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COVER STORY P 3

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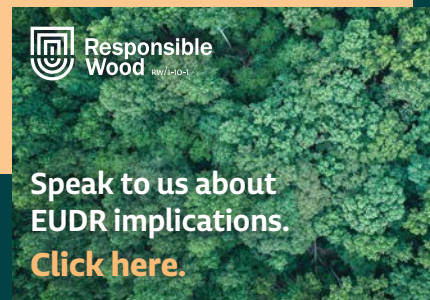
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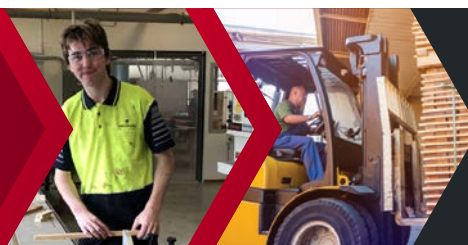
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Sailing into housing headwinds

Tradie shortages and soaring costs are the bad news for new builds, but at least home building approvals are on the way up again.

ACROSS Australia, home values were up 0.7% in June and over 8% for the year, with all capital cities except Melbourne posting a lift and Perth leading the pack with 2% for the month and 23% for the year, thanks to interstate migration.

It's good news for investors, but a blow to people wanting to buy their first homes. And the news doesn't get better when it comes to our capacity to build those homes. Matt Mackey, chief construction: costs at building consultant Arcadis told the ABC's The Business on Monday that "There's no single issue... there's a combination of two or three. The main one is that the labour costs are going through the roof at this moment in time and there's an ongoing skills shortage which is projected to get worse. There are increasing levels of insolvency across the industry



1

1/ The Federal Government's starting line for its ambitious housing target was passed on Monday, but we'll be lucky to hit it say experts.

Image: Shutterstock

2/ Matt Mackey, chief construction: costs at building consultant Arcadis told the ABC that skills shortages were one of the major elements holding construction back.

Image: ABC News

and when you look at the data behind that, it's well above long-term trend and probably has been since the recovery from Covid... It doesn't show any signs of going back to normal."

Mackey flagged the future pipeline of public sector work as a concern,



2

both the ambitious housing targets set by State and Federal governments and local programs such as Queensland's health infrastructure goals and the Brisbane Olympics.




"If you're looking at the data, they are very ambitious goals," he said. "If you're looking at the last five to 10 years, what's been approved, what's been started on site and what's been delivered, those stats are well below the thresholds of what we're talking about at the moment in terms of housing targets."

"Even with good headwinds and the market responding as it normally would, they would still be considered very ambitious. With the issues we've got at the moment of rising labour costs, skills shortages, rising insolvencies, constrained capacity and constrained supply chains, it is going to be very interesting to see if we're going to get anywhere near it. Our projection is that we're probably going to fall short."

Despite his concerns that public sector needs will take up so much capacity that the private sector will be left struggling from both a valuation perspective and

Cont P 6

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Understanding EUDR implications

Responsible Wood is helping the Australian and New Zealand timber sector become certification-ready for the new regulatory environment.

By JONATHAN TIBBITS and MATT DE JONGH

AS the European Union Deforestation Regulation (EUDR) approaches its enforcement date in December 2024, Australian and New Zealand forest industries are keen to understand its implications. The EUDR bans the sale of commodities such as coffee, cocoa, cattle, palm oil, soy, and wood linked to deforestation and forest degradation. This regulation is part of the EU's broader strategy to combat environmental and climate challenges and ensure that products consumed within the EU do not contribute to global deforestation.

Forest certification schemes, such as PEFC (Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification), are well positioned to meet the majority of EUDR elements. Certification to AS/NZS 4708-2021 already provides a robust framework to help global supply chains achieve preliminary compliance with the regulation.

Certification plays a crucial role in verifying that forest management practices are sustainable and do not contribute to deforestation, ensuring that businesses can meet the stringent requirements set by the EUDR. However, there are some definitions and applications of the EUDR that do not appear to have catered to an Australian and New Zealand forest industry context.

In light of these developments, Responsible



1/ Responsible Wood CEO Simon Dorries presenting details to workshop attendees.

2/ Issues with how the legislation may need tweaking were also covered in the workshop and training sessions. Images: Courtesy Responsible Wood

Wood recently visited New Zealand to engage with local industry stakeholders and provide essential information on the EUDR. The visit included a workshop and training session at the SCION Research Centre in Rotorua, aimed at enhancing the industry's understanding and compliance with international certification standards.

The workshop offered an in-depth overview of sustainable forest

management and chain of custody certification practices in both New Zealand and Australia. It served as a platform for knowledge sharing, networking, and professional development within the forestry sector. Attendees gained insights into Responsible Wood's activities in the region and globally through PEFC.

Simon Dorries, CEO of Responsible Wood, highlighted the significance

of these events in fostering a collaborative approach to sustainable forestry. "Our goal is to support the New Zealand forest industry by providing the latest updates and insights on sustainable forest management and certification. This workshop demonstrates our commitment to promoting best practices and enhancing the industry's ability to meet global standards," he said.

CHAIN OF CUSTODY

The training session focused specifically on chain of custody certification, providing valuable information to current and potential certificate holders. Participants learned about the principles of PEFC chain of custody, methods, controlled source risk assessments, claims and label use and relevant legislation, standards and codes of practice. This session was particularly timely given the impending EUDR.

