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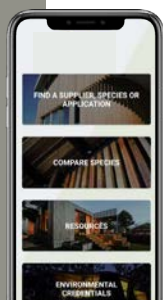
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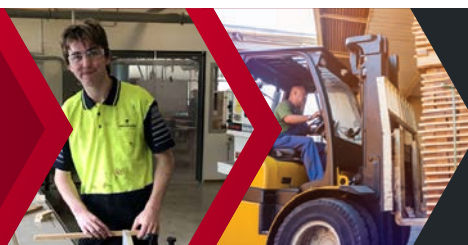
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The 25th Australian Timber Design Awards

Celebrating excellence in timber design.

THE Annual Australian Timber Design Award winners for 2024 were announced at 'View by Sydney' in Walsh Bay last week. Professor Greg Nolan from the University of Tasmania was MC for the evening. Bates Smart was the winner of the Grand Prix for their outstanding Embassy of Australia in Washington D.C.

The design of the new Embassy of Australia in Washington D.C. was complex, necessitating a delicate balance between cultural representation, iconic civic presence and practical security considerations. The inspiration came from Australia's iconic landscape and embodies the essence of the vast continent. The building's transparency was intended to capture the inherent Australian values of welcomeness and trust, while the interior's expansive atmosphere embodies the vastness of the Australian

“THE BUILDING'S DESIGN REFLECTS AUSTRALIAN VALUES



1 & 2/ The atrium at the Embassy of Australia in Washington D.C. was the overall winner of the 25th Australian Timber Design Awards. Photos: Joe Fletcher




landscape.

At the heart of the 20,000 square metre building, a large atrium serves as an orienting space displaying a powerful connection between the ground plane and the sky. This central atrium establishes a north south axial arrangement of representational spaces where every visitor is granted an equally immersive experience on entry.

The main representational spaces are defined by strong materiality with Australian timber wall panels, that provide both air reticulation and sound absorption, organised around

Cont P 3

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From P 2

a series of textured horizontal bands that transition from rough to smooth. This mirrors the protective qualities of the bark during the eucalypt forest's cycle of growth, burn and regrowth. Intricate metallic filigree screens have been sensitively deployed to mediate the interplay of light and shadow in social breakout and office spaces.

AWARD WINNERS:

Overall Winner – Embassy of Australia, Washington D.C. by Bates Smart

MERITS:

- **People's Choice** – Michael Kirby Building - Macquarie University Law School by Hassell Studio and FDC Construction (NSW)
- **Sustainability** – Berninreit Cultural and Community Centre by Jackson Clements Burrows
- **International Projects** – Embassy of Australia, Washington D.C. by Bates Smart
- **Rising Star** – Sarah Shearman from Brother Nature Design for River House

EXCELLENCE IN TIMBER APPLICATIONS:

- **Residential Class 1** – New Building – Taroona House by Archier
- **Residential Class 1** – Alterations & Additions – Verandah Terraces by Phorm architecture + design
- **Fit Out** – Residential – Northcote House by LLDS and Power to Make
- **Standalone Structure** – Fernery at Ballarat Botanic Gardens by BALANCE Architecture & Interior Design
- **Commercial Building** – T3 Collingwood by Hines, AECOM, JCB and Icon
- **Public Building** – Michael



1/ Hassell Studio together with FDC Construction (NSW) Pty Ltd, celebrate their People's Choice award for the Michael Kirby Building at Macquarie University Law School.

2/ Andrew Dunn, TDA CEO (left) with Steve Jones, studio director at Bates Smart receives the International Projects award for Embassy of Australia, Washington D.C.

3/ Jonathan Tibbets from Responsible Wood presented the Excellence in Timber Design: Australian Certified Timber Award to Incidental Architectural for Irrawaddy. Photos: Courtesy Andrew Dunn, TDA CEO

Kirby Building - Macquarie University Law School by Hassell Studio and FDC Construction (NSW)

- **Fit Out** – Commercial

and Public – Embassy of Australia, Washington D.C. by Bates Smart

- **Furniture & Joinery** – Holocene House by CplusC

Architects + Builders

Excellence in Timber Products:

- **Australian Certified Timber** – Irrawaddy by Incidental Architecture
- **Recycled Timber** – First Steps Count Child and Community Centre by Austin McFarland Architects

Greg Nolan, MC for the evening, is the Professor of Architecture at the University of Tasmania's School of Architecture and Design. He is also the Director of the University's Centre for Sustainable Architecture with Wood, a multidisciplinary research and development group that aspires to be a national leader in sustainable architectural design, building and applications with wood.

The Australian Timber Industry would like to extend gratitude to our panel of judges, sponsors and those who entered projects.

For a complete list of winners, finalists, and the awards magazine eBook, click here.

