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International Timber Bridge Conference in Rotorua

COVER STORY P2

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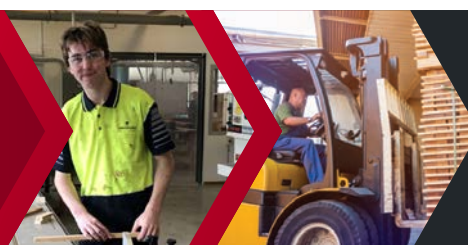
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Bridging sustainability

Responsible Wood and the University of the Sunshine Coast attended the International Timber Bridge Conference in Rotorua.

THE 5th International Conference on Timber Bridges (5ICTB) was recently held in Rotorua, New Zealand – the first time the global conference was held in the Southern Hemisphere.

The conference brought together engineers, researchers, timber industry professionals and sustainability advocates from around the world to explore the future of timber bridges. Key themes included structural performance, innovation in timber design, and the critical role of responsible sourcing and sustainable supply chains.



1/ The opening evening featured a Pōwhiri/Māori welcoming ceremony.

2/ Timber durability expert Professor Tripti Singh speaking on the sustainability and circularity of timber at the conference.

All photos: courtesy Matt de Jongh

address, highlighted the relevance of timber certification in bridge infrastructure.

“Responsible Wood, as the Australian national governing body for PEFC, plays a key role in assuring that the timber used in bridges is sourced responsibly,” he said. “Certification demonstrates that timber comes from sustainably managed forests and supports ethical, transparent, and climate-positive supply chains. As timber bridges become more widespread, especially in infrastructure projects with

carbon reduction goals, demonstrating sustainability through certification is vital.”

Professor Tripti Singh, a key member of the 5ICTB organising committee and director of the National Centre for Timber Durability and Design Life at the University of the Sunshine Coast, praised the international turnout and the calibre of discussion at the event. “The conference has been an incredible opportunity to connect global expertise with the local momentum we’re seeing in Australasia around timber infrastructure,” Professor Singh said. “It’s especially important for future engineers to see what’s possible with certified, durable timber—something Matt and Responsible Wood actively promote.”

In addition to the core conference sessions,

“CERTIFICATION DEMONSTRATES THAT TIMBER COMES FROM SUSTAINABLY MANAGED FORESTS”

Matt de Jongh from Responsible Wood was one of the speakers and, in his

Cont P 3

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From P 2

delegates toured timber research facilities and bridge construction projects, gaining firsthand experience in modern timber engineering practices.

The event also focused on encouraging student involvement, with hands-on learning opportunities to help the next generation understand the complexities of real-world construction—including project logistics, budgeting, and sustainability constraints.

de Jongh emphasised the broader vision of using wood

in infrastructure. "It's not just about building with timber—it's about building trust in timber. Certification gives designers, engineers, and governments the confidence to specify sustainable wood

with full visibility of its origin and impacts."

As attendees explored both technical innovation and the cultural and natural beauty of Rotorua – from the Redwoods Forest to the

city's geothermal wonders – the conference underscored timber's potential to support resilient, low-carbon communities well into the future.

"Nau mai, haere mai ki Rotorua!" said Singh echoing the welcome and invitation to the city that had been a central part of the pōwhiri ceremony that opened the event. "We hope the connections made here lead to lasting collaborations that bring more sustainable timber bridges to life across the globe."

On the cover: The SCION research institute in Rotorua, with its striking three-storey glulam and LVL building, Te Whare Nui o Tuteata.
Image: courtesy Matt de Jongh



1/ (From left) Sebastian Jaimes and Stuart Hazlett from Rothoblaas with Responsible Wood's Matt de Jongh.

2/ Professor Tripti Singh with field trip attendees, inspecting the ground contact timber testing at the SCION research centre's wood field test site.

3/ The conference featured technical visits, including a field trip the SCION research facility, where Romain Meot explained the team's timber testing. All images: courtesy Matt de Jongh

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New TFFPN comms faces

THE Tasmanian Forests and Forest Products Network (TFFPN) announced two new faces to the team on Friday.

Maeve McKenna and David Bauche are stepping into roles to support the communications, events, and membership activities of the TFFPN.

The names are already familiar in the sector: each will dedicate one day a week to the Network, in addition to their ongoing roles with Australian Forest and Wood Innovations (McKenna) and the Tasmanian Forest Products Association (Bauche). TFFPN said it was grateful to both organisations for their support in making this arrangement possible.

Together, TFFPN hopes the pair will help deliver consistent communications and continue to grow the network's

engaged, informed membership community. From sharing stories across the sector to supporting events and keeping members connected, they'll be focused on making it easy for people to stay informed and involved.

"It's fantastic to have Maeve and David on board to support the Network's communications, events, and membership," said Professor Julianne O'Reilly Wapstra, TFFPN Chair.

"Both bring deep experience and strong connections across the sector, and many of our members will already know them through their work with AFWI and TFPA.

"Having two familiar and trusted voices supporting TFFPN is a benefit, and I'm



The appointments were announced on TFFPN's socials. Image: courtesy TFFPN

excited to see the positive impact they will have."

