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Businesses already under pressure from GKNP announcement

COVER STORY P2

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GKNP – business impacts after the announcement

Enews spoke with Ben Wheaton, General Manager of Mi Organics, to discuss the real-world impact of the Great Koala National Park (GKNP) announcement on their business, their employees, and their customers.

Mi Organics is a proud, long-standing family business, founded almost 40 years ago by owner John and now operating across Coffs Harbour, Grafton, Nambucca, Townsend, and Woolgoolga. They employ over 60 staff. Ben Wheaton has been with the company for more than two decades. His opening remark cut straight to the point: "They [the NSW Labor Government] seem to have pulled the wool over everyone's eyes."

TURNING WASTE INTO ENERGY

Mi Organics plays a crucial role in the circular economy. The company collects sawdust, dockings, tree hearts and offcuts — all the timber industry's so-called "rubbish" that once would have been burnt. Instead, Mi Organics processes this material into a valuable fuel, used by sugar refineries, molasses, Nestlé, engineered timber manufacturing and a major abattoir to generate steam

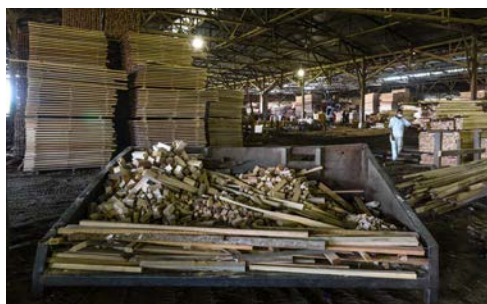
energy for power meat processing — saving vast amounts of energy. There is currently no short-term replacement for the fuels that they transport and the flow on effect will severely impact their operations.

They also supply bedding materials for poultry and meat growing, which is a RSPCA requirement and represents another potential impact.

THE FALLOUT FROM GKNP

While Ben is confident Mi Organics will survive, he's blunt about the future: this side of the business will take a significant hit. With private plantations unable to keep pace and log supply tightening, prices will jump, and imports will inevitably rise. And the human toll is already visible.

- No one from Government has contacted Mi Organics about support for businesses or employees.
- Anxiety in the industry is spreading — one worker



Mi Organics collects offcuts and 'waste' timber from sawmills and forests, material that can't be used in traditional products and transforms it into fuel for a wide range of businesses. This not only prevents waste but also reduces their customers' energy consumption. Image: Shutterstock

resigned in the first week after the Father's Day announcement, saying he "could see the writing on the wall."

- A loyal head mechanic of 12 years recently stepped down, telling Ben he'd rather give the younger staff — many with mortgages and young families — a better chance of hanging on.

"This is just the start of the human cost of the GKNP," Ben said.

Our industry also supports a wide range of supplementary businesses including machinery suppliers, repairers, transport, part suppliers, first aid and PPE suppliers, through to accountants and of course trainees and apprentices. The ripple effect throughout the

communities cannot be underestimated.

Put simply 'No production and no processing effectively mean, no jobs'.

PART OF A BUSINESS IN LIMBO

Mi Organics had just ordered a brand-new \$250,000 trailer. "If the signwriting hadn't already been completed and delivery locked in, we would have cancelled it," Ben admitted.

The business is now in talks with private plantations about thinning and supplementary operations, but everyone is chasing the same limited availability. "Demand will outstrip supply very quickly," Ben warned.

THE TOURISM "MYTH"


Ben also took aim at the Government's push to sell the GKNP as a tourism win.

"The perception that a tourist will be able to walk up a path and spot koalas is absolute rubbish. Even professionals struggle to spot them high in the canopy. There's nothing 'great' about the GKNP."

On the cover: The Mi Organics truck loading up on mulch created from the recycling of tree waste.
Image: Mi Organics



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Interview with the Honorable Gurmesh Singh

National Party – Member for Coffs Harbour.

Enews caught up with the Hon. Gurmesh Singh, member for Coffs Harbour, whose office has also been inundated with calls from distressed businesses and local organisations reeling from the Great Koala National Park (GKNP) announcement.

Singh stressed that it's not just industry on the chopping block – countless community and recreational groups will also be left

stranded. From mountain bikers, 4WD clubs and campers, to families who swim in forest waterholes and tourists who come to explore the region's great outdoors, entire lifestyles and visitor economies are at risk. "One of the most affected areas sits right on the doorstep of 80,000 people," he warned.

Calling the move "disappointing and silly," Singh said the ALP Government had two and



The Hon. Gurmesh Singh, Member for Coffs Harbour. Image: Parliament of NSW

a half years to consider the consequences yet chose to spring the announcement on Father's Day. "This is all about politics and the next state election," he said.

He also flagged the financial black hole that comes with the shift: "Maintaining a national park costs considerably more per hectare, but no budget has been set aside for it. Forests need to be actively managed – they always have been, from Indigenous stewardship through to today. If they're simply locked up and left, the problems multiply, and not just when it comes to fire."

'We continue to seek answers and clarification, but [they] just don't seem to know'. 'The Nationals will continue to fight this ridiculous policy all the way'.

“FORESTS NEED TO BE ACTIVELY MANAGED – THEY ALWAYS HAVE BEEN

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Forestry sector welcomed as key to Australia's net zero ambition

THE Australian Forest Products Association (AFPA) has warmly welcomed the Albanese Government's recognition that the forestry sector's entire supply chain is essential to achieving Australia's ambitious target of reducing emissions by 62-70 per cent below 2005 levels by 2035. This acknowledgment underscores the critical role of sustainable forestry in addressing climate change and supporting the nation's decarbonisation efforts, said AFPA Chief Executive Officer, Diana Hallam.

