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ISSUE 877 // 20 November 2025

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New payout package approved for NSW timber workers

COVER STORY P2



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Finally – a fairer package for NSW timber workers

TIMBER workers on the North Coast have finally received the recognition and respect they've earned with benefits that will allow them to leave the industry with options for the future, following the decision of the State Government to create a supersized not so great - Great Koala National Park.

Hansard records from NSW legislative council dated 16th October (extract) show: [I take this opportunity to recognise the outstanding advocacy of the Timber, Furnishing and Textiles Union (TFTU), Australian Workers Union (AWU), and Rail, Tram and Bus Union who is lending their support, representing forestry workers who will be displaced as a result of the GKNP. Several workers are at Parliament today to brief MPs and relate stories about the very real economic fallout from the announcement of the park. The workers were hoping for a smaller park which would have saved jobs. The reality is the larger park has been announced, and several hundred jobs will be lost as a result. There are also downstream economic



Members gathering at the office before traveling to advocate. Image: courtesy TFTU

costs associated with these job losses and the effect that has on local townships and economies]. Enews comment: This is a gross understatement given the evidence we have published over the past 11 weeks, but we will remain focused on this package.

Hansard records from NSW legislative council dated 12th November confirm the package with the special notes for workers over the age of 45.

Enews would like to acknowledge the hard work of numerous Members of Parliament, individual parties, industry advocates along

with efforts of The Timber, Furnishing and Textiles Union who said, "We are pleased the Government has finally agreed to a support package that will provide redundancy and training benefits of a similar scale and size to those achieved by workers in Victoria."

"The new package includes

“THE NEW PACKAGE INCLUDES ENHANCED REDUNDANCY PAY AND EXTRA SUPPORT FOR OLDER WORKERS

enhanced redundancy pay, extra support for older workers, re-training funds, a relocation allowance, free mental health support, and a peer support case worker to help workers seek re-employment or access other government services." This is available until 7 March 2027.

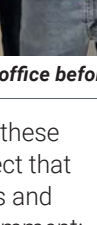
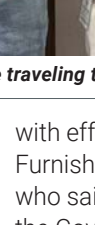
"It follows union campaigning activity that included a phone-in week to seek answers from the Environment Minister, 2 separate visits by union members to NSW Parliament house where MPs met with workers directly impacted and a vigil held outside the office of Janelle Saffin MP, Minister for the North Coast.

Enews spoke with Alison Rudman from TFTU who said "It is never a good day when members face losing

Cont P 3

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From P 2

their jobs. However, given the circumstances these workers face in small towns with limited re-employment possibilities, we are pleased to have helped them achieve the respect of a decent support package. The announcement was the result of strong and strategic advocacy by union members."

"While it took a lot of work to get it here, the package offered by the Government provides a genuine future for timber workers who lose their jobs because of the Great Koala National Park. For younger workers it may allow them to relocate or re-train to find new work. For older workers it may mean they can pay off their home and manage on their super. Importantly, this package takes an evidence-based approach to supporting impacted timber workers instead of pretending they can be re-employed in jobs that simply aren't there."

"We recognise the work of our members, our supporters across the industry, other unions, and advocates within the government who have worked together to achieve a sensible outcome".

The following statement came from an impacted timber worker who requested anonymity. "The package on offer is up to more than four times what the Award would give us and more than twice what our enterprise agreement would, we are relieved to now have options for the future."

Another member added, "It should not have taken such a fight to get an improved deal but we are glad it's there and hopefully we'll know more soon about our future and the future of the other 5 mills and contractors who were immediately impacted."

WORKER SUPPORT



PACKAGE NOW OFFERED

The Worker Support Package will provide comprehensive financial assistance to employees of Wood Supply Agreement holders and to employees of harvesting operators contracted by the Forestry Corporation of NSW directly impacted by the Great Koala National Park moratorium.

THE WORKER SUPPORT PACKAGE

The package includes:

- **Top-up redundancy payments:** employees will receive four weeks of base pay (inclusive of employer redundancy payment) per year of employment with an impacted timber mill or harvesting operator, capped at \$150,000.
- **Additional support for employees over 45 years of age:** a further three weeks of pay for every year of service after the age of 45 (up to a cap of \$50,000), to be calculated separately from the top up redundancy payment.
- **Education and training payments:** up to \$9,000 for retraining and upskilling.
- **Relocation payments:** up



1/ Alison Rudman addressing a meeting at Parliament House of NSW.

