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ISSUE 861 // July 31 2025

# timber & FORESTRY *e*news



## HQP Open Day a big success

COVER STORY P2

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# HQP Beerburrum Community Open Day

MORE than 450 people visited HQ Plantations' Beerburrum office for a Community Open Day earlier this month. Sunny skies welcomed the families and VIPs who wandered through Queensland's largest sustainable timber plantations, and visitors heard how HQP harvests enough timber for over 25,000 house frames annually, while replanting to ensure long-term forest health and environmental protection.

Huge harvesters were on display, along with firefighting equipment and other heavy machinery. Guests could operate a working fire hose, or follow the lifecycle of a tree from seedling to sawmill.

Feedback from visitors on the day expressed how friendly and passionate staff from both HQP and its contractors were and how effectively the event showcased forest

management techniques that protect land, water, wildlife, and communities. Visitors were shown the vital role the timber industry plays in Queensland's economy, supporting thousands of jobs – from harvesters and truck drivers to sawmill workers, scientists and firefighters.

Virtual reality headsets were even available to give kids a

guided tour through the forests and help them learn about forestry as a process and career.

Other important messages got out, too: the local community are keen users of the plantation land space, whether for riding, hunting or camping, and the Open Day drove home important conservation messages

around responsible use including minimising fire risk and rubbish pollution.

Goodie bags, lucky door prizes and major giveaways like tickets to Australia Zoo and Big Kart Track were crowd favourites and, for those in the industry, Andrew Powell, Minister for the Environment and Tourism, and Mick Stephens from Timber Queensland were both in attendance.

Overall, the day was a notable success, with feedback showing visitors gained a deeper appreciation

for HQP and its role in sustainable forestry and the Queensland economy – and were looking forward to the next Open Day!



1/ HQP's Jonathon Dupont, Liam Browne, Cameron Frame and Wayne Castle demonstrated the importance of forest safety.

2/ Mick Stephens from Timber Queensland (left) with the West family.

3/ HQP regional manager Jeremy Mansell with members of the Rural Fire Service.

4/ HQ Plantations staff Alison Dillon (left) and Sharon Beattie (right) with Timber Queensland's Mick Stephens. All photos: courtesy HQP

**On the cover: (from left) Andrew Powell, Minister for the Environment and Tourism, with HQPs Jason Wilson, Sharon Beattie (who organised the event) and Greg Stuckey** Image: courtesy HQP

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# Hardwood woodchip trade trends

## The DANA-Gingko International Woodchip and Biomass Trade Conference will show: are they evolving or revolving?

PACIFIC Asia hardwood wood chip imports into North Asian markets have been generally increasing each year – for several decades.

Apart from intermittent 'hiccups' as with Covid 19 and some major (temporary) demand downturns, the trade volume trends have been generally positive.

From only 8 million BDMT (bone dry metric tonnes) in 1991, they grew to around 12 million BDMT in 2011, to around 25 million BDMT in 2021 and to a record 29 million BDMT in 2024, and are expected to grow to 32 million BDMT by 2029.

However their composition has changed dramatically.

Earlier the United States South was the major exporter, but it fell away, to be replaced largely by Australia and Chile.

But now Vietnam has emerged as the dominant exporter: in 2024, it exported a record 18 million BDMT and it may exceed 20 million by 2029.

Australia is now a distant second at 3.5 million BDMT in 2024 and may not grow any further – unless major price reductions occur

Chile has fallen right away, and this year may be down to only 1.0 million BDMT, with South Africa and Thailand now contributing more.

All the changing dynamics and predictions of hardwood



**Australia has long been a significant woodchip exporter, as here at Burnie in 2013**

Image: CC/Gary Houston

(and softwood and biomass) demand in Mainland China, Japan, Taiwan, Korea and a (rising importer) Indonesia, and perhaps India – as well as exports from all supplier countries – will be canvassed at the annual DANA-Gingko International Woodchip and Biomass Trade Conference

in Singapore on October 20 and 21.

Immediately following will be a two-day Field Trip to West Australia, visiting hardwood and softwood plantation forests, a major sawmill and two ports with three woodchip exporters' operations. A

bonus visit will be to a new native forest ecological thinning operation, which could open up a major new export resource.

All can be seen on the website: <https://danaevents.co.nz/>



## 2025 DANA - GINGKO

### GLOBAL WOODCHIP AND BIOMASS TRADE CONFERENCE & NETWORKING EVENT












**SINGAPORE CONFERENCE 20 - 21 OCT + 2 DAY FIELD TRIP TO WESTERN AUSTRALIA 23 - 24 OCT**

### 2 day conference at Grand Copthorne Waterfront Hotel, Singapore

#### 26 speakers on several themes:

- Global Wood Chip Trade: Regional user and supplier updates
- Details of 160+ dedicated woodchip vessel shipping fleet
- Global Biomass: w/chips, white/black pellets and PKS
- Global pulp-mill status/expansions/future: Market pulp trends
- A 'New Projects, New Products' panel

### Optional 2 day field trip to Western Australia

#### Visits to:

- Eucalyptus nursery/plantations/harvesting
- Pine harvesting
- Pine Sawmill
- Bunbury Chip Export Port
- Albany Chip Export Port

FOR WEBSITE

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# New Log Haulage Code focuses on safety

THE newly released Log Haulage Code of Practice has been developed through a lengthy engagement process with industry. The National Heavy Vehicle Regulator developed the Code to assist industry ensure safety in the transportation of logs and meet the requirements of the National Heavy Vehicle Law.