"We acknowledge the Government's sector plans announced alongside the new 2035 target – especially the Agriculture and Land

Sector Plan and Built Environment Sector Plan – which point to enormous opportunities for forestry to be an essential part of the decarbonisation solution. We will engage with the Commonwealth to ensure forestry, and its supply chain can help meet the Government's targets, with the biggest possible contribution," Diana Hallam said.

Australia's



It's easy to see why managing and growing both native and plantation forests is essential to lowering Australia's net carbon emissions. The carbon trees absorb as they grow is remarkable and a powerful ally in tackling climate change. Image: Shutterstock

forestry sector, encompassing plantation and sustainable native forestry, is uniquely positioned to contribute to net zero goals. Trees absorb carbon dioxide through photosynthesis, locking it away as they grow, while timber and wood-based products store carbon for decades when used in construction, packaging, and other applications.

"By using timber in new homes and buildings to displace carbon intensive construction materials, wood-fibre based packaging instead of plastics, paper and tissue products, power poles and even garden and mulch products – alongside

production trees absorbing carbon as they grow – the forestry sector will help our national economy decarbonise while providing essential employment and economic contributions for the nation," continued Ms Hallam.

The sector supports many regional economies, providing thousands of jobs in rural communities and contributing billions to the national economy. Programs like the Support Plantation Establishment Program (SPEP) are vital to expanding plantation forestry, enabling the growth of new forests that enhance carbon sequestration and supply sustainable timber. Sustainable native forestry complements these efforts, balancing environmental conservation with economic benefits through responsible harvesting practices.

"We will work specifically

“AUSTRALIA'S FORESTRY SECTOR IS UNIQUELY POSITIONED TO CONTRIBUTE TO NET ZERO GOALS

AFPA THE LEADING VOICE FOR AUSTRALIA'S FOREST PRODUCTS SECTOR

From P 4

with the Albanese Government on existing initiatives like the Support Plantation Establishment Program (SPEP), the continued and necessary contribution from sustainable native forestry and how industry and the government can partner through the processing and manufacturing cogs of our supply chain – as the country works towards net zero,” Ms Hallam said.

The importance of forestry’s carbon sequestration potential was highlighted by Australia’s former Chief Scientist, Professor Ian Chubb, who noted during the Australian Carbon Credit Unit (ACCU) review: “the only pathway known to science that has immediate capacity – to remove greenhouse gases, particularly CO₂ from the atmosphere is photosynthesis.” This scientific reality positions Australia’s sustainable forestry sector as a leader



What makes the entire supply chain so valuable is that even after trees are harvested, the timber continues to lock away carbon. Timber products are not only renewable and sustainable, they also store the carbon captured by the tree, turning every building and piece of furniture into a long-term carbon vault. Image: Shutterstock

in climate solutions, growing, processing, and manufacturing essential products that lock up carbon at scale.

However, this federal momentum stands in stark contrast to recent actions by the New South Wales state government, which has imposed an immediate temporary moratorium on timber harvesting in 176,000 hectares of state forests designated for the Great Koala National Park (GKNP). Announced on September 8, 2025, by the Minns Labor Government, the ban halts native forest logging in the proposed park boundaries

on the mid-north coast, effectively stopping forestry operations in these critical areas to protect koala habitats and establish one of the state’s largest national parks without solid plans to pay for it. While the government emphasises support for affected workers through

“THERE ARE ENORMOUS OPPORTUNITIES FOR FORESTRY TO BE AN ESSENTIAL PART OF THE DECARBONISATION SOLUTION

transition programs, including mental health services and financial counselling, and maintains that hardwood plantations and private native forestry remain unaffected, the decision has been decried by the timber industry as a sudden blow that ignores years of consultation and threatens regional jobs and supply chains. This state-level restriction directly opposes the federal vision for a robust, sustainable native forestry component in national decarbonisation efforts, potentially undermining the sector’s ability to scale up contributions to net zero goals and highlighting the need for coordinated policy alignment across government levels.

AFPA continues to be committed to collaborating with the government, industry, and communities to maximise forestry’s contributions to net zero. By scaling up initiatives like SPEP, supporting sustainable native forestry, and promoting timber in construction, the sector can drive decarbonisation while fostering economic growth. “Australia’s sustainable forestry sector grows, processes and manufactures trees into a range of essential products – locking up carbon at scale,” Diana Hallam concluded.

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GKNP – business impacts

Enews spoke with Kirsty Parker of M&M Timbers, who recalled the devastating phone call they received on Father's Day.

"WE were told we were stood down—effective immediately," she said. "It came as a complete shock and hit my husband Matt incredibly hard. Our sons, our son-in-law, and other dedicated people who've been with us for years are all part of this business. It's our family's life's work."

M&M Timbers is no ordinary company. It's a fifth-generation hardwood harvesting crew that has been operating since 1906. For the past 14 years, they've worked exclusively within the designated areas that now form part of the proposed Great Koala National Park (GKNP). Their sole contracts are with Forestry Corporation of NSW (FCNSW).

Kirsty explained just how tightly regulated their work is:

"FCNSW officers walk the entire site long before we arrive. They mark each tree—on an iPad system and with a visual marker—showing which trees can be harvested and which must remain untouched. Some are protected for wildlife habitat, some are food trees for koalas, others simply aren't ready for harvest. The harvester sits with the iPad in front of him at all times. It tracks his every move and records which trees are harvested. At the end of every day, we upload the data to the EPA (regulator) as part of our contract."