Matt de Jongh, sustainability manager at Responsible Wood, emphasised the importance of this training in light of these new requirements. "With the EUDR set to be enforced from December 2024, it is crucial for our certificate holders to be well-prepared. Our training equips them with the necessary tools and knowledge to ensure compliance with this ambitious legislation, which aims to make global supply chains deforestation-free," he explained.

Cont P 9

New Queensland sustainable timber policy

LAST week, Queensland Premier Steven Miles, along with Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment Cameron Dick launched their government's landmark 30-year Queensland Sustainable Timber Industry Framework.

The package seeks to balance timber sector jobs, with \$200 million in funding securing jobs and supply, with environmental concerns – establishing the new Greater Glider Forest Park.

Timber Queensland, the state's peak body for the forest and timber industry, has responded to the framework with cautious support.

"A key issue facing the industry is a lack of policy certainty over future access to public and privately managed native forests for sustainable hardwood



From left: Member for Maryborough Bruce Saunders, Deputy Premier Cameron Dick, Premier Steven Miles, Mark Raguse of the AWU and Fraser Coast Mayor George Seymour at the policy launch.

production, as well as minimal incentives and measures to promote plantation and farm forestry expansion to increase timber supply," said Timber Queensland CEO Mick Stephens.

"The Queensland Sustainable Timber Industry Framework policy announced by the Government addresses a number of recommendations

put forward by industry, although we remain cautious about the levels of available supply and impacts on the local hardwood sector until we receive further clarification around the policy," Stephens said.

"We welcome the Government's recognition of the importance of the industry for housing materials and the

need to build our sovereign capability in timber production which supports local jobs."

Timber Queensland gave its support to several of the broad policy commitments made by the Government, including:

- maintaining a baseline with no reduction in timber supply levels between 2025 and the end of 2034 and that industry needs 'contractual certainty', which should help provide the confidence for the native hardwood sector to invest where 10 years of state resource security is contractually provided;
- establishment of a Category F land use, which can provide private native forest owners the confidence to undertake applied management through a long-term right to harvest with an appropriate

Cont P 11

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Inflation worries for construction

An inflation uptick and engineering activity downturn foreshadow further economic challenges.

MASTER Builders Australia has raised concerns about the need for serious action to bring down building costs and increase housing supply. Rising housing costs were one of the biggest monthly drivers of monthly inflation, with last week's figure bumping up from 3.6% to 4%, the worst result since November.

Rent prices are 7.5% higher than a year ago while the cost of new dwelling purchases is up 4.9% yoy.

"Inflation is a capacity killer, making investment more expensive and less attractive," said Master Builders CEO Denita Wawn.

"On the ground, we continue to hear projects for new homes, commercial or infrastructure construction simply don't stack up because it takes too long to build and is too costly.

"If we don't get inflation under control and urgently start boosting housing supply we are in for a lengthy period of pain and depressed construction activity."



Construction engineering declined in the March quarter for the first time since 2022. Image: Shutterstock

Wawn also raised concerns about the March quarter engineering construction data released by the ABS last week, showing its first decline in two years.

The volume of engineering construction dropped by 2.3% during the March 2024 quarter, affecting both public sector and private sector projects.

This reverse in engineering construction activity is ominous given that it was previously the main source of

growth in the industry.

All three pillars of construction activity are now moving backwards, Wawn warned.

"We know governments have acknowledged that more reform is needed to reduce

“IT'S TIME TO BRING BACK AN INDUSTRY-SPECIFIC REGULATOR WITH REAL TEETH

building costs but the rubber needs to hit the road," she said.

"Bringing down housing and rental inflation can only be achieved once we get a move on and speed up planning reforms, address tradie shortages through domestic and skills migration pathways, reform the regulatory environment, and scrap damaging elements of recent IR changes."

Wawn said that an aggressive construction union was negatively impacting the sector's ability to deliver: "Looking ahead, Australia's economic challenges will only be compounded by new pattern enterprise bargaining agreements rolling out across the industry which will increase costs and drag productivity backwards.

"Enough is enough. It's time to bring back an industry-specific regulator with real teeth and restore confidence in the building and construction industry," she concluded.

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BW/1-10-1

From P 2

in terms of finding enough actual bodies to work on sites, Mackey has some optimism around there being a degree of self-levelling inherent in the sector's ability to find bodies, with delays in public sector projects balancing out issues like interest rates that have bigger impacts on the private sector.

"The cliff isn't necessarily as steep as we think it's going to be, but there is a lot of work out there and we do have a diminishing supply chain and delivering capacity to deliver it all," he concluded. [Click here for the whole interview.](#)

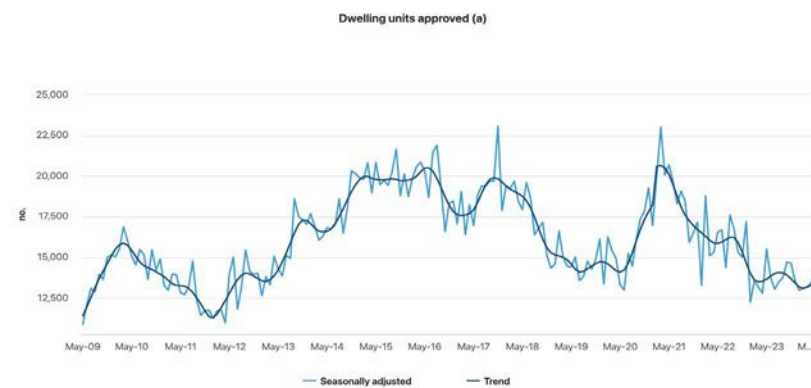
In slightly more cheerful news, home building approvals in May have lifted from the decade-low levels they previously hit. New ABS data shows detached house approvals increased by 1.3% and multi-unit approvals increased by 14.3% from a very low base.