It has been welcomed by industry sources, including the Australian Forest Contractors Association.

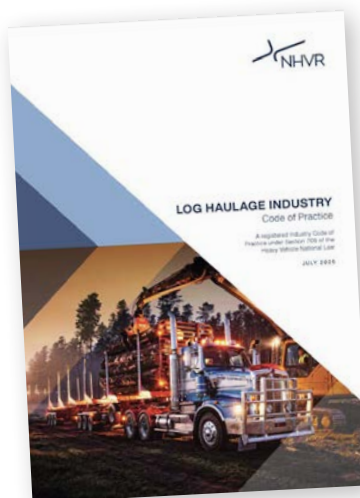
"Safety is the number priority for all of us in the

**“SAFETY IS THE NUMBER PRIORITY FOR ALL OF US IN THE TIMBER INDUSTRY**

timber industry. Having this Code to provide guidance for everyone within the Chain of Responsibility is a practical development in a complex operating and legal environment," AFCA CEO Tim Lester said.

"Importantly the Log Haulage Code is not a compliance document and it does not create any new obligations. It does step through the stages of log haulage operations to describe key risks that may need to be addressed and propose steps that businesses could take in response depending on their role in the chain."

AFCA worked with the NHVR and other industry partners to make sure content of the Code was relevant to industry and the



**The new Log Haulage Industry Code of Practice provides a clear and accessible method of recognising and mitigating risks and hazards.**  
Image: supplied

advice it provides is practical.

"There are considerations at every stage of log haulage activities, from contracting and scheduling, route planning and navigating

forestry and public roads, through to receipt and delivery," said Lester.

"By working together, we can make sure we protect drivers, other road users, trucks and loads to make sure haulage is both safe and efficient and so everyone gets home safely at the end of the day.

"Our thanks to all AFCA members who provided input and guidance for the development of the Code. We will continue to work with NHVR and forest services business to increase awareness of the Code and opportunities to mitigate and address risks."

Click here to download the Log Haulage Code from the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator.

Australian Forest Products Association

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**fpc** Forest Products Commission



# Productivity interim reports

The Productivity Commission has sought to outline problems and solutions.

AUSTRALIA'S labour productivity growth rate has dropped significantly in recent years. After an artificial jump in the early days of the Covid epidemic, 2022-23 saw a sharp drop to a 0.9% growth rate, half that of 20 years ago.

It's part of a global slowdown, but some of our problems are more local. We don't spend enough on R&D, our over-influential mining sector is largely based around export rather than local manufacture or value adding, non-market sectors – particularly healthcare and social – have had a huge growth in labour but not in output. While the timber and forestry sectors have been notable for their embrace of new technologies and reaped productivity benefits as a result (despite being considered an 'old' industry by those who have not kept up), construction has been in negative territory for several years for multiple reasons, which has had flow-on effects such as the slow transition to modular and panelised methodologies.

The Albanese government



1/ **Jim Chalmers has made productivity reform a key goal for this term of government.**

2/ **Chair of the Productivity Commission Danielle Wood has recorded a podcast on the need for reform and the reports.** Images: supplied



promised productivity reform in its first term and set out terms of references for five productivity inquiries (click here for full details).

Today, and over the following two weeks, interim reports on each of those

inquiries will be released. Click on each report title below to link to the interim reports on their release days at 10.30 pm AEST. There will also be registration details for webinars on each of those reports.

**Thursday 31 July:** Creating a more dynamic and resilient economy

**Sunday 3 August:** Investing in cheaper, cleaner energy and the net zero transformation

**Tuesday 5 August:** Harnessing data and digital

technology

**Monday 11 August:** Investing in cheaper, cleaner energy and the net zero transformation

**Wednesday 13 August:** Delivering quality care more efficiently

After the release of the interim reports, calls for submissions responding to them will open through August/September before the final report, due to be submitted to Government in December of this year for release at the end of this year or start of next.

Additionally, Treasurer Jim Chalmers will be hosting his Economic Reform Roundtables from 19 to 21 August, with expert attendees from industry, academia and more invited to a series of sessions at Parliament House where productivity will be at the centre of discussions.

For more details on the process, including a link to a podcast featuring Productivity Commission chair Danielle Wood, click here.

## Nominate today

2025 Richard Stanton Memorial Leadership Award nominations extended.

Click to learn more and nominate online.



Recognise a leader and celebrate excellence in responsible forest management and sustainable timber utilisation practices.

Click here to apply online.

**Entries close August 15, 2025.**

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# Call for free Standards

## Construction leaders argue for end to paywall.

AUSTRALIA is well served by its Standards, but access to them can cost. Purchasing the Timber building set, for example, which includes AS 1684 and relevant parts of AS 3959 and AS 1720 starts at \$162.56 per annum if you are a small business up to 19 people (or \$32.11 pa for the single-use, mobile-only version).

