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# Support local timber and wood-fibre products this Australian Made Week

THIS week is Australian Made Week. There are so many products created in Australia and purchasing Australian Made products helps boost our economy, create local jobs and support Australian communities. This is true for the timber and forestry industry as well. The Australian Forest Products Association (AFPA) is supporting Australian Made Week and calling on consumers to buy Aussie made timber and wood-fibre products and support a sector that underpins local manufacturing, regional jobs, our local environment, and helps fight climate change.

"Around 180,000 Australians are either directly or indirectly employed by the supply chain of Australia's forestry and forest products sector, with many of those jobs located in regional centres and rural Australia, keeping these places alive. When consumers focus more on buying the locally made and manufactured, essential products we create, that means a stronger supply chain, a stronger sector and

stronger communities," Chief Executive Officer of AFPA, Diana Hallam said.

"We often find that consumers are very surprised just how many items essential for everyday life are made by our sector. Consider timber house-frames and furnishings like flooring and decking, cardboard packaging and tissue products, timber and particleboard furniture and shelving as well as magazine and news-print paper. There are so many examples.

"When Australians buy Australian Made items, produced from Aussie grown and manufactured timber and wood-fibre, they're

supporting a great manufacturing industry, local jobs – whether they're in the forest, timber mill or in transport and logistics. Our sector also operates to world leading environmental standards, meaning consumers can have peace of mind that buying Australian means buying sustainable and supporting an industry that fights climate change.

"Remember to look for the iconic green and gold kangaroo logo to be sure you're buying Australian Made. You can be sure it's a sign of quality and support for so much more than just one product. It's support for towns, families,

communities, the economy and environment. When Australians buy Australian – we all win," Diana Hallam concluded.

One such company is AKD, Australia's largest softwood sawmilling business. AKD shared "Our team is proud to be part of an Australian Made and Owned company – and it shows! To celebrate Australian Made Week, we're sharing photos of the amazing people behind our timber, proudly holding the green and gold kangaroo. Whether it's out in the forest, on the production line, or behind the scenes in the office, our orange team shows what it means to be part of AKD – and how much it means to work for a local company that backs its people and communities."

This week as you go about your normal shopping, keep an eye out for the green and gold logo that signifies a product was made in our beautiful country!



**AUSTRALIAN MADE  
AND OWNED**

*On the cover: AKD celebrates Australian Made week with some amazing people behind their timber, proudly holding the Australian Made and Owned sign. Image: AKD*

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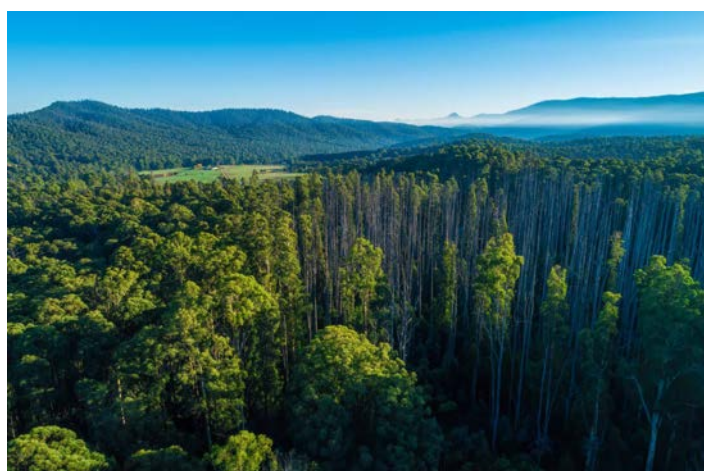
# NSW state forests provide critical timber and other community benefits

PUBLIC native forests in NSW and across the country provide enormous benefits for Australians and misleading claims around public balance sheet losses, don't cut it, Chief Executive Officer of the Australian Forest Products Association (AFPA), Diana Hallam said.

"Activist groups determined to end NSW's sustainable native forestry industry are being deliberately misleading and completely ignore the sovereign capability, fire management and the major community and economic benefits of hardwood timber production as well as the recreational opportunities provided by NSW state forests, when making increasingly hysterical claims around the NSW Government-owned enterprise," Diana Hallam said.

Forestry Corporation of NSW (FCNSW) charges minimal fees for visitation and use of state forests, unlike the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, and utilises revenue from their commercial native and plantation forests to offset the costs of managing almost two million hectares of public native forests on behalf of the State.

"Activists are quick to point out FCNSW's hardwood division earnings loss of \$14.9 million – trying to link it with a completely inaccurate notion that native forestry is somehow



**NSW state forests are carefully managed and provide a range of benefits both economically and to the community.** Image Shutterstock

economically unsustainable while ignoring the provision of land management services. Running this argument is akin to arguing that if state run schools and hospitals don't make a profit, they should be closed down as well. It's ridiculous," Diana Hallam said.

