, but also of the entire forestry and timber industry to the long-term survival of the French forest. This unprecedented industry mobilisation to restore a symbol of French heritage is a perfect illustration of the vision and determination that PEFC has been pursuing for 25 years: to bring together and offer all forestry stakeholders solutions to meet the common challenges that lie ahead: the changing environmental, economic and societal challenges facing forests in France in the face of global warming, and thus preserve the French forest."

To learn more about the restoration, follow: @rebatirnotredamedeparis on Facebook, Instagram and YouTube or click here for the restoration website or visit Friends of Notre Dame de Paris (click here).

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Image: VidaWood

Putting young people on the right path

TAFE Queensland roof tiling teacher Geoff Midson has been training students in apprenticeships and other courses for less than two years, but has already found what he most enjoys: teaching students as part of the Department of Youth Justice's Transition 2 Success (T2S) program.

Having enjoyed a long career in the niche trade of roof tiling, Geoff decided his next challenge would be to pass on his knowledge to the next generation of tradies. In addition to his core duties of training apprentices, Geoff has put his hand up to conduct some of the training TAFE Queensland provides under its agreement with the Department of Youth Justice.

The agreement sees TAFE Queensland training opportunities form an essential part of the T2S program for young people in, or at risk of entering, the youth justice system. Using close relationships among local employers, education providers and Youth Justice officers, the program aims to set young people on a new path towards meaningful employment and a successful start to adulthood.

By treating them as people worth investing in with training and mentoring, the program hopes to instil a sense of purpose into them and lower the chance of them engaging or re-engaging in crime.



TAFE teacher Geoff Midson hopes some of the young people from the T2S program will take up roof tiling.

Common training days for these groups include gaining their Construction White Card (an essential safety ticket to working on construction sites across Queensland in any capacity), learning life skills such as first aid and CPR, and trade taster days with industry experts like Midson to develop basic skills and learn the basics of various occupations and industries.

On a recent training day with Midson at TAFE Queensland's Caboolture campus, a group of young people from Caboolture T2S were treated to a trade taster in roof tiling and gained many new skills and an understanding of a trade most hadn't previously heard of.

Feedback from the young people was overwhelmingly positive, with a few claiming it was the most interesting and

“SOME SHOWED GREAT PROMISE AND INTEREST IN PURSUING A JOB IN THE FIELD”

engaging training day they had done with the program and declaring their interest in pursuing employment in the industry – as encouraged by their teacher for the day.

Midson said he thoroughly enjoyed the training day and felt it was a great way to promote his niche trade to the students.

“The interest level from the students was really high, they were engaged in the skills we worked on and some of them showed great promise and interest in pursuing a job in the field,” Midson said.

“They were keen to learn and showed their work ethic on the day, and I think some of them could make a successful career out of roof tiling, given the right support.”

“It just goes to show that when somebody finds the right industry, they can totally change direction and dive into something meaningful that gives them the satisfaction they're looking for,” he added.

To learn more about T2S programs, click here. For the full range of TAFE Queensland courses, click here.



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Chinese temple wind research provides reassurance

Simplified roof models are a staple of calculating the effects of wind on engineering. New research on complicated Chinese temples shows their strengths and limits.

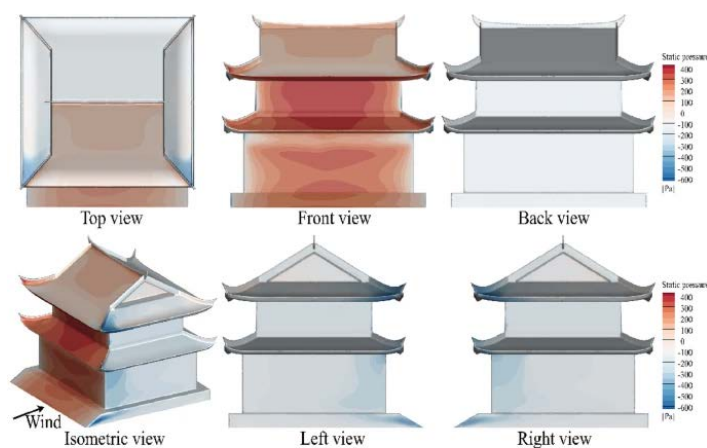
ONE extremely common discussion between engineers and fabricators working with timber is how to calculate wind effects, particularly for roofs. Simplified models make the task achievable for even the most complex structures, but there is a tension between concerns that the simplification may go too far and compromise safety, or that the model may overcompensate for the simplifications and impose unnecessary costs on the builder.

