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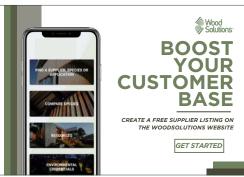


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ALL UNDER ONE ROOF

- IR SUPPORT
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- COMMUNITY





New EPA regulations impact forestry operations

The new rules are designed to better protect greater gliders in NSW but have led to unexpected forestry crew stand downs.

LATE on Sunday night this week, the NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA) amended the site-specific biodiversity conditions (SSBCs) to clarify search and survey requirements and strengthen protections for greater gliders. These new rules took effect immediately.

These changes require
Forestry Corporation of NSW
(FCNSW) to implement a
25m logging exclusion zone
around any tree in which a
greater glider is sighted during
FCNSW's search and survey.

This is in addition to the existing exclusion zone requirement, which protects trees where greater glider dens have been identified. These amendments have been made to increase protections for other trees known to be used by greater gliders, where dens have not necessarily been identified but are likely to be present.

Changes have also been made to clarify requirements for how nocturnal search and surveys must be conducted. This includes requiring search and surveys to be conducted

at night, with the first transect of the search and survey commencing within 30 minutes of sunset to increase the likelihood of observing gliders leaving their dens.

Without these amendments and clarity to search and survey requirements, FCNSW has advised the current conditions would have a material impact on the state's wood supply.

The EPA says that "The February SSBCs did not reflect the shared understanding of the EPA and FCNSW that only the first part of the search and survey had to commence within the first hour of sunset. As a result, the EPA is not issuing Stop Work Orders at this time. However, we are still investigating potential noncompliances with the SSBCs."

While no Stop Work Orders were issued, the Australian Forest Contractors Association (AFCA) announced that 15 harvesting operations have had to be stood down by FCNSW while the corporation makes sure they can comply with the new rules: 11 operations in the



Greater Glider. Photo: Sam Horton, Wikimedia Commons

north of the state and 4 in the south.

FCNSW has advised that usual stand down arrangements and payments will apply for those harvesting contracting businesses that have affected and that there are currently no stand down arrangements in place for haulage. It is not clear how long the stand down is likely to last, with expectations ranging from several days to a number of weeks. FCNSW will negotiate with individual

businesses to determine what financial support will apply.

The changes come in response to weeks of productive discussion between FCNSW and the EPA regarding greater glider search and survey requirements. AFCA said: "Last week environmental activists issued a notice of intent to Forestry Corp (and likely the EPA) that further court actions would be launched to seek additional injunctions to prevent harvesting activity. Amendment of the biodiversity conditions could not occur while a court action was underway, leading to the developments of the weekend."

AFCA has called for case studies from affected businesses and individuals to support AFCA's advocacy asking the NSW Government to stop these rolling series of changes to NSW forestry. Affected businesses can contact AFCA general manager Tim Lester on 0437 524 933 or email tim@afca. asn.au.



Power from forests

LATE last week, Forestry Corporation NSW announced it would be exploring the potential for windfarms within public pine plantations to contribute to the NSW transition to renewable energy.

CEO Anshul Chaudhary announced that Neoen, Iberdrola Australia, TagEnergy and Mainstream Renewables Power and Someva Renewables joint venture have been awarded permits to investigate wind farm opportunities in selected pine plantations in the Central West and Southern Inland regions.

Chaudhary said the permits will enable the proponents to investigate windfarm opportunities in pine plantations in the State Forests around Bondo, Orange, Black Springs and Sunny Corner. "Today's announcement marks the start of the investigation phase under what will be a comprehensive and considered planning process," he said.

"A permit is not a consent to proceed with a project, but it will allow the proponent to start the detailed studies to see if a project is viable within each investigation permit area. Each company will need to conduct detailed wind farm feasibility studies, which will commence with the installation of wind and weather monitoring equipment on meteorological masts.

"Each company will also undertake extensive community consultation and work with local communities to consider and address potential concerns around environmental impact, noise, landscape and visual impacts, traffic and transport issues, hazard and risks, heritage, water and soil impacts and waste management."

Once this work is completed



Windfarms in Europe, such as this one at Lauterstein in Germany, have long been successfully sited in forests. Image: courtesy WPD

the companies would submit the projects for consideration by the State Government and if approved, Forestry Corporation will issue a Construction and Operations permit.

The combined investigation, consultation, planning and approval stages could be expected to take between three and six years. Any approved development would be unlikely to be in operation until the early 2030s.

The pine plantation sites have been considered for wind turbine projects because these state forests have existing infrastructure in place, such as roads and powerlines, and are often located some distance from neighbouring residential estates. Native forests are not included in these project areas.

Wind farms inside forests have been built for over a decade in Europe. The location makes sense as forests are often sited in hilly locations with high winds and are, by definition, well set back from populated areas.

By looking only at plantation forests, Forestry Corporation has neatly side-stepped the debates that have arisen in Germany, where centuries-old forest sites have been used. Even there, replantings have been made with trees that are better adapted to climate change, which it is hoped will improve long-term forest health.

Other wind farm locations in Australia have seen concerns raised by locals about bird and bat injuries from turbines. Overall, the numbers are minuscule compared to those killed by cats, cars and the effects of fossil fuels, but there are now multiple methods for significantly reducing bird and bat fatalities and the companies involved are keen to alleviate residential concerns.