Larger companies might count it a worthwhile investment, but for sole traders and little family firms, it might be one of the spends that hits the chopping block when times are tough. The result is that rather than having access to the full and most recent Standards, they're relying on the sections, sometimes



Free access to the Standards will improve building quality for all. Image: Shutterstock

outdated, that are replicated in other codes or elsewhere in the public sphere.

Which is why on Monday, a group of industry leaders met with polities in Canberra to ask that access to Standards become free, particularly for building, plumbing and

electrical practitioners.

"HIA alongside a group of construction leaders and Standards Australia came together at Parliament House, to present a united front in getting easier access to Australian Standards in the hands of those who need them most," said HIA managing director, Jocelyn Martin.

"As small businesses continue to struggle with high operational and living costs, and increasing red, white and green tape, HIA and industry partners are calling for free access to Australian Standards to help ease the regulatory burden for builders and tradies.

"This increasing level and complexity of regulation all adds to the regulatory burdens being placed on small businesses and by removing the paywall to access Standards it would be an important step to reduce red tape and improve housing affordability."

Martin noted that making the Standards free would also tie in with the Governments' deregulation and industry productivity boosting agenda.

"In 2015, the Building Ministers' Forum agreed to

a similar initiative to eliminate costs associated with purchasing the NCC by making it available free and online," Martin said.

"This move has been an overwhelming success and seen greater usage and better understanding

of the NCC, especially by small businesses. It is now regularly accessed by over 400,000 practitioners, significantly up from 12,000 when it was behind a paywall.

"By reducing the upfront cost, it would ... improve the useability and penetration of the NCC and associated Australian Standards."

The move follows a similar call from the Australian Institute of Health and Safety (AIHS) last year, asking for key Standards to be made free.

"Businesses must pay hundreds of dollars a year to access a selection of Standards, and as businesses grapple with inflation and other financial pressures, we are concerned this is a cost some will forgo, potentially compromising safety," Cameron Montgomery, AIHS chair, said.

"These documents are crucial to ensuring workplaces are safe and productive. Any Standards referred to in legislation should not sit behind a paywall and should be freely available to those tasked with adhering to them in order to keep workplaces safe."



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**DAY 2**  
**Building our Future in Timber**  
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**Industry Site Tour Program**

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## SEPTEMBER

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

Highly informative conference covering a variety of topics including: building farm resilience, Queensland's future timber plan, EUDR and illegal logging, timber, beef and carbon opportunities. building our future in timber, housing demand, modern methods of construction, timber mid-rise apartments and social housing. Plus, networking dinner and industry site tour. To register, visit <https://www.timberqueensland.com.au/education-events> or for more information you can email the team at [admin@timberqueensland.com.au](mailto: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-wood-science-course>

**13: SAVE THE DATE: WFTN Cocktails for Charity event – Brisbane, 2.00pm - 6.00pm.** Tickets \$65. Visit <https://www.ntha.com.au/eventdetails/32982/wftn-cocktails-for-charity> to purchase your ticket. RSVP by Tuesday, 27 August.

**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.

**30: Hoo Hoo meeting – Sydney, Club Ryde Ex: 6.30pm.** The Sydney Timber Industry Institute, AKA "Hoo Hoo International", have a few willing members that want to re-establish this great organisation. We look forward to seeing you there - Health Happiness & Long Life..

## OCTOBER

**13-14: Timber Construct 2025 – Melbourne.** The program includes timber

framing innovations, timbers strategic return to the light construction market and High-performance timber products for modern construction, architectural excellence in wood design, fire safety for timber's critical performance barriers and much more. For more information and to register, visit <https://timberconstruct.org/>

**20-22: International Woodchip and Biomass Conference and Networking Event – Singapore.** Subjects covered include: global & Asian macro-economic outlook, pulp-woodchip end user, improving chip quality and export yields, carbonised pellets, biomass trends and much more. For full conference details and to register, visit <https://www.danaevents.co.nz/2025singapore/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: Conference Field Trip – Perth, WA.** Follows on from the woodchip and biomass conference in Singapore. 2-day trip includes accommodation, breakfast, lunch, dinner and bus transport for site visits. Registrations or full field trip details, visit: [danaevents.co.nz/2025singapore/fieldtrip](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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# Breaking the sales talent shortage

## A blueprint for CEOs and business owners.

By JASON HOWES & PAM FOSTER

BUILDING an unstoppable business starts with having the right people in the right roles. Yet the building industry is currently facing a critical shortage of skilled sales talent, presenting major roadblocks to growth.

Many salespeople are thrown into the deep end without proper training, coaching or tools to measure success. Expected to turn a company's performance around, most struggle to stay afloat and fall short of expectations. Without the right support, very few can thrive in such challenging conditions.

Now may be the perfect time for CEOs and business owners, to change this! Just as any building needs a solid foundation, a high-performing sales team needs the right training, structure, and mentorship to succeed.