McKenna is a communications specialist with more than 12 years of experience and a passion for storytelling. Originally from Ireland and now based in lutruwita/Tasmania,

she's worked across digital communication, social media, and newsroom teams, with a focus on connecting with audiences in meaningful ways.

Bauche is an experienced senior communications and government relations manager. As well as seven years in Tasmania, David has worked in NSW, Canberra

and Victoria. Prior to working in communications and government relations, he was a senior editor at News Corp and Rural Press, and has worked as an adviser to a Federal Minister.



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Tasmanian election forestry policies

What the parties are promising ahead of next week's election.

WHILE the state's healthcare issues, housing needs and debate over the Stadium are dominating reporting on the upcoming Tasmanian State Election, forestry is a major business on the Apple Isle and each of the major parties has made announcements around their platforms.

The ALP's Tasmanian leader, Dean Winter, has committed to continuing native forestry's exemption from the national Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act and asked the Federal Government to consider extending similar exemptions to other major state industries including salmon farming in a bid to "cut green tape". Winter is a long-time supporter of native forestry, calling out the fact that Tasmanian logs are now being exported to Victoria to maintain milling jobs in that

state, which could instead move to his.

Labor candidates have also received an assist from the Albanese Federal Government with 25% increase to financial assistance as it delivers on a key election commitment to boost the Tasmanian Freight Equalisation Scheme (TFES). The scheme provides financial assistance for costs incurred by those shipping eligible materials across the Bass Strait.

Jeremy Rockliff's Liberals have reaffirmed their commitment to native forestry harvesting and the communities it supports, saying that the ALP is not to be trusted and that previous comments on locking forestry out of some native timber areas (particularly the Tarkine) are the truth of what a future



Andrew Jenner, sitting member for Lyons, will run as a National candidate after the Jacqui Lambie Network decided not to field state candidates. Photo: supplied

benefit more from fees and charges instead of just propping up the public service.

The party also wants to stamp out regulatory duplication and tighten biosecurity measures to safeguard Tasmania's international standing.

The Greens promise to institute a standalone Department of Environment and Water, increase response

ALP forestry policy would represent.


The Tasmanian Nationals have unveiled a five-point policy platform they say will cut government red tape while supporting the state's farming, fisheries and forestry sectors. Under the plan, economic and social benefits would be factored into project approvals, outdated regulations would be reviewed and local communities would

capabilities for bushfires and prevent the illegal harvesting and sale of firewood. Less helpful for the forestry sector are the party's plans to repurpose Forestry Tasmania to manage native forests for the protection and conservation of existing and future carbon stores in a heating climate and protect, in formal reserves, 356,000 hectares of high conservation value forest.


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Have your say on FSC Standard

Public consultation opens on revised FSC® Forest Management Standard for Australia.

THE Forest Stewardship Council® Australia and New Zealand (FSC ANZ) has launched the first public consultation on the revised FSC Forest Stewardship Standard (FSS) for Australia.

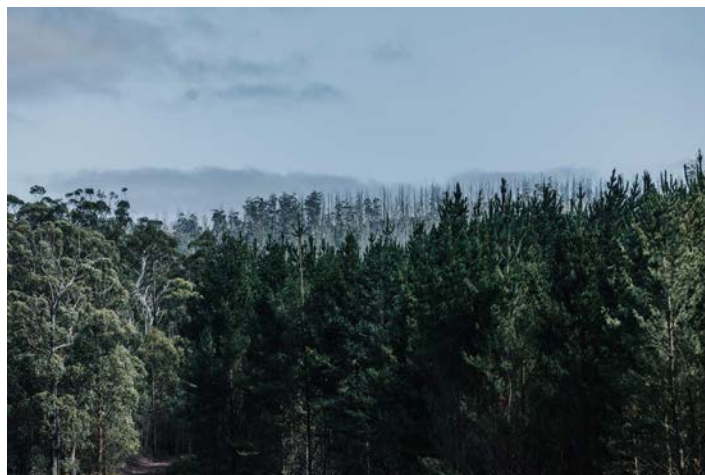
The public consultation marks an important milestone in the revision process initiated by FSC ANZ to ensure the FSS continues to promote best-practice responsible forest management and remains fit for purpose. The consultation is open from 1 July to 31 August 2025. All stakeholders are invited to review the draft and provide feedback via the FSC Public Consultation Platform (see clickable links below).

James Felton-Taylor from Australian Sustainable Timbers, Chair of FSC ANZ, said, "The Board considers the Forest Stewardship Standard to be the keystone of everything FSC ANZ does as an organisation, locking the whole together. We are grateful for the incredible work the Standards Development Group has put into developing this first draft. We encourage everyone with a passion for responsible forestry to take part in the public consultation."

Click here to access the revised FSS and to participate in the consultation.