"The proponents have demonstrated a strong commitment to build long-

STATE FORESTS
HAVE EXISTING
INFRASTRUCTURE
IN PLACE. NATIVE
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PROJECT AREAS.

term relationships with the local communities and stakeholders, First Nations groups and the Local Government," Chaudhary said.

The project follows 2021 NSW parliament changes to the Forestry Act 2012, which allowed renewable energy projects to be considered in softwood plantations.

"Wind farms can co-exist with plantation forests

without having any long-term impact on tree growth or plantation operations, as the wind turbines are situated well above the top of the trees. Pine plantations are large areas often in windy locations, with access to powerlines, and a good existing road network," Chaudhary said.

"Each project will have a Community Benefit Fund equivalent to a value per megawatt of installed capacity, delivering direct benefit back to impacted residents and the broader community."

Wind farms currently operate in forests in Canada, Germany, Sweden, Wales, Scotland and Ireland and similar proposals are being considered for plantations in Tasmania, Victoria, South Australia and Queensland.

You can read a backgrounder to FCNSW's windfarm project by clicking here or check out Forestry Corporation's renewable energy projects by clicking here or find more information on the planning and approval process for potential projects by clicking here.

FSC leads alignment with EUDR

THE EU Regulation on Deforestation-free Products (EUDR) came into force in June 2023 and will apply from 30 December this year. The complexities of navigating the new system are already causing some concerns, but FSC is here for the sector.

The Forest Stewardship Council has accelerated several existing projects to align its sustainable forestry standards with the EUDR requirements and develop the required technology solutions to ease compliance for companies.

FSC will launch its 'FSC Aligned for EUDR' program at an online event on 3 July, from 6–7.30pm. Click here to register.

As the invitation says, "FSC Aligned for EUDR takes

the complexity out of EUDR requirements and provides a robust solution to help certificate holders become compliant on time.

"Get access to the FSC Aligned Certification for EUDR, supporting companies to fulfil their due diligence obligations. It includes the newly developed FSC Regulatory Module and FSC

Risk Assessment Framework and enables EUDR alignment by leveraging FSC's robust system. Find out how to start implementation immediately.

"Enjoy a first look at the second part of this modular



The EUDR legislation is designed to help protect forestry from exploitation and provide assurance that wood products and more come from well-managed land. Image: FSC Africa

solution – FSC Aligned Reporting for EUDR. Powered by FSC Blockchain (Beta), it will help companies report on their EUDR Due Diligence activities."

The event will include a short Q&A section and be

followed up with dedicated technical webinars that will dive deep into FSC Aligned Certification for EUDR, where the experts involved will answer technical questions. Simultaneous interpretation into key languages will be offered.

Meanwhile, FSC has also prepared a series of resources for companies preparing for EUDR. These include a six-step checklist that companies - including FSC certificate and licence holders - can tick off now to prepare for the December deadline. Click here to access it. Additionally, there is a web page on FSC and EUDR, including how the two are mutually reinforcing, the latest on the FSC Regulatory Module and access to helpful FAQs. Click here for the link.





ntha.com.au

Vale Vic Gersekowski

From championing cypress pine products here and abroad to mentoring others, Vic was a powerful force for good in Queensland timber.

By MELISSA SYME

IT is with sadness that we say farewell to a true champion of the Queensland Timber Industry this week. Victor Gersekowski, owner/director of Vic's Timber – a cypress pine sawmill at Cecil Plains in the Western Downs region of Queensland – has passed.

Vic always had the cypress blood running through him, with

grandfather Dick Gersekowski starting the business, carting cypress logs in the 1940s. The sawmill at Cecil Plains was bought by the family in 1959, with father Noel building much of the equipment. Tragically the sawmill burnt down in 1974, however Noel rebuilt it in just six months! Vic inherited the sawmill in 1981 after his father passed away.

In 1999, he revamped the business and became the driving force behind Vic's Timbers.



Vic Gersekowski loved cypress pine, and was committed to sharing that passion.

Cypress pine (Callitris glaucophylla) is a conifer native to Australia. In Vic's words, "It is such a unique timber,

hard-wearing, durable, termite resistant... It has the durability and hardness of a lot of hardwoods and yet it has a knotty appearance like pine."

The family started off selling boards into the Sydney market, but as times changed, their focus turned to selling house framing and flooring into the Queensland market. Always





looking for new opportunities and value adding, they invested in kiln drying and developed new customers overseas selling specialty products. Dressed timber into Japanese markets was a real winner!

You may not have always agreed with Vic (we especially diverged on his enthusiasm for Donald Trump!) but you

- 1/ He was thirdgeneration timber man; Vic's grandfather started a cypress haulage business in the 1940s, here, the company's trucks in 1953.
- 2/ Vic sold dressed cypress pine timbers into Japan as well as other international speciality products and a long record of growing the Australian market.

knew where you stood, and he was always up for a good argument! Vic's passion for the cypress pine industry was well known and he most definitely lived and breathed

it! He was keen to share his knowledge and experience, and always had a positive outlook for the timber industry. I was a forester based at Dunmore near Cecil Plains in the 2010s and had the privilege of knowing Vic for several years.

Farewell Vic – you made a great contribution to the timber industry and to Queensland!



Melbourne Design Week launches in sawmill

Melbourne's
Revival Projects is
the last inner-city
timber mill and
kiln in Australia.
The Collingwoodbased team, led by
Robbie Neville with
ample assistance
from Stephanie
Neville, was the
recipient of the
Melbourne Design
Week Award in

2022 and this year kicked off Design Week last Thursday with the launch of a special project.