### WHY SALESPEOPLE ARE STRUGGLING

Imagine being asked to hit ambitious targets without a roadmap. It's no surprise that many sales professionals feel disoriented and underappreciated. Without structured training and direction, high turnover and underperformance are inevitable—costly problems for any business.

The issue runs deeper. Many talented sales professionals are hired for roles that don't align with their strengths or are stuck in positions where they can't grow. It's like placing a skilled builder in the wrong trade—passionate but unable to deliver their best. Without



Source: Membrain, CRM Sales Enablement. Image: supplied

clarity or the right support, they disengage, wasting their potential. With the right structure, training, and guidance they can thrive and contribute to your business's success.

When your sales team lacks direction and purpose, it's like revving the engine of a high-performance car – tyres spinning, smoke pouring out, but you're going nowhere fast. You've got all the power, but without the right alignment and training, you're just burning rubber. What's the real cost? Lost deals, missed revenue, and a clouded path ahead – leaving disillusioned employees to kick up the dust as they walk out the door.

We've all seen it: the talented sales rep relegated to an inside role, itching to be out on the road, or the junior executive who could be a top performer with the right training and mentorship. Instead, they're stuck spinning their wheels and eventually move on to an industry that's investing where you're not. If you're not developing your people, you're losing them.

### THE PATH TO SALES SUCCESS

So, what's the solution to the talent shortage? The answer lies in creating a structured sales trajectory program that takes ambitious professionals from inside sales roles to high-performing Business Development Managers in 12 to 18 months. It's about developing a clear, strategic path for growth that aligns individual potential with business needs.

Here's how we do it at Arrow Executive Sales:

- 1. EVALUATE: Assess Sales Potential** Building a high-performing sales team isn't about placing people based on gut feel. It starts with understanding who's on board, what drives them, and where their strengths lie. Leveraging a global technology platform, we go beyond CVs and KPIs to uncover hidden talent and "diamonds in the rough." Our evaluations focus on mindset, sales ability and coachability to ensure every team member is positioned for maximum success in client-facing or inside sales roles.
- 2. ATTRACT: Recruit Top Talent** If your team is missing the right talent or you're short-staffed, we can help you find the ideal fit. Specialising

in recruiting sales hunters who drive business growth, we leverage advanced recruitment AI and our extensive industry network to pinpoint top performers—cutting your time-to-hire by up to 85%.

### 3. INCENTIVISE: Create a Performance Framework

To attract and retain top sales talent, it's crucial to balance competitive base salaries with performance-based incentives. Structuring compensation around achievements and aligning payouts with performance helps create a driven, results-oriented team. Our solution offers clear dashboards and seamless CRM integration, giving sales teams full visibility into how their efforts impact their earnings—building trust and boosting motivation to hit targets.

### 4. ACCELERATE: Develop Sales Skills

Once you know who's got the potential, it's time to provide them with the tools and training that align with your business priorities. Our comprehensive 12-month program breaks down best practices into bite-

Cont P 9



From P 8

sized, actionable lessons. It's hands-on experience, targeted coaching and strategic learning designed to build skills, boost confidence and accelerate growth.

### 5. EMPOWER: Equip for Sustained Success

We harness cutting-edge coaching technology to track progress, provide feedback and promote continuous development. Key features include:

- **Performance Visualisation:** Real-time dashboards show sales professionals exactly where they stand. This level of visibility fosters ownership and drives improvement.
- **Structured Coaching Plans:** Integrated coaching plans ensure there's no guessing what's next. Every salesperson and manager know what to work on and how to achieve their goals.

### Selling Behaviors

Activity Levels  
Closing & Negotiating  
Consultative Selling  
Listening Skills  
Needs Analysis



#### • Individual and Team

**Overviews:** Gain a clear picture of your entire team's performance, making it easy to identify where to focus your coaching efforts for maximum impact. Implementing a structured sales trajectory program and leveraging technology isn't just about driving growth – it's about building a high-performance culture.

The shortage of skilled sales talent is real, but it can be overcome. Industry leaders need to take a proactive approach by investing in structured training, aligning talent with the right roles, and providing the tools and coaching needed for growth.

Partnering with an industry veteran passionate about winning new business can make all the difference. Expert coaching hones sales skills, instills a winning mindset, and empowers your team to exceed targets and drive growth.

Ready to build a world-class sales team? The blueprint is here, and the time to act is now.

*Jason Howes and Pam Foster of Arrow Executive Sales build high-performing sales teams that close more deals and drive business growth. To learn more about their Sales Trajectory Program, contact Jason Howes or Pam Foster at 1300 903 527 or visit [www.arrowexec.com.au](http://www.arrowexec.com.au)*

### TALENT & CLIENT ENGAGEMENT PARTNER



*Pam Foster is a Talent Scout who helps businesses grow by finding the right people. With over 15 years of experience, she's all about solving recruitment challenges and crafting talent strategies that fit like a glove with each company's culture and goals.*

*Pam has teamed up with some of Australia's biggest names and fastest-growing startups, including BP Australia, Dan Murphy's, Nimble, Nutrition Warehouse, Princess Polly, and Woolworths Limited. She's not just filling roles – she's diving deep into your business, getting to know your values, culture and what makes you tick, so she can find candidates who are the perfect match for your team.*

# Building the next generation of sales professionals!



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# FSC economic chamber EOI

A new representative is sought for the standards development group.