ABOUT THE AUSTRALIAN TIMBER DESIGN AWARDS

The vision of the Australian Timber Design Awards is to highlight, advertise, advocate, and develop a timber design ethos through the encouragement and showcasing of superlative timber design in various applications. A broad range of entry categories demonstrates the diversity of timber and permits recognition of achievement in a variety of areas.

On the cover: Steve Jones, of Bates Smart (left) with Kevin Peachy, head of Woodsolutions Program, receives the Overall Winner award for Embassy of Australia, Washington, D.C. Photo: Courtesy Andrew Dunn, TDA CEO

Frame and Truss Manufacturers Association Australia

Paving the way for sustainable forestry.

By KAT WELSH

ON October 18, the Frame and Truss Manufacturers Association (FTMA), alongside Wood Products Victoria, the Gippsland Forestry Hub, and the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, launched a pivotal document titled *Steps Towards a Greener Future*. This report specifically addresses the critical role of forestry in establishing a sustainable future for Australian housing.

The report puts forth 23 well-researched recommendations aimed at helping the Australian government meet its environmental targets (Net-Zero by 2050) while also fulfilling its housing

commitment of 1.2 million new homes over the next five years, as outlined in the National Housing Accord 2022. It delves into several issues and proposes solutions across four key categories.

At the heart of the report are themes of sustainable forestry, carbon capture, engineered wood design through offsite prefabrication, and the essential



(L-R): Dr. Alastair Woodard (WPV), Kersten Gentle (FTMA), Lesia Goodwin (Gippsland Forestry Hub), Jon Lambert (Heartwood Unlimited) share a passion for advocating the critical role of forestry in creating a sustainable future for Australian housing. Photo: FTMA

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message: "if we can build with timber, we must." It highlights the significant benefits of carbon storage provided by forests and argues that Australia must take proactive steps to enhance its forestry practices, mirroring the efforts of other countries in achieving global emission targets while meeting the urgent housing needs of its citizens.

The launch was hosted at the Morwell Innovation Centre in Victoria, featuring insights from FTMA's CEO Kersten Gentle, Wood Products Victoria's Dr. Alastair Woodard, and Heartwood Unlimited Managing Director Jon Lambert. Kersten introduced Carbon Warrior, FTMA's environmental initiative, which discusses the original policy proposal, *4 Steps Towards a Greener Future*, focusing on carbon capture, renewable energy investments, and the need for legislation supporting

bio-based materials in construction. She showcased examples from other nations that have integrated renewable materials into their building regulations, stressing that Australia should follow this progressive path.

Alastair elaborated on the *Steps Towards a Greener Future* report, emphasising how straightforward solutions could be achievable with the right policies. "The building sector wields substantial influence. We account for 12-20% of water consumption, 25-40% of energy use, produce 30-40% of greenhouse gas emissions, and generate 25-40% of solid waste," he remarked. He underscored the necessity of considering the full impact of our choices and the importance of life cycle assessments—

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From P 4

evaluating how materials are sourced, produced, transported, maintained, and eventually disposed of. The report also advocates for a circular economy, urging consideration of both the beginnings and endings of material use.

"This is an extraordinary opportunity for the forest and wood products sector. With the global focus on reducing CO2 emissions, we can make a significant, positive impact. It's a once-in-a-generation chance," Alastair noted.

Jon Lambert provided a realistic perspective on the sustainable forestry landscape in Australia, discussing current challenges within the sector stemming from existing government regulations. Alarming, up to 40% of Australia's timber demand is met through imports, raising the pressing question: why aren't we planting more trees in a nation so vast?

A panel discussion followed, focused on how



1/ (L-R) A panel discussion with Dr. Alastair Woodard, Kersten Gentle, Jon Lambert.

2/ Dr. Alastair Woodard elaborated on the Steps Towards a Greener Future report. Photos: FTMA

the report's findings could guide Australia towards a sustainable future—benefiting the environment, communities, economy, and industries alike. It became evident that both federal and state governments need to spearhead significant change.

For FTMA, *Steps Towards a Greener Future* is an essential tool for enhancing awareness and education, particularly within the frame and truss industry, while addressing the broader context of sustainable forestry practices. The report will be circulated among state and federal politicians and has already attracted preliminary interest from key political offices.

For more information about the report, its goals, or how it can be utilised, please reach out to FTMA by clicking here.