Titled '100 Circles', the project centred around 100 small timber urns. These were milled from five large Cypress macrocarpa trees that Revival salvaged from Box Hill Cemetery in 2023. The trees were growing too close to adjacent graves and



Cutting down the trees at Box Hill Cemetery. Image Stephanie Neville

had become unsafe.

Revival milled the smaller logs into sections and then manufactured the urns without glue or mechanical fixings. These were sold before and during the four-day event that followed the launch and are designed to be used for the storage or burial of cremated ashes.

A golden wattle seed is housed within the lid of each urn. When buried, the urn



Robbie Neville with one of the cypress urns. Image Stephanie Neville

will completely decompose and the cremated ashes will ultimately give life to a new tree. Each urn comes with half a cup of activated charcoal to help neutralise the pH levels of cremated remains, salvaged from a large timber sculpture in Docklands that was vandalised by fire.

Proceeds from each sale will be donated to Indigenous groups that manage forests after fires. Each new

custodian of the urns was asked to provide words explaining why they connected with this concept. These 100 stories were displayed in the exhibition, accompanied by video and images of the tree removal process at Box Hill Cemetery

along with working notes and environmental impact data.

Revival's major work is a consultancy that designs both building deconstruction and reconstruction using salvaged materials from the local area. Alongside its building work, the company runs regular educational and making programs and an important Urban Tree Recovery initiative. To learn more, click here.



MAY

30: Wood You Like To Know 2 - ONLINE EVENT. This online summit hosted by Weathertex takes a deep dive into the latest trends and innovations in timber construction. Industry experts, professionals, and enthusiasts will discuss topics from modular construction and prefabrication to affordable housing solutions and innovative approaches to aged care and retirement living, by way of Milan Design Week, sustainable construction and regulatory updates. Tickets \$79 and \$99. For more and to register, visit https://www. woodyouliketoknow2.com.au/

JUNE

11: WoodSolutions Webinar Launch of the Resilient Timber Homes Design Guide - ONLINE

EVENT. This free online event will give an overview of the new guide from some of the experts behind it as well as a Q&A session to answer questions on the new Code+ approach.

For more details and an RSVP link, visit https://www. woodsolutions.com.au/events/ woodsolutions-webinar-specialevent-launch-resilient-timberhomes-design-guide

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-summitprescribed-fire-exploring-thescience-practice-and-culture/

JULY

3: FSC Aligned for EUDR program – ONLINE EVENT,

6-7.30pm. To register, visit https://www.linkedin.com/events/launchevent-fscalignedforeudr7193967598538022912/

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 pen to everyone associated with the timber

and forestry products sector in some way. For full details, visit https://gottsteintrust.org/ grants-courses/understandingforest-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 twoday 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 www. forestryconference.com.au/



Award-winning library

A timber-rich interior has taken out top gong at the Australian Library Design Awards.

WHEN the University of Tasmania became a key part of reinvigorating Launceston's industrial Inveresk area, it worked hard to deliver a result that would meet the needs of students, the community and the environment. One notable example is the new Inveresk Library.

Architects Wardle designed the building alongside more than 150 students, staff and community, including consultation with First Nations voices and in consideration of the surrounding environment.

Vos Construction led the build with carbon reduction methods and materials prioritised, including repurposing 77 steel gas pipelines into structural piles, using low-carbon concrete, the integration of atrium skylights and solar initiatives that maximise natural light and energy. To offset the industrial feel of the library, a nod to the area's past, architect Manuel Canestrini had specified Tasmanian timber throughout the interiors to instil warmth into the space as well as sequestering carbon.

"The most important feature of the building internally would be the exposed timber structure of level two and level three because this is what adds the warmth to an otherwise harsher environment," Canestrini told Tasmanian Timber, which was a part of helping to source local materials.

Timber also played a large role in the building's acoustics, particularly with sound travelling up three storeys.

Tasmanian oak acoustic panels help with the acoustics







1/ The library reflects the area's industrial heritage. Image: University of Tasmania

2/ As well as locally sourced timbers, the library re-used existing groundworks and made low-carbon materials choices. Image: Wardle Studio

3/ Timber delivers warm interiors and noise abatement. Image: Tasmanian Timber

of the space, complemented by the solid timber. Level one, designed as an area for students to seek services and support, is a lively space of activity, while levels two and three are reserved for meetings and house the library's impressive book collection.

This month all of that thought and planning was rewarded with the library winning best designed academic library at the Australian Library Design Awards.

The building was the stand-out entry in the academic library category for 'reimagining' the traditional concept of a library and delivering a 'vibrant hub for learning, collaboration, and cultural exchange'.

Judges also

commended Inveresk library for exemplifying the 'transformative power of architecture' to 'foster a sense of belonging and discovery,' while 'inspiring, engaging, and enriching' the community it serves

The awards are presented annually by the Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA) to showcase and celebrate the investment in libraries around the country. Entries are assessed on design, strategic relevance and impact.

Debra Wilson, Manager Library Resources and Services said while the library team had submitted the winning entry, the achievement was the collective success of everyone who had helped bring the space to life.

"Our team is so proud

Inveresk library has been recognised with this national title. It's a win for everyone who helped shape the building design and deliver these wonderful contemporary spaces that are now being enjoyed," Wilson said.