To support stakeholder understanding and engagement, FSC ANZ will host two identical webinars presenting an overview of the revision process and the main proposed changes to the Standard:

- 29 July, 18:00 – 19:30 AEST – click here to register



Timbers from FSC-certified forests deliver sustainable, trusted wood products into the Australian domestic and export markets. Making sure the Standard is fit for purpose underpins that trust. All photos: FSC®

- 1 August, 10:00 – 11:30 am AEST – click here to register

Members of the Standards Development Group (SDG), who drafted the revised version of the FSS, will attend both webinars. The webinars will not be recorded.

Stefan Jensen, Senior Policy Manager at FSC ANZ and SDG Facilitator, said, "FSC ANZ's objective is to deliver a Standard that is best-in-class, auditable and practical to implement – by introducing new requirements and refining existing ones. To achieve this objective, we need clear, actionable input from an

informed and diverse set of stakeholders."

WHAT'S NEW IN THE DRAFT REVISED STANDARD?

Some of the most significant proposed changes include:

- Stricter controls on the use of highly hazardous pesticides
- Stronger safeguards for workers' rights
- The introduction of the Indigenous Cultural Landscapes concept
- New cultural empathy requirements for specific forestry roles

Feedback from the consultation will be compiled by FSC ANZ and submitted to the SDG to inform the development of the second draft, scheduled for consultation in 2026. A public consultation report and the SDG's formal responses to the feedback received will be shared in the second round of consultation.

"The revision process is a powerful example of FSC's ability to bring together environmental, social and economic interests to shape the future of responsible forest management," said Melanie Robertson, CEO of FSC ANZ.

"SDG members have brought extensive technical expertise and operational knowledge from across Australia's regions and stakeholder groups to the revision work, working constructively to ensure the new and revised requirements are focused, streamlined, and clear in intent."

The SDG encourages all interested stakeholders to provide feedback on this first draft of the revised standard. It welcomes feedback that can help improve the draft and encourages stakeholders to be as constructive as possible in their feedback. Input that suggests how specific changes can be improved is especially welcome.

If you have any questions, please contact Stefan Jensen: s.jensen@au.fsc.org

For more information about the revision process, click here.

Take part in the consultation by clicking here.

SEPTEMBER

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

For more information, email admin@timberqueensland.com.au

7-12: Gottstein Trust's Understanding Wood Science Course – Albury and Canberra. The course is designed to provide exposure to a wide range of industry & research experts and includes site visits to leading plants across three types of end products. For further information and registration details visit [https://gottsteintrust.org/grants-courses/understanding-](https://gottsteintrust.org/grants-courses/understanding-wood-science-course)

[wood-science-course](https://gottsteintrust.org/grants-courses/understanding-wood-science-course)

13: SAVE THE DATE: WFTN Cocktails for Charity event – Brisbane, 2.00pm - 6.00pm.

Sponsorship opportunities available - contact jenni@versacetimbers.com.au
More details to follow.

18-19: SAVE THE DATE: THU 18 - Onetrak/Tigercat field demonstration day followed by AFCA AGM & dinner. FRI 19 - Networking breakfast – Canberra. More details to follow.

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 – Perth, WA. (Follows on from the woodchip and biomass seminar in Singapore.) For more information visit <https://danaevents.co.nz/2025singapore/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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National Timber Fibre Strategy sets roadmap

The Albanese Government's announcement has been welcomed.

AT the 2022 Federal Election, the Albanese government promised to deliver a Timber Fibre Strategy. The Strategy was devised to serve as advice from the forestry industry to the Australian Government and to form part of the vision and information basis to guide future government actions.



The newly released final report on Australia's Timber Fibre Strategy. Image supplied



Stephen Dadd, executive director at Pentarch and one of the Strategic Forest and Renewable Materials Partnership co-chairs. Image: courtesy AFPA



Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Julie Collins MP with Foreign Minister Penny Wong and a South Australian farming family. Image: courtesy Julie Collins/Instagram

After three years of work by the Strategic Forest and Renewable Materials Partnership – a forum that brought together industry, unions and the government – the Strategy was compiled by The Fifth Estate and handed to the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry in March this year, then released to the public on Monday.

Strategic Forest and Renewable Materials Partnership co-chairs Stephen Dadd and Michael O'Connor said: "The Timber Fibre Strategy is the result of detailed work with forestry leaders across industry, unions, research organisations, government officials and community groups. The forestry industry has told us it wants to help solve some of the problems facing Australia. From housing to net zero, the Strategy sets out actions for industry and governments to use sustainable, carbon-sequestering forest products to build houses and lift productivity.

"The Strategy sets a

vision for our entire industry, from managing a healthy and expanding forest estate to a diverse and productive manufacturing sector."

Those aren't empty goals: the Strategy (click here to download) engages on six priority areas, setting out 128 actions that cover and address pivotal issues facing the sector. The six key sub-strategies are:

- Building sovereign timber fibre manufacturing capability and capacity
- Meeting demand for timber fibre resources
- Healthy forests, actively managed
- Attracting and engaging people and other industry enablers
- Supporting and growing regional communities
- Innovating the timber fibre value chain

"Our forest products sector has a unique opportunity to provide sustainable, high-quality, carbon-sequestering products that Australians need," said Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and

Forestry, Julie Collins MP at the launch.

