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ISSUE 803 // May 16 2024

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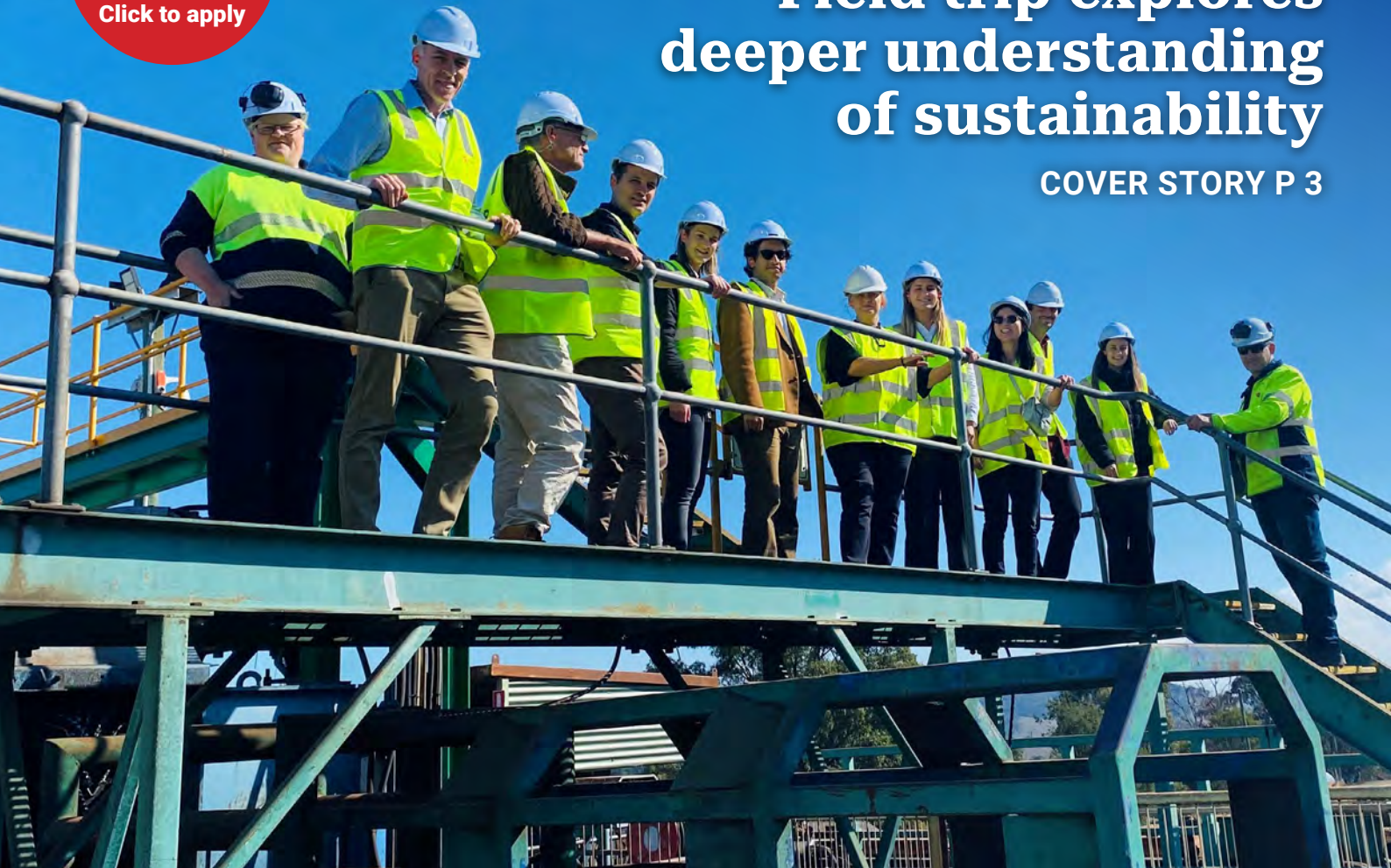
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Field trip explores deeper understanding of sustainability

COVER STORY P 3



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Green Triangle Timber Industry Awards

THE Green Triangle Timber Industry Awards (GTTIA) have been a resounding success since the first awards dinner in 2018, marking a significant milestone in recognising excellence and innovation within the local timber industry.

As we look forward to the next chapter, the GTTIA Committee remains dedicated to fostering growth and ensuring that the awards continue to serve as a flagship event for the region's timber sector.

Since its inception, the GTTIA has evolved into a platform that not only celebrates the achievements of nominees and winners but also highlights the diverse industries within the

“OUR SUCCESS IS A DIRECT RESULT OF INDUSTRY BACKING

timber sector. By shining a spotlight on the myriad of job opportunities and career pathways available, the awards play a pivotal role in inspiring future generations and fostering innovation. Furthermore, the GTTIA serves as a testament to the timber industry's positive impact on environmental sustainability, carbon emissions reduction, and the integration of transformative technologies.

Through showcasing these contributions, the awards continue to underscore the industry's vital role in driving positive change for both the sector and the broader community.

Looking ahead, the next GTTIA awards night is

scheduled for October 2025 and will mark the culmination of newly implemented changes informed by the valuable feedback from sponsors, attendees, and award nominators from our previous events. As part of our ongoing commitment to excellence, the committee is dedicated to streamlining the nomination process and forging partnerships with local organisations to enhance the experience for all stakeholders.

In addition to these enhancements, the committee is also exploring avenues to further elevate the recognition of nominees and winners, particularly through the esteemed Legend Award. By continually refining our

approach, we aim to ensure that every deserving individual receives the acknowledgment they rightly deserve.

As we embark on this exciting journey, we would like to acknowledge and thank our sponsors, suppliers, and regional representatives for their unwavering support. Without the sponsorship team, the awards night would not be possible – our success is a direct result of industry backing.

We encourage everyone to stay connected with us through our social media platforms - Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn to remain updated on the latest news and announcements about the awards.



1/ The Green Triangle Timber Industry Awards highlight excellence and achievement in the timber industry. Image: Facebook
 2/ GTTIA 2023 environment and sustainability award winner: Wendy Fennell from Fennell (left). Forestry highly commended: Levi Bateman of HVP Plantations.