Since opening in 2022, the building has welcomed more than 120,000 students, staff and community and industry visitors for teaching and learning activities, meetings, and a vibrant program of events. Members of the public can also sign up and borrow books from the library for free or enjoy Loose Goose cafe on the ground floor.

Caine Chennatt, Director Curatorial and Cultural Collections and Acting University Librarian, said,

Cont P 15

FWPA moves T3 Collingwood

The hybrid mass timber office building is a fitting new home for the association that champions forest products.

AFTER 16 years at Queen St Melbourne, FWPA has moved to the new T3 mass timber building in Collingwood.

As FWPA's moving announcement puts it, "T3 is a high quality 15-level commercial building that aims to achieve best-practice sustainable desian. encompassing mass timber construction. building performance, occupancy comfort, and the urban environment."

Developed by Hines and designed by Jackson Clements Burrows Architects, T3 Collingwood is one of the tallest mass timber office buildings in Australia and embodies the T3 strategy – Timber, Transit, and Technology.

Completed last year, the18,200m² building includes a concrete garage and podium office section, topped by a 10-storey timber tower. Build by Icon and developed by American investment firm Hines, timber was at the heart of the design from the start.

The prefabricated mass timber structure contains more than 2000m³ of CLT and glulam, which uses







from sustainable Australian forests. Local supply was just one of the sustainable strategies employed in T3 Collingwood's design and construction and has resulted in a 34% reduction in embodied carbon (as determined by the Green Star Design & As-Built Review methodology). This equals 2850 tonnes fewer CO2 emissions than the equivalent standard concrete design for a similar building.

uses Victorian Oak sourced

'Transit' is also factored in, with the building situated near public transport hubs and with premium end of trip facilities and 186 bicycle parking spaces for those who walk, run or ride to work.

When it comes to

- 1/ T3 Collingwood is one of Australia's tallest hybrid timber buildings. Image: Hines
- 2/ The interiors are rich in natural and organic materials, embracing biophilic design principles. Image: John Gollings, JCBA
- 3/ Two outdoor terraces help office workers connect with nature when they need a break. Image: Hines

'Technology', the building employs high-end materials to minimise energy usage and the environmental impact of the lifespan of the building. High-performance glazing improves daylight filtering on each floor.

THE BUILDING
EMPLOYS HIGH-END
MATERIALS TO
MINIMISE ENERGY
USAGE

optimising overall energy efficiency. Renewable energy is sourced by a rooftop solar array and used to deliver workers' needs, while water is harvested from the structure and reclaimed for use in bathrooms and irrigation.

One of FWPA's major campaigns in recent years has been alerting building designers to the importance of including biophilic elements in their work - exposed timbers and other natural elements that contribute to worker wellbeing and healthier workplaces. A range of organic and biodiverse materials have been used throughout the interiors that connect users with the environment beyond, along with outdoor terraces on floors 5 and 12.

"This move marks an exciting transition for our organisation, aligning with our commitment to support wood products, sustainability and innovation," said FWPA CEO, Andrew Leighton.

The new address is Level 6, 36 Wellington St, Collingwood, VIC 3066.

Free koala-friendly trees

Koala Conservation Australia and Forestry Corporation are growing a free local buffet for Mid North Coast NSW koalas.

KOALA Conservation Australia (KCA) has received its latest delivery of eucalypt seedlings for the annual community koala tree giveaway. KCA, based in Port Macquarie, has its own planting programs and also partners with local community groups and private landholders every year to expand the koalafriendly territory in the area.

The donation from Forestry Corporation consists of a variety of seedlings grown at its Grafton Nursery. Around 25,000 seedlings have been donated this year for local planting projects supporting koala populations on the Mid North Coast

KCA will use the feed tree species, which are favoured by



Forestry Corporation Senior Ecologist Chris Slade with KCA Business Development Manager Jane Ellis.

koalas, to support community and private planting programs. These plantings will improve connectivity through the creation of koala corridors while providing future food and habitat for koala populations on the Mid North Coast.

Forestry Corporation's Partnership Leader, Leah Moncrieff said the seedlings have now been delivered with KCA's koala tree giveaway starting last weekend.

"The seedlings can be ordered through the KCA website and picked up from the Koala Hospital grounds in Port Macquarie for bush regeneration plantings, community plantings and private landholder plantings," Moncrieff said.

"Forestry Corporation is passionate about koalas and is excited to support KCA's efforts in providing the seedlings to the public. The seedlings come with easy-to-follow information from Forestry Corporation to ensure successful growth.

"These resources, available from KCA, can assist in selecting the right species to be planted in the right location, when and how to plant, how to alleviate ongoing risks and listing maintenance of the seedlings until they become established."

The initiative between KCA and Forestry Corporation, started five years ago, and has now seen more than 150,000 koala feed trees donated to the Koala Hospital for distribution to local landowners and community groups.

KCA General Manager Maria Doherty said the koala tree delivery has been gratefully received.

"KCA and Forestry
Corporation have a great
relationship working together
to improve koala conservation
in our local region, through
tree plantings, tree giveaways
and partnering at Guulabaa
where the world's first wild
koala breeding program has
commenced," Ms Doherty said.

KCA Conservation Manager, Scott Castle said the koala feed tree delivery is perfectly timed with ongoing works at Guulabaa – Place of the Koala – in Cowarra State Forest.