"Detached approvals in the three months to May 2024 are up by 10% compared to the same period in the previous year," said HIA chief economist Tim Reardon. "Multi-unit approvals remain 19.1% lower than in the same period in the previous year.

"There have been 163,760 total dwelling approvals over the most recent 12 months to May 2024. This is well below the 240,000 new homes needed each year from 1 July 2024 to achieve National Cabinet's goal.

"Addressing tax, planning, land and regulatory constraints will be necessary to increasing the supply of homes in Australia," Reardon added.

In seasonally adjusted terms, approvals in the three months to May 2024 saw an increase of 51.1% in Western Australia compared to the same period in 2023. This was



a. Trend break added to "Total dwelling units approved" trend series for February 2021
Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Building Approvals, Australia May 2024



a. Trend break added to "Private sector houses" trend series for February 2021
Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Building Approvals, Australia May 2024

- 1/ Overall dwelling approvals went up in May, turning around recent declines.
- 2/ Both detached houses and multi-res builds improved, the latter off significant lows.

followed by Victoria (+10.0%). Other states and territories recorded declines over the same period, led by New South Wales (-21.6%), followed by South Australia (-6.0%) and Queensland (-4.8%).

Meanwhile, July 1 saw another 50,000 new places made available in the Home Guarantee Scheme. Minister for Housing Julie Collins announced that the places will be made available across the Home Guarantee Scheme's three categories:

- The First Home Guarantee – 35,000 places a year;
- The Regional First Home Buyer Guarantee – 10,000 places until 30 June 2025; and
- The Family Home Guarantee – 5,000 places until 30 June 2025.

"Our significant improvements to the Home Guarantee Scheme has helped



Minister for Housing Julie Collins says the Home Guarantee Scheme has helped over 110,000 people.
Image: Julie Collins Facebook

more than 110,000 people into home ownership across the country," said Collins.

"And Labor wants to help tens of thousands more through Help to Buy, our shared equity scheme which could help Australians save up to 40% on the cost of their mortgage.

"It won't just be a leg up into home ownership with savings

from a smaller deposit – Help to Buy will provide long term mortgage relief to Australians who are part of the scheme."

HIA was just one of the industry groups who have expressed support for the scheme. "Under the First Home Guarantee, an eligible first home buyer can purchase a property with a deposit of as little as 5%, while through the Family Home Guarantee a single parent with dependents can purchase a home with a deposit of as little as 2%," said Simon Croft, HIA Chief Executive, Industry & Policy.

"The Guarantees offer help to those

Australians looking to buy their first home, recognising that saving for a deposit is the largest obstacle to achieving home ownership. With the current cost pressures on households, a first home buyer is facing years to save a deposit and in that time they risk being priced out of the market."

Croft noted that in 2022-23, more than a third of Guarantees were issued to regional buyers and more than half of the places on the Scheme went to people under 30.

"HIA has always maintained that owning your own home is the best form of financial and personal security a person can have. The Home Guarantee Scheme goes a long way to helping that dream become a reality and HIA looks forward to its continued success," Croft said.

JULY**22: WA Field Day - Plantation Forestry - Chowerup Hall, Chowerup, WA 9.30am-4.00pm WAST.**

Forest Australia's WA branch field day focusing on plantation forestry. Join hosts PF Olsen, discussing topics including ongoing Blue Gum operations, conversion operations between agriculture/blue gum/pine, as well as carbon, conservation, and stewardship. For more info visit <https://www.forestry.org.au/wa-events/>

25-26: AIBS WA Chapter Conference - Crown Perth, Great Eastern Highway, Burswood. While specifically targeted at Australian Institute of Building Surveyors members, the conference will be looking at issues across the built environment from decarbonising construction to legislative updates, insurance and Standards. WoodSolutions is sponsoring Dr David Bylund of TMBR Consult in his presentation: Fire Compliance - NCC 2022 Made Easy with WoodSolutions. The two-day conference also includes a sundowner for networking on Thursday night.

For full details and to book, go to <https://aibs.com.au/2024-Conferences--Events/WA-Chapter-Conference-2024/ProgramandSpeakers.aspx>

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

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

7: WFTN 'Cocktails for Charity' event, 2.00 - 6.00pm - Loft West End, Brisbane. Join us for an afternoon of cocktails and charity to support RizeUp, an organisation dedicated to providing life-changing practical assistance to families affected by domestic and family violence. Tickets on sale soon.

13: NTHA NSW/ACT State Awards - Hilton, Sydney.