Now, new research on traditional Chinese timber temples published by Xiaoyue Gao, Qing Chun and Yidan Han in the *Journal of Wood Science* (volume 70), illustrates the strengths and limits of simplification.

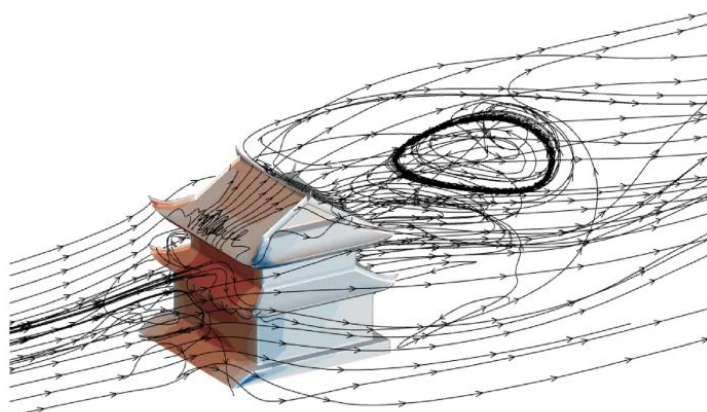
China's timber temples date back over a thousand years and are still rebuilt in the same complex styles. As the team write, "Studying the wind pressure characteristics is the premise for the preventive conservation of traditional timber buildings.

"To investigate the computational fluid dynamics (CFD) numerical simulation method for wind pressure on traditional timber buildings, a typical traditional timber building, the main hall of Shisi Temple [founded 1140 CE], is chosen as a case to carry out the study.

"A comparative analysis is conducted to examine the effects of curve simplification of the roof slope, as well as



a. Wind pressure distribution



b. Streamtraces around the building

CFD simulation results for the accurate model at a wind direction of 0° from the paper, showing that on the leeward side, there is significant separation and recirculation of the airflow.

the Dougong (bracket sets) and roof tile components, on the numerical simulation results of wind pressure on the building surface. Additionally, simplification schemes of geometric modelling are provided for the efficient and accurate simulation."

The research team noted that these ancient temples are susceptible to major wind events, describing the severe damage caused to Ziguo Temple by super typhoon

Sangmei in 2006 and the multiple temples damaged by Super Typhoon Jebi.

Accurately being able to gauge the effects of wind forces on these buildings is key for conservation, and at the same time, the project provided

“ EXCESSIVE SIMPLIFICATION CAN LEAD TO DISTORTED RESULTS ”

a strong opportunity to see the impacts of simplification and extend those results to modern buildings.

The results indicated that moderate simplification of the roof curve had a relatively minor impact on the overall calculation of wind pressure, and the difference between the drag coefficients of the simplified model and the accurate model was no more than 3%.

However, excessive simplification can lead to distorted results, particularly in the ridge section of the roof. Given the large curvature of the roof angles, it is recommended to use a polyline with at least three segments to approximate the original curve.

The influence of Dougong on the wind pressure calculation results is negligible (within 5%), whereas roof tiles significantly reduced the drag coefficient, with an impact of over 30% at various wind directions. The impact of roof tiles on wind pressure distribution in traditional timber buildings lies in their alteration of the building aerodynamic shape rather than an increase in roof thickness.

The team says the findings can provide a basis for assessing the wind resistance of traditional timber buildings and helpful insights for improving the efficiency of wind pressure analyses of traditional timber structures.

To read the full paper, click here.

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