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GKNP a bad result for koalas and timber workers

COVER STORY P2



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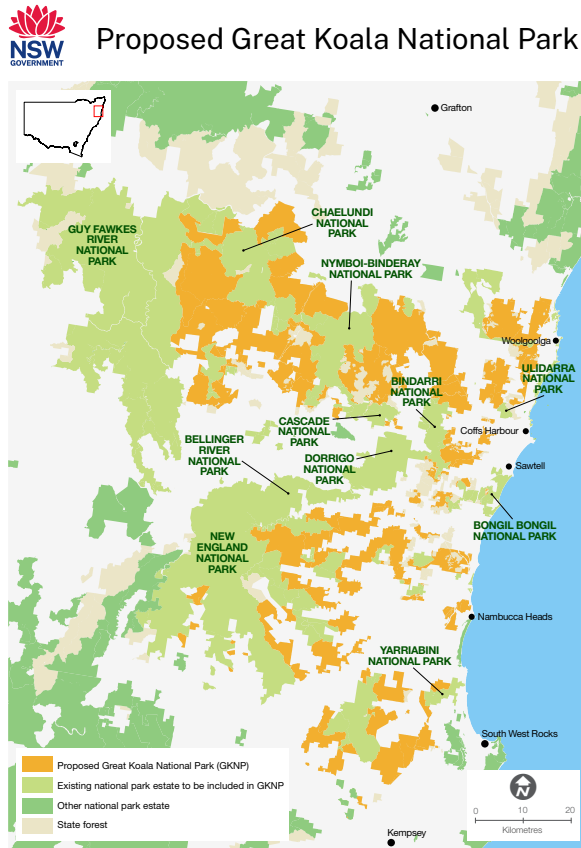
GKNP announcement shocks

The announcement of proposed park boundaries came with an immediate moratorium on timber harvesting.

LESS than two months ago, the Premier and Environment Minister were on a 'listening tour' of the NSW Mid-North Coast organised by Timber NSW, talking with sawmill owners, timber businesses and foresters about the Great Koala National Park (GKNP).

There was a spirit of welcome and Martin McCarthy of Coffs Harbour Hardwoods told *Enews* that he felt their concerns about job losses if too much State Forest resource was gazetted into the Park had been heard and understood.

Then, early on Sunday morning, the Minns government announced the



The extent of the proposed GKNP. Image: courtesy NSW Government

proposed boundaries of the GKNP, which would add 176,000 hectares of State Forest to existing National Parks, along with a "temporary" moratorium on timber

harvesting within the proposed boundary, beginning on Monday.

Sunday was not a happy Fathers' Day.

THE ECONOMIC CASE

Several paragraphs down in the announcement was this: "The final creation of the park is dependent on the successful registration of a carbon project under the Improved Native Forest Management Method, which is currently moving through the Federal Government assessment processes."

It is estimated that, should the Method be registered, the

GKNP could generate more than \$300 million in ACCUs over a continuous 15-year period, and so become a significant financial earner for the state.

This Method was proposed by the NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water as a proponent-led model for development under the Australian Carbon Credit Unit Scheme (ACCU). *Enews* first covered it in Issue 828, then in Issues 834 and 835.

The model "involves stopping or slowing down harvesting of publicly owned native forests. Not harvesting the forests for timber or letting them grow older before cutting them down, could enable ACCUs to be issued for storing more carbon."

However, the rationale behind the method is questionable. As experts including Timber Queensland's Mick Stephens have pointed out, it is at odds with the high-level principle identified

Cont P 3

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From P 2

in the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) 4th assessment report that states: "In the long term, a sustainable forest management strategy aimed at maintaining or increasing forest carbon stocks, while producing an annual sustained yield of timber, fibre or energy from the forest, will generate the largest sustained mitigation benefit."

That is to say, the amount of carbon stored by locking up an area cannot exceed the amount of carbon stored by a combination of sustainable harvesting for carbon-storing wood products and replanted forest.

Diana Hallam, chief executive of the Australian Forest Products Association (AFPA), said, "The NSW Premier's comments ... appear to confirm that the Emissions Reduction Assurance Committee (ERAC) process which led to the Australian Government's decision to prioritise the Improved Native Forest Management in Multiple-use Public Forests (INFM) proposal for development was not independent, honest or based upon science."

Hallam pointed out the NSW Government had received overwhelming feedback that the INFM Method suffers from key integrity failures, particularly additionality and leakage, and cannot meet the evidence-based standard required by the Australian Government's ACCU Scheme.

Assistant Minister for Climate Change and Energy, the Hon Josh Wilson MP informed AFPA that the INFM proposal must go through several legislated gateways before it can be made, including public consultation on an exposure draft and assessment by ERAC before