"The Albanese Labor Government is investing \$300 million into the long-term future of Australia's forestry sector. This investment is already delivering on some of the objectives outlined in the Strategy, but our Government understands there is more that can be done.

"I'm excited to use the Timber Fibre Strategy to work with the industry, and with states and territories, to maximise the benefits of this investment, and to leverage other opportunities across government to lift the productivity of the forestry sector."

While timber supply for housing is an obvious key theme, it is but one of the issues tackled. Contained within the strategy are many expert voices from within the sector, talking on issues as diverse as ecological thinning in WA, First Nations' engagement and innovation in timber fibre utilisation and value adding.

WELCOMED BY INDUSTRY

The strategy has met with a warm reception from within the sector.

Forestry Australia has called it a timely and important roadmap to support a sustainable, world-leading forest and wood products sector, saying the Strategy recognises the critical role of science, innovation, and active forest management in ensuring that Australia's forests can continue to deliver environmental, economic, cultural and social outcomes for generations to come.

Dr Michelle Freeman, President of Forestry Australia, said the Strategy provides a clear signal that science-led forest management and a resilient forest sector are central to Australia's future.

"As the professional association representing forest scientists and professionals, we are particularly encouraged by the Strategy's strong emphasis

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on science, good ecological practice and evidence-based decision-making," Dr Freeman said.

"It rightly recognises that active, well-informed forest management is vital for healthy, resilient forests — and that these forests provide essential benefits not just for the wood products sector, but for biodiversity, communities and the climate."

Forestry Australia noted the Strategy's ties to key national goals, including supporting healthy forests, addressing climate change, solving the housing crisis and delivering a future made in Australia. The organisation added that it builds on the Australian government's recent welcome investments in research, development and future workforce capacity — including \$10 million for the Forestry Workforce Training

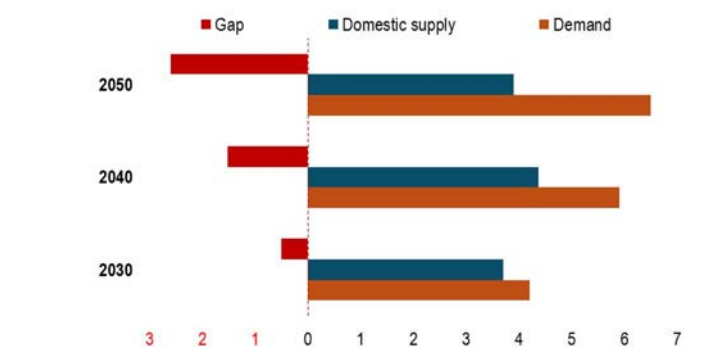


Figure 5 – Australia's projected sawn softwood timber supply gap (million cubic metres)

As shown in Figure 5 of the report, the gap between demand and supply for domestic sawn softwood timber will continue to grow unless changes are made. Image: supplied

Program, and support through the Support Plantation Establishment Program.

"Forestry Australia is proud to be delivering the Women in Forestry and Forest Industries Mentoring Program as part of the Forestry Workforce Training Program investment — a practical initiative supporting diversity, professional development and the next generation of forest

sector leaders," said Freeman.

"We commend the Government for backing innovation, skills and long-term capacity. Forests and forest science are key to a climate-positive future."

AFPA was similarly positive, calling the strategy "balanced and considered".

"We're happy that [the Strategy has] come to fruition after three years of work



Dr Michelle Freeman, President of Forestry Australia. Image: courtesy ACAIR

from the Strategic Forest and Renewable Materials Partnership that was created to inform its development," Diana Hallam, CEO of AFPA said.

"We welcome Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, the Hon Julie Collins' recognition that the strategy points to a bigger role for the forestry sector in tackling

Cont P 10

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ABARES report highlights sustainability

The new report shows the climate credentials of Australian native forestry.

THE Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics (ABARES) released a new Insights paper on Monday, titled Australia's native forests and wood production report (click here to download).

The paper describes Australia's native forests managed for wood production, the sustainable wood harvesting that is carried out within them and other ecosystem services that they provide. The data shows about 0.05% of Australia's native forests (about 65,000 hectares) is sustainably harvested annually to produce timber and wood-fibre products. All of those forests are then required by law to be regenerated after harvest, with the paper providing a clear explanation of the differences between forest harvesting and deforestation.

Diana Hallam, CEO of the Australian Forest Products Association (AFPA), welcomed the paper,

saying, "This ABARES report reaffirms what our native forestry industry lives and breathes by – that sustainably harvesting timber for wood production is essential to create everyday products like house-frames, decking, flooring, furniture, power poles, pallets, packaging and paper. It also reaffirms that sustainable native forestry is not 'deforestation' because every harvested tree is replaced, and that our native production forests support diverse and unique biodiversity and have an important role to play fighting climate change, through the creation of carbon friendly products and active forest management.