Members of the FSC Australia Standards Development Group and FSC ANZ staff in 2024. From left to right: Mark Brown, Grant Wardell-Johnson, Stefan Jensen (FSC ANZ), Melanie Robertson (FSC ANZ), Sean Cadman, Tim McBride, Simon Cook, Tolita Dolzan, Lorraine Cassin and Carl Richardson. Image: courtesy FSC ANZ

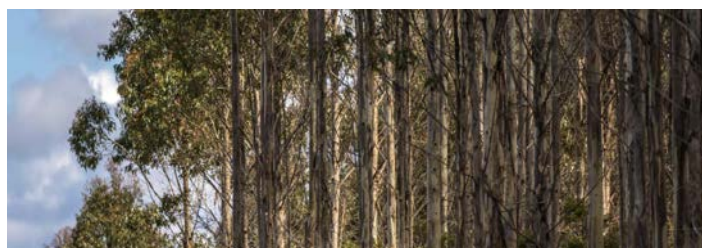
FSC Australia and New Zealand is seeking nominations for an economic chamber vacancy on the Standards Development Group (SDG), which is responsible for revising the FSC Forest Stewardship Standard for Australia.

This vacancy follows the departure of Simon Cook, who has stepped down from the SDG after his recent appointment to the Board of FSC ANZ. FSC thanks Cook for his significant contribution to the revision process.

The suitable candidate will be able to broadly represent the interests of the economic chamber, which includes individuals or organisations with a commercial interest in the forest sector.

The draft revised Standard is now open for public consultation until 31 August 2025, marking a critical milestone in ensuring the Standard continues to promote best-practice responsible forest management and remains fit for purpose.

Applications will close on 22 August 2025, whereafter the FSC ANZ Board will



The FSC Forest Stewardship Standard is a vital tool for responsible forest management in Australia. Image: supplied

consider applications and appoint the successful candidate.

## SELECTION CRITERIA

SDG members are chosen for their experience and ability to represent key interest areas that are important for the revision and FSC's values and policies.

Eligibility for the Standards Development Group requires that applications include and demonstrate:

- Membership of FSC ANZ. Or submission and approval of an FSC ANZ membership application as part of the expression of interest process. Members of the SDG will either represent the organisation nominating them, or they will represent themselves if they are individual FSC ANZ members.

- Up-to-date knowledge of FSC's systems and procedures. (Attendance in FSC training for Standards Development Groups may be considered sufficient for this requirement.)
- Representation of points of view from the economic chamber.
- An understanding of the impact of the standard on affected stakeholders.
- An understanding of and commitment to FSC's mission and vision.
- A desire to seek and reach consensus on complex or contested issues.



**SDG MEMBERS  
ARE CHOSEN  
FOR THEIR  
EXPERIENCE  
AND ABILITY**

- An ability to actively participate in the process until final approval of the revised standard.
- Support from two members of the corresponding chamber in the form of letters of support.
- Expert knowledge of and/or experience in the development, implementation and/or analysis of standards will be highly regarded.

For more information on becoming an FSC ANZ member, click here.

To read more about the revision process and access the SDG's terms of reference, click here.

For more information on the SDG and the process for appointment, please email Stefan Jensen, FSC ANZ's senior policy manager, at [s.jensen@au.fsc.org](mailto:s.jensen@au.fsc.org)

To submit your expression of interest, email a letter outlining how you meet the eligibility criteria outlined above, your CV and two letters of support from members of the economic chamber to [info@au.fsc.org](mailto:info@au.fsc.org) by close of business 22 August 2025.





# Good People Doing Great Work? Nominate them today.

The 2025 Green Triangle Timber Industry Awards are your chance to recognise the people and businesses who lead by example – the reliable, skilled, and often unsung contributors in our industry.

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## Silver Sponsors



## Bronze Sponsors







# FWPA research investment

## New forestry research worth \$8.75 million receives funds.

FOREST & Wood Products Australia (FWPA) is pleased to announce funding approval for seven successful forestry research proposals from the January 2025 open call for proposals.

The open call for forestry research proposals attracted 36 expressions of interest, resulting in 11 proposals that were reviewed by a scientific advisory panel of experts, a committee of grower members and subjected to a benefit/cost analysis by an independent economist.

A further seven proposals relating to Forest Damage Agents are currently being evaluated by a group of industry specialists with funding decisions to be made later in the year.

FWPA has approved seven projects with a combined value of \$8.75 million. These investments are made possible through FWPA's unique model as a research and development corporation (RDC). The approved \$4.45 million contribution from FWPA includes industry levies, voluntary cash contributions from industry, and matched funding from



**1/ The research funding encompasses forest health and biosecurity as well as projects related to exports, automation and invasive species.**  
**2/ The projects are designed to deliver practical outcomes for the commercial forestry sector in Australia.** All photos: courtesy FWPA

involve growers from all major commercial forest growing regions of Australia. The research will address a range of challenges across forest health and biosecurity, phytosanitary options for log exports, remote sensing, automation and robotics, and invasive plant species control.