"We will be using some of this year's donated trees to regenerate bushland areas and landscape at Guulabaa for the new Wild Koala Breeding Program," Castle said.

To learn about KCA or obtain food trees, click here.

To find out more about Forestry Corporation's community partnerships, click here.

STOP PRESS! \$13 million forestry funding package

STATE Minister for Regional NSW, Tara Moriarty, is scheduled to be joined by Carlie Porteous from Softwood Timber Group and James Jooste from Australian Forest Products to announce a \$13 million forestry funding package in Southern NSW this morning.

The announcement, made at Murraguldrie State Forest, is expected to promise funding that will provide much-needed protection of critical timber supplies in the Murray region in the lead up to the next bushfire season.

Murraguldrie State Forest was lucky to escape a major blaze in adjacent private plantations in the



Tara Moriarty, State Minister for Regional NSW.

severe 2014 bushfires. It's a close neighbour of Tumut and Tumbarumba, which were both severely affected by the 2019–20 Black Summer Fires, so the package will be warmly welcomed by foresters and the communities depending on their work in the region.

See next week's Enews for more.

New Tasmanian resource

Private Forests Tasmania has launched an interactive knowledge hub.

INTEGRATING forestry into private land uses is shaping up to be the fastest way to expand Australia's plantation resource for future needs.

But many land managers have questions or hold false beliefs arising out of historical plantation schemes. To deliver answers and combat myths, Private Forests Tasmania has launched an interactive Knowledge Hub for Tasmanian landowners to learn about the positive impact integrating commercial trees can have on their properties.

The Tree Alliance Knowledge Hub and its content have been developed in consultation with a broad scope of state and nationally renowned forestry, agricultural and biodiversity experts to ensure landowners can glean the best advice

and support from the information resources.

The \$400,000
project was
supported by
the TAS Farm
Innovation Hub
through funds
from the Australian
Government's
Future Drought
Fund, PFT and
supported by 10 other
stakeholder project partners.

The Knowledge Hub, developed by Walker Designs and Cavalletti Communications, consolidates accessible and user-friendly information and tools that highlight how integrating trees on farms through whole-farm planning can improve farm resilience through environmental and



The Knowledge Hub links landowners to a range of tools, case studies and ???

economic shocks such as droughts.

It includes case studies of farmers and other land managers who have successfully integrated forestry, expert advice and a wide range of resources.

Included in the hub is PFT's new Farm and Forest Mapper, developed by Esk Spatial, in consultation with Private Forests Tasmania and the Forest Practices Authority
This is a free set of
mapping and decision
support tools and
calculators where users
can easily plan, map and
manage their properties
to expand their plantation
estate and leverage
the multiple benefits
that trees on farms can
provide.

PFT CEO Dr Elizabeth Pietrzykowski said, "Longerterm, we hope the outcomes of this project will be more trees of the right type, in the right places across the agricultural landscape, improved farming businesses' drought resilience and better carbon and other natural capital asset outcomes."

To visit the Knowledge Hub, click here.



Tackling invasive pests and diseases

FWPA is working closely with researchers around Australia to fortify forestry.

PESTS and diseases are major threats to the forest sector around the country, but there are a lot of very clever researchers working across Australia to spot the risks earlier and solve existing problems.

In Western Australia, the impact of invasive eucalyptus weevils (*Gonipterus spp.*) on growth rates in *Eucalyptus globulus* plantations is a serious impediment to sustainable hardwood production in the region.

These pests can cause between 40% and 80% defoliation to shoot tips and the upper crown, which can reduce total tree growth by up to 30%.

Since August 2022, Dr Andy Howe of the University of the Sunshine Coast has led research to identify hostmatched, effective parasitoid wasp populations in the Green Triangle for release in Western Australia. The goal is to improve biological control of eucalyptus weevils.

The research is particularly important considering the invasive range of the weevils covers all Western Australian hardwood plantations, alongside increasing pressure against the use of neonicotinoids, which industry currently relies on in new and most two to three-year-old plantations.





1/ Eucalyptus weevil defoliation to upper crown showing feeding on bark of upper shoots leading to loss of apical dominance. Photo: Simon Lawson, USC

2/ Young eucalyptus weevil larvae and feeding damage on newly expanding foliage. Simon Lawson, USC

This work is expected to be completed by the end of July 2024. For details, click here.

Effective plantation health surveillance is essential to identify and diagnose damage and enable targeted management including chemical application, and strategic assessments including yield impact analysis.

A new project led by
Dianne Patzel (University
of South Australia) and Dr
Christine Stone (NSW Dept.
of Primary Industries) and
managed through Flinders
University in collaboration with
Professor David Bruce, aims
to compare a range of satellite
and airborne remote sensing
methods with traditional forest
health assessment methods.

This will create a costbenefit analysis relating to plantation health surveillance that builds on collaborative approaches already being trialled in the Green Triangle.

The research will provide recommendations on the capabilities, benefits and associated costs of several currently available satellite and airborne systems. For more detail, click here.

Then there's the team developing and validating rapid diagnostic protocols for exotic pests and diseases. They're working to create new species and genera-specific protocols, alongside environmental DNA (eDNA) approaches to enhance detection of target and nontarget species. The protocols will be designed to support the diagnostic laboratories handling the anticipated rise in samples from the National Forest Biosecurity Surveillance Program, as well as providing capabilities for rapid in-field diagnostics.

For more information click here.