2/ Alison Rudman addressing the members prior to the vigil.

All photos: courtesy TFTU

to \$45,000 for affected workers who move more than 50 kilometres for new employment.

- **Free access to mental health support, and financial and legal guidance:** TELUS Health are the contracted organisation to assist affected workers and their immediate families.

WELLBEING AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT

- The TELUS Health Employee Assistance Program offers free, confidential and 24/7 mental health, financial and legal counselling services to affected employees and their immediate family. Contact TELUS Health on 1800 835 871 and reference "GKNP Moratorium Industry Support Program" or visit one.telushealth.com and enter username: "gknpp" and password "wellbeing". [Both are lower case]
- The Rural Financial Counselling Service can provide support to impacted forestry industry businesses. For more information, visit rfcsnr.org.au

TRAINING SERVICES

Affected workers considering alternative employment can access training support and advice through Training

Services staff. Training Services can support access to a range of training products through their network of accredited training providers. This may include full qualifications or part qualifications (micro credentials / short courses) to fill identified skills gaps and support transition to new employment.

For more information, visit training.nsw.gov.au, call 13 28 11, or contact your local Training Services Officers:

- Jackie Martinson at Jacqueline.Martinson1@det.nsw.edu.au and
- Gerard Geerligs at Gerard.Geerligs1@det.nsw.edu.au.

TAFE NSW OPPORTUNITIES:

Tafe NSW offers career counselling services to transition into new roles or industries for those wanting to study with TAFE NSW.

To arrange an appointment, please contact counsellingandcareerdevelopmentsupport@tafensw.edu.au or call 131 601 (option 5 and then 2) Monday to Friday 8.30am to 4.30pm.

On the cover: Members at Parliament House advocating for a better support package Image: courtesy TFTU

New plantation grants delivering positive growth and results

AFPA has welcomed a further \$11 million for Australia's forest industries.

FEDERAL Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry the Hon Julie Collins MP announced the latest round of plantation grants under the Support Plantation Establishment Program (SPEP), that will see seven new projects receive funding, to establish around 5,500 hectares of new hardwood and softwood plantations across New South Wales, Western Australia, Tasmania and the Northern Territory.

AFPA Chief Executive Officer Diana Hallam said: "We sincerely thank the Government for its ongoing



The latest round of plantation grants under the SPEP, that will see seven new projects receive funding, to establish around 5,500 hectares of new hardwood and softwood plantations across New South Wales, Western Australia, Tasmania and the Northern Territory. Image: Shutterstock

local and regional economies, securing stronger fibre security into the future and advancing the Government's climate and sovereign capability objectives. These new plantations will also underpin the future of the construction sector."

Ms Hallam said: "The SPEP has so far supported the establishment of about 25,000

hectares of new timber plantations across multiple states, contributing to long-term timber supply, carbon sequestration, and biodiversity outcomes. Of these, we understand around 23,000 hectares will be registered under the Australian Carbon Credit Unit (ACCU) Scheme.

rollout of this program, which we advocated strongly for. It's a valuable and highly effective government-industry partnership that's delivering positive results and growth for our national forestry sector. It has also been critical in arresting the decline in plantation investment that was occurring prior to the commencement of the program.

"Since its inception, the innovative program has been a resounding success in stimulating new plantation investment across Australia, strengthening

hectares of new timber plantations across multiple states, contributing to long-term timber supply, carbon sequestration, and biodiversity outcomes. Of these, we understand around 23,000 hectares will be registered under the Australian Carbon Credit Unit (ACCU) Scheme.

"Given the SPEP's demonstrated success, we hope to see an extension of the program and ongoing funding so plantation establishment and expansion can continue without interruption into the future.

"There can be no doubt by extending the SPEP, it will continue delivering tangible economic, environmental and community benefits in communities throughout Australia, from the Tiwi Islands to Tasmania."