M&M Timbers have operated in the state forests for five generations and have done so under very strict regulations. The GKNP announcement has completely halted their entire business with no relief funding despite promises. Image: Shutterstock

Even their skidder and dozer carry iPads that monitor movement and activity. The compliance is so strict that even minor accidents must be rectified immediately.

"If a felled tree brushes a protected one and breaks a branch, we're required to stop, plant a replacement tree, and log it in the system for later inspection. If a non-designated tree is cut down, the fine is \$15,000 per tree. You can't afford to make a mistake. That's why every crew up and down the North Coast are such skilled, careful operators—we have to be."

But on Sunday, FCNSW told them not to report for work on Monday. They've been promised a stand-down payment for 10 weeks, but as of now, no funds have arrived. In the meantime, M&M Timbers continues

to pay wages from its own bank account, while waiting—frustratingly—for news on whether their contract will survive.

"During the 2023 state election, the NSW Government promised it was committed to a sustainable forestry industry," Kirsty said. "Where is that promise now? We believed Chris Minns would make a sensible decision. Instead, this is industry-destroying."

The ripple effect of their stand-down is already

hitting the wider community.

"Our log transport partners, local sawmills, even WesTrac who service our machinery—everyone is feeling it. We spend \$90,000 a year on servicing alone, not counting breakdowns or parts. We just ordered 5,000 litres of diesel—that bill still has to be paid.

Yesterday, one mill cancelled a \$35,000 order for new saws and a scheduled service because they're running out of logs. That's money straight out of the local economy."

And behind the numbers is a very human toll.

"The mental health impact has been enormous," Kirsty admitted. "For two years we've been living with growing anxiety, but this announcement has been devastating. Our six employees haven't been able to sleep properly since. Personally, I couldn't even bring myself to go to the supermarket—it feels like the ground has been pulled from under us." Our WesTrac service mechanic just asked me if he will still be required next time, I didn't even know what to say.

“THEY’VE BEEN PROMISED A STAND-DOWN PAYMENT FOR TEN WEEKS, BUT AS OF NOW, NO FUNDS HAVE ARRIVED



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SEPTEMBER

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>

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

MAY 20-21: SAVE THE DATE: 5th International Forest Business Conference – Sheraton Sopot Hotel, Poland.

A two-day conference on megatrends that shape responsible forest and wood

industry investments. The conference aims to bring together leading timberland investment management organizations, investors interested in forestry asset class and sustainable wood industry representatives in order to exchange and share experiences and ideas about new forest business frontiers. Register at www.fba-events.com or contact rafal@forest-analytics.com

JUNE 9-11: SAVE THE DATE: Woodex Trade Exhibition – Gallagher Convention Centre, Johannesburg, South Africa.

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Parametric protection: covering the insurance gap

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Australia is facing growing wildfire risks, driving insurance premiums and deductibles higher and in some cases eliminating wildfire coverage altogether. Image: Adobe Stock/Descartes

AUSTRALIA is no stranger to the devastating impact of wildfires, but with shifting climate patterns and lengthening fire seasons, the stakes are rising rapidly.

From the catastrophic Black Summer of 2019-2020, which scorched more than 24 million hectares and triggered \$2.4 billion in insured losses, to increasing fire risk across South Australia and Victoria, the frequency and severity of wildfire events are reaching critical levels.

As traditional insurance models struggle to keep pace, parametric insurance is emerging as a smarter, data-driven alternative. With rapid payouts triggered

by predefined conditions, parametric solutions offer transparency, speed and the financial resilience needed to navigate an increasingly volatile wildfire landscape.

"Between September and December in Australia is peak exposure time, so now is the time to review and secure parametric wildfire insurance to be prepared for the season ahead," Lynn Roehrig, Descartes Head of Business Development Australia and New Zealand said.

Descartes' parametric solutions offer a new form of resilience to wildfire. Customised precisely to clients' exposure based on up-to-date plantation shapefile

and valuation, Descartes covers the entire risk season with a straight-forward, transparent satellite-based solution.

SEASON FORECAST

Wildfire is one of the most significant natural hazard risks in Australia. While the danger period typically spans summer and autumn across most of southern Australia,

the timing varies by region. In New South Wales and southern Queensland, peak fire risk usually occurs in spring and early summer, whereas the Northern Territory experiences the bulk of its wildfires during winter and spring.

This year, ongoing dry conditions in South Australia and Victoria saw fire risk in those regions elevate earlier than usual, exacerbated by higher-than-average atmospheric pressure over southern Australia – part of a broader climatic shift linked to climate change.

"The increasing scale

“DESCARTES POLICIES ARE TAILORED TO THE CLIENT'S SPECIFIC EXPOSURE

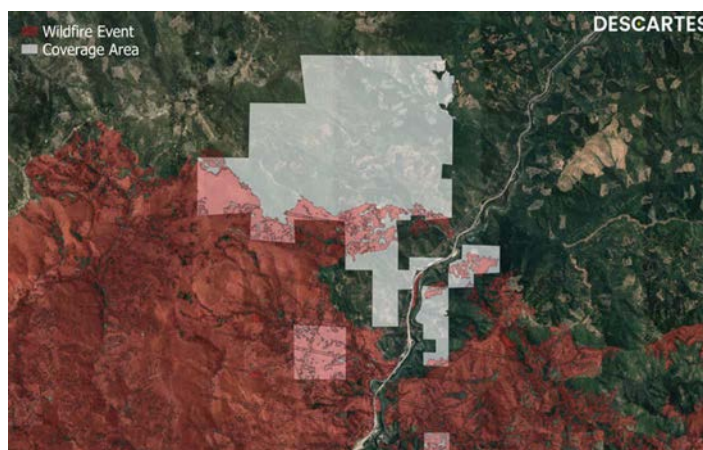
From P 8

and complexity of wildfires across Australia and New Zealand are threatening more than just the land – they're impacting critical carbon credit investments and leaving plantation assets dangerously exposed," Lynn said.