Finally, a new FWPA project is designed to help secure social license for tree removal to increase the success of exotic pest eradication programs.

This proved a significant challenge in a previous, failed Giant Pine Scale eradication program conducted in Melbourne, where there was public pushback against the removal of infected trees.

The project will gauge the current public understanding and acceptance of tree removal in urban landscapes during an eradication response. It will also provide biosecurity agencies and stakeholders with tools to help educate and gain (and sustain) social license for tree removal due to exotic pest incursions as necessary to protect our environment.

For more information click here.



An industry services company working to grow the forest and wood products market Visit us at fwpa.com.au

Stopping bark beetles

New drone detections and big data analysis offer hope, while new incursions in the UK show the beetle's worrying spread.

EUROPEAN forest resources have been having a very trying few years. Geopolitics aside, climate change is dramatically increasing the impacts of endemic pests on stressed trees, as well as the risks from drought, fires and more.

In recent months the relentless attempts of the European spruce bark beetle (Ips typographus L.) to gain a local foothold have continued across the UK, with a new outbreak recently recorded in East Anglia.

The beetles bore into spruce timber and, if in sufficient numbers, can even attack healthy trees, killing large numbers of trees and causing significant economic impacts. Their numbers boom with wetter winters and drier summers and recent years have caused large-scale forest damage in Norway and Sweden.

The resulting damage lowers the availability of timbers or the quality of timber coming from the affected forest resources. And while it does lead to an increase in available low-grade timber and may lower prices at that end of the market, it adds significant costs elsewhere.

The UK is still conducting a valiant effort to contain the beetle's spread, since its first British sighting in 2018.

"We are conducting a swift investigation including rapid eradication measures, alongside wider environment surveillance to determine the scale of the issue and identify additional suitable management actions," said UK Forestry Commission spokesperson Andrea Deol.





1/ The European spruce bark beetle, Ips typographus. Image: Gilles San Martin, CC.
 2/ Woodland affected by an Ips typographus incursion (inset: breeding galleries in the bark). Image: UK Forestry Commission.

"All landowners, managers and timber processors should remain vigilant for *lps typographus*. It is important for landowners to continue to check the health of spruce trees on their land, especially as temperatures rise and we enter the next flight season."

The beetles were originally thought to have been imported through biomaterials, but it is now considered likely that they have flown to the UK across the Channel, which is reflected in the major locations where they have been found.

Most outbreaks in the UK have been in the southeast, particularly in Kent and East Sussex, and have been managed by declaring eradication sites and conducting sanitation felling, coupled with traps and surveillance.

Scientists are looking for ways to assist and target these efforts. Last year, the European Commission announced success using big data modelling to indicate risk of bark beetle attacks in Norway spruce forests.

Researchers looked at which environmental characteristics of Norway spruce forests were most correlated with risk of bark beetle outbreaks, using modelling to analyse a large data set covering a 48 600-square-kilometre area in south-east Sweden.

Using patterns revealed by modelling, they were able to identify key risk factors for severe beetle outbreaks. For example, spruce and mixed coniferous forest (where 70% or more of crown cover is made up of spruce, or pine and spruce) were at higher risk of attack than those with a mix of deciduous and coniferous trees (where neither make up more than 70% of crown cover). This effect was more pronounced during normal weather - mixed forests of deciduous and coniferous trees were similarly susceptible during drought.

Click here for more.

Now, another team is publishing their new research in the journal *Frontiers in Forests and Global Change* showing the results of a drone-based detection study.

Current management strategies rely on the timely detection of recently attacked spruce trees, which is challenging given the difficulty in spotting symptoms on infested tree crowns. Bark beetle population density is one of many factors that can affect infestation rate and symptoms development.

This study compares the appearance of early symptoms in endemic and epidemic bark beetle populations using high-resolution UAV multispectral imagery.

Results show that high bark beetles population density triggers a more rapid and intense response regarding the emergence of symptoms. Infested trees were detected at least one month before symptoms became evident to the human eye in epidemic sites.

While the early detection was not possible in endemic sites, for regions where the beetles are moving in or back, this early-detection approach could allow automatic diagnosis of bark beetle infestations and provide useful guidance for the management of areas suffering pest outbreaks.

To be notified when the paper goes live, click here and follow the links.

Wood and coffee improve concrete

RMIT and a Victorian council are trialling a world-first with wood- and coffee-concrete footpaths.

ONE environmental problem construction seems stuck with is the amount of concrete in many builds. From slab building styles to hybrid tall towers, concrete currently remains a necessary ingredient. So researchers have been looking at ways to lower concrete's environmental cost.

One such project is currently getting an unusual proof of concept test in Victoria. RMIT University has teamed up with Macedon Ranges Shire Council to conduct a world-first coffeeand wood chip-concrete footpath trial.

The trial comes out of research into replacing sand in concrete with biochar. Sand is an increasingly scarce resource and is often mined in environmentally fragile areas. It can also include extensive transport costs, both in cash and carbon. Biochar, on the other hand, can be produced from a wide variety of organic waste materials that currently go to local landfills. Organic waste cannot be added directly to concrete because it would decompose over time and weaken the building material. So the RMIT School of Engineering team, led by Dr Rajeev Roychand, turned a selection of promising options into biochar using a low-energy process without oxygen at 350° Celsius.