"By addressing critical challenges and leveraging industry partnerships, these projects seek to advance the science of commercial forestry and its practical application that reduce risk, loss, and cost while increasing productivity across the sector," said Jodie Mason, FWPA Head of Forest Research.



The FWPA Forest Research Program supports collaborative activities that advance research, development, and extension (RD&E) of benefit to Australia's commercial forest growing sector.

The Forest Research Program is aligned with the Forestry RD&E Investment Plans, which were

**“THESE PROJECTS SEEK TO ADVANCE THE SCIENCE OF COMMERCIAL FORESTRY**

the Australian Government. These contributions are complemented by substantial in-kind and other cash support from industry members and research partners. This collaborative funding

approach ensures long-term, stable investment in research that delivers impactful outcomes for the sector.

The successful proposals were submitted by seven research providers and

developed in consultation with Australia's commercial forest growers to inform collaborative investment and identify priority topics. Click here to learn more.



# Victorian sawmills struggle

## The downsizing of ForestOne comes as mills struggle to sell timber.

THE ABC reported on Saturday that ForestOne will close its dry sawmill and particleboard manufacturing operations in Benalla, north-east Victoria. Locals fear the job losses could be as many as 140 people, but ForestOne, which is a major employer in the area, told the ABC the number was expected to be lower.

The company said that increased manufacturing and external costs, coupled with “ever-increasing governmental and compliance costs” had made the two activities unviable.

Benalla bakery manager Andrew Bertalli told the ABC the partial closure would have flow-on effects for local businesses. “It is huge dollars out of the community each week,” he said.

“It is going to affect everyone in Benalla.”

Click here for the full ABC story.

Unfortunately, the problem is far from restricted to Benalla. Victorian housing dwelling approvals dropped 23% in the last quarter and high building costs, including what the Property Council of Australia describes as a “harsh taxation regime” have led to a significantly below national average on the building confidence index – 104 versus 124.

The State government says that it is the “number one state in Australia for approving



**1/ Andrew Bertalli, whose Benalla bakery produces award-winning custard slices, worries about how the flow-on effects of the ForestOne cutbacks will negatively affect the town.** Photo: courtesy Bertalli's Alpine Breads/Instagram

**2/ Andrew White, CEO of VFPA, told the AFR that there were mills unable to operate at capacity due to the building downturn.** Image: supplied

and building homes.” And, indeed, this year has seen the building completions rate rise by 231 dwellings over the last quarter, though it still lags both state and national goals, but with 132,600 people having immigrated to Victoria last year, that's nowhere near enough. Importantly, suppliers and builders are saying that growth in construction is nowhere near fast enough.

Andrew White, the chief executive of the Victorian Forest Products Association, told the *AFR* (click here to read the full story) that while the industry had been initially braced for significant supply shortages to meet increased housing demand, they were now struggling to sell their timber.

“Some mills have had to downsize their workforce, and they haven't been able to operate at full capacity,” White said.

“There aren't as many houses being built, and the wood is not going out ... We can be doing a lot more, but a



lot of these issues are out our control because of the market dynamics.”

Demand still strongly outstrips supply in the state, but Victoria's state and local governments have long held tight controls on development. Established owners have significant power to reject developments at the local level – along with the Victorian State government having more taxes and red tape than other states, which realestate.com.au estimated at adding an additional \$373,000 for a typical new house.

Add to that the skyrocketing cost of planning for new developments, which a recent article in *The Age* reported as having soared from about \$700,000 to nearly \$6 million in 10 years, a rise of about 750% (click here for the story).

Some of this is also a product of a sector in flux – housing is shifting to higher density models in major Australian cities and change is always slow. But unless something changes soon,

more jobs may be lost and then the capacity to ramp up supply as demand inevitably increases will be lost.

The Victorian Government has begun building reforms to deliver modern methods of construction, focusing on panelised and modular building methods that can be pre-approved and speed up home builds significantly, but this set of reforms is still in its

consultation period and won't be implemented before next year at best.

The Housing Industry Association (HIA) has made a detailed submission to the Treasurer's Economic Reform Roundtable on behalf of HIA's National Manufacturers' Council calling for support for Australian building product manufacturers. The submission outlines key reforms to ease regulatory pressure, stabilise energy policy, address workforce shortages and unlock innovation within the manufacturing industry.

While written on the national level, the submission directly addresses Victoria's problems. “Manufacturers are increasingly burdened by overlapping regulations, from planning and environmental rules to complex building code changes,” said HIA managing director, Jocelyn Martin.

“Our members want to invest and innovate, but governments must get out of their way and let business get on with business.”

# MTC wins at Archidex

Two booths showed the best of Malaysian timber sustainability.

THE Malaysian Timber Council (MTC) celebrated their nation's timber at last week's 24th International Architecture, Interior Design & Building Exhibition (ARCHIDEX 2025), held at the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre.