Click to see list of the latest grant recipients.



Australian Forest Products Association

AFPA THE LEADING VOICE FOR AUSTRALIA'S FOREST PRODUCTS SECTOR

“A VALUABLE AND HIGHLY EFFECTIVE GOVERNMENT-INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIP DELIVERING POSITIVE RESULTS

The fight for NSW's hardwood industry continues

A special note from the Publisher

BACK on 24 July, Enews reported on the visit by Premier Chris Minns and Minister Penny Sharpe to Coffs Harbour Hardwoods (CHH) during their multi-day 'listening tour' with Timber NSW.

Fast forward to Father's Day and our coverage that week on NSW Labor Government's shocking GKNP announcement. Condemnation swiftly came from key leaders including Diana Hallam, CEO of AFPA, Dr Michele Freeman, President of FA, Tim Lester, CEO of AFCA, Mick Stephens, CEO of Timber Qld and Steve Dobbins, CEO of FWCA. The Timber, Furnishing and Textiles Union was equally scathing.

Personal interviews soon followed with Hon. M. Kemp



The battle for NSW's hardwood forest industry continues. Image: Freepik/EmEye

(Oxley), Hon. R. Williamson (Clarence), and Hon. G. Singh (Coffs Harbour), all from the NSW National party and who are rigorously fighting for the lifting or reduction of the park moratorium. We also spoke with Hon. M. Banasiak MLC from the Shooters Fishers and Farming Party (SFFP), who joined others in highlighting the human toll: lost jobs, struggling local businesses, damaged tourism, and a

policy that simply doesn't align with the science. Mark was very willing to stop, be interviewed and send us a formal statement that we published.

Across the North Coast, the impacts have been severe. Some interviews have been emotionally charged, with business owners having to pause mid-conversation to compose themselves, a raw reflection of just how deeply

this decision cuts so many hardworking individuals. Voices included:

- Ben Wheaton, Mi Organics (business operating for 40 years)
- Kirsty Parker, M&M Timbers (business established in 1906)
- Shane Hoffman, Hoffman Group (fifth-generation family business)
- Cherie Baynham, Greensill Bros (business operating since 1952)
- David Haywood, Haywoods Bulk Transport & Landscaping (operating since 2005)
- David Gibson, AE Gibson & Sons (fifth-generation manufacturer and supplier of sawmill equipment)
- Marcus Bastiaan, Specialty Doors (Australian door manufacturer)
- Shaun Kennedy, Holiday Coast Saw Sharpening services

Cont P 6

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From P 5

- Chris Carre of Phoenix Supply NSW & Dale Eagle of Central Saws (VIC), both Australian manufacturers of precision saw blades.

Every one of these businesses employs local people, supports vital supply chains, contribute to the economy and in some cases support local supporting clubs.

Jimmy Angel from Nambucca Valley Council spoke passionately about community sentiment, noting that timber remains as one of the top industries essential to the region's economy. He shared how he's spoken with Archie Woods (Nambucca Sawmill), Matt Dyer (Bowraville Sawmill), and other local businesses—including a café that has now closed and a mechanical workshop feeling the effects

of an immediate decline.

Our investigations also uncovered that Forestry log deliveries had ceased to the large Pentarch Heron's Creek Sawmill, suggesting a strategic move by the NSW Government, perhaps drip-feeding smaller mills to mute public backlash. This isn't clear but what we do know is, logs are travelling further, increasing freight, emissions and road repairs.

Even more concerning, recent investigations suggest that financial support for affected businesses is conditional on signing Non-Disclosure Agreements (NDAs) to prevent further negative publicity. What conclusions do you draw from this?

Then came a game-changing revelation: the CSIRO's national Koala monitoring program found

significantly higher Koala numbers than previously estimated. The population has jumped from 95,000 in 2024 to between 398,000 and 569,000. This is a staggering 400% increase, even at the lower estimate! The Hon. Michael Kemp (Oxley) responded swiftly: "It's now clear Koala numbers have been underreported for decades. It's time the Government faced the facts and stopped using fear to justify bad policy." *Enews* couldn't agree more.