"There's a big challenge around organic waste ending up in landfills," said Roychand. "It represents about 3% of Australia's greenhouse gas emissions. Our research team is focusing on transforming this waste into a valuable resource for the construction industry."





The trials focus on biochars made from wood chips and from coffee grounds, which replaced up to 15% of sand in the concrete mix for the coffee biochar and 10% for the wood biochar. Both showed a significant increase in strength for the resulting concrete, with coffee being calculated at a 30% improvement.

Now, both biochar mixes have been laid as everyday footpaths in Gisborne. Shane Walden, Council's Director of Assets and Operations, was pleased to be working with RMIT on this innovative project.

"We're taking those experiments and putting them in ground and in the field today," Walden said. "We're going to have people walking across the concrete that includes these products and RMIT is going to be coming back and doing testing to see how they stand up.



1/ The RMIT team, (L-R) Prof Jie Li, Dr Rajeev Roychand and Dr Mohammad Saberian.

A coffee concrete footpath in Macedon Ranges Shire.
 Biochar made from wood (left) and coffee (right) both strengthened the concrete they were used in.

All images: courtesy RMIT

"Despite the fact that we're using coffee grounds and mulch in the concrete, residents aren't going

to really see or smell any difference in this concrete product.

"It's really important for Council to be involved in projects such as this and to be working closely hand in hand with universities such as RMIT. This not only helps improve the knowledge level of our contractors and our staff, but it also has lots of other benefits and benefits that are important to our community, including helping the environment, acting sustainably and, most importantly, reducing waste to landfill and having a circular economy."

While the Gisborne project uses standard thicknesses of concrete paving, the increases in strength achieved in the lab raise the potential of biocharusing concretes allowing

engineers to lower the amount of concrete used in builds to achieve the same strength and stability, delivering cost, weight and environmental benefits.

"We are currently working in the supply chain sector so that we can make this research into a mainstream product for commercial applications," Roychand said.

"Every biochar produced from a different organic material comes with varying composition, in addition to the difference in carbon content, particle size and absorbency, that can boost the performance of concrete in a range of ways."

There are several upcoming infrastructure projects around Victoria that plan to use the biochar concrete, the RMIT team will partner with Australian-owned BildGroup – a civil infrastructure, asphalt paving and road profiling company – to deliver these circular-economy projects.

You can read more on the team's research by clicking here or clicking here.

Future tradie worries

A crackdown on immigration and private education suppliers leads to worries the next gen of tradies won't be sufficient.

THE ABC reports that the peak body for for independent tertiary education providers is predicting mass closures of 150 vocational colleges over the next two years, with a further 250 at risk due to government reforms to slash migration and crack down on the private college sector.

While there are definitely some underperforming suppliers that are focused on business rather than education, there are also worries that the result will be insufficient training resources now and ongoing reputational damage in the education and training sectors.

Troy Williams, chief executive of the Independent Tertiary Education Council Australia, said, "We've seen providers who've typically been in operation for 20–30 years letting off 50–60 staff out of a total complement of 400."

The reforms include a cap on international students as part of a bid to ease the housing crisis. Click here to hear the full story.

Meanwhile, the HIA has flagged that any boosting apprentice numbers must



Concerns are being raised about training for the people who will build Australia's future housing supply. Image: Shutterstock

also be a key focus for the Federal Government.

"The number of new apprentices entering the building industry will not be sufficient to fill the labour supply gap that will prevent the industry reaching the Housing Accord's target of building 1.2 million new homes over the next five years," said Geordan Murray, HIA executive director, future workforce.

HIA recently made a substantial submission to the Apprenticeship Incentive System Review, listing a number of recommendations that should be closely considered.

"Trade apprenticeships are the gateway into a wide range of careers in the construction industry," Murray said.

"The government's
Strategic Review of the
Apprenticeship Incentive
System must look at all levers
to significantly boost the
number of new apprentices.
The apprenticeship incentive
system should provide
a holistic approach to
supporting apprentices on
their journey to become fully
qualified trades people. These
should include financial and
non-financial supports."

HIA is calling for industry-

based mentoring and career advice, programs to drive cultural change, and linking incentives to apprentice experience and wages, as well as financial support for the businesses who are creating the employment and training opportunities for apprentices.

"The investment and time that employers make in training apprentices is significant," said Murray. "To increase the capacity of the construction industry's workforce we need more employers who are willing to make that investment.

"We cannot train more apprentices without employers. Easing the cost of employing and training apprentices will encourage more businesses to create more training opportunities.

"The shortage of skilled trades workers is one of the top issues currently facing the building industry in Australia. If the Government is fully committed to reaching the goal of building 1.2 million homes, then no stone should be left unturned to address skills shortages."

To download HIA's full submission, click here.

From P 8

"Inveresk library looks to an exciting future by evolving the traditional library concept in a way that ensures everyone can

MOST IMPORTANT
FEATURE
INTERNALLY WOULD
BE THE EXPOSED
TIMBER STRUCTURE

feel welcome and supported here.

"The space brings together students, staff, community and industry in a central, dynamic and inclusive learning destination which encourages the discovery of new knowledges, the



Architect Manuel Castrini focused on sustainable materials that would create a welcoming environment. Image: Tasmanian Timber

exchange of ideas, innovation and in-person connections.

"To have the country's best academic library here is a testimony to how the project team and many Launceston communities co-designed this space working collaboratively at the speed of trust."