Join us in celebrating the New South Wales & ACT Timber and Hardware Industry. Nominations open at <https://www.ntha.com.au/events/2024-nswact-state-awards-nominations/> Contact Tahlia at events@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

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 www.forestryconference.com.au/

NOVEMBER

13-15: AFCA annual Gala dinner & conference - Launceston, Tas. For more information visit: <https://www.afca.asn.au/Events/afca-2023-conference-photo-gallery>

SAVE THE DATES 2025

MARCH 22: NTHA SA/NT/WA State Awards - National Wine Centre, Adelaide. Join us in celebrating the SA, NT & WA Timber and Hardware Industry. Contact Tahlia at events@ntha.com.au

MAY 30: NTHA QLD State Awards - Brisbane City Hall, Brisbane. Join us in celebrating the New South Wales & ACT Timber and Hardware Industry. Contact Tahlia at events@ntha.com.au

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

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Plan B for a Bronco

TAFE Queensland is helping Cory Paix to plan for success whenever his football career concludes.

IT'S a very rare week in Origin Season when neither NSW residents nor Queenslanders are running from the mention of all things Rugby League. So let's celebrate this fleeting moment with a good news story about Brisbane Broncos Hooker Cory Paix, who has a back-up career in carpentry lined up and is doing his best to encourage youngsters into the trade.

Born and bred in Toowoomba, Paix has been playing in the NRL since 2020, but he says sticking true to his lifelong plan of a trade qualification to fall back on is just as important as his on field success.

Paix is nearing completion of a carpentry apprenticeship, studying the Certificate III in Carpentry (CPC30220), which he has been undertaking one day a week thanks to TAFE Queensland's flexible training options. Cory said he is glad he stuck with the trade and wants to encourage young people dreaming of a career in elite sport to consider one, also.

"Footy's not forever and you've got the rest of your life to think about. I believe that [if you're interested in] a carpentry apprenticeship – or any sort of trade – you should pursue that," Paix said.

"Certainly from a young age my father told me that you've always got to have a Plan B. I like the construction industry and started pursuing that goal in grade 10, and am currently



1/ Cory Paix with NRLW star Ali Briginshaw, TAFE Queensland Brisbane General Manager Brent Kinnane, and two Beyond the Broncos program students from Alexandra Hills State High School.

2/ Paix in the carpentry training area at TAFE Queensland's Alexandra Hills campus.

3/ Being on the way to completing his trade certification provides Cory Paix with peace of mind about his future career.

and the ease of access to flexible training methods and online training components.

"When the season rolls around, we get one day off a week and I spend most of my

time out on site completing my apprenticeship, the rest of the time in between I'm on the computer completing my TAFE online," Paix said.

"I work with a trainer by the name of Anthony Gregory and he's been so accommodating for me, he's helped me progress further on in my apprenticeship and I'm very grateful for that. My relationship with Anthony is very professional, he comes out on site at least once a month and makes sure that I'm up to date and where I need to be to keep my progression moving forward.

"I've worked with a lot of other training providers before

this, and I've found so far that TAFE Queensland does it the best."

TAFE Queensland trains 25,000 apprentices each year across industries ranging from bricklaying to baking, and apprentices choose a delivery mode that suits them and their employer best. Cory Paix is one of thousands of these apprentices who are accessing the Queensland Government's Free Apprenticeships for Under 25s funding to complete their training.

TAFE Queensland is also a Beyond the Broncos Community Partner, delivering training support to a course designed to enrich the learning experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in Years 10-12.

For more information about Vocational Education and Training visit tafeqld.edu.au or call 1300 308 233.

From P 3

Discussions during the visit also covered the EUDR and the benefits of certification in meeting these new requirements. The visit to New Zealand provided an opportunity to present PEFC International's EUDR Due Diligence Module, report back on the PEFC International Forest Forum in Paris in May and listen to stakeholder concerns. The EUDR, part of the EU's New Green Deal, is the world's most ambitious policy to address deforestation. It bans the sale of products linked to deforestation and introduces a benchmarking system to assign risk levels associated with deforestation and forest degradation.

PEFC, the world's largest forest certification scheme, has been proactive in aligning with the EUDR. A series of webinars in March provided certificate holders around the world with updates on the new legislation. "PEFC certification already addresses sustainability, legality, and due diligence, considering deforestation and forest degradation through our Sustainable Forest Management and Chain of Custody standards," stated the PEFC Working Group on EUDR.

The visit to New Zealand underscored the role of certification in helping businesses understand how they may comply with the EUDR. Certification schemes like PEFC are well-positioned to meet the EUDR's requirements, as they already consider environmental, social, and economic aspects of sustainable forest management, streamlining compliance processes for businesses.

Despite the positive strides towards compliance, there are growing concerns within

the Australian and New Zealand forest industries regarding the application, endorsement and definitions within the EUDR. Stakeholders have highlighted that certain aspects of the regulation may be out of touch with regional practices and lack clarity on key issues, such as the distinction between primary and plantation forests. These ambiguities could lead to challenges in interpreting and implementing the regulation, potentially disadvantaging local producers and complicating efforts to achieve certification. It is crucial for these concerns to be addressed to ensure that the regulation is both fair and effective in promoting sustainable forest management practices in our region.

Authorities will inspect varying percentages of operators and traders based on the risk level associated with their products' origin. These inspections aim to confirm compliance with the EUDR, ensuring that businesses effectively meet their obligations under the new regulation.