Enews calls on Premier Chris Minns to show true leadership and admit the GKNP policy was based on poor data, reverse the GKNP

decision, and recognise that Koalas and sustainable forestry can and do coexist. This will allow industry workers to retain their job, our industry to keep the skills and the NSW Government will save a truck load of money in topping up redundancy payments and payout of forestry contracts.

Instead, the Government seems more focused on the safe passage of its Workers Compensation law reforms, which largely protect [it] from mental health claims, at the expense of the North Coast's economy, people, and a viable hardwood industry. But here is the kicker. Despite the backroom deal on GKNP, following a 16-hour debate in the NSW upper house, the proposed W/C law reforms were defeated. Chris Minns was reported as saying the fight is over and the bill will return to the lower house.

“THE FALLOUT OF THE GKNP MORATORIUM CONTINUE

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Image: Freepik

NOVEMBER

25: Gender Equality Webinar – ONLINE. 1:00pm – 2:00pm (AEDT). The 10 Gender dynamics still holding women back — and how to navigate them. Click here to join.

DECEMBER

2-4: FSC Forest Management Expert Course – Bali, Indonesia. The course gives you the mindset and knowledge of an FSC auditor. Join the ASI-accredited Forest Management (FM) course to meet formal training requirements and gain valuable insight into the FSC FM system. For more information and to register, click here.

2026

MARCH 23-24: SAVE THE DATE: DANA – 2026

Special event. Global Natural Capital Investment Conference – Melbourne.

Topic: *Why Oceania so popular with investors.* For full details of keynote addresss and speaker topics, visit <https://danaevents.co.nz/2026melbourne/programme>

25: Conference Field Trip – Melbourne. Follows on from the 'Global Natural Capital Investment Conference' in Melbourne. Includes visits to Eucalyptus and Pine Nursery, Pine Sawmill Log Yard/mill, Pine Plantation/Harvesting, Eucalyptus Plantation/Harvesting, Mature Redwood Plantation, Midway Wood chipping and Export Operation followed by dinner @ 3030 Restaurant - Werribee South. For more information, visit <https://danaevents.co.nz/2026melbourne/fieldtrip>

[co.nz/2026melbourne/fieldtrip](https://danaevents.co.nz/2026melbourne/fieldtrip)

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. Africa's premier trade exhibition for timber, woodworking machinery, tools, and forestry. WoodEX for Africa has evolved into a true international event, consistently attracting visitors and exhibitors from more than 20 countries. Visit www.woodexforafrica.com for more information.

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A walk back in time

Higher-value utilisation of *Eucalyptus globulus*.

By EVAN SHIELD

I HAVE been professionally devoted to *Eucalyptus* for most of my (overly?) long career. This had origins in use of wood of various species for pulping, but, since 1992 it has been almost exclusively directed to higher value utilisation of plantation-grown *Eucalypt* wood.

It is beyond fortunate that circumstances have allowed me to obtain a global perspective on utilisation of *Eucalypt* wood. In Portugal, I was privileged, now some 40 years ago to visit the (then) CAiMA pulp mill in Albergaria-a-Velha where in a global first, wood of a *Eucalypt* was used in commercial pulp production, beginning in the 1920s. That species was - of course - *Eucalyptus globulus*.

That visit was extended to include a first trip to Brazil where I was introduced to then ultra-modern *Eucalypt* plantation silviculture and larger scale Kraft pulping. I continue to be amused by recollections of my reading at about the same time, a Nordic claim to the supremacy their

indigenous pulpwood and dismissal of *Eucalypt* wood as providing only a "useful filler" pulp. Somehow, that message failed to be translated into Portuguese and Spanish so that Brazilians, Chilenos and Uruguayos people groups, could understand properly the inferred inferiority of their emerging pulp industries.

In this short article, I

want to focus on *Eucalyptus globulus*, hoping that a greater number can gain understanding that it is, or can be, substantially more than one of the finest hardwood pulpwood's in the world. In doing so, I shall detail its use as rotary veneer in structural plywood and as sawn wood in glue-laminated timber (GLT). For both products, I shall rely on well-established

commercial entities in Northern Spain.