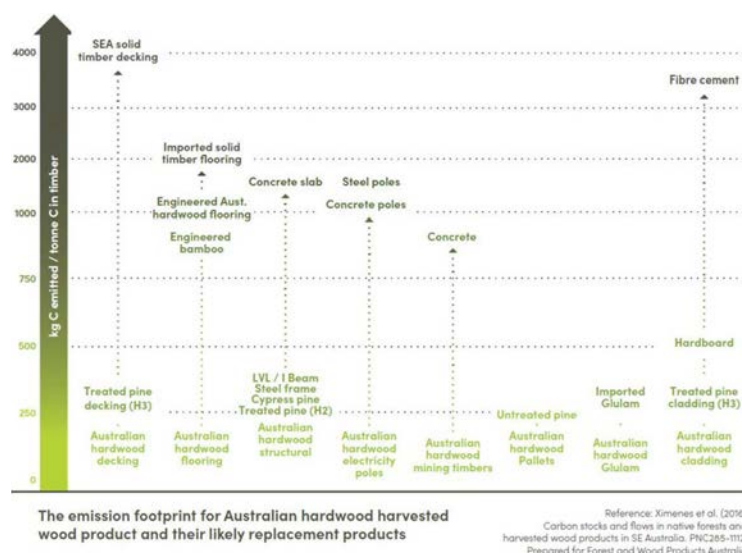


Table A from AFPA's submission showing the significant increase in carbon emissions when Australian harvested wood product is swapped for likely replacements.

and after consultation that the proposal complies with legislated Offsets Integrity Standards.

"So how can the NSW Premier be so confident that he 'expects it to come through' when that public consultation is yet to occur?" Hallam asked.

"Comments [that] the funding for the Park's creation 'is dependent on the successful registration of the INFM method' have confirmed widely held suspicions regarding the politicisation of the process by which new carbon methods are made."

AFPA's own modelling in its submission responding to the Method shows significant risk of leakage, saying "At its simplest, the cessation of harvesting and supply of timber from one source will result in harvest and supply of wood products to meet demand being delivered from another source of the same or similar supply, or by another material."

Timber supply from other areas will almost certainly mean imports. The submission quotes Yale University figures that 86% of Australia's hardwood imports come from countries with a worse Environmental Performance Index and 87%

from countries with a worse Corruption Perceptions Index than Australia.

Switching to other materials is no better, with the majority of options being concrete and steel, both of which are significantly higher in carbon emissions.

In seeking to make money out of carbon 'savings' in the GKNP, NSW may well be worsening the overall problem.

QUESTIONABLE SCIENCE

Forestry Australia was quick to respond to the announcement on Sunday, pointing out that the concept of a National Park as gold-standard for threatened species conservation simply doesn't stand up.

Research has shown that timber harvesting and fauna conservation can be effectively managed together, with a three-year study showing that selective harvesting in state forests on the NSW North Coast did not adversely affect

koala numbers, as well as data showing that bushfires are slightly less common and less severe in managed State Forests compared to National Parks.

"The Great Koala National Park makes a headline, not a science-led plan," said Dr Michelle Freeman, president of Forestry Australia. "By sidelining the complementary role of actively managed State Forests, the Government has missed the chance to maximise outcomes for koalas and communities."

Dr Freeman said simply declaring a national park does not guarantee biodiversity conservation or the long-term survival of koalas or other threatened species, including southern greater gliders, yellow-bellied gliders and glossy black cockatoos.

"Science-based, adaptive forest management across all tenures is essential to maintaining healthy forests, adapting to climate change, and conserving biodiversity," she said.

"The State Government's decision risks repeating past mistakes where a shift away from active and adaptive management has led to declines in native species, including koalas.

"Recent research highlights that koala populations in NSW state forests remain high and stable, thanks to thoughtful regulated management."

Freeman compared this with examples like Booderee National Park, where potoroos and bandicoots became locally extinct, and the Pilliga Forest, where koala numbers declined after conversion to conservation reserves, saying they "demonstrate that passive management can fail wildlife

“THE GREAT KOALA NATIONAL PARK MAKES A HEADLINE, NOT A SCIENCE-LED PLAN”

Cont P 6

New BMSB treatment

AS the 2025–26 BMSB season kicks off (1 September to 30 April), a new safer, treatment option for brown marmorated stink bug (BMSB) is now available for use by importers.

The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) reports that ethyl formate, used in combination with carbon dioxide, has been approved under the AusTreat offshore treatment assurance scheme as an environmentally friendly substitute for methyl bromide.

Unlike methyl bromide, ethyl formate is not an ozone-depleting substance and does not contribute to greenhouse gas emissions.

Ethyl formate is a naturally occurring compound found in some fruits, such as raspberries. It breaks down quickly in the environment,

minimising long-term ecological impacts. Adopting ethyl formate supports Australia's international commitment to sustainability under the Montreal Protocol.

Other countries that are using ethyl formate include New Zealand, South Korea and Japan, with trials currently underway in Southeast Asia and the US.

The treatment will be available for use on imported target high risk goods being exported from high-risk BMSB countries. BMSB originate in Asia but are rapidly spreading through increased global movement of cargo and has become a serious invasive pest worldwide.



Brown marmorated stink bug. Image: Courtesy DAFF/Ken Walker, PaDIL

DAFF warns that if BMSB were to establish in Australia it could cause widespread plantation and native forestry damage, crop losses, and damage to ornamental and native plants. Treating goods before they enter Australia is our best defence.

Implementation of ethyl formate as an alternative treatment will be phased, beginning with offshore, pre-

arrival treatment for the 2025-26 BMSB risk season. There are plans to introduce its use onshore in the following 2026-27 season.

The Ethyl Formate Fumigation Methodology (version 1.0) and associated documentation templates are available, click [here](#). Treatment providers must be registered under AusTreat prior to conducting ethyl formate treatments on BMSB target risk goods. A registration form from is available by clicking [here](#).

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R U OK? is an every day question

EVERY second Thursday in September, R U OK? Day serves as a reminder to check in on the mental health of those around us. Today is the day for 2025, and a lot of workplaces will be marking it, but it's not a one-day proposition. In fact, it is a question to ask every day.