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Exploring sustainable forestry

Responsible Wood shares their insights from the NSW field trip.

IN a ground-breaking collaboration, the Materials & Embodied Carbon Leaders' Alliance (MECLA), Hyne Timber, XLam, Forestry Corporation of NSW, and Responsible Wood joined forces to organise a transformative field trip focusing on certified sustainable forest management and ethical supply chains. The event, held across New South Wales and Victoria, provided attendees with invaluable insights into the intricate processes behind responsible forestry practices.

Matt De Jongh, Sustainability Manager at Responsible Wood, emphasised the significance of such initiatives, stating, "Events like these are crucial for fostering a deeper understanding of sustainable forestry practices. By witnessing firsthand, the efforts put into maintaining our forests, participants gain a renewed appreciation for the importance of ethical and responsible supply chains."

Katie Fowden, General Manager of Stakeholder Engagement at Hyne Timber, highlighted the company's commitment to quality and sustainability, saying, "For over 140 years, Hyne Timber has prioritised delivering industry-leading products while ensuring the preservation of our natural

resources. This field trip underscores our dedication to promoting sustainable forestry and driving positive environmental impact."

Alexi Barnstone, Project Manager at MECLA, echoed similar sentiments, stating, "MECLA is dedicated to reducing embodied carbon in the construction industry. Collaborating with key stakeholders in initiatives like this field trip allows us to align our efforts with the Paris Agreement targets and advance the principles of the circular economy."

The field trip offered



1/ Attendees at the XLam CLT Plant at Wodonga, with Tony Dakin (far left), Head of CLT Supply, XLam and Colin Stone (far right), HSEQ & CI Manager, XLam.

2/ Linda Cotterill of Forestry Corporation of NSW addressing attendees in a pine plantation near Tumbarumba.

3/ Attendees at the Hyne Tumbarumba Sawmill with Kristina Kaminski, Site Leader, Hyne Tumbarumba Sawmill.

4/ Attendees with Colin Stone, HSEQ & CI Manager, XLam.

5/ Attendees at the Hyne Tumbarumba Sawmill.

participants a multifaceted experience, where attendees had the opportunity to witness sustainable forestry practices in action, gaining insights into forest regeneration, biodiversity conservation, and responsible harvesting techniques.

One of the highlights of the trip was a visit to a certified sustainable pine plantation managed by Forestry Corporation of NSW. Participants observed firsthand the meticulous planning and execution involved in maintaining a renewable

plantation to ensure a sustainable supply of timber.

Additionally, demonstrations and presentations from industry leaders such as Hyne Timber and XLam showcased innovative solutions for sustainable construction. Hyne Timber and XLam's expertise in engineered timber for mass timber construction exemplified how

advanced technologies can enhance sustainability, increase construction efficiency, and improve overall project outcomes.

Overall, the 'timber' field trip served as a catalyst for promoting awareness and collaboration within the construction industry. By bringing together key stakeholders, it facilitated meaningful discussions and laid the groundwork for future initiatives aimed at advancing sustainability practices.

As Matt aptly summarized, "This field trip is just the beginning. By continuing to work together and championing sustainable forestry practices, we can pave the way for a greener, more environmentally conscious future."

Through initiatives like these, the industry is poised to make significant strides towards a more sustainable and ethical built environment, aligning with global goals for a healthier planet.

On the cover: Field trip attendees at the Hyne Tumbarumba Sawmill

FWPA announces research funding

Supporting better than carbon neutral by 2050 for the forest and wood products industry.

FOREST & Wood Products Australia (FWPA) is committing funding to research which will inform an industry-wide decarbonisation plan to lead the sector to achieve a better than carbon neutral outcome by 2050. This pioneering initiative supports Australia's carbon commitments via the creation of a comprehensive decarbonisation roadmap for the forest and wood products industry.

A SECTOR-WIDE STRATEGY FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

This approach incorporates carbon sequestration within commercial forest estates and includes

recommendations for softwood and hardwood plantation forests, wood processing sites, managed native forests, and the paper and packaging manufacturing sector.

The roadmap project, which has just commenced, will model industry emissions projections out to 2050. This work will establish baseline projections and identify the most effective avenues for carbon emissions reduction, capture,



The goal behind the plan is to not just reach carbon neutral but do even better by the 2050 mark.

and storage. The roadmap project is the final element of an industry wide carbon plan endorsed jointly by the FWPA

and Australia Forest Products Association (AFPA) Boards in August 2023, that establishes an industry wide strategy that will identify and outline methods to achieve significant carbon reduction targets.

Working with the AFPA Climate policy working group, the plan was designed to leverage FWPA's established strengths

that support industry

Cont P 5

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AFPA THE LEADING VOICE FOR AUSTRALIA'S FOREST PRODUCTS SECTOR



The FWPA, AFPA and Wood Beca are collaborating their efforts and funding towards this project.

From P 4

collaboration in research, development, and extension. FWPA and AFPA have been working with industry and researchers to develop emissions reduction methodologies, enhance carbon capture, storage, and productivity across plantations, and create strategies to quantify emissions savings from utilising timber-based solutions in commercial building projects. This will potentially allow the construction industry to acquire Australian Carbon Credit Units by using carbon-storing timber and will support paper and packaging use.

The plan is underpinned

“ [THE] INDUSTRY IS A PIVOTAL PLAYER IN THE GLOBAL ECONOMY AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

by the ongoing research work led by the forest growers and Grower Research Advisory Committee (GRAC) to define source activities to increase overall plantation area, yield, and productivity as related to carbon sequestration by the commercial forest estate.

COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS AND FUNDING

FWPA will spearhead this initiative, partnering with AFPA and Wood Beca to deliver this crucial roadmap. The project will be funded primarily through grower and processor contributions, with additional financial support from the paper and packaging sector.

With such a diverse and expansive industry, Wood Beca will work with FWPA on the development of the plan with considerations for the complexities and challenges such nuance can create. The work will define objectives and set a direction for future scenario modelling which is critical

to the success of the study and ensure the modelling represents the position of the industry as well as risks and opportunities to achieve better than net zero by 2050.