"FCNSW's hardwood division financial outcomes can be attributed to a range of factors, including lower timber production, costs associated with regulatory changes and other management expenses. That's the reality and activists need to stop pedalling lies that public native forestry isn't economically or environmentally sustainable.

"Activists should also remember that the suite of forest management services that FCNSW provides alongside harvesting, helps mitigate against bushfire risk, better manages pests and feral animals, providing additional benefits for the State. That's not to mention the community service provided through free public access, camping, picnic areas and roads that facilitate a range of recreational activities.

"It's worth noting, the

part of its sustainable harvest program. These are important services that FCNSW provides in house in NSW. What we saw in Victoria with the closure of native forestry was a major increase of imports from Indonesia, Malaysia, China and Brazil with a worse environmental outcome.

"The provision of state forests for a range of uses, including sustainable timber production is important for NSW and Australia. Without it, the global environment would be far worse off because Australia would have to fill the hardwood timber supply gap with more imported timber from overseas that doesn't come with the environmental and sustainability credentials Australia operates within," Diana Hallam concluded.

**AFPA THE LEADING VOICE FOR AUSTRALIA'S FOREST PRODUCTS SECTOR**

**“AUSTRALIA WOULD HAVE TO FILL THE HARDWOOD TIMBER SUPPLY GAP WITH MORE IMPORTED TIMBER**



# Forestry Corporation's partnership with Place of Koala

THERE is some great news coming out of Guulabaa – Place of Koala with every single breeding pair successfully birthing a joey at the wild koala breeding facility. Some of the joeys have already emerged and are learning to climb. This is a fantastic breakthrough for the ongoing protection and trajectory of their population. They will be the first koalas released into local forests and the timing is perfect coinciding with the koala feed tree giveaway.

Forestry Corporation's annual delivery of koala food tree seedlings supports Koala Conservation Australia's (KCA) community koala tree giveaway, aimed at improving habitat on the Mid North Coast.

A truckload of 25,000 donated eucalypt seedlings arrived at Guulabaa - Place of the Koala available for Port Macquarie Hastings residents to pick up and plant koala corridors across the Mid North Coast.

This year's eucalyptus seedling species included:

- 12,120 Tallowood seedlings (*E. microcorys*)
- 6,280 Forest Red Gum seedlings (*E. tereticornis*)
- 320 Swamp Mahogany seedlings (*E. robusta*)
- 6,080 Grey Gum seedlings (*E. propinqua*)
- 200 Grey Box seedling (*E. moluccana*)

The seedling giveaway has seen almost 200,000 eucalypt seedlings donated to KCA and the Port Macquarie Koala Hospital for plantings on the Mid North Coast over the past five years.

Forestry staff are handing out planting guides and



**1/ Forestry Corporation's eucalyptus seedlings support the efforts of Koala Conservation Australia.**

**2/ This year's annual seedling delivery lines up with the first joeys born at the wild koala breeding facility.** Images: Forestry Corporation

advising landholders, which species should be planted across different terrain on their property.

"A huge thank you again to Forestry for donating these much-needed trees," Koala Conservation Australia spokesperson Scott Castle said.

"The annual tree giveaway engages the wider community in planting koala food trees and goes some way to regenerating and connecting existing habitats," he said.

"These trees support local planting projects to

provide sustenance for koala populations, improve connectivity between areas, afford future food and habitat and improve environmental value," Forestry Corporation Partnership Leader Leah Moncrieff said.

"This joint enterprise between the Koala

Conservation Australia and Forestry Corporation supports our wonderful ongoing partnership and long-standing collaboration, which includes the establishment of a Wild Koala Breeding Centre within Cowarra State Forest.

"This program also allows the community to become involved and contribute to the health and wellbeing of koalas, supporting local wildlife and the environment.

"Forestry Corporation is passionate about koalas and are very excited to support KCAs efforts by providing tree seedlings. We also offer easy-to-follow planting information and resources,

which is available from the Tree Giveaway webpage and on site when you pick up seedlings.

"These resources will assist in selecting the right species for the right location, when and how to plant, how to alleviate ongoing risks and maintaining the seedlings until they become established ensuring success," she said.

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

For more information about the baby joeys click here.

“THESE TREES SUPPORT LOCAL PLANTING PROJECTS AND SUSTAIN KOALA POPULATIONS”

# Wavefront aberration tech could strengthen Australia's sustainable forestry

WAVEFRONT aberration analysis, a cutting-edge technique adapted from optical metrology used in astronomy and ophthalmology, is set to redefine precision forestry from 2025 to 2029. By integrating wavefront sensors and adaptive optics into existing tech-driven systems, this innovation promises to bolster forest health monitoring, carbon accounting, and bushfire risk management.