MTC's two booths were significant crowd favourites and also struck a chord with the Archidex design judges: the sculptural booth "Timber Flow: the Folded Crest" won the Gold Award for the PAM-ARCHIDEX Curated Booth. This booth was envisioned as a spatial narrative – drawing inspiration from the Tanjak, a traditional Malay headgear that represents honour, resilience, and heritage. The design reinterprets this cultural symbol into an expressive timber form that folds and flows with architectural precision.

Crafted from locally sourced Kembang Semangkok and Chengal, the pavilion was designed by Esmonde Yap and constructed by Lumber Mart Sdn Bhd.

Additionally, MTC's 60m<sup>2</sup> arched booth attracted a great many visitors, some there to discuss what timbers would be best for their projects, some just to feel the texture of the wooden weaving.

"As a timber trade organisation that looks after the promotion and development of the timber industry, one of our core functions is to encourage the use of timber in the built environment," said Noraihan Abdul Rahman, CEO of MTC at the event. "We are here at Archidex because we feel that this is the right exhibition for us to showcase to the building and construction industry players the beauty and versatility of timber."



1/ "Timber Flow: the Folded Crest" was created from strips of local Malaysian timbers.

2/ Each module was attached with timber dowels, for easy disassembly and reassembly in any other configuration with minimal wastage.

3/ The MTC arched booth.

4/ Teams from the MTC, the designers and builders celebrating at Archidex.

5/ Constructing "Timber Flow: the Folded Crest".

All images: courtesy MTC



"We have collaborated with architect and interior designer Esmonde Yap a young and talented architect who has designed this showcase for MTC inspired by the local, traditional weaving baskets."

Yap, from Spatial Factors Architects, said, "The weaving started with a very simple idea, which was to celebrate Malaysia's timber heritage. Specifically in this project we looked at the Malaysian basket, where you see different elements intertwined with each other, so translating that into timber was another exercise."

The team worked through multiple iterations of each idea, both digital designs and tangible timber samples, before

choosing the final forms. In each, the materials made final choices: the failure rates of various species dictated which forms would be bent into the curved modules of Timber Flow and, for the booth, the central parts of the arches were narrowed to reduce weight while maintaining structural integrity.

Importantly, both as a symbol and as an example, the booths demonstrate circular design principles, local craftsmanship, and the versatility of Malaysian timber in modern architecture. Both can be taken apart and reassembled again and again with minimal wastage (even down to timber fixings): the careful lowering of the overall weight also adding

to the arches' transportability. At the end of life, each element can be adapted/resused in other structural or decorative purposes – a true showcase of MTC's sustainable innovation.

The exhibition was officiated by the Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia, YAB Dato' Sri Haji Fadillah bin Haji Yusof, who, in his keynote address, emphasised the importance of developing culturally rich, modern, and environmentally sustainable infrastructure. He highlighted the growing need for green construction practices and technological advancement in shaping Malaysia's future cities.



# Mixed signals on EUDR

DUE to be implemented at the end of this year, the new EUDR regulations are still the focus of intense lobbying by EU member states, which is causing uncertainty in global markets and investments.

Eleven EU member states – including Austria, Luxembourg, Italy, Finland, and others have called for weakening of the legislation, particularly where it impacts small and medium enterprises (SMEs). Most arguments centre around the regulatory load being too arduous for SMEs (particularly for countries like Luxembourg with little to no exposure to deforestation) and request simplification. But some large non-timber firms are also lobbying: Mondelēz, the owner of Cadbury's, has called for a one-year delay, saying that

it will not be ready to meet its obligations in time.

One suggestion is that in addition to the current EUDR country benchmarking (introduced in May this year) of low, standard, and high deforestation risk, a new no-risk category be added to ensure that countries not exposed to deforestation or with sufficient policies to address it do not have to fulfil multiple compliance requirements.

However, such a category would almost certainly remove geolocation data requirements, which are the



**Illegal deforestation for palm oil is one of the activities the EUDR seeks to halt.** Image:ADPartners, CC BY-SA 3.0 via Wikimedia Commons

main tool for ensuring that conflict timbers from places such as Russia and other illegal harvesting do not enter the supply chain disguised as legal timbers from compliant states.

There is a strong concern from supporters of the EUDR changes that any delays or watering down will show that environmental legislation is

always up for negotiation by business interests. Many businesses have been preparing to meet the deadline (already extended by 12 months after previous feedback) and have shifted their production

for compliance, which would put them at an economic disadvantage were others allowed to trade for longer without having to meet EUDR requirements.

The Business and Human Rights Resource Centre is keeping a running log of developments as they occur, [click here to access](#).

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Image: Freepik

# Firewood theft in Victoria

## Opportunistic criminals are cutting down gums.

VICTORIA'S Conservation Regulator has reported an interception of illegal firewood harvesting last week, the second such arrest at Reedy Lake in July.

Far from being domestic users gathering fallen firewood outside the legally allowed periods, these are large-scale operations taking trees for illegal sale.

In last week's case, a man from Melton was arrested at around 5 am with a tandem trailer, two chainsaws and a load of River Red Gum timber after becoming bogged in a rented vehicle in Reedy Lake Wildlife Reserve near Nagambie. In addition to the loaded timber, another freshly felled River Red Gum was nearby.