Responsible Wood's visit to New Zealand reinforced the importance of sustainable forest management and certification in the global effort to combat deforestation. Through workshops and training sessions, the organisation is empowering the New Zealand forest industry to meet international standards and comply with new regulations like the EUDR. As the industry moves forward, the role of certification will be paramount in ensuring sustainable practices and deforestation-free supply chains.

On the cover: Responsible Wood workshop attendees gather at the front of Scion's award-winning Te Whare Nui o Tuteata.

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Timber framing gets a boost

Christine Briggs to lead new FWPA campaign

FOREST and Wood Products Australia (FWPA) is set to spearhead an initiative highlighting the advantages of timber framing in construction, promising a significant boost to its promotion efforts.

First established in the Australian Forest Products Association's Softwood Manufacturing Chamber and funded by the Timber Framing Collective, the 'Timber Framing: The Ultimate Renewable' campaign will continue its success with a WoodSolutions

rebrand and be managed by FWPA.

To oversee the effort, FWPA has appointed former board member and Timber Framing Collective founding member Christine Briggs as campaign manager. Briggs brings a wealth of sales and marketing experience along with a breadth of industry knowledge, ensuring the campaign's ongoing success.

FWPA's Head of Build Environment and WoodSolutions Program, Kevin Peachey, said this campaign plays an important



Christine Briggs has a long history within the timber sector and is both well connected and respected.

role in supporting the forest and wood products industry: "Timber framing is a cost-effective, long-lasting and sustainable option for framing in construction, and we believe it should remain a part of the DNA of Australian homes.

"The timber framing industry employs over 45,000 people across the supply chain, providing significant job opportunities. By highlighting these advantages and promoting timber framing as the preferred material among builders, we can support our members and expand the market share of timber framing in Australia."

While up to 80% of detached houses are built with timber framing in an average year, the percentage drops off sharply when it comes to town houses, apartments and commercial buildings, despite timber having proven itself as a reliable material in these builds. Not only can the choice of timber as a framing material come with obvious carbon benefits, but its noise- and temperature-insulating properties lower end user costs and increase user satisfaction with the building.

"Under Christine's guidance,

FWPA can enhance its creative and strategic efforts to communicate this story to builders, developers, and the broader construction industry," said Peachey.

Ms Briggs expressed her enthusiasm for the campaign and the benefits it would have for suppliers, builders and consumers alike.

"From bolstering jobs and the supply chain to delivering cost-effective, renewable materials and creating high-quality, durable homes, timber framing is a success story from beginning to end," Briggs said.

"I am eager to spotlight this valuable product and highlight its essential role in Australian homes."

In addition to existing campaign funding provided by the Timber Framing Collective funding partners, FWPA has committed further investment to ensure the ongoing success of the campaign.

FWPA Head of Marketing and Communications, Sarah Downey, said FWPA is uniquely placed to use its well-established reach and influence to champion this message.

"FWPA's WoodSolutions program is a recognised brand across industry, with established connections and authority in the building design and construction sector," said Downey.

"By bringing the timber framing campaign under the WoodSolutions umbrella, we can expand its reach and increase funding opportunities."

FWPA will commence management of the campaign from 1 July 2024.

"TIMBER FRAMING INDUSTRY EMPLOYS OVER 45,000 PEOPLE ACROSS THE SUPPLY CHAIN"

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editors@timberandforestrynews.com

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Hello!
s B d f
? @ #
Dear Editor



From P 4

- management plan;
- support for forestry education and extension services so that farmers and landowners including First Nations can implement best forest management practices to increase timber productivity, environmental and forest health benefits;
- wood processing innovation support to increase resource recovery and downstream production efficiencies in the sector; and
- plantation and farm forestry expansion to increase future timber availability.

Timber Queensland said that it will be seeking assurances that:

- native hardwood permits are issued as soon as possible for permit holders from the former South-East Queensland (SEQ) supply zone through to 2026 based on current contract volumes

for compulsory sawlogs, optional sawlogs and poles;

- longer-term permits through to 2034 are put in place for equivalent volumes within a sustainable yield envelope for former SEQ permit holders as soon as possible;
- further detail is provided on the agreed state supply volume to be provided through to 2034 including location and resource quality from available crown land;
- adequate business assistance is provided for transport impacts from the reduction of harvest area in the South-East Queensland Regional Plan Area from January 2025, as well as for permits issued through to 2034 in terms of any changes in resource quality and mix of log grades and products from the sourcing of equivalent volumes from other crown land;
- the 'Category F' instrument be explored as an alternative



Mick Stephens, CEO of Timber Queensland, has given cautious support to the new policy.

environmental control for private native forestry activities, compared to the Vegetation Management Act which targets broad-scale agriculture and is not fit for purpose for sustainable timber production with selective harvesting practices; and

- priority be given to private native forestry extension which has significant potential to grow and increase timber supply over the next few decades.

Stephens noted, "Another issue has been a lack of investment in new plantations and farm forestry plantings. We are keen to work with government to promote the

right trees in the right place for future timber supply.

"Major impediments for farmers include high-up front costs of tree establishment, limited access to forestry management expertise and lack of awareness of the on-farm benefits such as shade and shelter for livestock and supplementary income from timber and carbon sequestration."