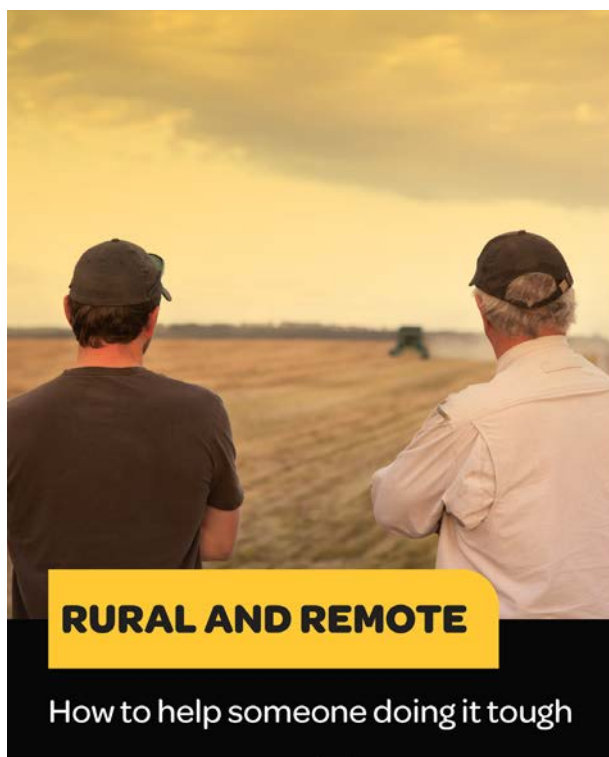
Mental health, exactly like physical health, benefits from regular check-ups. The R U OK team has compiled a comprehensive set of resources to help you start conversations with the people around you about their mental health, particularly when you've noticed changes in how they are behaving.

Starting the conversation can be the hardest part, so the R U OK? website (click here) has a flexible script to help you work out if you are in the right position to have that conversation and then how to initiate it. There's

no expectation that we all become mental health experts – encouraging the use of professional services is a key part of the script for serious issues (and the website links multiple helplines) – but sometimes people are just in need of a friend and a chat.

For workplaces, community groups and schools, the R U OK? team has targeted resources that are free to download. Click here for the page with resources broken into categories, including post natural disaster, rural and regional communities, LGBTIQ+ people and culturally appropriate tools for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mob including some in Language.

The R U OK? Conversation



RURAL AND REMOTE

How to help someone doing it tough

MATESHIP manual

R U OK?
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The Mateship Manual is designed to help people in rural and remote regions. Image: supplied

says that Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing is the industry sector least likely to claim support for serious mental health conditions.

While that's positive in one sense – jobs that involve time spent in nature and doing work you are passionate about tended to have better overall mental health for workers – it comes with the caveat that sectors like forestry whose employees skewed older and male were

less likely to report mental ill health. Given the pressures facing the sector at the moment, it's important we keep checking in on each other regularly, not just once a year.

Convoy also tours regional communities sharing educational resources: today it's in Mt Gambier at Cave Garden/Thugi, 1 Bay Rd, from 11 am till 4 pm.

SafeWork Australia's 2024 report, *Psychological health and safety in the workplace*

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From P 3

and ecosystems.

"These lessons must inform the management of the Great Koala National Park if it is to succeed," she concluded.

Forestry Australia has called on the NSW Government to:

1. Commit long-term, fit-for-purpose funding for the park's active management.
2. Set measurable, time-bound targets for koala populations and forest health, with transparent reporting.
3. Adopt an adaptive management plan (fire, predators, weeds and habitat complexity) across all tenures.
4. Co-design governance with Traditional Owners and forest scientists.
5. Recognise and retain the complementary role of well-managed State Forests alongside protected areas.

JOB LOSSES

The Minns Government announcement did recognise the GKNP's effect on the timber industry, including a comprehensive package for impacted business and workers.

Assistance includes JobKeeper-style payments to support workers by covering salaries and also financial assistance towards business operating costs.

"As well as financial payments to cover salaries, workers and their families will have immediate free access to mental health, financial and legal counselling services and training support," said the announcement.

"The Government has contacted every impacted mill and will now commence discussions with them about their long-term options and ensure appropriate support for workers."



Premier Chris Minns meeting with the Coffs Harbour Hardwoods team in July.
Image: courtesy CHH

The new Timber, Furnishing and Textiles Union called the decision "disastrous" and "political expediency at its worst".

It said, "After unions, forest scientists, major employer and industry associations put forward pragmatic solutions that would allow a koala park and protect jobs, the Environment Minister has instead implemented a splashy oversized park and tried to short-change workers to pay for it."

The government estimates the immediate temporary moratorium will have an impact on six out of more than 25 timber mills in the region and approximately 300 jobs. However, Tim Lester, CEO of the Australian Forest Contractors Association, points out this excludes many contractors and related businesses, saying, "The Government spoke to affected sawmills but not forest services businesses which means these employers haven't had any notice on what to tell their staff about coming to work."

"A temporary moratorium assumes a future return to work. Let's call it what it is – an immediate closure. In Victoria we experienced the chaos caused by a government that did not give businesses and communities the time they need to adjust. This is spin for

a political announcement.

"We engaged in the assessment and consultation process in good faith on the basis of the government's twin election commitments of a koala park and a sustainable timber industry. But the government has accepted ideology over evidence and hope over science."