CLOSING THE INSURANCE GAP

Australia's insurance industry has paid out billions in claims from recent wildfire events, prompting a natural tightening of the market. Brokers are now reporting reduced capacity, with many policies either excluding wildfire risk altogether or imposing strict limitations.

This shift is being driven by compounded losses and rising costs in the reinsurance market for wildfire coverage, leaving policyholders facing higher premiums, increased deductibles, and severe



An example visualisation of Descartes bushfire product live in action on a New South Wales plantation. Image: Descartes

sub-limits for wildfire-related claims.

In response, alternative risk transfer solutions are gaining traction – particularly parametric insurance. Descartes policies are tailored to the client's specific exposure and rely on robust datasets including historical wildfire records, long-term climate trends, weather patterns and satellite imagery.

By using satellite technology to detect burnt areas and assess fire severity, Descartes parametric insurance offers full transparency. Clients know exactly what to expect in terms of payout, without exclusions for smaller fire events or delays in claims processing.

"Our Burnt Area product is a fully customisable

solution that provides flexible structuring to match each client's needs and budget," Lynn said.

"With the use of satellite data, it is fully scalable across any area, meaning no on-site visit is required. Following a wildfire event, we deploy satellite imagery to identify the areas burned in and around the coverage area to determine if the policy has been triggered. Collaborating with third-party agencies ensures a high level of transparency and rigorous assessments.

"Our wildfire cover provides peace of mind to plantation owners and carbon investors, ensuring that even in the face of increasing climate volatility, their assets and income potential remain protected."

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Political expediency trumps science, economics and regional communities

FOREST & Wood Communities Australia (FWCA) understands the Minns Government has announced the new Great Koala National Park (GKNP), on the back of a backroom deal with Independents to pass stalled workers compensation reforms.

According to Executive Officer Steve Dobbyns, FWCA believes that Penny Sharpe, the Minister responsible for dealing with the crossbench and the architect of the flawed GKNP assessment process, has done a deal with Independents Alex Greenwich, Michael Reagan and Jacqui Scruby in the Lower House to transfer the full 176,000 hectares of State forest into a new National Park, as trade-off to get changes to workers compensation legislation through the Lower House.

"Workers have been shafted in both directions by Minister Sharpe. This backroom deal to include the full assessment area in the GKNP will not only threaten more than 5,700 jobs reliant on our sustainable native forest industry on the north coast but also limits claims by all NSW workers with a psychological injury. It could be viewed as a twin edged sword for those workers who are now out of a job because of the GKNP decision", said Mr Dobbyns.

FWCA points to real world examples of similar city-centric decisions in Victoria and Western Australia that have come at a significant cost to Government and decimated rural communities.

"The industry package to shut Victoria's sustainably

1 The cost to establish the GKNP will be significant and should include consideration for plantation establishment

GKNP Likely Costs - preliminary	Basis for Calculation	Preferred IAP Option	Acceptable IAP Option	Great Koala Park full assessment area
		37,000 ha (13% NE supply cut)	53,000 ha (18% NE supply cut)	176,000 ha (40% NE supply cut)
Wood Supply Agreement contract payouts/reductions	@\$400/m3, comparable with Vic Forest 200% of delivered cost – based on Mandala "central case" and projection of supply over next 5 years	\$125m (year 1)	\$174m (year 1)	\$389m (year 1)
Plantation establishment	@\$10,000/ha land cost plus establishment and management over 5 years and an MAI of 12	\$64m (years 1-5)	\$97m (years 1-5)	\$320m (years 1-5)
Mill Site remediation	Uncertain but at least \$1m per site closed			\$10m (year 1)
Fire management and fuel load reduction services, incl ecological thinning and cultural burning pgm	Vic Gov has just announced \$72m for forestry contractors to supply fire mgt service @\$40/ha pa	\$1.5m pa	\$2m pa	\$7m pa
Additional NPWS estate management costs	@\$80/ha is estimated current cost for NPWS	\$3m pa	\$4m pa	\$14m pa
Freight subsidy for logs delivered	Longer haul distances from fragmented supply and difficulty meeting contract zonal and species KPIs - average haul distance 50km additional	\$6.5m pa	\$9m pa	\$20m pa
Industry Development Grants	To maintain critical supply for housing, remaining mills will require "retooling" to adapt to reduced volumes – grant requirements uncertain	TBD	TBD	TBD
Tree Breeding Research Centre		\$1m pa	\$1m pa	\$1m pa
Workforce Support	As an indicator, Victoria packages of between \$206k and \$256k per worker (depending on age). NSW likely to cost more than this – see detail over page. Calculating overall costs is difficult as the number of workers impacted will depend on the size of the park and the impact on the industry. This is only an indicative guide. A GKNP covering the full assessment area is likely to cause closure of the industry. If this occurs the cost of Workforce Support would increase to \$803m for the North-East RFA Region.	\$104m min. (year 1)	\$145m min. (year 1)	\$321m min. (year 1)
Total costs (for next 5 years only)		\$353m	\$496m	\$1,250m

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1/ This table outlines the deep financial differences between the proposed and acceptable versions of the GKNP and the full GKNP that the government has decided to go with.