He called the \$200 million funding commitment "significant" and said, "if implemented appropriately [it] can position the industry with an opportunity to increase timber supply for housing and construction demand."

"Our mission is to protect and grow the Queensland timber industry and we will continue to hold the government of the day to account in terms of commitments, barriers and opportunities for growth," Stephens concluded.

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Stewards of the forest

How FSC-certified Timberlands Pacific Pty Ltd is meeting the environmental promise of sustainable forestry.

FROM endemic species to sacred sites, all natural habitats, especially forests, hold inherent conservation values. Those known as 'high conservation values' (HCVs) reserves encompass high biological, ecological, social and cultural significance.

Timberlands Pacific Pty Ltd (TPPL), an FSC-certified forestry organisation spanning Tasmania and the Green Triangle region of South Australia and Victoria, demonstrates its dedication to preserving these values. Through meticulous assessments, TPPL identifies and safeguards the ecological importance of its diverse forest estates, underscoring its leadership in sustainable forest management and biodiversity conservation.

The HCV approach, developed by FSC in the 1990s, serves to identify and manage critical values within production landscapes like TPPL's forests. This framework spans six categories – species diversity, landscape-level ecosystems, habitats, ecosystem services, community needs and cultural values – adopted across forestry and other sectors. Under FSC Principle 9, all certified forestry organisations are required to maintain and/or enhance these HCVs through a precautionary approach, ensuring proactive conservation and responsible resource management practices.



- 1/ Mosaic burning across the Werrikoo HCV has delivered ideal territory for both the heath mouse and the swamp antechinus.
- 2/ Small mammals are trapped in advance of conservation operations to check their distribution and health.
- 3/ The heath mouse, aka dayang, is an endangered native mouse that requires recently burnt vegetation to thrive.
- 4/ Scientists record details of each specimen trapped before releasing them to gain information on the population's overall health.

At the core of TPPL's operations lies the Penola Plantations, blending *Pinus radiata* plantations with natural vegetation pockets. Designated HCVs and other reserve types harbour a diverse array of flora and fauna, including rare or threatened species. TPPL's dedicated experts conduct thorough assessments to ascertain the ecological significance of these sites, highlighting their critical role in biodiversity conservation.

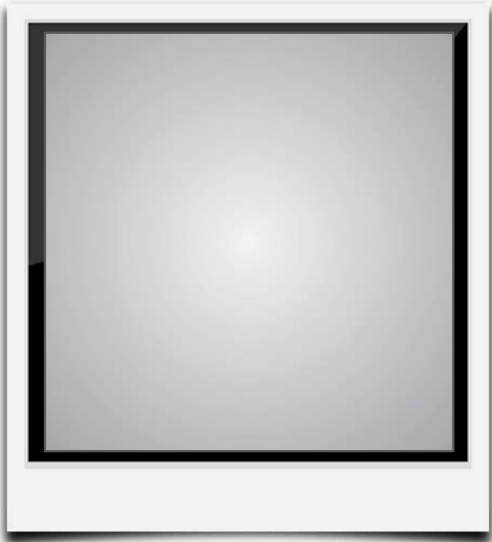
TPPL's approach to managing HCVs is guided by a profound respect for nature. Under the umbrella

of FSC Principle 9, TPPL identifies and manages HCVs potentially impacted by their activities. This proactive stance involves setting clear management objectives, implementing stringent operational controls and instituting robust verification and monitoring programs to ensure continual maintenance and/or improvement in conservation outcomes.

A TRIUMPH IN WESTERN VICTORIA

Six HCVs have been identified within the Penola Plantations estate, all falling under HCV class 3—forest areas containing rare, threatened, or endangered ecosystems. TPPL has recently undertaken enhancement efforts at the Werrikoo HCV in western Victoria, classified as 'Damp Heathland' within a 62-hectare depleted Ecological Vegetation Class. Flora assessments indicated

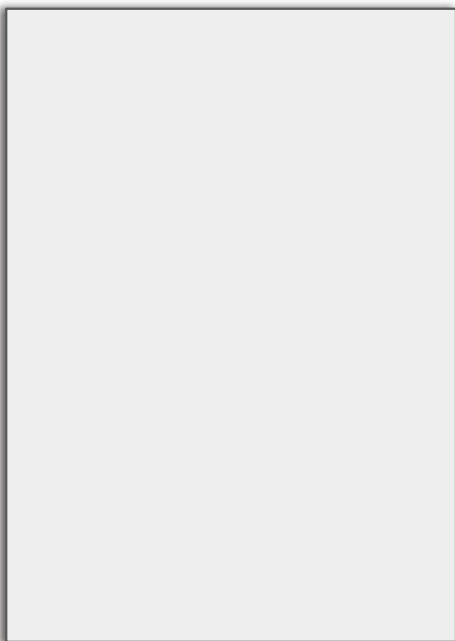
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the heath was ageing and required controlled burning for regeneration.

Since 2014, monitoring efforts at Werrikoo, including hair-tubes, camera surveys and small mammal trapping, have revealed significant wildlife presence. Notably, the nationally vulnerable swamp antechinus and the endangered heath mouse have been documented. The swamp antechinus thrives in long-unburnt habitats but faces threats from frequent burning. Conversely, the heath mouse adapts to environments shaped by



1/ The high conservation area rehabilitation is managed by the ecology team from the nearby working forests.