Despite promises for employment transition assistance, Lester warns there is no credible avenue for jobs that will be effective replacements. The average timber sector salary is 2.5 times higher than the average tourism salary, and forest workers are key economic members of their local communities.

"The money they earn is spent in local businesses, their kids go to the local schools, they volunteer for community groups," Lester said. "Like a supermarket in a shopping mall, a forestry workforce pulls in and facilitates a broader economic and community life in rural and regional areas."

"The decision to create a park is not just affecting the stated 300 workers and their families, or the 450 [adjacent workers] affected. The impacts are multiplied and will change the dynamics of whole towns across the region."

The impacts will also be felt beyond the immediate

job losses. As regions grow around industries such as timber, support businesses focus in those towns. Without the anchor industry, it will be hard if not impossible for many of those support businesses to find new clients.

"This decision immediately wipes out 40% of the timber supply from the north coast, an industry that employs 5700 people and generates \$1.8 billion," said Lester. "You can't strip back that volume and not expect any impact on other businesses and jobs."

"Where are all the new tourists going to come from? And why will they behave differently to every other National Park visitor by supporting small town services such as mechanics, solicitors and accountants? The promise of an economic boon for locals and businesses is a mirage but the loss of \$730 million will be keenly felt."

Enews reached out to some of the affected businesses, but understands their focus is with their workforce this week.

The ABC was able to speak with mill owner Andrew Williams, of the 75-year-old Williams Timbers business in Bucca, north-west of Coffs Harbour. He said the immediate moratorium on logging had only added to the confusion when he spoke with an ABC reporter on Monday.

"Today was a hard day, when you turn up to work [and] you have got 12 guys that you need to talk to about the future of their jobs and their livelihoods," Williams said.

"It's something that I wasn't really prepared for."

To read the full story, click here.

On the cover: Evidence that koalas are thriving in State Forests alongside sustainable native timber harvesting was ignored by the NSW government.
Image: Shutterstock

SEPTEMBER

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

18-19: SAVE THE DATE: THU 18 - Onetrak/Tigercat field demonstration day + AFCA dinner, 5.30pm.

FRI 19 - Networking breakfast, 7.30am-9.00am & AGM, 9.00am-10.00am – QT Canberra. Click here to book breakfast or click here to register AGM attendance.

30: Hoo Hoo meeting and dinner, 6.30pm-8.30pm – Sydney, Club Ryde Ex. Dinner \$42. The Sydney Timber Industry Institute, AKA "Hoo Hoo International", have a few willing members that want to re-establish this great organisation. To RSVP, contact Heather Gattone on 0411 490 169 or email heatherbelle@iinet.net.au

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>

[co.nz/2025singapore/home](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

24: GTTIA – The Barn, Mt Gambier, SA. Gala dinner and awards ceremony. 6pm - pre event cocktails and 7.00pm - awards ceremony.

Tickets available via the website: www.gttia.com

2026

MAY 17-19: SAVE THE DATE: Professional Woodworking Expo – NEC, Birmingham, UK. Dedicated event for woodworking professionals, the Professional Woodworking Expo is the essential platform for joinery and installation businesses. For more information, contact Jess Hardisty: jess.hardisty@montgomerygroup.com

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Reclaim margin and market share

Why growth mindset leaders are partnering with Arrow Executive Sales.

By **JASON HOWES**

IF you are a business owner or sales leader, you have likely felt it. Sales are flat. Costs are rising. Margins are under pressure. And despite the push to perform, your sales team is struggling to deliver results. It's not easy out there, that's why we're passionate about supporting sales professionals with training to thrive in tough markets.

For years, salespeople and the managers leading them have been placed in roles without the tools, training or strategy to succeed. Many were never taught how to build a pipeline, progress opportunities, handle objections or close effectively. Very few leaders are taught how to recruit for sales. Like many, I built teams by learning on the fly. I made mistakes, I've felt the frustration.

That's why, over the last seven years, I've invested heavily in understanding what works. In 2018, after nearly 30 years in sales and leadership, I took a step back to reflect. What became clear to me was this: sales teams are under-supported. The real issue lies in the lack of consistent structure, training and development that sets people up to succeed.

This became the foundation of Arrow Executive Sales.

We help businesses solve two critical challenges:

- Hiring salespeople who can sell;
- Training and coaching to deliver consistent, strategic performance.

These are not side issues. They are commercial priorities that impact revenue, culture and growth.

A RECRUITMENT REALITY CHECK

Hiring salespeople is one of the toughest tasks in business. Even experienced HR professionals struggle. Salespeople tend to interview well – they build rapport, tell a story and sell themselves.

When someone steps into the role, many hit a wall. They get partway, then stall – no strategy, no plan, no real support. It's about knowing how to win in today's high-pressure, fast-moving market.

We're in the middle of a serious talent shortage and it's getting worse. Yet some still expect new hires to bring customers with them and deliver results from day one.

Launching Arrow Executive Sales, I started from scratch with no customer base, no clients and no brand equity. It was tough going. Rejection stings, but you learn from it.

Once I understood the problems we could solve and the gaps we could fill, the next step was testing where we could deliver the most value. One insight stood out: a high percentage of salespeople can only get so far in the sales process (most don't have one). It's common for a manager to step in when it comes to creating, progressing or closing major opportunities – the 'dream accounts' that drive market share. But what if your



manager can't help either? Or doesn't have the time?

That insight continues to shape how we work with clients. We don't deliver off-the-shelf sales training. We build capability, confidence and clarity based on where your team is now, and where you need them to be.