Wavefront aberration technology analyses how light waves are altered through complex environments like dense eucalypt canopies. Deployed via drones, satellites, and ground platforms, these sensors deliver high-resolution data on tree health, canopy structure, and soil conditions. Unlike original, older methods requiring labour-intensive surveys or invasive sampling, this is a non-destructive approach that provides real-time insights. It can detect early signs of pest outbreaks, such as dieback from invasive species, or shifts in leaf moisture, enabling rapid responses to protect ecosystems.



**New technology is helping to refine Australia's forestry management, making Australia a leader in sustainability practices.** Image: Shutterstock

Carbon accounting, a cornerstone of Australia's climate strategy, stands to benefit immensely. With robust systems already in place for monitoring forest carbon stocks, wavefront analysis adds unmatched precision in mapping biomass. This supports carbon credit programs and reforestation initiatives critical to Australia's net-zero ambitions. By 2027, experts forecast this technology will integrate seamlessly with existing tools, enhancing data accuracy for global reporting.

Bushfire prevention, a national priority given

Australia's fire-prone landscapes, is another key application. Wavefront sensors analyse light reflections to identify high-risk areas with dry vegetation or heavy fuel loads, complementing current satellite and ground-based monitoring systems. This early detection capability could make a significant difference in mitigating catastrophic bushfires, protecting both ecosystems and communities. Additionally, the technology assesses forest resilience, supporting the design of ecosystems that can endure climate stressors like prolonged droughts or invasive

pests, building on Australia's adaptive forestry practices.

While Australia's forestry sector is well-equipped to adopt this technology, challenges remain. High initial costs and the need for specialised training could slow integration, particularly in remote regions. Yet, with Australia's track record of embracing innovation—such as LiDAR and satellite imagery—widespread adoption is practical by 2029. The scalability of wavefront systems could make them a standard tool, enhancing commercial timber production and conservation efforts across diverse landscapes, from Tasmania's cool temperate forests to Queensland's tropical woodlands.

Wavefront aberration analysis appears to be a natural evolution to Australia's commitment to sustainable forestry. By blending advanced optics with the nation's expertise in environmental science, it will empower forest managers to protect and nurture ecosystems with unparalleled precision.

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

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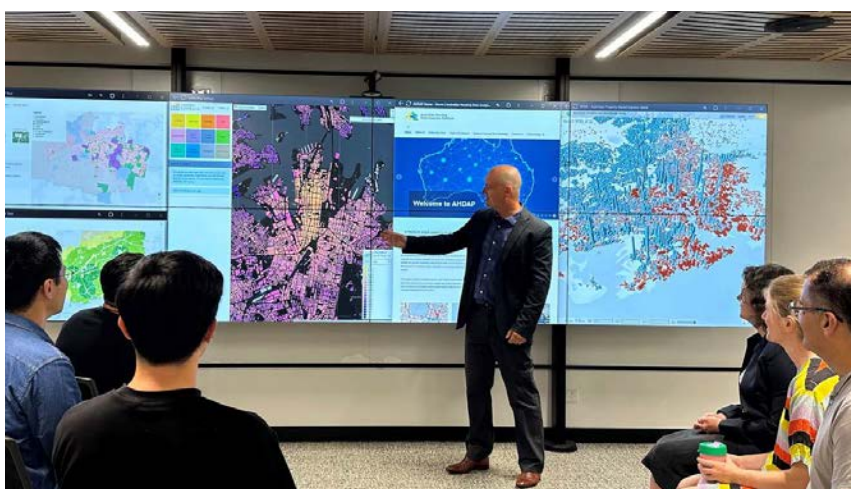
# New world-leading UNSW Analytics Lab to tackle housing crisis

A WORLD-LEADING housing analytics lab led by UNSW Sydney researchers will bring together academics, industry, government and not-for-profits in a coordinated effort to tackle Australia's critical housing affordability and supply crisis.

The facility will be launched on Monday at Sydney's Tech Central in South Eveleigh. It is equipped with cutting-edge technology, including live dashboards of real-time planning approval data and a generative AI Assistant to help forecast the impact of planning policies.

- NSW Premier Chris Minns and Housing Minister Rose Jackson to launch the Housing Analytics Lab
- The Lab, at Tech Central in Eveleigh, will provide a state-of-the-art facility to co-design solutions to Australia's housing crisis
- Key partners include Commonwealth Bank, Mirvac, NSW Tenants' Union, National Shelter, AURIN and Housing Australia
- The City Futures Research Centre at UNSW Arts, Design & Architecture was awarded a \$1 million grant by the Office of the NSW Chief Scientist to establish the Housing Analytics Lab.

The Lab opens as Australia's housing crisis hits a new level, with data revealing one third of the country's homes are valued over \$1 million. It will centralise housing data from different areas in the sector to find breakthroughs to problems like housing affordability, the shortfall



UNSW Sydney's Professor Chris Pettit utilising interactive housing data. Photo: UNSW

of social homes and the stifled development pipeline. Collaboration is key, and the hub's partners, which include the Commonwealth Bank and Tenants Union of NSW, will also meet at the facility to discuss housing and planning policy issues.