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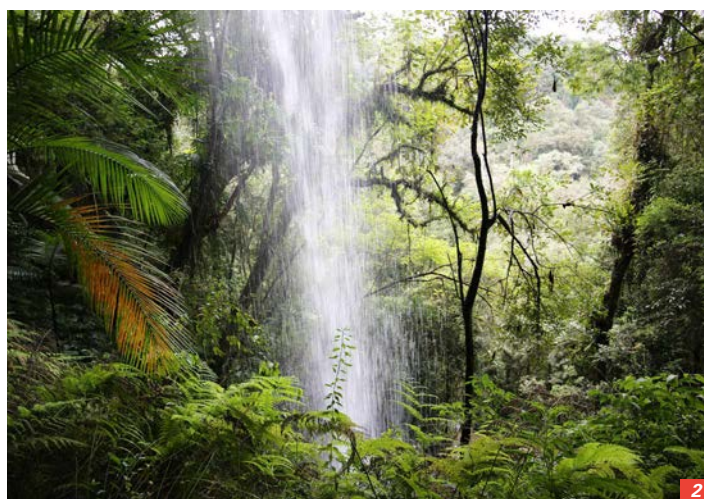
FSC Forest Week campaign calls for collective action

Small steps together create big change for all

THE Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) has successfully concluded its third annual FSC Forest Week, spotlighting the crucial role of responsible forest management in addressing urgent environmental challenges. The annual campaign mobilises 1,300 partners and leading brands from 40 countries to tackle climate change, biodiversity loss, and Indigenous communities' well-being.

With the world set to convene at the upcoming COP16 and COP29 summits, FSC calls on businesses, communities, governments, and individuals to continue their efforts in protecting the world's forests and urges decisive action to ensure forestry remains a priority in global climate discussions.

In Australia and New Zealand, leading organisations such as Coles Group, ALDI Australia, Officeworks, VISY, Mitre 10, Wellington Zoo, and more, came together to celebrate their support for FSC's responsible forestry. This year's campaign, themed "Small steps together create big change for all," highlighted the power of collective action in addressing the climate and biodiversity crises. With participation from over 1,300 partners across more than 40 countries, the campaign featured community outreach,



1/ **The forest is a precious resource that must be protected and used sustainably.** Photo: Ben Beech

2/ **The beauty of forests makes for a stunning walk to help promote sustainable practices.** Photo: Arturo Escobar

"The rapid growth of our campaign has been crucial in raising awareness of FSC, bringing sustainable forestry into focus for consumers. This collective effort is driving meaningful action on the climate and biodiversity crises, highlighting the essential role responsible forest management plays in securing a healthier future for our planet."

This year's campaign amplified the message that impactful change does not always require large-scale efforts. Rather, everyday choices, such as purchasing FSC-certified products, can contribute to broader efforts of protecting forests and those who depend on them. Additionally, it highlighted the critical role these actions play in combatting biodiversity loss and climate change.

"We are thrilled to see the growing global influence of FSC Forest Week," said Trevor Armel, FSC International Director of Marketing. "The mounting climate and biodiversity crises demand urgent action, and this initiative has proven to be a catalyst for responsible behavior, inspiring people and businesses to protect our forests and ensure a sustainable future."

Building on the success of this year's campaign, FSC calls upon individuals, businesses, and communities to engage on the critical discussions around the climate and biodiversity crisis, and help drive the transition toward a greener, healthier planet for all.

Learn more about the campaign here.

corporate engagement, and forest walks. These activities showcased a unified approach to tackling critical issues such as climate change, biodiversity loss, and promoting the well-being of Indigenous communities.

"I'm incredibly proud of the tremendous support from our members, certificate holders and promotional licence holders across Australia and New Zealand," said Melanie Robertson, CEO of FSC Australia and New Zealand.

**“EVERYDAY CHOICES
CONTRIBUTE TO
BROADER EFFORTS
OF PROTECTING
FORESTS**

OCTOBER

29-31: Forestry Australia 2024 Symposium – Mercure Ballarat Convention Centre, Golden Point, VIC.

Theme: Healthy and resilient forests for our future, will facilitate conversation and collaboration that regardless of land tenure and ownership, healthy and resilient forests should be the objective for all forest and land managers. The Symposium is a focused three-day gathering, consisting of two days of plenary and concurrent sessions, and a day of Field Trips. The two-day program will feature a range of Keynote and Invited Speakers, who are experts and thought leaders in their field. The Symposium will also

feature several social functions, facilitating networking and collaboration in an informal and relaxed environment. For more information, visit <https://www.forestry.org.au/2024-symposium/>

NOVEMBER

13: AFCA AGM – Launceston, Tas - IN PERSON & ONLINE, at 3.00pm. To register visit: https://afcaevents.zohobackstage.com.au/Business_Summit_and_Gala_Dinner2024#/

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

20: Forestry Australia Webinar

- Rapid detection of fire in Australia's forests – ONLINE EVENT, 12.30-1.45pm (AEDT).

For more details and to register, <https://www.forestry.org.au/webinar-fire-detection/>

SAVE THE DATES 2025

MARCH 22: NTHA QLD State Awards – Brisbane City Hall, Brisbane. Join us in celebrating the QLD Timber and Hardware Industry. Contact Tahlia at events@ntha.com.au

MAY 30: 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

MARCH 25-28: DANA Global Wood Products Supply and Demand Trends Seminar, Global Forest Investment Conference, and WWII Battle of the Bulge Battle sites tour – Europe. Contact admin@dana.co.nz

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.