THE NEW SALES LANDSCAPE

Today's buyers are more informed, trained and cautious. They're buying less, reducing inventory and negotiating harder.

Meanwhile, many salespeople have missed out on proper training and the gap is widening. Under pressure, they lead with discounts. Instead of staying strategic, they fall into reactive customer service mode. Time that should be spent creating new opportunities is swallowed up by keeping existing customers happy.

Sales teams are expected to deliver more with less, and when targets are missed, blame often falls on individuals. But if your team isn't prospecting, learning or

adapting, it's a system issue.

Underperformance isn't usually just a lack of motivation. It's a combination of poor fit, lack of structure and missing support. That's why uncovering Sales DNA is critical.

At Arrow Executive Sales, we work with leaders to identify what's holding performance back across your people, structure, process, conversations and mindset. Together, we then build a plan to fix it.

Our programs are practical, focused and built for results. Delivered either face to face or online, for individuals or teams. If you're serious about lifting performance, let's identify what's holding your team back.

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same path and understands the challenges. **Contact Jason Howes on 1300 903 527 or visit www.arrowexec.com.au**



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Sales Leadership:

Strategy, Culture, Results.

Stop guessing, uncover your sales DNA!



Forestry slash to biofuels

Turning wood waste into a power source may slash prices.

BRIAN Cox, managing director of the BioEnergy Association of New Zealand, took to controversial independent NZ media outlet *The Platform* this week to discuss a proposal that solves two problems in one: using forestry slash as a biofuel.

Forestry slash has caused significant problems during floods in New Zealand Aotearoa, resulting in property and infrastructure damage and the tragic death of a 12-year-old boy in recent years. While waste residue from timber processing has long been used in the industry to power kilns and other needs, it has traditionally been left behind at plantations.

Cox says that the country is overlooking it as a valuable energy resource. Rising costs – particularly for natural gas – have seen both industrial and residential power prices surge since the start of the decade.

He told interviewer Leah Panapa that the quantity of slash is obviously significant and that it is frequently available in piles by the side of accessible roads where de-limbing has been done. Noting that areas like the Central North Island already collect forest slash for use in local



1/ Mark Coghill with some of the waste wood fibre OneFortyOne has collected for re-use as biomass.

Image: courtesy OneFortyOne

2/ Brian Cox, managing director of the BioEnergy Association of New Zealand. Image: supplied

industrial boilers, Cox said, “We could get so much more if we had a will to pick it up.

“Energy is one of the easiest products we can make from it. We can extract chemicals and do a whole lot of other things with it, but the one that is most economical today is energy. And what do we have a problem with? Energy!”

He flagged that the missing link at the moment is creating a path from the resource to the power generators, but said that may be about to change.

“Genesis Energy at Huntly are looking at putting biomass into the Huntly Power Station instead of coal,” said Cox. “They are now talking to forest owners and farmers around the Central Plateau and Highland, around Waikato, to get contracts for enough biomass to come in. And if they do that, they won’t need to import coal.”

Cox said that slash could supply up to 27% of the



nation’s energy by 2050, saying that it was already at about 9% without really trying to grow the sector. The readiness of the resource makes it even more attractive, Cox said.

Panapa asked whether the economic cost of collecting forestry slash was too high, but Cox replied that the increasingly high costs of power generation in NZ and other issues such as the natural gas shortfall and transitions from coal meant that it was already economical and that cost would improve as technologies and demand improved.

The cost of forestry slash is about NZ\$16/gigajoule. By comparison, mid-2024 figures from the Electricity Authority Te Mana Hiko (the most recent data showing a like for like comparison) have gas

prices above NZ\$25/gj, diesel fluctuating in the NZ\$40-50 range and only coal cheaper at around NZ\$9, though with a significantly higher carbon cost. Figures weren’t given for renewable sources, but overall, standard electricity generation costs in recent years have been around NZ\$26-30/gj.

OneFortyOne has been one of the forestry companies leading the charge in using slash as a biofuel. Last year it signed a new five-year agreement with Canterbury Woodchip Supplies to see forestry slash turned into biofuel, replacing coal in the boilers of local companies such as produce firm JS Ewers. This switch to green energy has seen JS Ewers achieve a 98% reduction in on-farm carbon dioxide emissions, a drop of 27,000 tonnes of emissions annually.

Mark Coghill, OneFortyOne operations manager, says the company has invested close to a million dollars into the biofuel project since late 2021. “Over the next five years we hope to reduce the amount of wood waste in our forests by at least 75,000 tonnes,” he said.

The move has resulted in lower fuel costs for businesses and potentially removing the need to burn 22 thousand tonnes of coal over five years, reducing carbon dioxide emissions by 50,000 tonnes.

If Cox gets his way and those figures are scaled up nation-wide, even political figures who aren’t concerned about carbon abatement can see the benefits.

To hear the full interview, [click here](#).

“IF THEY CAN GET ENOUGH BIOMASS CONTRACTS, THEY WON’T NEED TO IMPORT COAL

Silviculture makes sense

AT last week's Timber Queensland and AgForce "Doing Timber Business" conference, University of Queensland forestry economist Dr Tyron Venn presented the results of case study analysis showing the financial performance of grazing operations with and without silviculture practices in Spotted Gum and Pine regions of Queensland.