Project lead Professor Chris Pettit, Director of the City Futures Research Centre, said the lab would disseminate real-time evidence to key players to inform future planning and decision-making.

"With the nation facing significant housing challenges, it's vital that researchers, government, and industry work together using the most robust data and analytical tools to inform policy," said Prof. Pettit. "Having the space with the capabilities of the Housing Analytics Lab at our disposal means we can all come together, and co-design much-needed solutions backed by data."

NSW Premier Chris Minns and NSW Minister for Housing and Homelessness Rose Jackson will officially

launch the Housing Analytics Lab. Premier Minns said establishing this important facility is a key part of tackling the state's housing crisis.

"This facility brings together the experts and the data, giving us key insights as we address the housing crisis," Premier Minns said. "We need universities that can translate research into real-world solutions — exactly what UNSW is doing here."

A state-of-the-art housing research facility

Through government data-sharing arrangements, Prof. Pettit said the lab would also be able to provide insights into a range of housing problems. These include:

- Housing capacity around train stations
- Requirements for social housing by local government area

- Distribution and turnover of short-term and long-term rentals

- Data on housing and apartment developments

"We can use real-time housing datasets and the power of machine learning to explore multiple planning scenarios with live feedback," Prof. Pettit said. "This will help provide

decision-makers with the ability to assess the impacts of different policy options before implementation."

The Lab will be a hub for housing experts to develop and launch products and services addressing housing challenges. Prof. Pettit said the hub will also seek the input of community members to tailor housing solutions.

Vice-Chancellor and President of UNSW Sydney, Professor Attila Brungs, said the Housing Analytics Lab demonstrates how the University's world-leading researchers are fostering collaboration to positively impact society.

"The housing crisis is a complex policy challenge that can only be addressed through genuine collaboration across sectors," Prof. Brungs said. "By bringing together the deep expertise of UNSW researchers, the decision-making ability of government, the resources and reach of industry and the vital contributions of not-for-profits, the Housing Analytics Lab will help deliver solutions that benefit all Australians."

“ABLE TO PROVIDE INSIGHTS INTO A RANGE OF HOUSING PROBLEMS

**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](mailto:events@ntha.com.au)

**JUNE**

**3: Woodsolutions Webinar – ONLINE EVENT. 11am - 12noon (AEST).** For more information and to register your attendance, visit <https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register>.

**20-22: Perth Home Show – Perth Convention and Exhibition Centre, Perth 10.00am - 5.00pm daily.** Explore hundreds of home related products, exclusive Show specials, attend free seminars, and gain insights from top Australian renovation and building experts. For more information and to book tickets, visit <https://homeshows.com.au/perth/>

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**29-JULY 2: 5th International Conference on Timber Bridges – Rotorua, New Zealand.** The focus is on timber bridges and the current need for resilient infrastructure to support thriving communities. For more information and to register your interest, visit <https://ictb-conference.org/2025/>

**30: WoodSolutions Workshop "Timber in a carbon neutral environment" – Pridham Hall, Adelaide. 8.30am - 3.30pm.** Discover how timber is reshaping the future of sustainable construction. For more information and reserve your place visit <https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/woodsolutions-workshop-timber-in-a-carbon-neutral-environment-tickets-1363725101489>

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**SEPTEMBER**

**2-3: Timber Queensland Biennial Conference "Doing Timber Business in Queensland" – Brisbane.**

For more information, email [admin@timberqueensland.com.au](mailto:admin@timberqueensland.com.au)

**OCTOBER**

**13-14: Timber Construct 2025 – Melbourne.** To register your interest, visit <https://timberconstruct.org/>

**20-22: International Woodchip and Biomass Seminar and Networking Event – Singapore.** For more information visit <https://danaevents.co.nz/2024singapore/home>

**20-23: Forestry Australia 2025 Conference – Adelaide Convention Centre, Adelaide.** The conference theme is 'Restoring forests and landscapes to

secure Australia's future' and aims to develop both local and national collaboration. For more details visit <https://www.forestry.org.au/2025-conference/>

**22-23: Melbourne Build 25 – MCEC, Melbourne.**

Victoria's largest construction and design show. For more details visit <https://melbournebuildexpo.com>

**23-24: Field Trip – Vietnam.**

(Follows on from the woodchip and biomass seminar in Singapore.) For more information visit <https://danaevents.co.nz/2024singapore/fieldtrip>

**24: GTTIA – The Barn, Mt Gambier, SA.**

Nominations are now open for 2025 Green Triangle Timber Industry Awards. Nominate online: <https://gttia.com/nomination-form/> For full details on award categories and submission guidelines, visit: <https://gttia.com/2025-award-categories/>

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# She Builds The Future

## HIA and MiTek opening doors, creating pathways.

Launched at HIA's National Policy Congress in Melbourne, the Housing Industry Association (HIA) and MiTek have joined forces to launch *She Builds The Future* – a program designed to inspire, educate and promote diversity in the residential building industry.