OCTOBER 20-22: International Woodchip and Biomass Seminar and Networking Event – Singapore.

OCTOBER 23-24: Field Trip – Vietnam.

Swift parrots return to Tasmanian forests

SUSTAINABLE Timber Tasmania is pleased to see the return of the migratory swift parrot to Tasmania. Every year, swift parrots travel from mainland Australia in search of forest areas with the richest food sources for foraging and breeding.

Sustainable Timber Tasmania's proactive monitoring has confirmed that swift parrots are actively searching



Sustainable Timber Tasmania are excited to see evidence of the Swift Parrot's return to Tasmania and have put steps in place to protect them across their breeding season. Image: Shutterstock

for potential nest sites in Tasmanian forests, with recent observations indicating

the presence of some birds in the Eastern Tiers.

To enhance monitoring efforts, Sustainable Timber Tasmania has deployed acoustic recorders throughout this area. These devices

will assist in detecting different kinds of bird activity

and enable us to adapt management activities where needed. In the coming week, monitoring will also take place in the southern forests.

Sustainable Timber Tasmania remains committed to implementing effective conservation outcomes for the swift parrot in Tasmania's public production forests and looks forward to providing further updates as monitoring efforts progress throughout the season.

Source: Sustainable Timber Tasmania via LinkedIn

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Builders support the Opposition's supply-focused housing policies

THE building industry is expressing support for the announcement made by Peter Dutton, Leader of the Opposition. He announced that an elected Coalition Government will commit \$5 billion, through a new *Housing Infrastructure Programme*, to enable critical infrastructure.

"The Coalition has announced a commitment to a \$5 billion infrastructure package, to boost more home building across Australia and get homes delivered faster.

"The Housing Industry Association (HIA) welcomes this important investment that would kickstart and bring forward new housing in greenfield estates and in turn significantly boost current

housing supply levels," HIA Managing Director, Jocelyn Martin said.

Peak building and construction industry association Master Builders Australia, backs the new Federal Opposition housing policies to boost housing supply. As the only industry association representing the residential, commercial, and civil construction sectors, Master Builders shares that it acutely understands the extent to which all three sectors have a role in ending the housing crisis.

Master Builders CEO Denita Wawn said: "We know that the key to ending the housing crisis is unlocking new housing supply, but there are a

lot of barriers standing in the way of rolling projects out.

"Over the last five years, construction costs have increased by 40 per cent and build times have blown out by up to 47 per cent.

"Labour shortages, access to water, sewerage, power and roads, union disruption, and red tape all significantly impact the final project cost and build time."

Jocelyn Martin echoed the sentiments: "This \$5

billion funding for states and territories would support key 'last mile' infrastructure to build the roads, sewers, energy supply and water infrastructure, which is critically needed to get homes shovel ready faster.

"Our members consistently tell us that it is the lack of investment in infrastructure which slows down their ability to bring homes to market faster. We know that efficiently delivered greenfield housing is the quickest way to deliver homes for Australians."

The Opposition also announced a freeze to the National Construction Code (NCC) alongside a review

“

WILL COMMIT \$5 BILLION, THROUGH A NEW HOUSING INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAMME

Cont P 9

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4. China softwood demand and import supply forecasts 2029 and 2034

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What will imports be from each of 27 countries in 2029 and in 2034?



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From P 8

of NCC changes to identify options to further reduce red tape.

Jocelyn Martin added, "The further commitment to consider a pause on future National Construction Code (NCC) changes by the Coalition is welcomed given the significant burden of recent NCC and other major reforms being placed on the industry in the past few years.

"These most recent NCC changes added more red tape hampering productivity and are key factor in driving up home building costs for builders and homeowners, and these were introduced at a time when cost of living pressures is locking more Australians out of housing."

Denita Wawn also commented on the NCC freeze, "A pause on unnecessary code



Building new houses remains a priority and the announcement from the Opposition is a welcome support to the industry. Image: Shutterstock

changes that increase cost and complexity without meaningful improvements in standards is a positive step."

Both the HIA and Master Builders noted that the next round of NCC changes is already under consideration.

"The proposed review will provide an opportunity for industry to be heard on perverse outcomes of recent

changes that were introduced without proper consideration of the evidence and the implementation hurdles facing builders," Denita Wawn concluded.

Jocelyn Martin added concern about further rises on costs and complexities for building: "The residential construction industry and particularly small business

are struggling under the weight of red tape and this is hampering the delivery of new homes. This initiative to place a pause on further rule changes will provide certainty to the industry and let builders get on with the job of building the homes Australians desperately needs.

"HIA is committed to working with both sides of Government's to continue to identify options to further reduce red tape and bring down costs for consumers as well as maintaining the balance of high-quality housing and proportional regulatory settings."