2/ FWCA is only one of the many associations and business that are deeply concerned about the future of the GKNP region. All images: FWCA

managed native timber industry is \$1.5 Billion!!! On top of which, Victorians are paying an additional \$72 Million per year to engage the same harvesting contractors to undertake bushfire prevention and fire suppression. These decisions have also done nothing to dampen demand for our most sustainable building material – timber!!", said Mr Dobbyns.

In 2024 alone, Australia imported 46% of its solid wood needs due to an ever-decreasing plantation and native forest estate across the country. In a housing crisis, where 1/3 of the timber

needs of the average 1 or 2 storey detached home comes from hardwood timber, FWCA believes the last thing Governments across Australia should be doing is locking up any more managed native forests.

Throughout the GKNP assessment process, the Industry Advisor Panel (IAP) provided several options on the potential size of the park and the likely impacts.

"The industry respects the Government's election promise to create the GKNP, but the second part of their election promise was do so in a manner that maintained

a viable, sustainable timber industry. We know the science shows koalas are unaffected by our highly regulated, sustainably managed timber harvesting operations and by which side of the National Park/State forest boundary they live on, so we provided Government with various options so they could fulfil both election commitments. It's unfortunate that they have ignored that advice and taken the worst-case scenario, which will likely cost NSW upwards of \$1.25 billion", said Mr Dobbyns.

"Despite the timber industry's good faith approach and participation in the GKNP assessment process over the last couple of years, FWCA is very disappointed that the Government has turned its back on the science, economics and regional communities and taken the politically expedient way out", said Mr Dobbyns.

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Driving innovation: FWPA's Forest Growers Research Program showcased at FA Conference

FOREST & Wood Products Australia (FWPA) is proud to highlight the vital role of its Forest Growers Research Program at this year's Forestry Australia Conference – 20-23 Oct in Adelaide, bringing together leading experts to share insights, outcomes, and opportunities shaping the future of Australian forestry.

The Forest Growers Research Program is designed to deliver targeted, industry-led research and development (R&D) that increases productivity, and value across the forest growing sector. By investing in projects that matter most to growers, the program is delivering practical benefits – from enhanced silviculture practices and improved plantation health, through to tools that support smarter decision-making and long-term resource security.

This year's conference provides the perfect stage to showcase the progress and outcomes of the program, with presenters sharing their insights and expertise across specific focus areas. Each will highlight how their research is being applied in the field, advancing both industry knowledge and practice.

INNOVATIONS IN FOREST MANAGEMENT

Our line-up of researchers is as diverse as it is impressive. With 12 presentations taking

place on day two from 1:30 to 5:00pm, there's a wealth of knowledge to be gained.

- John McGrath, MFS McGrath: Optimising the productivity of hardwood plantations in southern Australia
- Nina Hinko-Najera, University of Melbourne: Plantation water use and availability across a topographically complex catchment area
- James Montgomery, University of Tasmania: IoT Acoustics for proactive monitoring of threatened forest fauna in remote environments
- Jim O'Hehir, UniSA: Integrating APSIM into resource management systems for estate wood flows and valuations that account for climate change
- Anthony Finn, University of South Australia: PINT - A Program for performing survival counts
- Conrad Trollip, Forest Science, NSW Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development: Develop and validate rapid, high-throughput diagnostic



Eucalyptus nitens, commonly known as **Shining Gum**. Photo: FWPA

protocols for forest biosecurity surveillance

- Auro Almeida, CSIRO: Assessing productivity and growth constraints in Eucalypt and Pine plantations for sustainable forestry in Tasmania
- Jonathan Plett, Hawkesbury Institute for the Environment, Western Sydney University: Innovative nursery management solutions to sustainably manage root disease, improve nursery utilisation, and enhance resilience and productivity of planted pines
- Dylan McFarlane, VSICA Research: Safeguarding Australian exports of logs from future withdrawals of methyl bromide

- Martin Strandgard, University of the Sunshine Coast : Cost/benefit analysis of the fire risk mitigation impacts of treating pine thinning residues

Register for the conference

A PROGRAM BUILT BY AND FOR GROWERS

The strength of the Forest Growers Research Program lies in its collaborative design. Projects are identified and guided by grower priorities, ensuring relevance and strong adoption of outcomes. FWPA works in partnership with growers, researchers, and government, investing in R&D that supports both immediate challenges and long-term industry needs.

BUILDING CONNECTIONS AT THE FORESTRY AUSTRALIA CONFERENCE

This is a unique opportunity for growers, researchers, policymakers, and stakeholders to connect, exchange knowledge, and chart a course for the future of forestry in Australia. FWPA is proud to support its presenters in sharing the story of the Forest Growers Research Program, and invites conference participants to engage, ask questions, and explore how these projects can benefit their own operations.

Discover more about our research.



FWPA.com.au

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OneFortyOne and HAMR Energy sign MoU

Transforming forestry residues into low carbon liquid fuels.

ONEFORTYONE and HAMR Energy have entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to collaborate on the supply of sustainable biomass for renewable methanol production in Australia and New Zealand.

The MoU marks a significant step forward in the development of HAMR Energy's flagship Portland Renewable Fuels Project (PRF Project) in Victoria. The project will produce up to 300,000 tonnes per annum of renewable methanol, derived from forestry residue biomass and green hydrogen, which can be used to fuel planes and ships, helping decarbonise hard-to-abate transport.

The partnership aligns with the Australian Government's Cleaner Fuels Program which will provide \$1.1 billion to support the supply of low carbon liquid fuels (LCLF).