As reported in Beef Central (click here to read the whole story), the results show clear benefits for whole-of-farm returns through managing remnant and regrowth native forests on grazing land with silviculture practices, while also helping to reduce Australia's heavy reliance on imported timber. However, fully capitalising on those opportunities also relies on policy settings catching up and

allowing carbon credits to be earned for managing existing native vegetation, not just for planting trees, as is presently the case.

For beef producers with areas of native hardwood timber such as spotted gum, retaining trees and actively managing regrowth to code outperformed clearing to open pasture on production and profitability metrics. Thinning remnant spotted gum to code generated a net present value around \$1300/ha over 20 years.

Dr Venn said including the management of native remnant and regrowth forest in carbon accounting



One of the silviculture test farms, which showed significant animal productivity and welfare benefits. Image: Timber Queensland

methodology would provide the incentives needed to encourage landholders to adopt silviculture over clearing, while also unlocking a vast untapped timber supply that would reduce Australia's reliance on imports from countries deemed high risk for deforestation, illegal clearing and forest degradation.

Beef Central also reported on one of the most significant

deterrents to the broader uptake of silviculture: uncertainty around harvesting rights (to read the full story, click here).

Experts said that landholders were choosing to sell rather than retain timber, despite lower returns than they could realise in the future, because

they were not certain they would have the right to harvest in the future.

The conference was reminded that Timber Queensland and AgForce Queensland have long been advocating for the State Government to introduce a new "Category F" in the Forest Act to guarantee harvest rights on private land.

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Tasmanian Timber Awards

Celebrating the best of the Tasmanian timber industry.

LAUNCESTON was hopping last Friday night as 250 guests gathered at the Tailrace Centre for the 2025 Tasmanian Timber Awards. This biennial event, hosted by the Tasmanian Forests and Forest Products Network (TFFPN), recognises excellence across the sector, from harvesting and forest management to innovation, design, safety and tree farming.

TFFPN Board Director, Dr Louise Wallis, said the Awards were a proud moment for the industry. "It's always a great moment to bring everyone together and recognise the diversity across the forest and timber products sector," she said. "These awards highlight the breadth of our industry – from growing and managing forests, through to fire management, harvesting, processing, innovation, design and safety."

"By coincidence, this year's outstanding and emerging leaders both came from the transport side of the industry – one through innovative engineering and manufacturing, the other through logistics. What stood out for me was their quiet leadership and generosity, always supporting their peers and helping to lift the whole industry."

The winners were:

Emerging Leader in the Tasmanian Timber Industry: Francis Richardson, Orana



1/ Representatives from Sustainable Timber Tasmania and Indicium Dynamics, who won the Innovation award for their collaboration, Fire Foresight.
2/ Melody Reihana won Trainee of the Year.
3/ Graeme Elphinstone was recognised for his Outstanding Contribution to the Timber Industry.
4/ Artist Sylvia Elphinstone celebrating husband Graeme's win with him. All images: courtesy TFFPN

Enterprises Industry for his drive to improve innovation and efficiency in timber transport.

Excellence in Design and/or Use of Tasmanian Timber:

Align Architecture & Interiors, and Saxon Hall Architecture

Timber Processing Excellence:

Britton Timbers

Excellence in Environmental Management Practices:

Dydee Mann

Forest Growing and Management Excellence:

Forico

Harvesting Excellence:

Midway and their contractors

Innovation Award: Sustainable Timber Tasmania and Indicium Dynamics for Fire Foresight, Tasmania's first end-to-end digital bushfire detection and alerting system.

Outstanding Contribution to the Tasmanian Timber Industry: Graeme Elphinstone, Elphinstone Engineering



Trainee of the Year: Melody Reihana, Sustainable Timber Tasmania, whose passion and commitment to sustainable forestry have quickly marked her as a future industry leader.

Tree Grower of the Year:

Malcolm Larner

Workplace Health and Safety Excellence:

Forico

The night's highest honour was awarded to Graeme Elphinstone of Elphinstone Engineering, who received the Outstanding Contribution to the Tasmanian Timber Industry Award in recognition of more than 50 years of innovation, leadership, and service.

A true pioneer, Elphinstone transformed timber transport with designs that set new global benchmarks for safety and efficiency, including Australia's first on-vehicle weighing system, the folding pole jinker, and the EasySteer suspension system.

Equally respected for his commitment to people and place, he kept his operations in Triabunna through industry downturns, safeguarding local jobs and mentoring future generations of timber professionals.

It has been a big week of recognition for Elphinstone, who was also elected to the Shell Rimula National Road Transport Wall of Fame (see P14).

"Receiving the Outstanding Contribution Award was almost overwhelming. You put in the work over many years without

expecting recognition, and then to hear such genuine, positive comments from across the sector is incredibly humbling. This acknowledgement means a great deal," Elphinstone said.

"What I love most is seeing young people come into the sector and make their mark. I often say there are only two reasons you leave us – either you're not quite where you need to be, or you're moving on to better yourself."

"Watching the next generation take those opportunities and shape the future is what keeps me inspired."

The Awards highlighted not only individual excellence, but the strength, resilience and collaboration that underpin Tasmania's forest and timber products industries.

For more about the TFFPN, click here.



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Graeme Elphinstone inducted into Shell Rimula Wall of Fame

Elphinstone Engineering celebrates its founder's recognition for his many vehicle innovations.