"Today's announcement is not the full answer to addressing Australia's significant housing shortages, but it is an important step forward. It recognises that the Australian dream of home ownership can still remain a reality" concluded Jocelyn Martin.

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Small business energy efficiency grants SA

THIS program provides funding to small businesses and not-for-profits to invest in energy efficient equipment or improvements. Applications are open and will close on Friday 29 November 2024 or when the funding is fully expended, whichever occurs first.

The funding is between \$2,500 and \$50,000. It is open to applications from South Australian small business and not-for-profits. The funding may be used for energy efficient activities and equipment including:

- Power supply and generation
- Lighting and electrical
- Energy efficient appliances
- Heating, cooling, and refrigeration
- Water heating



Financial assistance for businesses to invest in energy efficient equipment and/or improvements. Image: Freepik

- Motors, pumps, fans, and compressors
- Process automation, controls and optimisation
- Other unique projects/equipment

To be eligible to apply, businesses must:

- have a valid and active Australian business number (ABN)
- be registered for goods and services tax (GST)
- not be a home-based business
- not be a public company

- be able to match at least 50% of eligible costs.

Additionally, businesses must be located and operating in SA, and:

- be a small business electricity customer (including not-for-profit) that is on a separately metered business tariff with their electricity retailer and consumes less than 160MWh of electricity per year, or (if you do not meet these criteria)
- have an Australia-wide grouped payroll of less than \$1.5 million in 2023-24 (Note the information you provide with your application will be verified against information held by Revenue SA).

For more information, or to apply, [click here](#).

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Timber Plantation grants open again

THE Australian Forest Products Association (AFPA) welcomes the recent announcement by the Hon Julie Collins MP, Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry opening the latest round of grants demonstrating the Albanese Government's commitment to expanding Australia's plantation forest estate.

The Federal Government has just opened its third round of \$74 million Support Plantation Establishment grants program which is vital in ensuring Australia will have much need fibre and wood supply for the nation's future.

Diana Hallam, AFPA CEO, stated, "These grants are essential for strengthening Australia's sovereign capability in timber and wood fibre products. The new plantations

established through this scheme will not only support our climate change efforts and contribute to national emissions reduction targets but also provide critical job opportunities in key regional areas across the country."

"Under the program, a grant of \$2,000 per hectare is available to landholders to plant a timber crop on their property."

"In response to feedback from AFPA and forest growers, the Albanese Government has made some changes so the program is more accessible for



Round three of the Support Plantation Establishment grant is now open. Image: Shutterstock

landowners. These changes are welcomed by the industry.

"AFPA strongly endorses the Government's strategic investment in timber plantations as a critical step towards achieving Australia's climate targets and ensuring a robust, sustainable supply of timber and wood fibre for the nation's future"

This announcement comes in the context of the return of the Hon Julie Collins MP to the portfolio of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry.

"It is great to have Minister Julie Collins back in the Agriculture, Fisheries and

Forestry portfolio. As the Shadow Minister prior to the 2022 election Minister Collins committed the Albanese Government to this grant program in recognition that the plantation estate had been shrinking for over a decade," Diana Hallam concluded.

For more information on the grants program click [here](#).

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Construction nightmares

Builder bankruptcies are costing Aussie homeowners millions

EMBARCKING on building or renovating a home represents a large financial commitment. However, compared to other major investments, protection for Australian's funds is limited. Despite the unprecedented need to build, construction companies are collapsing like houses of cards, leaving consumers with lost deposits and half-finished homes.

SOMETHING'S BROKEN

Australia needs to build homes. Driving demand is high immigration and a trend of fewer habitants per home. On the supply side, building commencements are in decline, with 2024 data at 10-year lows. Overall, the ratio of new population to new dwelling approval is the worst since data began to be recorded in 1984.

Residential construction companies are going into liquidation at an alarming rate. According to ASIC data, the 2023-2024 financial year saw 2,832 construction companies go insolvent. This included several industry-revered names, including Clough Group, Probuild, and Porter Davis Homes.

COVID disruptions, including skilled labour shortages and rising raw material costs, are often blamed for the high level of insolvencies. However, warning signs have been unheeded, the 2022 review by the Reserve Bank of Australia identified financial pressures and predicted that insolvency levels would increase and the financial stress to potentially be spread to consumers and the wider construction supply chain.

Australia's homebuilding



As construction companies collapse, consumers are left with lost deposits and unfinished homes, exposing gaps in financial protection for one of life's biggest investments Image: UNSW

industry is characterised by low profit margins and fixed-price contracts, meaning there is little headroom for builders to absorb pressures. This means many homebuilders have been operating at negative cashflows, where suppliers don't get paid, and projects are left unfinished.