"Our MoU with OneFortyOne is another important milestone as we continue to develop our pipeline of LCLF projects and finalise our Series A fundraise. We have MoUs in place to supply all the feedstock for the PRF Project and recently completed Pre-FEED with global chemical design company ThyssenKrupp UHDE, positioning us to move quickly through the next phase of project development. We are looking forward to working with OneFortyOne, our other project partners, state and federal governments and offtakers so that locally sourced forestry residues are soon fuelling Australian aviation and shipping," said David Stribley, Co-Founder of

HAMR Energy.

Under the MoU, OneFortyOne will work with HAMR Energy to supply biomass residues initially to the PRF Project, with the potential to then leverage the learnings into New Zealand, where OneFortyOne has forestry assets in the Nelson/Marlborough regions in the South Island. The parties will explore optimal biomass specifications and supply chain logistics with the intention to progress to long-term supply agreements in due course.

"This is a pivotal moment for trans-Tasman forestry – we believe our industry is the logical partner in this LCLF space given the predictability and reliability we offer through scale and consistency of feedstock supply, year-round operations, and utilisation of well-established infrastructure and supply chains," said Nick Chan, Director of Corporate Strategy at OneFortyOne.

"We are excited to explore how lower-value residues can be transformed into high-impact renewable fuels, supporting emissions reduction efforts in other industries like aviation and shipping.

"We are happy to have entered this MoU with HAMR and, if successful, we will diversify our end market



The PRF Project will take the 'rubbish' of forests and sawmills, use it to create renewable fuels and greatly improve the circular economy and help eliminate wastage for forestry. Photo: OneFortyOne

exposure while working towards decarbonising our supply chain, particularly Scope 3 transport emissions. This is another example of how we're innovating across both Australia and New Zealand," Nick added.

Over the next 18–24 months, OneFortyOne will support HAMR's development efforts, including supplying sample wood fibre for testing and in-field operational trials to refine feedstock assumptions, in addition to progressing supply agreements.

The partnership reflects a shared commitment to sustainability, regional economic development and innovation. It also reinforces OneFortyOne's focus on reducing emissions across its operations, including Scope 3

emissions from forestry and export activities.

"The announcement [last] week on LCLF by the Australian Government is very timely, we are pleased to see the ongoing commitment to reducing Australia's carbon emissions. We look forward to collaborating with government, industry and research organisations as we explore carbon emission reduction options," Nick concluded

ABOUT ONEFORTYONE

OneFortyOne is a forestry and sawmilling business. We operate throughout the Green Triangle, Australia's premier forestry region in Australia spanning the border of South Australia

and Victoria, and the Nelson and Marlborough regions of New Zealand in the Top of the South Island. We plant millions of seedlings every year, renewably replacing the trees we harvest. Learn more: onefortyone.com

ABOUT HAMR

HAMR Energy is an Australian low carbon fuels company dedicated to accelerating global decarbonisation of hard to abate sectors. With our experience in complex energy projects, we produce low carbon fuels and chemicals to help decarbonise industries like shipping & aviation. We have the expertise, technology and vision to develop one million tonnes of low carbon fuels capacity by 2030. Learn more: hamrenergy.com

HIA urges action on housing crisis, workforce, and regulation

THE Housing Industry Association (HIA) is calling for urgent action to address Australia's housing crisis by tackling a critical shortage of skilled trades, balancing population-driven demand with housing supply, and cutting regulatory barriers to meet the Housing Accord target of 1.2 million homes by 2029.

TRADIES SHORTFALL THREATENS HOUSING GOALS

On International Tradesperson Day, HIA highlights the vital role of skilled trades and the industry's workforce challenges. "Trade shortages loom as a major threat to reaching the Housing Accord target of building 1.2 million homes by 2029," said HIA Executive Director – Future Workforce, Mike Hermon.

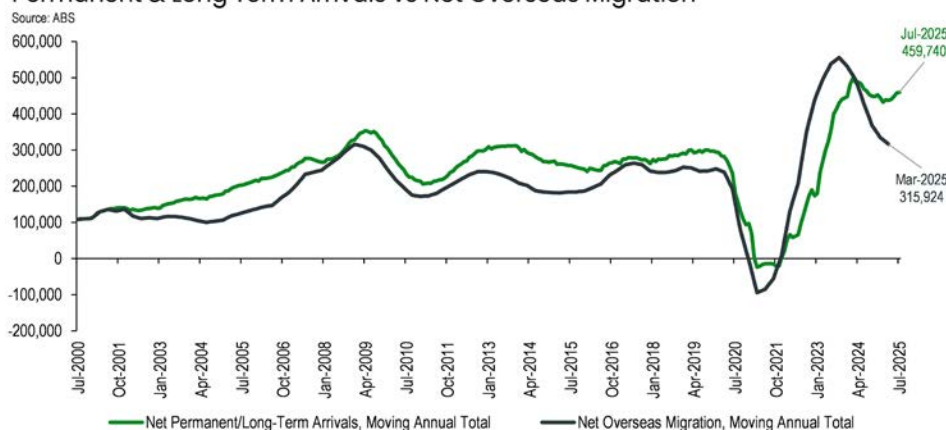
"As we recognise the essential role of skilled trades in the residential construction sector on this International Tradesperson Day, the most critical questions to ask is whether the industry has the workforce capacity to deliver the number of homes required to get Australia out of our housing crisis? Unfortunately, we do not," Mr Hermon added.

With approximately 277,800 skilled trades workers in residential building, Australia faces an estimated shortfall of 83,300 tradies. "Due to several factors, including an aging workforce and competition for trades from other sectors – such as infrastructure and

renewables projects – the next generation of trades has not kept pace," Mr Hermon noted. This figure reflects the net increase needed, with additional workers required to replace those leaving the industry.