"Importantly, the report shows our total national



Australian hardwood timber boards, stacked for drying.
Image: Shutterstock/Tanya Stawitzki

forest area grew by 2.8 million hectares from 2008 to 2021 and that the total area of multiple-use public native forests, where wood harvesting is permitted, has more than halved since the mid-1990s to 4.3 million hectares, or just 3.3% of Australia's total native forest area in 2021. The percentage of accessible area has reduced even further to just 2.1% off the back of forced industry closures in Victoria and Western Australia. This

should help put to rest activist claims that our sustainable industry is destroying forests, something that couldn't be further from the truth. It's worth noting that in the European Union around 84% of natural forests are available for harvest and wood production."

Hallam welcomed the report's discussion of the challenges around decreasing wood supply and recognition that plantations cannot replace native sawlog supply.

"We welcome this ABARES report that demonstrates the important role of sustainable native forestry for essential products, the economy, jobs, environment and climate and thank the Albanese Government for its release," Hallam concluded.

From P 9

national housing challenges and the Government's housing agenda. This is a major issue of the times and we stand ready to increase our contribution to the national effort."

Hallam also acknowledged the Strategy's role in highlighting wood products as multi-issue solutions.

"Australia and other countries around the world are seeking to replace more emissions-intensive building materials with sustainable timber to achieve their climate targets. More recognition of the environmental benefits of

timber will ensure the industry can grow and succeed, sustaining many local jobs and boosting regional economies," she said.

The fact that forestry workers are foregrounded in the Strategy has met with approval from the Australian Forest Contractors Association (AFCA).

AFCA CEO Tim Lester said, "The Strategy highlights that there are opportunities and challenges facing the sector. It also shows how governments and all parts of the industry can work together to deliver healthy forests, thriving regional communities and successful businesses.

"Pleasingly the document acknowledges the importance of forest services businesses as critical participants in the supply chain, and that their success is key for a sustainable and growing timber fibre sector."

Lester added, "We also note the acknowledgement of the role played by forestry certification, such as AFCA's world-leading ForestFit™ standard and certification scheme, to support responsible and ethical supply chains while also providing assurance of environmental, social and economic sustainability."

The associations all

thanked the team behind the Strategy and Minister Collins for her support saying they looked forward to working with the government to realise the Strategy's goals.

The Queensland Government has also announced that it will be delivering a landmark Queensland Future Timber Plan to ensure the state's timber supplies are adequate to build a projected 1 million homes by 2044.

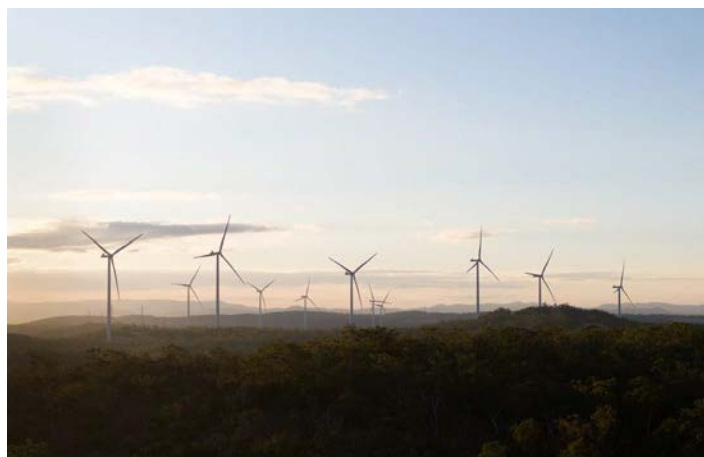
It says that the draft plan will be released for public consultation later this year and invites interested parties to subscribe to Forestry News (click here) for updates.

Forest wind farm battery plan

IN May, *Enews* shared the announcement that Forestry Corporation was looking to explore the potential for wind farms within public pine plantations (click here for issue 805).

Now, French renewable energy and storage developer Neoen is proposing to build 3200 megawatt hours of battery storage next to one such farm. Renew Economy reports that the development, which would be the largest of its kind in Australia, would be fed by a 1.2 gigawatt wind farm.

The proposed Bondo wind project, east of Tumut, would comprise up to 149 turbines, each of around 8 MW in capacity. The towers would be unusually high as the tops of the blades need significant tree clearance within the forests.



Battery support for renewables has been shown to keep power consistent and prices lower. Image: supplied

The battery storage system would be sized at a total of 3200 MWh, split into two separate components, each of 1600 MWh and 400 MW power capacity, that could connect into two different 330 kV transmission lines that already pass through the area. Another option is the new 500

kV Humelink transmission line that is also mapped out for the area.

As mentioned in the *Enews* story, Neoen has already been liaising with the local community to answer questions and give early information about what the turbines and battery would

look like, as well as potential new jobs and other benefits to the region.

The company is at the forefront of battery storage in Australia. It constructed South Australia's Hornsdale Power Reserve, the world's first 'big battery', as well as building the 300 MW/450 MWh Victorian Big Battery in just 12 months. In Western Australia its Collie Stage 1 battery opened ahead of schedule, less than 18 months after the start of construction and Stage two is expected later this year. Other ongoing battery installations include projects in NSW and Queensland.

The SA experience shows that allowing renewables to act as base power both firms up the grid and keeps power prices lower.

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Thank you, Chris!