ABOUT FOREST AND WOOD PRODUCTS AUSTRALIA

FWPA is an industry-owned, not-for-profit Rural Research and Development Corporation (RDC) for the forest and wood products industry. Partnering with the Australian Government and industry stakeholders, we invest in research and development and marketing to improve the profitability, productivity, competitiveness, and sustainability of our industry.

A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FOR CARBON CAPTURE AND STORAGE

FWPA CEO Andrew Leighton emphasises the importance of this roadmap: “This plan is a testament to our commitment to supporting the industry in capturing

and storing more carbon. Through research-backed initiatives and strong industry consultation, we aim to lead the way in sustainable practices.”

BUILDING A ROBUST AND CIRCULAR ECONOMY

The forest and wood products industry is a pivotal player in the global economy and environmental sustainability. The decarbonisation plan will reinforce the industry’s role in contributing to climate goals while managing the resources necessary to build 1.2 million homes over the next five years.

Chris Lafferty, RD&E Manager at FWPA, adds, “As facilitators of this plan, FWPA is laying the groundwork to future-proof our industry. We are identifying the best paths to manage our carbon-storing resources, mitigating risks, and creating opportunities for our member companies to contribute to a robust and circular Australian economy.”

Nominations open for the Richard Stanton Memorial Award...

Read our selection criteria.



responsiblewood.org.au



Transforming softwood timber verification

Biased position testing supports cost-effective quality control.

FOREST & Wood Products Australia (FWPA) is pleased to share new research introducing biased position testing as a cost-effective and efficient method for the verification of structural softwood timber properties.

This innovative approach can unlock significant cost savings and improved efficiency whilst maintaining rigorous verification of structural softwood timber strength and stiffness properties.

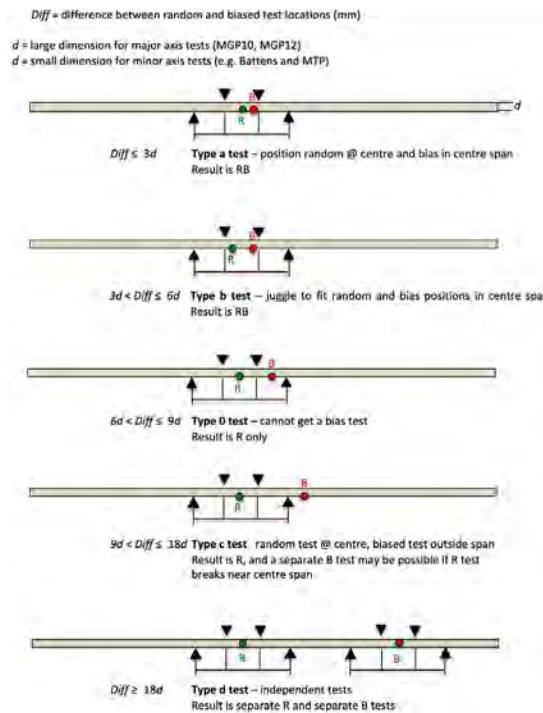
When it comes to quality control and product performance, random selection is traditionally used for sampling structural timber. However, biased selection can also be used. Random selection is like drawing names from a hat; every item has an equal chance to be tested, giving a statistically clear picture of overall quality. Biased selection, however, is based on picking samples (i.e. with known defects) which give specific insights, but not

about the whole group.

Biased ratios are essentially formulas that help translate results from that second biased sample into the results expected, as if the whole sample set was randomly tested. So, biased selection testing allows for a reduction in testing costs by utilising a smaller sample size while achieving the same level of confidence in the verification results. This cost-saving measure is particularly advantageous for sawn timber products such as MGP12, MGP10, and F5.

This project was led by Professor Jon Shanks, Director of TimberED Services and Associate Professor in Timber Engineering at University of Tasmania and was conducted in collaboration with University of South Australia.

“By focusing on the grade-determining features of the



Test instructions for both biased and random position tests.
Image: FWPA

Australasia (EWPA).

“This innovative approach offers cost savings, improved efficiency, and accurate estimation of properties. It is a significant step towards enhancing the competitiveness and sustainability of the industry.” said Chris Lafferty, RD&E Manager at FWPA.

FOREST AND WOOD PRODUCTS AUSTRALIA

FWPA aims to improve the competitiveness and sustainability of the Australian forest and wood products

timber, biased position testing provides direct feedback on the grading process with fewer boards tested,” said Jon Shanks.

To ensure compatibility with existing design values and standards, this project developed a process to establish appropriate Biased Ratios for quality control testing.

“This research demonstrates what can be achieved by collaboration between industry stakeholders, in this case showing that biased position testing does work and can ensure continued product compliance. By embracing this new sampling method, the timber industry can maintain high levels of quality control, whilst reducing costs and improving overall productivity.” said Gavin Matthew, CEO at Engineered Wood Products Association of

industry through innovation by investing in effective and relevant R&D and promotion of the industry’s products, services, and values. FWPA undertakes industry-level activities where a collective approach delivers more effective and valuable commercial outcomes than individual action. We deliver services that support the industry’s capacity as a major exporter and mainstay of regional communities in many parts of Australia.

FWPA is a leading industry services company (RDC) that supports the Australian forest and wood products industry through research, development, and promotion. FWPA works closely with industry stakeholders to drive innovation, sustainability, and growth in the forest and wood products industry.

For more information click here.

BIASED SELECTION TESTING ALLOWS FOR A REDUCTION IN TESTING COSTS



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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.

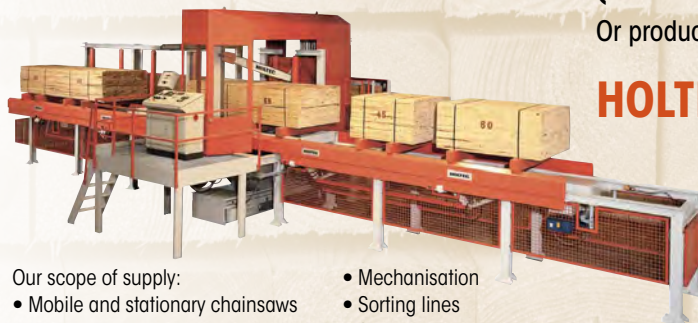
OCTOBER

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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Richard Stanton Memorial Leadership Award

Celebrating emerging leaders in sustainable forestry.