CONSUMERS LEFT 'CARRYING THE CAN'

When a homebuilder goes bust, consumers become unsecured creditors and are at the bottom of the food chain after a lengthy insolvency process. The only available remedy is builder's insurance, with most states – except Tasmania – legislating that builders take out insurance covering insolvency.

However, it is limited: claims must wait until five weeks after insolvency, policy limits vary between states, with some limited to 20% of the build's value. Porter Davis Homes didn't take out the insurance, leaving consumers completely in the lurch.

The fallout extends to subcontractors who end up on unsecured creditor's lists.

Often, small or family-run businesses become stuck covering the cost of materials and staff if they want to continue trading.

WHY IS THERE A LACK OF PROTECTION?

Building or renovating is one of the largest investments an Australian will make. Unlike other large investments, the construction sector has little regulation regarding how consumer funds are utilised and protected.

Regulations protect consumer funds across financial services if they collapse. Consider consumer payments for legal services; consumer funds must be held in a client account and only used for their intended purpose.

When a homeowner places a deposit with a builder, this money can be spent for any purpose. There have been stories of builders going

on luxurious holidays while homes go unfinished. More often, given the cash flow pressures, consumer deposits from one project are used to complete prior commitments.

Builder accounts are opaque, and it is very hard to know where the money goes. There is little incentive or need for homebuilders to spend money on the project for which it is intended.

Remedies for homebuilders' tight cash flows are delaying payments to suppliers or taking on more projects. New deposits increase cash flow in the short term but put more consumers at risk creating a classic Ponzi scheme – until it falls over.

A SOLUTION: PROTECTING CONSUMER DEPOSITS

With many consumers being left in the lurch, it is hard to see confidence returning without a new approach.

Financial services firms already provide a template for ring-fencing consumer funds and ensuring that money is spent for its intended purpose.

Extending this protection to the residential construction sector would require project accounts, where consumer funds reside until they are drawn down by builders and subcontractors and the work is completed to standard.

If the builder goes bust, this money remains in place to pay subcontractors and continue the build. A side benefit is that it may improve the robustness of the industry, providing homebuilders with a motive to ensure each project has sound financial footing.

Source: UNSW

“CONSTRUCTION COMPANIES ARE COLLAPSING LIKE HOUSES OF CARDS”

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Xtreme Excavators



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Komatsu PC270HW
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Log Loader



Komatsu PC300TL
Tractionline



Komatsu PC400HL
Harvestline

The Komatsu Xtreme models have been developed by collaboration between Komatsu Forest & Komatsu Osaka Factory to meet our tough forest conditions.

Preparing for bushfire season

Following their article in last week's issue (#825), FWPA offers excellent resources to support businesses with bushfire preparedness.

WITH the arrival of spring, many regions across Australia are turning their focus to the heightened risk of bushfires. Fire and emergency services are warning that this year may present "an elevated threat of bushfires," following the warmest August on record in Australia.

Bushfire incidents pose a significant risk to the forest and wood products sector, impacting the entire supply chain—from damage to plantations and forests to effects on the quality and productivity of wood products.

The FWPA is committed to bushfire preparedness, management, and mitigation through its research programs and resource development, aiming to protect commercial interests and lower risks. Our goal is to provide sector members with information and practical tools to foster resilience in products and practices, ultimately safeguarding Australian homes in the long term.

BUILDING IN BUSHFIRE-PRONE AREAS

Timber framing and wood products are applicable in various residential construction contexts, subject to the guidelines of Australian Standard AS3959 – Construction of Buildings in Bushfire-Prone Areas.

A Bushfire Attack Level (BAL) assessment evaluates the risk of bushfire attack for a specific building site. There are six BAL ratings, each with distinct requirements regarding acceptable building materials for residential construction.

FWPA's WoodSolutions

program offers several resources to help understand and calculate a BAL assessment:

- **Blog:** Building with wood and BALs. An overview of BALs and their guidance for timber use in bushfire-prone regions.
- **Webinar:** Demystifying Bushfire Attack Level BAL Assessment. Bushfire expert Dr Maria Kornakova discusses the BAL process, calculation methods, and benefits.
- **Tool:** BAL Bushfire Calculator V2.1. An online tool for determining the BAL for a specific construction site.
- **Fact Sheet:** Building in Bushfire-Prone Areas (Fact Sheet 19). A printable summary of key fire safety standards and an overview of WoodSolutions resources to support the construction industry.
- **Podcast:** WoodChat Episode 14 – Building with Wood in Bushfire-Prone Areas. Insights on best practices for timber construction in fire-prone areas, highlighting FWPA's efforts to provide resources for both the construction industry and consumers.