HIA advocates for open pathways into trades, transparent career options for high school students, and best-practice training. "Though a range of solutions are available to address Australia's estimated 83,300 tradie shortfall. To start with, it is important that pathways into these trades is open and transparent and as high school students finish their senior school education a trade is considered a viable career option," Mr Hermon said. Improved skilled migration and attracting workers from other industries are also critical. "The housing shortage that is driving up housing costs for Australian households can only be reduced through efficient delivery of new housing in greater quantities than has been achieved in the past. The workforce of the housing industry must grow if this is to occur," he concluded.

Permanent & Long Term Arrivals vs Net Overseas Migration



Australia's permanent and long-term arrivals and migrations have been dipping and spiking over the past five years making it difficult for the housing industry. Image: HIA

MIGRATION FUELS HOUSING DEMAND

Population growth continues to outpace housing supply. "The ongoing influx of overseas migrants has pushed Australia's population beyond 27.5 million in the first quarter of the year," stated HIA Chief Economist, Tim Reardon. The ABS reports a net inflow of 110,060 overseas migrants in the March 2025 quarter, totalling 315,920 over the past year. "While this represents a continued moderation from earlier inflows, it is still well above the pre-pandemic decade average of less than 220,000," Mr Reardon added.

Western Australia (+142,300) and Queensland (+137,060) lead population growth, while New South Wales and Victoria lag behind pre-pandemic trends. "The home building industry in Australia needs stable and reliable population settings, not the bust and boom settings seen over the last five years," Mr Reardon said. HIA supports managed migration to deliver skilled construction workers, noting that volatile migration creates

economic and social challenges. Recent policy steps, like the Home Guarantee Scheme, are positive, but "the goal of stable and reliable migration pathways has not been balanced with the removal of restrictions on new home building necessary to meet demand," Mr Reardon concluded.

REGULATORY REFORM NEEDED NOW

Excessive regulation is delaying housing delivery. "Australia's sluggish productivity growth and persistent housing shortages demand immediate attention. What we need is action, not another round of reports," HIA Managing Director, Jocelyn Martin said. HIA's submission on the Productivity Commission's Five Pillars reforms calls for a Better Regulation Minister to cut red tape by 25 per cent and streamline environmental approvals. "Red tape is overwhelming business and slowing the delivery of homes," Ms Martin stated. A dedicated 'strike team' to clear over 26,000 delayed housing projects is also critical. "The priorities are well known, it's time to move from planning to doing," she concluded.

HIA urges swift action to grow the workforce, stabilise migration, and reduce regulation to deliver affordable housing for Australians.

India eyes massive housing deal with Australia amid trade push

REPORTS emerging from India suggest a bold proposal that could see Indian workers heading to Australia to help construct up to one million homes, potentially addressing the nation's chronic housing shortage. According to unconfirmed statements from India's Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal, negotiations with Australian counterparts are well underway, framing this as a monumental opportunity valued at least at USD 500 billion.

Goyal, speaking at an event hosted by the Confederation of Indian Industry, reportedly described the initiative as involving Indian labourers travelling to Australia for training in local building standards. These workers would then contribute to housing projects tailored to Australian needs. Details remain scarce, with no specifics provided on locations within Australia or the level of financial commitment from Canberra. The minister's remarks, cited by outlets like The Hindustan Times and PTI, emphasise the scale: "I am in deep negotiation with my counterpart in Australia to create 1 million homes. Anybody wants to do the maths? A million homes in Australia would be at least USD 500 billion opportunity."

To fund this ambitious venture, India is allegedly seeking partnerships beyond its borders. Goyal reportedly discussed the idea with a visiting delegation from the United Arab Emirates, led by Trade Minister Thani bin Ahmed Al Zeyoudi. "I talked to Thani to see if we can do



Whilst Australia is suffering from a housing crisis, there are questions as to whether more immigration is really the right way to go about solving the shortage of labour and housing.

Image: Shutterstock

a partnership to help us fund this massive opportunity," Goyal is quoted as saying. The UAE, a key player in Indian real estate investments, could provide crucial backing, though no firm agreements have been announced.

This proposal comes at a time when Australia's housing crisis is intensifying, with soaring costs and supply shortages dominating public discourse. High demand, exacerbated by population growth, has driven up prices, influencing recent federal elections and sparking widespread debate. Protesters at anti-immigration rallies in cities like Melbourne, Sydney, and Brisbane have linked migration levels to these pressures, calling for a pause on inflows to alleviate strains on infrastructure and affordability. Far-right figures and libertarian politicians have amplified these concerns, with plans for larger demonstrations on Australia Day in January 2026.

Critics, as highlighted in commentary from The Economic Times, question

whether importing more workers addresses the root issues. One view posits that relying on additional immigration to fix problems stemming from rapid population increases—such as unaffordable housing for existing residents—might not yield the desired outcomes. Instead, it could perpetuate the cycle, sidelining local job and training opportunities.

Goyal's comments also underscore India's broader strategy to seize global trade openings amid external challenges. Despite the United States imposing 50 per cent tariffs on Indian goods starting in August, the minister asserted that India would not yield. "India will not bow to anyone," he reportedly said, predicting exports would still surpass USD 825 billion in the financial year 2025. This resilience is part of a push for diversification, with Australia serving as a supportive partner after publicly backing New Delhi against the US measures.

India and Australia are progressing on a free trade

agreement, building on discussions like the virtual meeting between Goyal and Australian Trade Minister Don Farrell on 17 August regarding the Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement. Goyal highlighted the need to act swiftly: "It's for us to grasp these openings. If we miss out, we will have only ourselves to blame."