Tasmanian oak acoustic panels help minimise the spread of noise. Image: Wardle Studio

New Zealand hybrid systems

These mixed-material builds are accelerating and embracing the uptake of mass timber.

By MICHAEL SMITH

A HYBRID
Buildings Seminar
held in Auckland
late last year
generated
widespread
professional
interest in
improving best
practice in the
construction
industry, especially
as it relates to
engineered timber.

Post the event, I looked at some of the key points that emerged from the seminar and considered

two New Zealand education sector projects that are pushing the boundaries of timber construction.

The seminar hosts, Dr Robert Finch, Director of Timber Unlimited (TU) and Dr Daniel Moroder, President of the Timber Design Society (TDS), pointed out that using timber as part of a hybrid structure can solve design challenges and create structurally efficient, robust, low-carbon solutions that will help New Zealand transition to a low emissions economy.

Among the impressive range of speakers was Andrea Stocchero from the Ministry of Primary Industries (MPI). He noted that a hybrid system that includes mass timber structural members can provide additional benefits to the performance of steel and/or concrete structures alone.

"When projects include timber, they not only add visual warmth to the finished



AUT A1: builds on the university's legacy of highly sustainable development. Photo: Jasmax

build, they can optimise strength and flexibility, [plus] provide improved durability, fire performance and support, and lower carbon emissions to address sustainability criteria. To achieve these potential improvements, though, optimising procedures at the early concept design stage is critical."

Andrew Hewitt of Red Stag TimberLab explained that designing for manufacturing and assembly (DfMA) is critical for engineered timber components. Local manufacturing capacity is limited at the moment, sometimes leading to longer lead times for mass timber elements, which can interfere with smooth construction timelines.

TIMBER WEIGHS
FOUR TO FIVE TIMES
LESS THAN STEEL
OR CONCRETE

An understanding of such challenges, designing efficient solutions, and the early involvement of manufacturing suppliers are essential to achieving a successful outcome.

Also speaking at the seminar was Nikki Vance (from Dunning Thornton Consultants) who presented a case study of 90 Devonport Road, Tauranga. When completed it will be an eightstorey curtain wall structure with lateral steel bracing and a CLT core.

A hybrid structure was chosen as the most efficient solution for the intended purpose and location, negating the unfavourable ground conditions where structural loads needed to be minimised.

(Given that timber weighs four to five times less than steel or concrete, foundation systems and depths can be significantly reduced – something that is becoming

increasingly recognised in the industry.)

Blair Tipler (Kobe Construction) talked of his firm's experiences when building Clearwater Quays Apartments – a precisionengineered, five-level residential block that featured a number of mass timber elements.

He emphasised the ability of mass timber to be prefabricated to extremely tight tolerances as part of a hybrid structure – which led to shorter construction sequences and rapid onsite installation (resulting in minimal disruption to neighbouring properties).

Tipler noted that structural steel must also be specified to tight tolerances that match those of mass timber. Low precision welds can warp steel members by millimetres, which means contractors must spend additional time adjusting panels, beams and/ or columns to ensure correct jointing.

He added that it was crucial to manage the moisture content across all timbers delivered to site – for example, keeping the LVL under cover with good airflow and convenient access.

AUT A1

Among a number of innovative timber builds under way in the New Zealand education sector is Auckland University of Technology's A1 project, due to be completed this year.

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The architects (Jasmax) say A1 builds on the university's legacy of "highly sustainable development, placing student success and wellbeing at the heart of the design".

It comprises a new 5,000m2 four-storey timber building, plus the refurbishment and adaptive reuse of a four-storey, 40-year-old steel and concrete building – connected by a five-storey LVL atrium with steel bracing.

Jasmax adds that A1 is an LVL posttensioned frame structure with a timber Potius floor system, which is similar to a timber Double Tee. "It all sits on a one-metredeep concrete

raft foundation, which is enabled by the lightweight structure. The use of heavier materials would have required 50-m-deep piles to reach solid rock."

THE LIVING PĀ

Also scheduled for completion this year is the Living Pā, situated on Victoria University's Wellington campus – a pioneering example of mass engineered timber construction and green building "with deeprooted connections to Māori cultural values".

FOUNDATION
SYSTEMS AND
DEPTHS CAN BE
SIGNIFICANTLY
REDUCED





 $1/\,$ The Living Pā: a pioneering example of mass engineered timber construction and green building.

2/ The Living Pā features a low-impact engineered timber framework to help overcome geological and seismic issues.

A case study released by Mid-Rise Wood Construction says the project aims to transform Te Herenga Waka Marae "into a globally renowned hub of environmental responsibility". Further, it seeks "to embody Māori beliefs, values and passions, guiding countless individuals towards reconnecting with their natural heritage".

No less ambitious is the project's goal of achieving Living Building Certification under the International Living Futures Institute's Living Building Challenge (LBC) programme. Essentially, the Living Pā must be "energy, carbon, water and waste positive – and also actively contribute to the local ecology and community across a wide

array of criteria".

Located in a high-profile urban location on challenging, steep terrain, the project features a low-impact engineered timber framework to help overcome complex geological and seismic problems.

Having now passed the halfway point in construction, the Living Pā has overcome a number of difficulties – including moisture management, supply chain issues related to the pandemic and peer reviewing of sometimes unfamiliar mass timber processes.

But, as the case study notes, the project "exemplifies the potential for sustainable building practices to lead us into a regenerative future".

Source: Timber Trader News



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