2/ This heath mouse looks similar to a swamp antechinus but has different teeth and very different habitat needs.

regular fires, with studies showing population declines as heath habitats mature.

To balance the needs of these species, TPPL collaborated with local experts to develop a mosaic burning strategy across Werrikoo. This approach involves planned

burns at different times and locations within the reserve to create diverse habitats. Targeted surveys, field assessments, and controlled burns were conducted in 2017, 2022 and most recently in autumn 2024. The Nature Glenelg Trust, partnering with TPPL, conducted preparatory trapping and surveys ahead of the 2024 autumn burn.

TPPL exemplifies the transformative impact of responsible forest management under the banner of FSC certification. Through their dedication to preserving HCVs and supporting biodiversity, TPPL not only protects Australia's native wildlife but also inspires a movement towards harmonious coexistence between humanity and the natural world. In this way, TPPL ensures that future generations inherit a planet rich in ecological wonders and sustainable resources.



“TO BALANCE THE NEEDS OF THESE SPECIES, A MOSAIC BURNING STRATEGY WAS USED AT WERRIKOO

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Image: AKD

Battle to save the Atherton Arboretum

Locals have applied to have the site listed on the Queensland Heritage Register, but the new owners have already begun knocking down trees.

FOR 50 years, the 500-plus mature trees at far north Queensland's Atherton Arboretum have been an important part of the Australian National Herbarium. With multiple rare species from the wet tropics, it was an important educational tool and regularly used by botanists, students, ecologists, naturalists, plant enthusiasts and members of the public.

In late 2021, concerned locals posted to the Atherton Tablelands Facebook group flagging that the CSIRO had closed public access to the site and raising concerns the organisation was planning to sell the property. With funding stripped from the Maunds Road Tropical Forest Research Centre – the facility's name at the time – it closed in 2022.

The locals, led by Gemma Horner, botanist and founder of the Save the Atherton Arboretum group, and Rebel Warren, a former CSIRO technician who worked at the site before being made redundant and becoming a nature photographer, called for the arboretum to be preserved.

"I think that's the general consensus of the people in this area," Warren told *The Guardian* in a 2022 interview. "They [do] not want to lose that site. And there's the historical value of the work that was done there. It was an important institution for this town."

The site was sold to Cairns-based Savannah



Seven in 2023.

Undeterred, Save the Atherton Arboretum submitted an application to list the site on the Queensland Heritage Register and it is in the process of being assessed. Tablelands Regional Council originally had no objection to that listing, but later argued against it saying that inclusion on the register could hinder development.

Nevertheless, there was considerable local support for the listing and the assessment is now underway. Under the Heritage Act, during an assessment, no significant destruction of cultural values is permitted.

Despite this, bulldozers moved in a couple of weeks ago and have cleared an estimated 15% of the trees.

"They worked from the

1/ Destruction at the Atherton Arboretum site. Photo by Neil Clarke from Save the Atherton Arboretum Facebook page

2/ Gemma Horner (left) and Rebel Warren at the site in 2022. Photo supplied by Save the Atherton Arboretum

3/ Multiple Stop Order notices have been attached to the perimeter of the property. Photo by Julia Howard from Save the Atherton Arboretum Facebook page

back of the property forward because it was not visible from the road," Horner told the *Cairns Post* (click here for the full (paywalled) story).

"There's a lot of destruction and a lot of trees on the ground, they have definitely cleared a portion of land and some significant trees."

The Department of Environment, Science and Innovation has issued a stop order and is investigating further action it may take against Savannah Seven. The maximum penalty for contravening a stop order is \$2.6m.

"I'm so thankful to the minister for signing off on the stop order," Horner said.

"We don't want to shut-out all development and 1.2ha of the site was not included in the heritage application, but efforts to work with the landholder have been unsuccessful."

She told the *Cairns Post*, "(We would like to see it) turned it into a green space and the start of a botanic garden, and information

centre or an environment hub showing the history of forests in the wet tropics."

Local forester Alex Lindsay regularly visited the tropical forestry collection grown at the arboretum while growing up in Atherton.

He told the ABC he blamed a lack of imagination and vision by successive governments for failing to preserve the site.

"You have this incredible place where there are these trees that are 30, 40 and 50 years old. You can go and experience the diversity and wonder of the natural forests around this area so close to town," Lindsay said.

"It would be an incredible asset to Atherton."

He said it was not too late for the Tableland Regional Council and the owner of the land to work together to achieve a great outcome for the community.

Meanwhile, Save the Atherton Arboretum has now formed a committee to continue its fight for the site.

Victorian Premier's Design Awards open

The awards help Victorian timber builds and products to shine.

ENTRIES close soon for the 2024 Victorian Premier's Design Awards. One of the leading design awards in Australia, it's designed to celebrate the best of Victoria and judged by a panel of industry experts on the design's process, excellence, innovation and impact.

Categories range from Architectural design through to product and fashion and shortlisted entries and winners receive significant profile boosts in the process. In recent years, timber has played a leading role in many winning and highly commended entries.