Looking ahead, India's trade agenda appears packed. Deals with Oman, New Zealand, Qatar, and the European Union—a bloc with a USD 17 trillion economy—are in various stages. Union Commerce Secretary Sunil Barthwal is set to meet EU officials in Brussels, with reciprocal visits planned, potentially accelerating an agreement. Interest from South American nations Chile and Peru, as well as South Africa and Eastern European countries, signals expanding horizons.

If realised, this housing collaboration could mark a novel chapter in Indo-Australian ties, positioning India as a provider of skilled labour in Australia's domestic policy arena. However, with details unconfirmed and domestic sensitivities in Australia around migration and housing, the path forward remains uncertain. Observers will watch closely as negotiations unfold, balancing economic gains against local priorities.

Wooden satellite blazes a trail in space exploration

IN a world-first, a wooden satellite named LignoSat has been launched into orbit, marking a bold step toward sustainable space exploration. Developed by Kyoto University and Sumitomo Forestry, this 10cm cube, crafted from honoki magnolia wood, weighs just 900 grams. Carried to the International Space Station (ISS) via a SpaceX rocket, LignoSat will orbit Earth at 400km for six months, testing wood's resilience in the extreme conditions of space.

Unlike traditional aluminium satellites, which release harmful metal particles when they burn up on re-entry, LignoSat is designed to combust completely, leaving no trace. This eco-friendly approach could significantly reduce the environmental

footprint of space missions, especially as the global space economy is projected to soar from \$630 billion in 2023 to \$1.8 trillion by 2035. With space activities expanding, innovations like LignoSat are vital for minimising debris and pollution.

Wood's advantages in space are surprising yet practical. It's lightweight, strong, and doesn't interfere with radio waves, making it ideal for housing antennas and sensors. Honoki, traditionally used for sword sheaths in Japan, was selected after a 10-month ISS experiment confirmed its durability in space's oxygen-free, waterless vacuum, where it resists rotting or burning. LignoSat, built using traditional Japanese techniques without screws or glue, also shields



This poster highlights the JPL CubeSat missions. NASA CubeSat Programs provide opportunities for small satellite systems to fly as secondary payloads on larger spacecraft, or as independent missions. Image: NASA/JPL-Caltech

semiconductors from space radiation, potentially aiding future lunar or Martian data centres.

The satellite's onboard

sensors will monitor how wood withstands temperature swings from -100°C to 100°C every 45 minutes as it orbits. Kyoto University's Takao Doi, a former astronaut, envisions a 50-year plan to plant trees and build timber homes on the moon and Mars, with wood proving its worth as a renewable, space-grade material. As Koji Murata, a forest science professor, notes, wood's historical use in early aircraft suggests its potential for modern spacecraft.

LignoSat's mission could reshape the space and timber industries, proving that a renewable resource might just be the key to humanity's cosmic future.

Source: ABC and World Economic Forum

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Accoya decking elevates museum rooftop

ACCSYS, the world's leading supplier of premium, high-performance and sustainable wood building materials is proud to announce that Accoya wood decking has been installed for the rooftop terrace of the world-famous NEMO Science Museum, a landmark building in Amsterdam designed by the renowned architect Renzo Piano.

Located in the heart of Amsterdam, directly above the city's busy waterfront and opposite a boardwalk that has featured Accoya decking for over a decade, NEMO's rooftop terrace is one of the city's most recognisable public spaces. Exposed to sun, rain, and the nearby waterways, the project is a living showcase of Accoya's unmatched durability and stability, a real-world test of time in challenging conditions.

The rooftop terrace uses 1,200m² of Accoya natural decking boards with integrated anti-slip strips, ensuring safety for visitors in all weather conditions.

Construction of the rooftop was a major undertaking: laying the Accoya decking with its aluminium substructure took approximately 10 weeks, while the entire roof renovation project spanned around nine months.

NEMO's rooftop garden is the highest in Amsterdam



Accoya decking installed on the 1200m² rooftop terrace of the NEMO science museum.
Image: Accsys

and a popular attraction for both residents and tourists, offering panoramic city views and a unique open-air experience above the museum's exhibition spaces. The terrace was part of recent renovations, during which earlier concrete elements were replaced to address a structural leak, providing the opportunity to choose a sustainable, long-lasting wood solution.

Steyn van Hamersveld, Facility Manager at NEMO, stated, "The NEMO terrace is subject to constant exposure – sun, rain, and the humid conditions of Amsterdam's waterfront. For such an environment, we needed a material that combines long-term dimensional stability with minimal maintenance. Accoya provides exactly that, ensuring the decking will

perform reliably under heavy foot traffic for decades."

Pergas Sellappah, Head of Sales in Benelux at Accsys commented, "We are proud that NEMO has chosen Accoya for such an iconic public space in the heart of Amsterdam. The project showcases how Accoya delivers not only exceptional durability and performance in demanding conditions, but also a sustainable and locally manufactured solution that aligns with the city's vision for resilient, future-proof architecture. From the new rooftop terrace to the nearby Accoya boardwalk still performing flawlessly after more than a decade, Amsterdam continues to be a living showcase of what Accoya can achieve."

Building on the success of the rooftop renovation, discussions are already underway to expand Accoya's role at NEMO, with future plans to create custom-made benches for visitors.

Find out more about NEMO here.

“ACCOYA DECKING WILL PERFORM RELIABLY UNDER HEAVY FOOT TRAFFIC FOR DECADES



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