THE Richard Stanton Memorial Leadership Award, recognises outstanding achievements in sustainable forest management, and is now accepting nominations for 2024. First established in 2015, to honour Richard Stanton, a valued contributor and exceptional leader in the Australian forestry profession, this award celebrates those who continue his legacy through innovation and leadership in the forestry and forest products sector.

ABOUT THE AWARD: OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE NEXT GENERATION

As the world pivots towards sustainability and seeks to combat climate change, the forestry and forest products sector faces a technological revolution. Artificial intelligence (AI) and advanced technologies are increasingly integrated into this field, enhancing everything from forest management to supply chain logistics and product development. This shift is not only transforming the industry's landscape but also reshaping the job market, demanding new skills and offering novel career paths.

For young people, the burgeoning field of forestry technology offers a promising horizon. As traditional roles evolve, AI-driven data analysis, remote sensing,



Simon Dorries (Responsible Wood) presents the award to Kim Baber (Future Timber Hub) at the 2022 Richard Stanton Awards.

and sustainable resource management opportunities are emerging. These new roles leverage technology to optimise forest health, maximize resource use, and ensure environmental sustainability. However, the advent of these technologies also stirs competitive currents in the job market, emphasising the need for ongoing education and skill development in cutting-edge tools and product innovation.

Amidst these developments, organisations like Responsible Wood in Australia play a small but pivotal role. Responsible Wood champions the next generation of forestry leaders through initiatives like the Richard Stanton Memorial Leadership Award. Named after the late Richard Stanton, a pioneer in sustainable forest management, this award recognises and supports young professionals and students making significant contributions to sustainable forestry practices. For the first time, in 2024, and with the support of the late Richard Stanton's widow, Sonya Stanton, the award extends its eligibility to early-career

professionals in forestry, environmental science, wood technologies, and design, as well as university students pursuing relevant studies, including those completing post-graduate degrees (i.e., Masters, PhDs).

These commitments extend beyond individual accolades to broader support for innovation and sustainability in the sector. By nurturing young talent and championing innovation, they help ensure that the forestry sector not only adapts to the demands of the 21st century but does so in a way that respects and preserves the environment and social license. This aligns closely with global sustainable development goals, making the forestry sector not only a field of employment but also a domain of crucial environmental management.

ELIGIBILITY

Open to professionals in forestry, environmental science, wood technologies, and design, as well as university students pursuing relevant degrees. Candidates must demonstrate a connection to sustainable

forest management under AS/NZS 4708, or chain of custody under AS 4707, or PEFC ST 2002.

CRITERIA FOR EXCELLENCE

Nominees will be evaluated based on their contributions to forestry, innovation in forest management or product utilisation, commitment to sustainability principles, and impact on forest health and biodiversity.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Candidates must be independently nominated, with detailed submissions not exceeding 800 words describing their achievements and contributions. Nominations should be emailed to info@responsiblewood.org.au by 5:00pm on June 30, 2024.

We encourage nominations from Indigenous Australians for this award as we strive to recognise and celebrate the diverse talents and contributions to forestry and land management throughout Australia.

SELECTION PROCESS

A Judging Panel, appointed by Responsible Wood's Marketing Committee, will evaluate the nominations. The decision will be final, and the winner will be notified via email and recognised across various platforms, including the Responsible Wood website and social media.

AWARD BENEFITS

The recipient will receive a \$2,000 bursary to support professional development, such as attending conferences

“RICHARD STANTON WAS A VALUED CONTRIBUTOR IN THE FORESTRY SECTOR

Cont P 9

New one-stop shop to attract, support and promote women in building

MASTER Builders Association of New South Wales, in partnership with the NSW Government, has officially launched a digital one-stop shop to attract, support, and promote women in the building and construction industry.

The new website, Women Building NSW, marks a significant milestone in the industry's efforts to promote inclusivity and diversity within the industry, with a range of resources and support for women and young girls, parents, employers, and consumers.

Executive Director Brian Seidler said we hope providing vital resources and support will help more women pursue rewarding careers in this dynamic sector.

"As one of the largest sectors, with around 150,000 businesses employing around 400,000 people, the building and construction industry plays a crucial role in the growth and prosperity across every city, town, and region in NSW.

"But sadly, only 15 per cent of that workforce is made up of women, and as little as 3 per cent of tradies are women.

"This presents a massive opportunity for the future success of the industry with an untapped pool of the population who have an array of skills and talents to bring to



1/ **Master Builders NSW and the NSW Government are encouraging women to take the building industry by storm.**

2/ **There are many opportunities available for women in the industry, now made easier with a dedicated space to help connect them with the right resources.** Images: Shutterstock

the table."

The launch of the Women Building NSW website comes in the midst of chronic workforce shortages facing our sector, and at the same time, NSW struggles with a housing crisis.

"Women are the key to ensuring we can unlock the door to many more homes and deliver the vital infrastructure and commercial hubs communities are crying out for," Mr Seidler said.

NSW President Bob Black said the new Women Building hub offers a wealth of resources and support to help bridge this gap.

"It can be difficult to navigate all the various pathways available for women in the industry, which the hub aims to bring together."

Mr Seidler added: "We

know the premise of working in a male-dominated industry can be daunting for parents of young girls who might be interested in the trades, so we want to make sure there are appropriate support networks available and clear information on the opportunities.

"Unfortunately, vocational education still faces biases to its university cousin, especially in school, so this hub hopes to dispel some of the myths and showcase the rewarding opportunities for women."

Some of the features of the hub include:

- Detailed Job Guidebook covering over 100+ careers and job opportunities for women in trades.
- Business start-up booklet for women interested in establishing a construction business.

- Information for parents, teachers, and career advisors.
- Information on upcoming pre-apprenticeship courses and apprenticeship employment opportunities for girls and women.
- Resources for employers to recruit, retain, and support women in construction.
- Register of female-led businesses in the building and construction industry.
- Women ambassadors and mentors offering support and guidance.
- Industry stories, networking events, and resources on gender awareness and discrimination.