HIA is excited to be working in partnership with MiTek to bring this program to life since International Women's Day in March.

"If we can inspire people of all ages to think about the range of jobs this amazing industry has to offer, we know we can increase the diversity of the industry and create a culture of inclusion," said HIA Deputy Managing Director, Kristin Brookfield.

The *She Builds The Future* website is aimed at girls and women interested in a career in home building. The website provides a unique way to learn more about the pathways into the industry.

"Knowing what you want to do when you leave school can be daunting. The *She Builds The Future* website showcases a range of jobs, onsite and offsite, in construction, manufacturing and business management. The website provides insights on the what the job involves, why you'd be interested in the job and what you need to do to get that job. This information is supported



***She Builds The Future* – promoting, educating and inspiring women to bring their talents to the building sector.** Image: Shutterstock

by wonderful stories and guidance from real women, working in the job today," said Ms Brookfield.

While most people think of the well-known jobs like builders, carpenters, electricians and plumbers, there are so many more people and jobs involved in building a new home. Every new home is built on strong foundations using high quality building materials. Engineers, designers, fabricators and many more amazing jobs make up this essential sector of the building industry.

As a trusted innovation partner in off-site construction and a passionate advocate for a more inclusive building industry, our partnership with MiTek is something HIA see as vital to expanding the information young women

can find on manufacturing and design jobs. The website will showcase a variety of these roles and showcase women already achieving success in their chosen careers.

"MiTek and HIA are working together to help open doors for the next generation of builders, tradespeople, manufacturers and fabricators," said David Oliver, Managing Director – MiTek, Asia Pacific. "As we launch

this initiative, we are proud to create pathways that inspire and empower women and girls to consider careers in building."

The program also includes the release of the Australian edition of *The House that She Built*, a children's story book written to open the world of home building to our youngest minds.

With women currently making up just 15% of the construction industry in Australia, the program serves as a call to action, encouraging young minds to building as a genuine pathway to explore and develop skills that build confidence and character.

"By supporting initiatives like *She Builds the Future* and *The Australian edition of the House That She Built*, MiTek and HIA are paving the way for a more inclusive workforce—where women and diverse talents are not just welcomed but empowered to lead, thrive and contribute meaningfully to the construction industry," concluded Ms Brookfield and Mr Oliver.

**“WOMEN AND DIVERSE TALENTS ARE NOT JUST WELCOMED BUT EMPOWERED TO LEAD, THRIVE AND CONTRIBUTE MEANINGFULLY**



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# Friend or foe: why homebuilders have a lot to learn from termites

TERMITES are often thought of as bad news when it comes to a building's integrity – but what if the voracious insects hold the blueprint to designing the coolest homes in the Territory?

Charles Darwin University's (CDU) new Professor of Architecture, Lindy Burton, said a key component when designing buildings to support occupants' wellbeing is air flow.

Professor Burton said the iconic termite mounds decorating Territory landscapes were perfect examples of the naturally ventilated, self-cooling cathedrals termites design and thrive in.

"If there's even just one little bit of information that

can help architects improve the way we design buildings, to help us to ventilate them better, reduce temperature, and limit our reliance on energy consumption, we've got to investigate it," she said.

"We are part of nature, and we can learn a lot from it – we should never assume humans have all the answers."

Professor Burton hopes to attract PhD candidates to the University to explore those lessons with her.

Wellbeing has been a strong theme throughout Professor Burton's career – before taking on her first academic role at Queensland University of Technology, she specialised in the design of health infrastructure such as hospitals and laboratories.



**A close-up look at the internal design and intricate ventilation system of a termite nest.** Photo: Charles Darwin University

"I built a career around healthy buildings and how buildings support your wellbeing through lighting levels, air quality, and connection to nature," she said.

Now turning her sights on cultivating the Northern Territory's first crop of homegrown architects, Professor Burton said it was

important to ensure her students focused on context, climate, culture, and community throughout their studies and design processes.

"Today's reality is that currently, the NT often relies on southern solutions that neglect to address the

Territory's unique complexities," she said.

"The Territory's geographical position demands innovative, adaptive, climate-responsive design research, and should incorporate First Nations knowledges to create infrastructure representative of the NT's vibrant communities."



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# World-leading gene editing research will benefit NZ

SCION has launched the world's first field trial of gene-edited conifer as part of research aimed at improving wood quality and producing materials to support New Zealand's bioeconomy.

The Crown Research Institute has developed and implemented an advanced gene-editing technique known as CRISPR that lets scientists turn off a specific gene within the pine's complex genome. This helps them understand what that gene does – which in turn builds understanding of how wood develops.