FIRE SAFE DESIGN

Fire safety at the design stage is crucial for enhancing bushfire resilience. WoodSolutions has published various design guides tailored for building practitioners,



With summer quickly approaching, Australia heads back into bushfire season with warnings that this one could be intense.
Image: Shutterstock.

including fire safety engineers, architects, and consultants. These guides are the go-to resources for correctly specifying and applying timber in bushfire zone construction. Access them through the following links:

- **Guide 15:** Fire Design
- **Guide 17:** Fire Safe Design of Timber Structures – Compliance with the NCC
- **Guide 18:** Fire Safe Design of Timber Structures – Methods of Analysis and Supporting Data
- **Guide 19:** Performance Solution Fire Compliance – Internal Linings
- **Guide 20:** Fire Precautions During Construction of Large Buildings
- **Guide 38:** Fire Safety Design of Mid-rise Timber Buildings

BUSHFIRE RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT: CURRENT RESEARCH PROJECTS

FWPA is currently backing several research initiatives that explore fire behaviour, impacts, and mitigation strategies. These findings will enhance the knowledge and guidance available to the forest and wood products industry, aiding in risk

management and impact reduction.

Examples of ongoing projects include:

- **Quantifying the Wider Economic Impact of Large-Scale Fires in the Green Triangle Plantation Estate.**

While the immediate effects of fires can be straightforward to assess, the broader community impact,

especially regarding long-term disruptions to wood supply, is more complex. This project aims to quantify these impacts, using the Green Triangle region as a case study, with methods applicable to other areas.

- **Cost/Benefit Analysis of Fire Risk Mitigation & Nutrient Impacts from Treating Pine Thinning Residues.** This project investigates the cost-effectiveness of treating pine thinning residues to mitigate fire risk and retain nutrients.

EXISTING RESEARCH AND RESOURCES

FWPA's WoodChat podcast regularly features interviews with leading experts on bushfire risks and mitigation strategies, showcasing a range of research projects across Australia.

- **Episode 27:** Modelling the Future to Minimise the Impacts of Bushfire Events on Forestry.
- **Episode 22:** Future-Proofing the Forestry Industry Against the Impact of Bushfires.

For more information click here.

“The Bond” – timber beyond the ordinary

Innovation in protective timber coatings to meet the challenge: safeguarding and enhancing exposed mass timber builds

By INTERGRAIN TRADE & INDUSTRIAL

THE Bond is a recently completed \$59.7m seven storey building showcasing the stunning possibilities of modern timber design. With a mass timber glue laminated (glulam) frame, and floors in roof panels in Cross Laminated Timber (CLT), the construction boasts more than 10,500 square metres of space for offices, healthcare providers and retail.

Architects Fitzpatrick + Partners worked with engineers, TTW, to create a design that would allow light to flood every floor, with the timber frame visible through full height glass panels. The developer, Mulpha Developments, embraced the idea of incorporating the organic charm of raw timber and open views of greenery, especially since The Bond houses specialist medical facilities. Several remarkable studies have shown that buildings with high 'biophilic' qualities promote better concentration and productivity for workers, and faster rates of recovery for patients.

Like Murdoch University in Perth, The Bond boasts a future-forward timber focused design that is a win for both human wellbeing and environmental sustainability.

THE CHALLENGE

Careful planning was required to protect the timber from degradation and weathering during the construction process.

Prefabricated in Austria, the timber components were shipped to a sheltered



1- 3/ The Bond building showcases floor-to-ceiling mass timber blocks, encompassed in a glass exterior cladding, allowing a full view of the luxurious mass timber from inside and out. Photos: Intergrain Trade and Industrial

holding yard, with sections transported to site on the day of installation. Crucially, all timber required a high-performance coating that would provide protection from extreme UV exposure while enhancing the beauty of the wood grain.

THE INTERGRAIN SOLUTION

Intergrain State Sales Manager, Noel Cumberland worked closely with Michel Maingard of Buildcorp to specify a coatings system that would deliver the desired finish.

Whilst in some cases the weathering of timber was unavoidable, the aim was to restore, highlight and protect the wood with a subtle matt finish.

The first step was to remove all surface contaminants on the timber with Intergrain UltraPrep Timber Cleaner, a high strength treatment developed specifically for efficient rejuvenation of weather-stained timber. Once completely dry, Intergrain UltraClear Exterior Matt was applied. This tough finish enhances the colour and grain of the timber, providing superior protection against weathering and extreme UV exposure. Unlike traditional oil-based timber clear coatings, this water-based formula has been developed for Australian conditions, is low in Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC) and will not yellow over time.

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From P 15

THE RESULTS

"Intergrain timber coatings technology successfully prepared and enhanced the engineered timber, creating a high-performance aesthetic finish that will last," Noel explains.

"Importantly, we were able to work closely with Buildcorp and other contractors to restore and protect the timber during the construction process efficiently."

The Bond is a stunning example of the use of engineered timber in multi-level construction, prompting many architects to think beyond traditional concrete and steel designs. Timber simply requires some extra preparation and planning to retain structural integrity and protect the surface in the building process.