The project was made possible with funding from the Trade Pathways Program - Training Services NSW. For more information click here.

From P 8

or training sessions. Additionally, the winner will be granted the Richard Stanton Memorial Leadership Award Announcement opportunity to present their work to the Responsible Wood Marketing

Committee and receive an award trophy.

PROMOTION AND RECOGNITION

The award announcement will feature prominently on the Responsible Wood website, industry media and promoted

“AWARD RECOGNISES AND SUPPORTS YOUNG PROFESSIONALS AND STUDENTS

social networks to ensure wide visibility. The winner will be highlighted in a dedicated news post, showcasing their achievements and leadership.

For more information and to submit a nomination click here.

Super for Housing Report recommends more assistance for first home buyers

“THE Housing Industry Association (HIA) welcomes the Super for Housing Interim report released by the Senate Economics Committee. The report makes important recommendations that could help more young Australians secure a deposit faster and get into home ownership,” HIA Managing Director Jocelyn Martin said today.

Ms Martin’s comments come following the preliminary report from the Senate Economics Committee, who are undertaking an Inquiry into improving consumer experiences, choice, and outcome in Australia’s retirement system. The Inquiry specifically examined policy options to enable



Breaking into the housing market can be difficult for first home buyers, but a home is still a valuable part of security. Image: Shutterstock

Australians to use their superannuation to assist with purchasing a home

that would in turn improve retirement outcomes.

“HIA has been advocating that when it comes to getting first home buyers into a home the government should be open minded and leave all options on the table.

“It is therefore pleasing to see a number of recommendations from the Senate Committee on potential policy options that would further support first home buyers and others who may have fallen out of home ownership.

“At a time when the cost of buying a home has doubled and it is estimated to take at least an extra two years to save for a deposit on a first home, it is important governments look at different options and leave no stone unturned to ease the burden on first home buyers.

“Home ownership is the most important form of security in retirement. Superannuation is not working at its best if an

individual is using super to rent in their retirement.

“But accessing superannuation for housing in itself would only serve some Australians well, other forms of housing programs are critical to the mix to boost housing supply and home ownership rates.

“The Committee recommended to allow first home buyers to access more of their super than has been

previously proposed, with options for a higher maximum withdrawal cap or without a maximum threshold.

“It also adopted HIA’s other suggestions, including that:

- the First Home Super Saver Scheme be expanded and simplified.
- superannuation be eligible as collateral for a home loan; and
- APRA investigate the feasibility of superannuation-based shared equity schemes.

“HIA is prepared to offer support in any way it can to ensure these measures can be adopted in full.

“While the opportunity to own a home can be challenging, and the type of homes many families aspire to are changing shape, previous research conducted by HIA shows an overwhelming majority of Australians agree that home ownership still matters,” concluded Ms Martin.

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Support for employers and employees

Taking a step closer to achieving 1.2 million homes.

“THIS WEEK’S Budget included a key measure in the continuation of financial incentives for employers to take on an apprentice,” stated HIA Managing Director, Jocelyn Martin.

“Without an employer, there is no apprentice and the financial incentives that have been in place have proved invaluable to helping the construction industry to access more workers,” added Ms Martin.

“The Housing Industry

“**WITHOUT AN EMPLOYER, THERE IS NO APPRENTICE**”



Homes are not built without skilled workers; they are absolutely essential for the building industry.

Association (HIA) sought the continuation of these incentives. The shortage of skilled trades remains more acute than at any time prior to the pandemic and is a barrier to increasing supply of new homes.

“The Federal Government’s \$11.3 billion ‘Homes for Australia’ Plan and

commitment of \$90.6 million to support fee-free training for apprentices, pre-apprenticeships and skills assessments for overseas workers, will assist in addressing the shortage of skilled trades people and increasing supply.

“The boost to investment in more social, affordable

and community housing alongside infrastructure and skills funding boosts is another contribution to increasing the supply of homes.

“The \$1 billion towards unlocking key infrastructure delivery by states and territories including water, electricity, sewer infrastructure is an important step to unlocking land for new homes.

“HIA has called on the Government to double its infrastructure funding for states and local councils to enable them to get homes shovel ready faster, so it is pleasing to see this included in the budget” concluded Ms Martin.

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They speak a language that strangers do not know

THIS article begs the question do trees talk? Or perhaps more specifically do they communicate with each other? According to the dictionary definition, language is what people use when we talk to each other. Looked at it this way, humans are the only beings who can use language, because the concept is limited to our species. But do trees communicate with each other? If so how, they definitely do not produce sounds, so there's nothing to hear. It turns out trees have a completely different way of communicating – they use scent.

Scent as a means of communication? The concept is not totally unfamiliar to us. Why else would we use deodorants and perfumes? Scientists believe pheromones in sweat are a decisive factor when we choose our partners. So, it seems fair to say that we possess a secret language of scent, and trees have demonstrated they do as well.

For example, giraffes on the African savannah feeding on umbrella thorn acacias, move around quickly. It takes the acacias mere minutes to start pumping toxic substances into their leaves to rid themselves of these large herbivores. The giraffes get the message and move on to other trees. But they don't move on to trees close by, they walk past a few trees and resumed their meal only when they had moved



Umbrella thorn acacias signal a warning gas into the atmosphere to neighbouring trees that a crisis is close by – the giraffes are here for a feed!

about 100 metres or so away.

The reason for this behaviour is that the acacia trees that were being eaten give off a warning gas (specifically, ethylene) that signals to neighbouring trees that a crisis was at hand. Immediately all the forewarned trees also start to pump toxins into their leaves to prepare themselves. However, the giraffes are wise to this game and therefore move farther away to a part of the savannah where they can find trees that were oblivious to what is going on, or else they moved upwind where they could find acacias close by that have no idea the giraffes are present.

In addition, the tree leaf tissue sends out electrical signals, just as human tissue does when it is hurt. However, the signal is not transmitted in milliseconds,

different parts of its structure. If the roots find themselves in trouble, this information is broadcast throughout the tree, which can trigger the leaves to release scent compounds that are specifically formulated for the task at hand.