Two sets of trees have been planted, each with a separate gene turned off. This aims to enhance timber quality and improve the process of converting wood into fibre (pulp) and sustainable chemical feedstocks for the bioeconomy. One of these genes is involved in the synthesis of hemicellulose, a renewable biopolymer a molecule produced by plants with many versatile, high-value applications. The other is involved in the development of compression wood, which forms on leaning or bent stems to straighten them up. Compression wood behaves differently from normal wood during timber processing, leading to issues such as warping and reduced strength, as well as making the extraction of fibre and chemicals more difficult.

The trees in this trial were initially cultivated in a contained greenhouse, where their wood underwent a comprehensive analysis. This



**Scion's gene-edited trees are under close observation.** Photo: Scion

research yielded unique and fundamental insights into the mechanisms of cell wall formation. The trees have subsequently been planted in Scion's Environment Protection Agency-approved GMO field test containment facility to help scientists better understand how they perform under real-world conditions and to collect sufficient wood for relevant biomechanical experiments.

Scion senior scientist Glenn Thorlby says the trees' growth and development continue to be meticulously monitored. "This research will allow us to produce trees that, with optimised wood properties, will support the export of high-value timber and the biomass needed to replace petrochemicals as New Zealand transitions to a low-emissions sustainable bioeconomy.

Additionally, Scion has also developed gene-edited Douglas-fir to create sterile trees that could be planted without the risk of exacerbating New Zealand's wilding pine issue. These

sterile trees would potentially act as a form of biocontrol for future genetically modified trees.

"This will enable Douglas-fir to grow normally but not reproduce, helping limit its spread," Glenn says. "By targeting reproductive genes, we offer a potential solution to New Zealand's wilding pine problem."

Wilding pines occur when forest species such as Douglas-fir spread beyond planted areas, impacting native ecosystems and landscapes across New Zealand.

Scion's team is using advanced sequencing and analysis tools to pinpoint genes specifically involved in reproduction. Trees with these identified genes

inactivated through gene editing have been developed and must now undergo field testing to confirm they grow normally but don't produce the seeds responsible for spread.

Scion hopes to undertake these field trials when future regulations allow.

Alec Foster, Scion's general manager

for Forest to Biobased Products, highlighted the opportunity this work offers New Zealand. "This gene-editing achievement represents exactly the kind of transformative science New Zealand needs to secure its economic future.

"We're solving today's forestry challenges and pioneering solutions that could be worth billions to our economy. The ability to create sterile Douglas-fir trees that grow normally but can't spread as wilding pines, combined with radiata pine optimised for higher-value timber and biomanufacturing, demonstrates how gene technology can simultaneously protect our environment and drive economic growth," he says.

"With the government's modernisation of gene technology laws, we're hopeful we will finally be positioned to translate this world-leading science into real-world outcomes that will benefit every New Zealander."

**“AIMS TO ENHANCE  
TIMBER QUALITY  
AND IMPROVE  
THE PROCESS OF  
CONVERTING WOOD  
INTO FIBRE**



# Dry fire season ends with minimal forest damage

ONEFORTYONE'S fire season has officially concluded, marked by notably drier conditions and an increased number of very high fire danger days.

OneFortyOne Green Triangle Forests General Manager, Deon Kriek, commended the efforts of all crews and highlighted the collaboration between industry brigades, the Country Fire Service (CFS), and the Country Fire Authority (CFA).

"The cooperation and readiness of our fire crews was excellent throughout this challenging season," Deon said.

"Collaboration with the CFS, CFA, and industry brigades has been vital in managing risk throughout the season and minimised the impact of the fires we did have."

"The entire crew's commitment to working together to protecting the forest and the broader

community should be acknowledged."

The new Penola fire tower was finished ready for the season's start.

"Our fire tower operators were crucial in detecting and monitoring fires early," Deon said.

"They were also supported by the Green Triangle Fire Alliance's AI fire detection cameras, which operated around the clock."

Reflecting on the season, Deon noted the region experienced significantly drier conditions than average, which elevated the risk and severity of fires.

"There were more very high fire danger days compared to the average," Deon said.

"OneFortyOne fire crews



1/ OneFortyOne's firefighters were on standby for 132 days and responded to 66 fire incidents.



2/ The firefighters don't simply just put out the fire they also clean up the aftermath.

All photos: OneFortyOne

were on standby for 132 days, a substantial increase from the average of 88 days."

"During this time, we responded to 66 fires in our forests and other areas across the region."

"Despite the high number of fires, less than 2 hectares of OneFortyOne forests were impacted, and most importantly our people went home safe and well."

To celebrate the end of the

fire season, an event was held in Mount Gambier last week, bringing the fire crew back together.

"The end of season wrap up was a great chance to get everyone back together, reflect, and recognise the work of all crews over what was a challenging season," Deon said.