The rented vehicle was returned but the trailers and chainsaw were confiscated with the stolen timber. The offence also attracts a range of fines between \$814 and \$9879, depending on charges and legal decisions.

The previous arrest occurred during a targeted patrol. Authorised Officers caught the man in the act of cutting a recently felled, dead River Red Gum tree on the dry lakebed. He admitted

to felling and processing the tree for firewood. In the first interception, he was advised he would be issued infringement notices and was directed to unload the timber and warned that further offending could result in the seizure of any equipment involved.

Later the same evening, the offender was observed returning to the reserve under the cover of darkness. With assistance from Victoria Police, Conservation Regulator Authorised Officers intercepted his vehicle, towing a tandem trailer loaded with freshly cut River Red Gum timber.

Authorised Officers seized the trailer, the timber, and a chainsaw. Investigations are ongoing, and the man is expected to face court over alleged firewood-related offences.

It is not known from reports whether the two incidents involve the same person.

The Conservation Regulator emphasised in its report that River Red Gums – whether alive or dead – are vital to our environment and protected under law; it is an offence to cut them down. Dead, standing River Red Gums provide critical roosting habitat for some of our most threatened species, such as the White-bellied Sea Eagle.

The Conservation Regulator currently has a targeted focus on the illegal take of firewood for commercial purposes, as part of Taskforce Ironbark. Taskforce Ironbark is a state-wide initiative, led by the Conservation Regulator in partnership with Parks Victoria,

aiming to crack down on commercial firewood thieves.

"We are working with Parks Victoria and Victoria Police to disrupt illegal firewood harvesting across Victoria and prevent further damage to this ecologically and culturally significant area," said Greg Chant, manager regulatory operations, Hume, at the Conservation Regulator.

"The message to black market firewood operators is that if you're caught illegally harvesting timber from public land for commercial sale, you will be held accountable for the environmental damage, and risk facing prosecution and losing your vehicles and equipment."

If community members observe suspicious firewood activity, they are urged to call 136 186. Reports can be made anonymously. For more information about firewood in Victoria and Operation Ironbark, click here.



1/ The arrested man was caught with a full load of illegally harvested River Red Gum, with another freshly felled gum nearby.  
2/ Another arrest earlier in July also saw equipment including trailers and chainsaws confiscated.

All images: courtesy Conservation Regulator

“WE ARE WORKING TO PREVENT DAMAGE TO THIS ECOLOGICALLY AND CULTURALLY SIGNIFICANT AREA”



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# TQ's Cultural Agility program

## A transformative two-day journey toward cultural understanding and shared growth.

TIMBER Queensland has announced its *Cultural Agility Program: Building on the Strengths of Our Stories* program, a vital initiative designed to deepen understanding of Indigenous perspectives across Australia's forest and timber industries.

Held in partnership with respected First Nations leaders and cultural educators through Regional Economic Solutions, the two-day program offers a unique opportunity for industry professionals to embrace an exploration of Australia's shared history, current realities and pathways toward reconciliation and meaningful engagement.

"This is about building respectful relationships and recognising the value of Indigenous knowledge in shaping a shared sustainable future for our industry," said Timber Queensland CEO Mick Stephens.

"Understanding cultural context isn't just the right thing to do – it's an essential first step to understanding the legacy of past historical experience and the ongoing impact on indigenous people and the importance of trust."

The program creates a safe yet robust environment where participants are encouraged to move beyond rhetoric toward genuine understanding and collaboration.

"This shared understanding can enhance workplace inclusion, strengthen community partnerships, and support land stewardship aligned with both traditional



1/ **Regional Economic Solutions managing director Leann Wilson was the guest speaker at Queensland Treasury's National Reconciliation Week in late May.**

Image: supplied

2/ **Jeremy Marou in his other role as one half of renowned band Busby Marou.** Image: Jeremy Marou/Facebook.

and contemporary practices," said Stephens.

The program is led by renowned Indigenous educators including:

- Leann Wilson, a respected Bidjara/Kara-Kara and South Sea Islander Matriarch and managing director, Regional Economic Solutions.
- Jeremy Marou, a Torres Strait Islander man from Mer (Murray Island), singer and songwriter (Busby Marou) and training & community engagement advisor, Regional Economic Solutions.
- Phil Thompson, a respected Bidjara/Kara-Kara and South Sea Islander and senior advisor, Regional Economic Solutions.

Participants will take part in traditional yarning circles and powerful storytelling to discover Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing, being and doing.

Stephens said the Albanese Government's recently released National Timber Fibre Strategy acknowledges that our industry has much to learn from First Nations Peoples, particularly in forest management and Caring for Country.

"There is a sector-wide commitment to

increasing understanding and engagement; respectful and appropriate engagement is the starting point," he said.

"Timber businesses that embrace cultural agility are better equipped to work collaboratively with Traditional Owners, unlock new opportunities in land management, and contribute meaningfully to shared outcomes."

The program will be held in Brisbane on 9–10 September, 2025. For more information, including program details, how to book, and a 10% accommodation discount code for Eatons Hill Hotel, visit [www.timberqueensland.com.au/events](http://www.timberqueensland.com.au/events)



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