THE Shell Rimula Wall of Fame is a cornerstone of Australia's road transport heritage. "Our objective with the Wall of Fame is to highlight the contribution that road transport, as an industry, has made to Australia's economic well-being through the ingenuity of our trucking pioneers," the organisers explain. "It shows that road transport is much more than just the men and women who drive the trucks; there are many others in the industry who need to be recognised also."

Graeme Elphinstone's recent induction is a testament to his five decades of innovation in heavy vehicle design and safety. This prestigious award honours Graeme's lifelong commitment and outstanding contributions to Australia's road transport industry.

Tasmanian born and bred, Graeme began his career in the early 1970s and quickly became a problem-solver for the transport challenges of the era. In 1976, Graeme and his brother Dale imported and fitted Australia's first on-vehicle truck weighing system, installing scales on a Tasmanian log truck to accurately measure its load. This step revolutionised load

management, allowing drivers to know their weight before hitting the highway, and laid the foundation for modern onboard mass monitoring in heavy vehicles.

Since then, Elphinstone has led the way with a series of engineering breakthroughs in trailer design, suspension technology, and vehicle configurations. His ideas have become industry standards in Australia, significantly improving driver safety, regulatory compliance, and operational efficiency across the road transport sector. Some of Graeme's key innovations include:

- **1976** Fitted the first on-vehicle weighing system to an Australian truck, enabling drivers to monitor axle loads

and gross weight on the go. This was an Australian-first solution that set new benchmarks for load compliance and safety in trucking.

- **1980** Invented the stretch mudguard for trucks – a longer, flexible mudguard design that is now an industry standard copied by many manufacturers, reducing road spray and debris for improved safety of following vehicles.
- **1983** Designed the world's first self-loading road train combination, featuring a four-axle dog trailer that could automatically load cargo (e.g. logs) without external equipment. In the same year, Graeme introduced innovative

air transducers for air suspension systems to more accurately measure and adjust load pressure.

- **1985** Developed the 'Tri-Beam' suspension system – an inventive heavy-duty suspension design that earned Graeme the coveted BHP Steel Award for engineering innovation.
- **1986** Built the world's first folding skeletal trailer, the Fold-A-Skel™
- **1988** Designed one of Australia's earliest B-double trailer combinations.
- **1989** Created the Easyweigh™ Radio Remote Indicator – the world's first onboard weighing system with a wireless remote display.



1



2



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4

1/ Elphinstone's logging trailers have significantly improved efficiency and safety

2/ Graeme Elphinstone at work.

3/ Elphinstone's folding trailers mean unloaded vehicles can get to sites more safely, and then quickly fold out for their loads.

4/ The tri-axle configuration helps deliver stability to the load in bumpy road conditions. All images: courtesy Elphinstone Engineering

From P 14

- **1999** Winner "Australian Trailer of the Year" for Easyloader™
- **2005** Designed and built the world's first self-loading B-Triple.
- **2007** Designed and built world's first self-loading Road-Train doubled trailer production.
- **2008** Launched the Easyloader™ Long Logger trailer – an Australian-first, Performance-Based Standards (PBS)-approved design that could carry 19m-long logs on a 26m B-double combination.

• **2011-2013** Developed the Easysteer™ self-steering suspension system. This advanced trailer suspension automatically adjusts and guides rear axles during turns, reducing tyre wear and improving the turning ability of long combination vehicles. Easysteer™ enhanced safety and manoeuvrability for multi-trailer road trains, although it initially required persistent advocacy by Graeme to gain regulatory acceptance.

His company's design and deployment of folding trailers, multi-axle configurations such as tri-axle, and advanced load distribution platforms have

been widely adopted across the timber, mining, and bulk haulage sectors, where they have improved safety and efficiency for thousands. In fact, Garry Leeson – also recently inducted (2023) – credited Elphinstone's work in Tasmania for inspiring the mainland's adoption of folding trailers and other innovations.

On being inducted onto the Shell Rimula Wall of Fame, Graeme expressed gratitude

"I'M TRULY HUMBLLED TO BE INDUCTED INTO THE WALL OF FAME ALONGSIDE SO MANY LEGENDS"

to those who have supported his journey. "I'm truly humbled to be inducted into the Wall of Fame alongside so many legends of the road," he said. "When I built my first trailer and fitted that first scale system, I never imagined it would lead to this. I've always just tried to solve problems and make trucks, trailers and transport in general safer and more efficient for everyone. To have those efforts recognised by the industry I love is an incredible honour.

"This award isn't just mine – it belongs to our whole team and the many customers and partners who believed in our ideas over the years."



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Tasmanian woman ordered to pay for fires

THE Supreme Court of Tasmania has found that a spate of plantation fires in 2023 were intentionally lit by a 55-year-old Tasmanian woman. After ultimately pleading guilty, she has been ordered to pay compensation of \$464,000 to Forico, Tasmania's largest private forest management company, as well as serve a 15-month home detention sentence.

The nine events ranged from small grassfires that self-extinguished without causing notable damage, to a fire that lasted for several days and burned 56 hectares of bushland, including several timber plantations, in various stages of maturation, owned by Forico.

After her car was spotted



Forico foresters at work in one of the company's plantations. Image: courtesy Forico

near several of the blazes, police interviewed the woman who denied responsibility. When informed there was DNA evidence, she initially suggested one of her adult sons may have been involved, before later implicating her adult daughter, who is disabled and lives at home.

Later, the woman admitted that she had been responsible for the fires and

pleaded guilty in court.