FWPA celebrates Dr Chris Lafferty's two decades of leadership and innovation.

FOREST & Wood Products Australia (FWPA) farewells Dr Chris Lafferty from his role as Head of Research, Development and Extension (RD&E) after 23 years of dedicated service to the organisation and the industry.

Chris's tenure has been marked by significant transformations within FWPA, including its shift from a government agency to an industry-owned company in 2007, and the fostering of a highly collaborative research environment that has driven remarkable innovation and adaptability across Australia's forest and wood products industry.

Strategic investments and strong collaborations have driven many advancements, supporting the industry to be more innovative and adaptable.

Program and project highlights during Chris's time with FWPA include:

- **Establishment of the National Centre for Timber Durability and Design Life** to maintain market confidence in timber's long-term performance and reclaim Australia's leading position as an expert in timber durability.
- **Development of the 'pith detector' wood quality initiative** which combined pencil beam X-rays and resonant frequency measurements to identify the core (pith) of softwood trees. By precisely locating the pith, sawmills can make informed processing decisions, allowing structural boards to be cut according to an individual log's strongest points. Now incorporated into contemporary sawmilling

equipment, practical testing of the technology at the time showed the technology generated an extra \$14 per cubic metre of value.

- **Resistograph (Resi) technology** for use in softwood plantations to assess tree quality mid-rotation, aiding better management decisions. More than 30 units are currently in use across Australia.
- **Enhancement of nutrition and fertiliser tools** providing greater confidence in soil quality and allowing forest managers to save money and resources in treating plantations.
- **Development of bushfire salvage guidelines** in the wake of the devastating 2019-20 bushfires, which saw a 10% loss of the softwood estate. FWPA rapidly assembled experts to establish best practice guidelines for salvage and to conduct in-mill studies on processing burnt timber, demonstrating the power of facilitation in addressing immediate industry challenges.

At the heart of FWPA's strength, Chris explained, is its facilitating role as a research and development corporation (RDC).

"The unique model of the Australian RDCs that combine industry levies with Australian Government matched funding lets RDCs such as FWPA



(From left) Chris Lafferty and Andrew Leighton (FWPA CEO), with Vince Hurley (CEO of Australian Sustainable Hardwoods). Photo: courtesy FWPA

empower some really creative people to work with industry stakeholders that want to engage to the next level collectively," he said.

"The idea of a levy paid by all industry participants and matched by the Commonwealth Government is a fantastic model to address long-term issues."

RD&E programs are overseen and approved by industry leaders – ensuring relevance and focus – and tested by industry "with real-time input and feedback ensures outcomes are focused on what people actually want and can use," said Chris.

Chris also credited the broader RDC network. "We R&D Managers meet twice a year as a group to share ideas, practices, and to align our work," he said.

"RDCs are uniquely impactful because they bring

research together with industry supporters at a program rather than project level and avoid traditional 'piecemeal' approaches and outcomes."

TWO DECADES OF SERVICE APPLAUDED

Reflecting on his impactful tenure over the past 23 years, Craig Taylor, Chair of FWPA said Chris's time as Head of RD&E has been transformative.

"Under Chris's guidance, FWPA

has consistently embraced the inherent risk in research and built invaluable knowledge that has led to countless advancements.

"He has been a driving force behind a unique model of collaboration, empowering and fostering partnerships that have collectively invested more than \$400 million in vital forest and wood products research.

"We thank him for his unwavering commitment to making the Australian timber industry more innovative, adaptable and resilient and we are grateful we will continue to benefit from his invaluable experience and knowledge as our Company Secretary."

Chris officially concluded his RD&E role on June 30, 2025 and is succeeded by Ian Blanden, with whom he has worked for the last few months to facilitate a strong transition.



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Biomass's accurate carbon insights

The ESA's groundbreaking Biomass satellite has returned its first images.

IN late April, the European Space Agency (ESA) launched its Biomass satellite aboard a Vega-C rocket from Europe's Spaceport in Kourou, French Guiana.

Biomass – an Earth Explorer research mission developed within ESA's FutureEO programme – is designed to provide unprecedented insights into the world's forests and their crucial role in Earth's carbon cycle. It is the first satellite equipped with a P-band synthetic aperture radar, which is capable of penetrating forest canopies to measure woody biomass – trunks, branches, and stems – where most forest carbon is stored. These measurements act as a proxy for carbon storage.

Data from Biomass will significantly reduce uncertainties in carbon stock and flux estimates, including those related to land-use change, forest loss, and regrowth.

A diligent launch team oversaw the series of intricate manoeuvres to deploy the satellite's 12-metre-wide mesh reflector supported by a 7.5-metre boom and now the first set of images has been revealed.