So clearly trees communicate with each other. But why are trees such social beings? The reasons are the same as for human communities – there are advantages in working together. A tree is not a forest. On its own, a tree cannot establish a consistent local climate and is at the mercy of wind and weather. But together, many trees create an ecosystem that moderates extremes of heat and cold, stores a quantity of water, and generates a great deal of humidity.

What and how much information is exchanged between trees is a subject that is only just beginning to be researched. For instance, the magazine Nature reports that scientist Suzanne Simard has discovered that different tree species are in contact with one another, even when they regard each other as competitors.

So talk to a tree next time you are in a forest, it may answer you back, even if, stealing a line from Bing Crosby's famous Irish song Galway Bay, in "...a language that the strangers do not know".

TALKING TREES



With the late JOHN HALKETT

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as are human signals, instead, the tree signal travels at the slow speed of a centimetre a minute. Accordingly, it takes an hour or so before defensive compounds reach the leaves to spoil a resident pest's or herbivores meal. However, this slow tempo does not mean that a tree is not on top of what is happening in



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Giants of the Kauri Forest in the Northlands of Aotearoa

Exploring the majesty of the New Zealand Kauri tree.

By **CAMPBELL MCINNES**

THE great New Zealand Kauri Trees (*Agathis australis*) are renowned for their timber quality, natural grandeur and are one of the longest living trees in the world. These giants can reach staggering heights of over 50 meters, and boast massive trunks, some exceeding 5 meters in diameter, establishing them as true giants of the forest. Their smooth grey-brown bark and expansive, spreading branches create an aura of grandeur and something I have always wanted to visit, it was one of those bucket list items. On a recent trip in January this year, I made the effort to visit these wonders of nature which are nestled in the lush Waipoua Forest located in the North West of the North Island about a three-and-a-half-hour drive from Auckland.

The Waipoua Forest is the major home of the Kauri trees where it is estimated that 75% of the Kauri trees left in New Zealand can be found. Nestled within the 2,500-hectare (6,177 acre) forest is home to the largest Kauri tree in New Zealand, which the local Maori call Tane Mahuta, named after the Maori God of forest and of birds, also known as the "King" or "Lord of the Forest". Waipoua Forest is also home to the second largest Kauri tree which the Maori people call Te Matua Ngahare also known as the "Father of the Forest". Both these trees have thrived in an environment shaped by centuries of ecological balance.

Beyond their sheer size,



1/ *Tane Mahuta, King of the Forest stands towering above its surrounding.*



2/ *Te Matua Ngahere, Father of the Forest with its wide trunk. The mature kauri's providing visible homes to flora of the forest.*

Kauri trees play a vital role in shaping the ecosystems they inhabit. These trees have a unique relationship with their surroundings, influencing the composition of the forest and supporting a diverse array of flora and fauna. Kauri-dominated forests harbor an intricate web of life, providing habitat for various species. The Kauri's massive branches and towering canopy create a distinctive microenvironment beneath them. This microenvironment is crucial for the growth and survival of an array of plant species, including ferns, mosses, and epiphytes. The fallen leaves of the Kauri contribute to a nutrient-rich forest floor, fostering a complex ecological balance that sustains life throughout

the forest ecosystem.

MEETING TANE MAHUTA, KING OF THE FOREST

Traveling from Russell on the East Coast, over to the West Coast would mean I would enter the Waipoua Forest from the North side. Not long after passing the signage to advise I had entered the Waipoua Forest on State Highway 12, nature decided it was time to water the trees, just as I was pulling into my first stop and the entrance to the walk to meet Tane Mahuta.

At the entrance to this walk is a cleaning station, which all visitors must pass through before they can enter. These innovative cleaning stations, of which there are six in the region, have been introduced

to help prevent the spread of Kauri dieback. The stations have two bristle pads to scrape any mud from your shoes and followed closely by two metal plates with holes punched in them to stand on. As you apply pressure downwards on the metal foot plates your shoes and lower legs are sprayed with a disinfectant to ensure no contaminated material adjoin you on your journey!

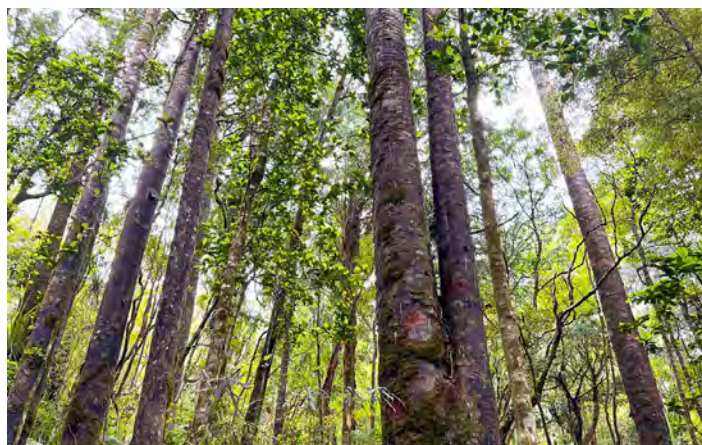
The walkway to meet Tane Mahuta was along a timber decking structure, raised slightly off the ground, built to keep visitors from straying off into the forest areas. Whilst it was still raining, the canopy of the forest created a natural umbrella which soaked up

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much of the rain, only allowing a small amount of rain to filter through the canopy. It was very surprising how close Tane Mahuta was to the roadway with the walkway only being 170 meters long. A short distance into the walk, I could see glimpses of this majestic tree. Reaching the first viewing location was only a 5-minute stroll.

Being in the presence of this tree was an awesome feeling and I can totally understand why it is known as the King of the Forest, as it stands towering through the top of the canopy to keep an eye over the entire forest area. This is the closest point you can get to this tree



Some younger Kauri trees straight and tall reaching to the canopy layer on the Te Matua Ngahere walk.

which is about ten meters away. Timber hand railings have been erected to prevent visitors getting too close and potentially damaging the root system of the tree, which are fragile and can be quite shallow.