Last year's Overall Winner was the Budj Bim Cultural Landscape, commissioned by Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation and designed by Cooper Scaife Architects after



The award celebrates design that both innovates and inspires, such as last year's Overall Winner, the Budj Bim Cultural Landscape. Photo: Tess Kelly, courtesy Victorian Premier's Design Awards

a long consultation process with community members. Charred timber battens star in this series of walkways and viewing platforms, while raised boardwalks preserve the cultural landscape for

future generations at the same time as making it more accessible to visitors. The lifted structure also allows for cultural burns in the area and helps the structure to withstand seasonal flooding.

Entries close on 19 July, so if you've just completed a glorious Victorian build or have brought an ingenious timber product to market, [click here](#).

Christmas in July for baby tradies

THE team at Dig IT, Australia's first ever mini-excavator park, is celebrating Christmas in July and has renamed their nine mini-excavators as part of the festivities.

Now the locally built 1.7 tonne CAT mini-excavators are answering to the names of Dasher, Dancer, Prancer, Vixen, Comet, Cupid, Donner and Blitzen – plus Rudolph, who's a permanent resident – for the mid-year local Yuletide and have donned the antlers to go with their names.

Situated at Thunderbird Park on Tamborine Mountain, just an hour from the Gold Coast and Brisbane, Dig IT has welcomed thousands



The nine mini excavators have been renamed at Dig IT for Christmas in July.

of kids (and grownups) in its year since opening.

Activities include training on the mini-excavators, knocking over mini towers in the demolition zone, moving

tyres and hooking 'crops' and mastering a series of remote-controlled machinery.

The machines are the real deal, with hard hats and high vis gear required onsite.

Adults can have a go, while kids can sit in the driver's seat alone or on the lap of their parent or carer, to try a range of skills – digging in the dirt is huge fun at any age!

As a seasonal bonus, book a session for two or more kids on either Monday or Tuesday until 2 September and each child will receive a free Dig IT Croc Jibbitz pack including include six excavator-themed Jibbitz, perfect for customizing their Crocs.

To book a two-hour session, [click here](#) or phone 1800 00 DIGIT.

For accommodation and camping at Thunderbird Park, [click here](#).

Major tyre manufacturer commits to sustainable rubber

BKT, a leading multinational tyre manufacturer for agricultural, industrial and off-road vehicles, has now joined the Global Platform for Sustainable Natural Rubber (GPSNR).

GPSNR is based in Singapore and is working to transform the natural rubber supply chain into one that is sustainable, fair and equitable.

Historically, the rubber trade has held significant risk for exploitation in its supply chain with both wide-scale deforestation to clear land for rubber tree plantations and significant underpayments to labourers and traditional landholders.

While there have been company-based initiatives in the past to ensure ethical and sustainable rubber production, it has been hard for end users to confirm whether their tyre supplier is taking an active role in these initiatives. Through its industry-wide assurance system, GPSNR helps member organisations implement and verify sustainability standards and practices in their operations and improve the social and environmental impacts of rubber production.

There are multiple opportunities for improvement in both environmental and social terms. The expansion of rubber plantations has represented a risk to tropical forests, but by means of the sustainable practices championed by GPSNR, it is possible to both protect biodiversity and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Similarly, ensuring dignified working conditions and respecting workers' rights on rubber plantations is central

to promoting an ethical and sustainable industry.

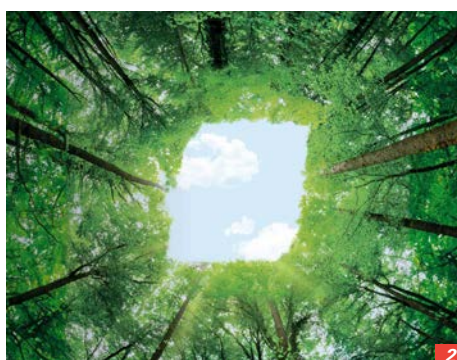
To address such challenges and promote sustainable solutions, GPSNR brings together natural rubber producers, traders, tyre manufacturers, NGOs, academic institutions and other industry partners.

BKT started as a bicycle tyre manufacturing business in newly independent India; nearly 70 years later the family-owned business has grown enormously, but it has maintained its focus on ethical and sustainable practices.

"The principles on which GPSNR bases its roots are in line with our ESG policy," said Rajiv Poddar, joint managing director at BKT. "This path will allow us to develop and align our digital tracking initiative for the sustainable sourcing of natural rubber in accordance with internationally accepted principles.

"At the same time, GPSNR membership allows us to sustain and expand our sustainability initiatives aiming at accelerating both structural and quality changes in our natural rubber supply chain over the next five years."

To support its mission, BKT is cooperating closely with a number of Indian government agencies, including the Rubber



1/ BKT is best-known for its agricultural and industrial tyres.

2/ Rubber tree plantations have been the cause of deforestation in the past; GPSNR is working to make the industry more sustainable and transparent.

Board and Automotive Tyre Manufacturers Association of India, and with some of the world's leading players in the natural rubber industry.

As a member of GPSNR, the company has also access to a platform that aims to standardise manufacturers' sustainability reporting and digital platforms for compliance with the requirements of the EUDR.

By joining GPSNR, BKT further confirms its compliance with core principles in the areas of sustainable forestry, water resource management, protection of rights and territories, human and labor rights, equality, traceability, transparency and anti-corruption, and training and education.



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