Fire management activity including crew training exercises, prescribed burning, and fire break maintenance will continue throughout the year.

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# Innovative timber construction for social housing in Germany

IN Augsburg's Kriegshaber district, German construction company Gump & Maier has completed "Haus Tür an Tür" (Door to Door), a project delivering 18 new apartments for low-income tenants and those in precarious housing situations. Designed by Streidl, Gilg, Wolff Architekten, the building prioritises social, ecological, and economic efficiency through innovative timber construction. By using prefabricated exterior walls made with Kerto® LVL (laminated veneer lumber), the project showcases how wooden elements can streamline construction, reduce costs, and enhance sustainability.

## THE POWER OF TIMBER IN



**Open, welcoming, bright, and modern: This is how the new building with apartments for low-income tenants presents itself.** Photo: Eckhart Matthäus

## SUSTAINABLE DESIGN

The building's foundation relies on both load-bearing and non-load-bearing exterior walls crafted in timber frame

construction, utilising a total of 500 cubic metres of wood. "The client wanted an ecological construction method, excluding cement, concrete, and steel," explains

Manfred Gilg of Streidl, Gilg & Wolff Architekten. "With wood, we chose a renewable resource that stores CO<sub>2</sub>, fulfilling the sustainability concept." This approach not only reduces resource consumption but also improves indoor air quality by absorbing pollutants. Additional eco-friendly features include a solar system for efficient operations, rainwater collection, a greened roof, and designated gardening spaces, all contributing to the building's long-term sustainability.

## PREFABRICATION BOOSTS EFFICIENCY WITH KERTO LVL

Cont P 13

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Image: AKD



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Kerto LVL, supplied by Metsä Wood, was selected for its high strength, stability, and suitability for prefabrication. Its precision proved invaluable, as Wolfgang Krettenauer, Project Manager at Gump & Maier, notes: "The precision of Kerto LVL is especially valuable during prefabrication. Minimal deviations help us streamline our processes and allow us to create high-quality components without mistakes." Compared to massive timber elements, LVL wall elements are lighter and slimmer, requiring less wood while maintaining structural integrity. These prefabricated components, complete with windows and facade cladding, enabled rapid on-site assembly, significantly reducing construction time.

## COST- AND ENERGY-EFFICIENT HIGH-STANDARD CONSTRUCTION

The exterior walls' deep stud level also incorporates Kerto LVL, with beams measuring 63 by 300 millimetres. Metsä Wood's ability to provide custom-made LVL in large widths set them apart from other suppliers, ensuring an efficient and cost-effective



**1/ The individual elements, including windows, shading, and facade cladding, were pre-produced in the factory.** Photo: Tür an Tür Miteinander Wohnen und Leben gGmbH

**2/ Kerto LVL is made from three-millimetre-thick softwood veneers that are glued together in the production process.** Photo: Gump & Maier GmbH

frame construction. This design easily accommodated energy-optimised wall elements with thick insulation, allowing the building to meet the stringent Efficiency House Standard 40. The use of LVL not only saved time, materials, and costs but also minimised errors, making the project a model of efficiency.

## BUILDING FOR LONGEVITY WITH SUSTAINABLE MATERIALS

For added durability, Metsä Wood's Kerto GLVL (glued laminated veneer lumber) was used for the ground floor threshold, with dimensions of 100 by 360 millimetres

and 100 by 300 millimetres. These high-load-bearing components, ideal for multi-storey buildings, prevent settling damage and enhance the building's longevity. The dimensional stability and accuracy of Kerto LVL ensure high-quality ecological timber frame construction, particularly in multi-storey projects. Sourced from PEFC-certified wood (PEFC/02-31-03), the materials align with the project's sustainability goals, offering innovative characteristics that set them apart from conventional solutions.

## A MODEL FOR FUTURE CONSTRUCTION

"Haus Tür an Tür" demonstrates how timber construction, paired with advanced prefabrication techniques, can deliver cost-effective, sustainable, and high-quality housing. By leveraging the technical benefits of Kerto LVL, Gump & Maier has created a healthier living environment for tenants while contributing to a more sustainable future through reduced CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and resource use. This project sets a benchmark for social housing, proving that ecological design and economic efficiency can go hand in hand.

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# The future of frame & truss: prefabrication leads the way

## Big River champions complete solutions, productivity, and onsite waste reduction.

OVER the past twelve months, the Australian building industry faced significant challenges, including labour shortages, fluctuating material costs, and an increasing focus on sustainability, shaping how homes and commercial buildings are designed and constructed. These pressures are driving businesses across the sector to adapt and innovate, adopting solutions to meet demand while maintaining quality and efficiency.

For Big River Group, 2025 will see the business continue to complete solutions that are trade focused and add value to the jobsite productivity. "The 2025 building trends will be on safety, productivity and a continuing shift in construction methods and systems such as an increase of pre-fabricated building components, that support efficiency and productivity," said Ray Ferretti, Executive General Manager - Construction of Big River Group.