The ESA has published images from Bolivia, Brazil, Indonesia, Gabon, Chad and Antarctica, revealing that not

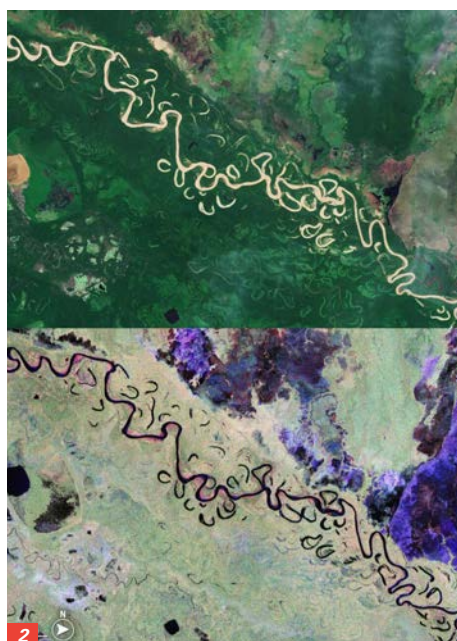
only is the satellite performing as hoped when it comes to gaining insights into Earth's forests, but that it also has the potential to unlock insights into other environments.

ESA's Biomass Project Manager, Michael Fehringer, said, "As is routine, we're still in the commissioning phase, fine-tuning the satellite to ensure it delivers the highest quality data for scientists to accurately determine how much carbon is stored in the world's forests.

"Biomass is equipped with novel space technology, so we've been closely monitoring its performance in orbit, and we're very pleased to report that everything is functioning smoothly and its first images are nothing short of spectacular – and they're only a mere glimpse of what is still to come."

While the first set of images are not suitable for research, given the technology is still being calibrated, they already indicate that Biomass is a gamechanger.

ESA's Director of Earth Observation Programmes, Simonetta Cheli, said, "Looking at these first images, it's clear to see that our Earth Explorer Biomass satellite is set to



1/ The Biomass satellite mission control team.
2/ Two shots of the same area of Bolivian forest: comparing Sentinel-2 (top) and Biomass results.
All images: courtesy ESA

deliver on its promise.

"We fully expect that this new mission will provide a groundbreaking leap in our ability to understand Earth's forests – combining cutting-edge radar technology with the scientific excellence that will unlock vital insights into carbon storage, climate change, and the health of our planet's precious forest ecosystems."

The radar instrument's different polarisation

channels combine to create vibrant images, with each colour revealing distinct characteristics of the landscape. For instance, green hues mainly represent rainforest, red hues forested floodplains and wetlands, and blue-purple is indicative of grasslands, while black areas are rivers and lakes.

Previous satellites gave good visual imagery and allowed for some identification of elements such as tree cover to estimate carbon. However, the true strength of the Biomass mission lies not in identifying features from a single image, but in its unique sampling technique and ability to combine multiple observations of the same area to reveal forest height and biomass. This enables scientists to accurately quantify forest carbon stocks and better understand the role of tropical forests in the global carbon cycle.

Among the pictures released are shots of the same part of Bolivia from the new satellite and the older Sentinel-2. The Biomass image offers significantly more information for quantifying forest carbon stocks, primarily thanks to its long-wavelength radar, which can penetrate the canopy and characterise the entire forest structure. In contrast, the optical Sentinel-2 image captures only the top of the canopy.

Other images show wetlands beneath dense canopies, detailed topography of both volcanic and desert sites and details of ice movements in Antarctica.

For the full story from the ESA, [click here](#).

“OUR EARTH EXPLORER BIOMASS SATELLITE IS SET TO DELIVER ON ITS PROMISE

IKEA expands NZ timber holdings

NEW Zealand's *The Press/Te Matatiki* reports that Swedish furniture giant IKEA has been buying up more farmland on the South Island in order to plant radiata pine plantation.

The paper reports that the IKEA Group has paid almost NZ\$18 million through its subsidiary Ingka Investments to buy almost 1500 hectares of land in Marlborough and Otago in the past few months after gaining permission from the Overseas Investment Office (OIO).

As previously covered in *Enews*, the New Zealand government has been legislating to halt the conversion of farmland to timber production in pursuit of emissions trading credits, with legal changes expected to be in force from October.

IKEA spokesman Felix

Östman told *The Press* they will sell the timber harvested in New Zealand on the open market, and only some of it will go into IKEA products.

"We do not purchase or plant forests to participate in carbon farming to generate and sell carbon credits from its forestland," he said.

"We are not in it for carbon credits. Our focus is on ensuring these forests are managed responsibly and contribute positively to the local environment and communities."

IKEA is one of the biggest timber users in the world and



IKEA uses timber – particularly pine – in many of its most popular products, including Billy bookshelves. Image: IKEA

will be opening its first NZ store in Auckland later this year in Sylvia Park, Auckland.

Across New Zealand, IKEA has bought somewhere in the region of 25,000 hectares of land for plantations, mostly pine with small percentages of other species including native timbers.

Its actions have previously attracted complaints from Māori and Pākehā residents and landholders. "Buying farms for the purpose of making your company look as though it is more environmentally sustainable... It's only sustainable for your balance sheet.

It's not sustainable for our communities. It's not sustainable for our society. And it's also not sustainable for the planet," said rural advocate Kerry Worsnop.

For the full *The Press* story, [click here](#).



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Tasmanian winners

Timber was the big winner in the architectural awards announcements.