In her ruling, Justice Tamara Jago noted that the woman had been suffering from ongoing mental health difficulties that had arisen from a history of childhood sexual abuse and that the period of fire lighting had coincided with the emotional aftermath of confronting her father about this abuse.

She acknowledged that

the defendant had worked hard with mental health professionals to minimise any risk of reoffending and had committed to ongoing relationships with those professionals. Justice Jago said that a prison term would only exacerbate the woman's mental health issues.

Nevertheless, the extent of the damage and the potential risk of the fires, as well as the real risk and resources cost to the firefighting crews who battled the larger blazes, meant that it was appropriate to impose the home detention term with strict conditions and electronic monitoring.

Forico did not comment on the outcome.

Mass timber cuts emissions

CLT and glulam were once building materials that came with high reputations for performance but a high transport carbon cost as we imported them almost entirely from Europe. Not anymore, with mass timber manufacturers around Australia growing substantially over the past five years.

Now, a report from *Renew Economy* says that local manufacture has made the carbon benefits of using mass timber in multi-storey construction obvious, and that adopting a wood-first approach may very well be what is needed to help Australia meet its carbon targets.

Michael Barnard writes:

"The carbon math is the strongest argument. CLT and glulam sequester carbon absorbed by trees, and even accounting for processing emissions and end-of-life, timber structures deliver 50% to 75% lower embodied carbon than concrete or steel equivalents.

"Some analyses of mid-rise CLT buildings in Australia show nearly net-zero or even slightly negative upfront carbon footprints. This advantage aligns perfectly with Australia's commitments to reduce construction emissions and with rating tools like Green Star



Australian mass timber, such as these CLT roof and floor panels by NeXTimber at the Flinders University Factory of the Future and Tonsley Technical College project, will help us meet carbon targets. Photo: courtesy NeXTimber

that reward embodied carbon cuts.

"As embodied carbon reporting becomes mandatory, likely following New Zealand's lead, mass timber will become a necessity rather than an option for many developers to meet targets."

Australia was an early

adopter of mass timber for tall buildings, but then spent a decade idling before Timberlink's NeXTimber, CUSP and XLam powered up the sector again with local manufacture. Barnard argues that performance and cost questions have been answered, with the technology showing strong fire performance and short build program times combined with quality finishes more than offsetting the high initial cost of the material.

The only problem for Australian mass timber, he says, is plantation supply. While Australian growers seek to increase supply, New Zealand may fill the gap.

To read the full story, click [here](#).

Illegal logging laws in full force

The transition period has ended and compliance is more important than ever.

THE new Rules around illegal logging have been generally welcomed by the sector but, for many importers and processors, they may have required a change in business practices.

Recognising this, the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) decided that for the first six months of the new Rules, assessments would be conducted with a focus on education and guidance for non-compliance matters relating to the application of the new/changed due diligence arrangements.

This milestone was passed earlier this month and those transition arrangements have now concluded. Accordingly, affected businesses must be compliant with the new and changed arrangements under the Illegal Logging Prohibition Rules 2024 (click here to read), based on the *Illegal Logging Prohibition Amendment (Strengthening Measures to Prevent Illegal Timber Trade) Act 2024* (Amendment Act) (click here to read), which came into effect on 3 March 2025 and apply for the purposes of relevant imports and processing of raw logs on or after 3 March 2025.

DAFF has created guidance material, including factsheets and resources, to support compliance and has asked for feedback on areas where further clarity may assist.

Although the education period is over, the emphasis from DAFF continues to be on helping companies meet the new Rules. In its own words: "The department remains committed to supporting compliance within the regulated

community with clear and accessible guidance. When undertaking assessments, the department works closely with entities to ensure a full understanding of their legislative requirements. We aim to facilitate long term, sustainable compliance."

In a bid to help "achieve better compliance and regulatory outcomes", DAFF has created:

- A webpage setting out the compliance process (click here) with clear information and resources to help you understand your responsibilities and how DAFF checks compliance;
- FAQ webpages to support the above (click here);
- The department's Compliance Policy (click here), which explains the principles it follows and the tools used to manage compliance fairly and consistently.
- A page for the department's Regulatory Practice Statement, which sets out how DAFF approaches regulation in practice (click here).

The Rules' focus on due diligence has arisen out of the insufficiencies of the old system. Putting the onus on importers and processors to ensure compliance may add to their workload but mitigates their risk, both for non-compliance and for reputational harm, as well as ensuring the supply chain integrity of Australian timber products and meeting the requirements of



Ibama, Brazil's key federal environmental law enforcement agency, and the Brazilian Army cooperate to monitor and seize illegal timber.

Image: CC Wikimedia/Ibama

international partners.

DAFF says, "Rather than being seen as extra work, due diligence is a valuable practice that supports responsible sourcing and long-term business resilience. Recognising this perspective also helps when considering ways to streamline due diligence processes, ensuring that any adjustments continue to support the shared goal of sustainable and transparent supply chains.

"Ultimately, due diligence is a shared responsibility and a key step in ensuring legal supply chains. It's about more than paperwork – it's about protecting Australian businesses and consumers from contributing to the harm that illegal logging causes. Due diligence helps businesses identify and support supply chains with strong timber legality practices, enhancing environmental protection and outcomes."

DAFF encourages all interested parties to sign up for the department's illegal logging subscription service (click here). You can also email the compliance branch at ilca@agriculture.gov.au or call the department during business hours (8.30 am to 5.30 pm) on 1800 657 313 or +61 2 6272 3933 outside Australia



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