The Bond foyer proudly displaying the building name on pine feature wall. Twelve months after opening, with the Intergrain UltraClear maintaining the original charters of the timber. Photo: Intergrain Trade and Industrial

Project architect Jessica Rodham explained why she believes timber construction is the way of the future, saying "We are always trying to propose to our partners that they should consider timber or a hybrid system of timber and steel because of the environmental and sustainability benefits and the carbon that can be absorbed back from the environment."

"The biophilic qualities mean people also have higher productivity and find it easier to focus and report better levels of concentration. As well, the timber can be re-used afterwards."

Further information, contact the Intergrain Trade & Industrial team for expert product knowledge, service and support. Call our Help Line on 1800 630 285 or visit our website here for more inspiration.

Source: Timber Trader News

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Image: Shutterstock

Steps to sustainability being taken across the board

Life-saving treatment provides second life for Sydney's precious water resource.

IN an Australian-first, clean and filtered water from Royal Prince Alfred Hospital's kidney dialysis machines is now being used by the City of Sydney to help keep streets clean.

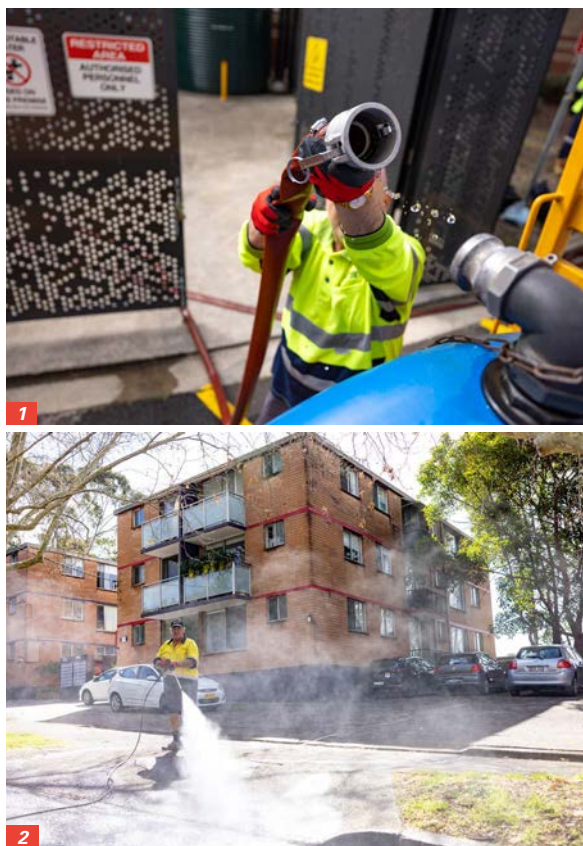
Around 50 dialysis machines, used for up to 14 hours a day, require ultrapure water. About 500 litres of ultrapure water is needed each time a patient undergoes dialysis.

A reverse osmosis unit generates ultrapure water so that no bacteria is present during treatment. During purification, excess runoff is collected and stored in two on-site tanks, designed and built during the redevelopment of the Professor Marie Bashir Centre in 2020.

By using this stored runoff in street cleaning, the City of Sydney and Royal Prince Alfred hospital can save up to 1.5 million litres of water every year.

"Water is our most precious resource and finding ways to better manage it is crucial

"CAN SAVE UP TO 1.5 MILLION LITRES OF WATER EVERY YEAR"



1/ The City of Sydney collects the water from the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital.

2/ City staff using the collected water to clean the streets and pathways Photos: Chris Southwood/City of Sydney

to Sydney's resilience. This is increasingly important as the climate crisis lengthens periods of drought," Lord Mayor of Sydney, Clover Moore AO said.

"Not only does this collaboration mean there is more drinking water available, the filtered supply is great for street cleaning because it has low levels of particles, calcium and magnesium – that means it's less likely to leave residue and streaking, is less abrasive on road and footpath surfaces, and reduces equipment scaling.

"By collecting the water

from Royal Prince Alfred, we are also reducing emissions and travel time for our trucks, which don't have to return to depots in Alexandria or Ultimo to refill after cleaning the streets."

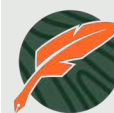
The surplus capacity of water from dialysis is captured in two large 10,000 litre tanks onsite. The City of Sydney fills its trucks with the water, saving an estimated 30,000 litres every week.

Chief Executive of Sydney Local Health District, Deb Willcox AM said the project was an important element in helping meet its environmental goals.

"Sydney Local Health District has invested in the infrastructure to build these tanks as part of our ongoing sustainability program," Ms Willcox said.

"We are very happy to partner with the City of Sydney to ensure the water is put to good use and do our part for the environment."

The collaboration allows the City of Sydney to tap into an alternative water source, with both organisations able to improve their water sustainability and reduce environmental impact.



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