ON the weekend, the winners of the 2025 Tasmanian Architecture Awards were announced.

Two of the buildings we picked as favourites in *Enews* #855 resonated strongly with the judges, with The Shed at the University of Tasmania and the Tolpuddle Tasting Room claiming three accolades each.

Jury chair Sarah Lindsay, RAlA, highlighted the importance of materials sustainability in developing designs that resonated



1/ **Nebraska, designed by Lara Maesele.**

Photographer Adam Gibson

2/ **Jordan House, designed by Preston Lane.**

Photographer Adam Gibson



the profound role architecture plays in shaping not just our built environment, but our collective future.

"As we visited each project, we found ourselves addressing a recurring question: What more can architecture do? This led us to reflect on the broader responsibilities

of our profession—how architecture can contribute meaningfully to conversations

with the judges and their end users. In her Jury Chair message, Lindsay wrote: "The entries sparked rich and thought-provoking conversations, touching on

themes such as sustainable forestry practices, education pedagogies, trauma-informed design, and the urgent housing crisis. These discussions reminded us of

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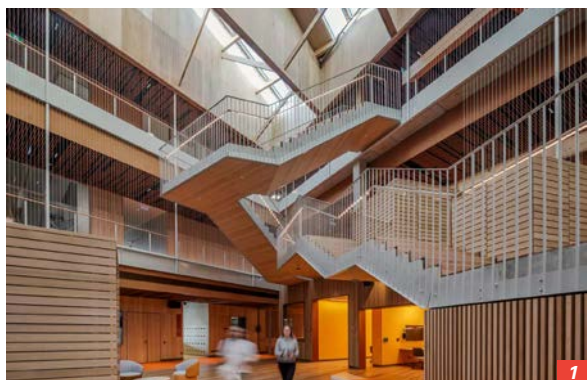
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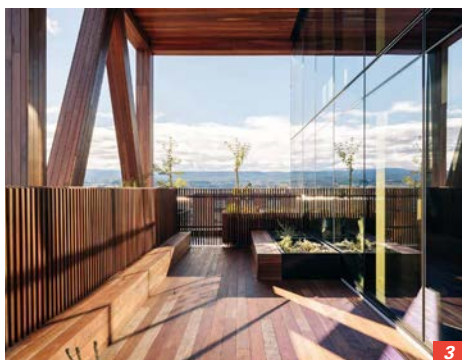
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regarding environmental sustainability, social inclusion, equity, and cultural identity."

She noted that architecture has been particularly affected by the compounding difficulties of recent years, including Covid, supply pressures and economic challenges and congratulated the willingness of Tasmanian architects to transcend these problems with "resilience, creativity, and unwavering commitment to elevating the human experience". Lindsay was particularly impressed by the ways in which many entries materially addressed the twin crises of climate change and housing.

This focus on materials naturally tied into timber projects being foregrounded in the winners' circle. The Shed took the Award for Educational Architecture, the Award for Interior Architecture and a Commendation for Sustainable Architecture.

The judges' notes said: "The Shed demonstrates a commendable devotion to sustainable architecture through the innovative, iterative use of Life Cycle Assessment, construction processes, and extensive use of shining gum (*Eucalyptus nitens*) from regional plantations, reflects the



rigorous approach to meeting and exceeding the client's expectations for sustainable outcomes."

The local sourcing and design for end-of-life reuse were celebrated in each of the awards, as was the fact that much of the building connects openly with the broader community, inviting interactions between the university and local residents.

Tolpuddle Tasting Room won the Award for Commercial Architecture and the EmAGN Project Award, plus a commendation for Sustainable Architecture.

In their notes, judges said that "The jury commends Tolpuddle Vineyard for ethically and responsibly specifying locally sourced timber for both building cladding and bespoke joinery elements", while emphasising the use of timbers means "the built form is sensitively integrated within its landscape, demonstrating a strong connection to place."

Other *Enews* picks were also rewarded on the night. The St Luke's Building tied with Tolpuddle in the Award

1/ The Shed at the University of Tasmania, designed by Wardle.

Photographer John Gollings

2/ Tolpuddle Tasting Room, designed by Tanner Architects.

Photographer Adam Gibson

3/ An outdoor retreat in the St Lukes Building, designed by Terroir.

Photographer Adam Gibson. All images courtesy of Australian Institute of Architects.

for Commercial Architecture and being hailed as "a significant advancement in mass timber construction within Tasmania" thanks to its clever use of CLT and glulam. The local shining gum (*E. nitens*) CLT floor on Level 7 was particularly praised.

The Dill Pickle Club received a Commendation for Interior Architecture, with its intelligent use of the truss to form a significant design element and deliver acoustic performance garnering praise.

Other winners were also heavily timber focused, including Jordan House, which won the Award for Residential Architecture – Houses (Alterations and Additions), and Nebraska, which took home the Award for Residential Architecture – Houses (New). In both cases the jury recognised the extensive use of timber joinery as both enhancing the builds and bringing warmth to the interiors, as well as connecting the homes to their locations and delivering tactile rewards.

For architects, the message is clear: timber is a winner.



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