I have seen many photos of Tane Mahuta and like my own, they do not do justice to its grandeur. In 2002, Dr. Robert Van Pelt, a forest ecology researcher and

affiliate assistant professor at the University of Washington measured this tree with the following results: Height 45.2 m, Girth of 15.44 m, Trunk height 17.8 m, Trunk volume 255.5 m³ and Tree volume 516.7 m³. To put the volume of this tree into context, a 40-foot shipping container can load an average of say 40 m³ of Radiata Pine, this would mean that Tane Mahuta's volume would be

equivalent to 13, 40-foot shipping containers. It should be noted that the sign at the viewing platform has different measurements to those of Dr. Robert Van Pelt's findings. On the sign from the Department of Conservation it states: "The dimensions of Tane Mahuta are; Trunk height 17.7 meters. Total height 51.5 meters. Trunk girth 13.8 meters. Trunk volume 244.5 meters.(3)". Regardless of which figures are correct today, this tree is massive. Tane Mahuta is said to be around 2,000 years old with estimates ranging from 1,500 to 2,500 years.

Moving around to the second viewing location, takes you further away and allows you to peer through the forest to capture the tree in its more natural surroundings. While there were a number of visitors coming and going, everyone appeared to be

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“TANE MAHUTA IS SAID TO BE AROUND 2,000 YEARS OLD

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Image: Freepik

From P 15

mesmerised and silent. Other than an occasional whisper between two people, all you could hear were the sounds of the forest, the wind rustling the leaves and an occasional bird noise. I notice there were also a number of people who had walked in barefooted. Having spent some quiet time just being in the presents of the King of the Forest, it was time to head off to visit another amazing specimen.



Kauri tree that has died after falling victim to Kauri Dieback.

THE KAURI WALKS IN THE WAIPOUA FOREST

Travelling by car just 1.5 kilometres down the road is the entrance to the Kauri walks carpark. Here there is a trail that leads to three kauri walks being: 1) Yakas, seventh largest Kauri, 2) Four Sisters, as the name suggests a close cluster of four trees, and 3) Te Matua Ngahere, second largest Kauri of New Zealand. Unfortunately, both the Yakas and the Four Sisters walks are "temporarily closed", however they appear to have been closed for quite some time, based on the amount of re-growth there is enclosing the entrances to these walks.

The main feature however being the Te Matua Ngahere walk to the second largest Kauri tree was still open and well worth the 40 minutes it takes to get to this tree. Once on the main path to Te Matua Ngahere, like the earlier walk it is a timber decking walkway that whines its way through the forest. As the feeding roots of Kauri trees are shallow and delicate, the

elevated timber walkways have been erected to protect these root systems and are present along the entire walk.

This walk is much longer than the earlier one and as you walk through the forest you past many Kauri trees of all ages from saplings to rickers, emergents through to very large mature specimens. This trail gives you a much better look and understanding of the habitat and the surroundings the Kauris thrive in. Upon turning the final bend on the path Te Matua Ngahere reveals himself in the surroundings of the natural forest in where he grew. While Te Matua is much shorter than Tane Mahuta, at 29.9 meters (around 15 meters shorter), he is actually wider with a girth of 16.41 meters (around 1 meter wider).

Due to its width, there is no doubt this tree is enormous and well worthy of being the second largest Kauri of New Zealand. On the slight incline walking back towards the carpark, you get a different perspective of the forest. Perhaps because the main events were completed, there

was more time spent on exploring the rest of the forest. While I had seen one dead Kauri on my way down to Te Matua Ngahere, I noticed two more dead kauri trees on my way back up the path. From what I have read and seen; these dead Kauri's looked like they had fallen victim to the Kauri Dieback disease!

Now on my way back to Auckland, in the afternoon, I stopped at the Kauri Museum, which is located in Matakohē, around

one-and-a-half hours' drive from the Waipoua Forest. The Kauri Museum was well worth the visit, although I do wish I had more time there.

KAURI TIMBER CHARACTERISTICS

The timber from the Kauri tree has been highly sort after for its exceptional quality, versatility, and aesthetic appeal. Its characteristics include: a straight grain, with a fine even texture, both heartwood and sapwood are pale yellowish white to golden brown in colour, the average dried weight is 540 kg/m³, which gives it an impressive strength-to-weight ratio. Kauri timber is known for its stability and resistance to warping, shrinking, and cracking, even in fluctuating conditions. The timber generally has a lack of knots, due to the trunk of the mature tree having little to no branches. The timber is used in a wide variety of applications, from fine woodworking and furniture through to construction.

KAURI DIEBACK

THREATENS THE SURVIVAL OF THESE ANCIENT GIANTS

The existence of the Kauri timber industry is now under threat and has a battle against Kauri dieback disease, caused by the soil-borne pathogen *Phytophthora Agathidicida*. First identified in the 1970s, Kauri dieback has spread rapidly, posing a severe risk to the survival of these ancient giants.

Once a tree becomes infected, the disease progresses with no known cure, leaving scientists and conservationists with the challenge of saving these iconic trees. This devastating disease attacks the roots and lower trunk of Kauri trees, leading to rotting wood and ultimately killing the infected Kauri. The rapid spread of Kauri dieback poses a significant risk to both the industry and the communities that depend on it.

Recognizing the gravity of the situation, New Zealand has implemented stringent biosecurity measures to curb the spread of Kauri dieback. Timber industry stakeholders have been proactive in adopting responsible logging practices, including the cleaning of equipment and machinery to prevent the inadvertent transmission of the pathogen. Additionally, there is a growing emphasis on sustainable forestry practices to ensure the long-term viability of Kauri timber resources.

The challenge lies in striking a delicate balance between meeting the economic demand for Kauri timber and preserving the longevity of this precious resource. The timber industry must embrace innovative solutions to navigate the

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complexities posed by Kauri dieback.

The plight of the New Zealand Kauri tree is not an isolated concern but reflects a global challenge of preserving ancient and endangered species. As the world continues to develop it has to come to terms with biodiversity loss. The lessons learned from the battle against Kauri dieback are relevant on a global scale. The need for collaboration, community engagement, and the integration of traditional knowledge is paramount in addressing complex ecological issues.



Kauri Museum NZ, author Campbell McInnes stands next to largest Kauri timber slab in the world at 22.5m long.