As a first step, Big River Group's Trade Centres at Dry Creek in South Australia, and Breakwater in Victoria, demonstrate this commitment to addressing challenges with reliable, high-quality solutions for the frame and truss sector.

"Both Dry Creek and Breakwater are focused on supporting builders with prefabricated roof trusses, wall frames, and floor trusses, which are becoming increasingly critical in addressing on-site inefficiencies and labour shortages," said Ferretti.



**1 & 2/ Two completed house projects that feature products from the Big River Group.**  
Images: Big River Group

"By tailoring our solutions to meet the specific needs of projects - whether boutique homes in South Australia or multi-residential developments in Victoria - we're helping builders embrace offsite construction methods that improve efficiency and manage costs in today's challenging market."

Given the challenges builders face on-site with labour shortages and unpredictable weather, there has been a noticeable shift toward offsite prefabrication. Prefabricated solutions not only speed up the construction process but also allow potential issues with plans or engineering to be identified before they arise on-site,



avoiding rework and costly fixes by various trades.

To stay competitive in a demanding market, Big River Group has integrated advanced tools and streamlined processes across its operations. At Dry Creek, AI-powered design software enhances precision and production speed, while Breakwater features the latest Hundegger saws paired

with skilled estimators and designers who utilise cutting-edge design programs. These tools ensure quality control and competitive pricing through continuous improvements in design and machinery.

Additionally, Big River Group offers a comprehensive range of solutions, including flooring and framing cladding products such as MaxiWall and a full range of fibre cement products by Etex and James Hardie. These materials not only streamline construction but also deliver high performance, durability, and a modern aesthetic, supporting the industry's evolving needs.

The building industry is becoming less reliant on global supply chains, but some projects will continue experiencing sourcing delays next year. Big River Group has worked intensely with supply chains to ensure they can achieve the best supply rates to support the industry with core products.

"Supply at our Dry Creek centre has been consistent due to the strong relationships we've built with our suppliers over the years," said Ferretti. "Our stock management system ensures we can meet production requirements at all times, giving builders the confidence that their projects will stay on track." Big River further strengthens its operations by supporting Australian timber mills, ensuring the supply of top-quality framing materials,



From P 16

an approach that not only guarantees high standards but also results in greater efficiency and reduced wastage on-site.

At its Breakwater facility, Big River Group has made significant progress in reducing its environmental impact. Historically, a large volume of timber offcuts, strapping, and general waste went to landfill. Today, through partnerships with recycling organisations like Visy, SIM Metal, GT Recycling, and the Mulch Company, the company has achieved a 95% reduction in landfill waste. Timber offcuts are now repurposed into garden mulch and industrial products, saving approximately \$65,000 in landfill fees annually. Plastics from timber packs and strapping are recycled through GT Recycling, while metals such as plates and strapping are processed through SIM Metal. Office paper and cardboard are fully recycled through Visy, with secure shredding for confidential documents, and all printer and photocopy cartridges are recycled. "By recycling all our materials - from timber offcuts to plastic and metal - we've significantly reduced our environmental impact while optimising our processes for greater efficiency," said Ferretti.

As part of Big River's commitment to add value to customers and building projects, there is a robust training program in place for staff. Ferretti adds, "This on-going training allows us to continue supporting our products with expert solutions and technical advice responding to the demands of ever-changing industry requirements, as well as providing a pipeline of talent to support the company's evolving needs."



1, 2 & 3/ Prefabricated wall segments are installed on a house project.  
Images: Big River Group

Big River also invests in comprehensive development programs to upskill its workforce, enabling employees to step into technical roles like design and estimation. Central to these efforts are advanced industry design software platforms such as Multinail and Pryda, which play a vital role in enhancing the company's frame and truss operations.

"At our Dry Creek Trade Centre, Multinail's software allows us to create highly precise designs for roof trusses, wall frames, and floor systems, ensuring seamless integration with engineering requirements and production workflows," said Ferretti. "In Victoria, Breakwater uses Pryda's software to optimise prefabrication processes, enabling efficient estimation and the early detection of potential structural issues. These tools are essential in helping us enhance accuracy,

reduce waste, and streamline production to meet the growing demands of the construction industry."

Looking ahead, Big River Group is exploring greater automation in its manufacturing processes and further integration of AI into design workflows. "At Breakwater, we are exploring AI-driven design programs and how we can integrate them with BIM (Building Information Management) systems," said Ferretti. "This technology will allow builders to see in real-time where trusses or beams may intersect with services in the structure, improving accuracy and reducing lead times." Both Dry Creek and Breakwater are positioning themselves as leaders in prefabrication, ready to adapt to a rapidly changing industry.

For more information about Big River Group's innovative frame and truss solutions: [click here](#).



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