As I returned back across the ditch to Australia and reflected on my time spent among the ancient giants of the Waipoua Forest, I wondered if our generation will be able to do enough to protect Tane Mahuta, Te Matua Ngahere, and the

other kauri trees! Will the timber industry be able to sustainably harvest Kauri for its various valuable uses? I sincerely hope these majestic giants will endure for future generations to visit, admire, and appreciate.

Source: Timber Trader News

Five guides to address wellbeing woes in architecture

LED by RMIT Professor Naomi Stead in collaboration with Monash University, researchers created a series of guides to support wellbeing for architects, after a survey found architecture workers had a lower-than-average quality of life compared with Australia's general working population.

Many of the research participants indicated that there was a discrepancy between effort and reward in architectural work – given relatively low pay, long hours, pressured deadlines, intense risk and complexity.

“All items from the personal wellbeing index were rated lower in 2023 than in 2021. This was particularly notable in relation to future security, achievement in life, health,

and standard of living,” said Stead.

As a free online resource, the downloadable “Guides to Wellbeing in Architectural Practice” outlines ways to improve wellbeing within architectural offices. Stead said the guides identified and expanded on five major themes for improving wellbeing.

“A key factor we found was that while architects are highly committed and believe that their work can make a positive difference in the world, society at large doesn't necessarily see or understand that potential contribution – to the public domain, sustainability, and improving quality of life for all – amongst other things,” she said.

“This means unreasonable pressure on the time and money available to complete work – avoiding that would mean practices are in a better position to avoid disruptive redundancies, improve job security and satisfaction, and pay their people well.”

Trust, transparency and psychosocial and psychological safety were also found to be vital to a healthy and productive workplace.

“It doesn't matter if you're a director, project leader or just starting out in architecture, prioritising the wellbeing of all in the practice are key steps to making the industry a better place to work,” she said.

For more information click here.



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UK steps up battle against pests and pathogens

New funding for national tree health laboratory in Surrey, UK.

THE battle against tree-disease spreading beetles such as the Emerald ash borer and the larger eight-toothed spruce bark beetle has taken a significant step forward today thanks to new Government funding unveiled.

The funding will pay for a new £4m research and containment facility at the UK's Forest Research Alice Holt Research Station in Surrey and will better equip the country in managing the risks posed by these harmful pests and pathogens, in plans unveiled on Friday 10 May by Defra and the Forestry Commission as part of National Plant Health Week.

The new facility will expand the capacity of the existing Holt containment laboratory by almost double. This will boost capability to study pests and pathogens in a contained and controlled environment – enhancing our national response and facilitating safe international trade.

Statistics released by Forest Research today show there were 2350 tree pests and diseases reported via the TreeAlert service from April 2023-March 2024.

By assessing the pests and pathogens in a contained laboratory, scientists from Forest Research – Great Britain's leading organisation for forestry research – will be able to study them in a safe and controlled manner using cutting-edge technology and equipment to safeguard our treescapes.

Biosecurity Minister Lord Douglas-Miller said:

"The UK is a world leader in tree health and biosecurity and today we are going further in boosting our armoury to combat tree pests



1/ **The pest, *Ips typographus*, an eight-toothed spruce bark beetle.**



2/ ***Phytophthora ramorum*, a disease plaguing trees in the UK.**



3/ **The oak processionary moth, an ongoing pest issue for the UK.** All images: Forest Research

and diseases and manage emerging threats.

"We are committed to protecting the country's tree health and maintaining biosecurity to ensure our trees and woodlands are resilient to fight climate change. Building on the existing vital work of Alice Holt will be a key part to achieving this."

Defra Chief Plant Health Officer Professor Nicola Spence said:

"Pests and diseases are a threat to our nation's trees and plants. They cause significant damage, economic losses and in many cases tree death. Tackling them is a key part of commitments set out in our world-leading Plant Biosecurity Strategy to protect our nation's plants and trees.

"Funding this new facility at Alice Holt will boost our capacity in the fight against new and emerging threats and help us maintain some of the strongest biosecurity measures in the world."

Forestry Commission Chair Sir William Worsley said:

"Trees and woodlands support our wellbeing and are home to some of our most treasured species. They play an important role in tackling climate change.

"It is vital that we expand our research to counter new tree health outbreaks which are a threat to our nation's trees.

This new facility at Forest Research's renowned Alice Holt Research Station will boost and expand our response to ensure trees are resilient for the future".

Forest Research Chief Executive Professor James Pendlebury said:

"The Alice Holt Research Station has played a key role in researching pests and pathogens to protect our forests, strengthening UK-wide efforts to combat pest and disease outbreaks.

"It is important that we increase our capacity to combat these threats so we can continue our world-leading research and, this investment will help Forest Research fight to safeguard our trees and woodlands for future generations".

Due to a changing climate, we are seeing a rise in the number of pests and recent years have seen an increase in the eight-toothed spruce bark beetle *Ips typographus* and ongoing responses to *Phytophthora ramorum* and oak processionary moth. The laboratory will also help prepare for known threats which are not currently present, such as Emerald ash borer – an exotic emerald coloured beetle from Asia which has spread to North America and caused significant damage to ash trees – and Xylella, a ferocious bacterial disease which has devastated

olive trees in France and Italy.

Today's announcement supports delivery of the Plant Biosecurity Strategy for Great Britain, which committed to work with the industry and general public to protect the country's plants from risks posed by pests and pathogens. The new facility will boost capacity for research on regulated pests and pathogens and ensure we can better respond to future threats.

The Government has ambitious targets to increase tree canopy and woodland cover in England to at least 16.5% by 2050 and continues to take action to meet this with more than 15 million trees having been planted this parliament, with future proofing our forests from disease a key part of our plans to increase tree cover.

Public vigilance is a key part of the fight against tree pests and diseases. You can look out for any unusual symptoms – like leaf discolouration or 'bleeding' lesions – on trees and report any sightings via TreeAlert, the GB's online tree pest and disease reporting tool.

In a further move to protect the UK from harmful pests and diseases, the Government has introduced a new set of global, risk-based border controls which will improve UK biosecurity, part of the Border Target Operating Model.

Find out more [click here](#).

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