Garnica is Spain's foremost plywood producer and exporter. Their primary raw material is Poplar from plantations in both Spain and France. As a consequence of sanctions against Russia following the invasion of

Ukraine, Birch plywood supply to the European market was curtailed and no substitute of equivalent structural / aesthetic equivalence was readily available. Garnica's response was to develop a "reinforced range" of plywoods based on Maple veneer for faces, *E. globulus* veneers for



1/ Sawlogs of *Eucalyptus globulus* to be quarter-sawn at Parquets Lorenzo S.A., Galicia, Spain.



2/ The principal product from Parquest Lorenzo S.A. - dimensions in cm. - a 1.73 m² pack. All photos: courtesy Evan Shield



3 & 4/ Impressive sawn wood quality: *E. globulus* at Parquets Lorenzo S.A. Galicia, Spain.



From P 8

core long-grains and Poplar veneers for core short-grains. Click here to visit the website.

The numerous video links available on YouTube testify to a favourable reception to this product. This seemingly successful utilisation of plantation-grown *E. globulus* is doubly welcome because of my conviction that Australian research (at DAF's Forest Products Research Facility in the Brisbane suburb of Salisbury) has provided what I consider to be clear evidence that rotary peeling conversion is the superior option in higher-value utilisation of

plantation-grown Eucalypts. Fundamentally, modern rotary peeling technology, especially when based on higher quality spindle-less lathes, offers superior recovery and productivity than is possible with sawing. It is, I submit a disruptive technology that should not be ignored.



1/ Defect-docked *E. globulus* sawn wood prior to finger-jointing: Villapol S.A.
2/ Lamella after finger-jointing & ready for lamination: Villapol S.A.

The family-owned company Villapol S.A. is located in Trabada, in the province of Lugo in the Autonomous Community of Galicia, North Western Spain. Click here to visit the website. Their principal activity is the production, largely for export markets of *E. globulus*; based GLT. I have been privileged to have visited this facility on

two occasions, in 2001 and in 2006. The first occasion was preceded by my visiting the sawmill and processing facilities of Parquets Lorenzo S.A., the company then supplying green-off-saw wood to Villapol. That sawn wood and the parquet blocks and cabinet doors manufactured

Cont P 10

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From P 9

from it at Parquets Lorenzo were impressive, probably the best quality plantation grown Eucalypt sawn wood I had seen before or indeed since.

On my 2001 visit to Villapol S.A., corporate focus was on fabrication of window scantlings, primarily for export to other European nations.

Impressions of the superior quality of the sawn wood of *E. globulus* grown in Galicia were reinforced. Doubtless, this

was in part the result of defect docking and finger-jointing of the sawn wood.

On my second visit (2006), Villapol S.A. had broadened their product range with a deeper commitment to

structural products. Symbolic of this was their construction adjacent to the factory of a guest house that used traditional “nail-less” jointing and GLT of substantially larger dimensions. Click here to visit the website.

In conclusion, Villapol S.A. has provided a wonderful testimony to be the quality of plantation-grown *Eucalyptus globulus*. It is worthy of emulation wherever superior site conditions for plantations of this species are to be found.

The book is available in English and Spanish and can be downloaded for free via this link.



1 & 2/ The Villapol S.A. GLT products – three lamella window scantlings – for European markets. All photos: courtesy Evan Shield



- 1/ Front of Villapol S.A. guest house: 2006 when construction was not yet completed.
- 2/ Rear of the Villapol S.A. guest house.
- 3/ Side of Villapol S.A. guest house with verandah.
- 4/ Sub-floor structure Villapol S.A. guest house.
- 5/ Exposed roof structure Villapol S.A. guest house.
- 6/ Interior panelling Villapol S.A. guest house.

Editorial comment

LAST week *Enews* reported the urgency to save Victoria's Alpine Ash forests (*Eucalyptus delegatensis*) and the race against time. Several readers couldn't agree more and were quick to point out Vic Forests were responsible for seed collection, storage and reseedling.

Enews can confirm from our past connection with Vic Forests this was accurate, expertly handled seed collectors were left without a job following the closure at that time. A Forestry Australia statement from August 2023 included the following "The issue highlights concern raised by Forestry Australia, the seed collection services provided by VicForests, may be lost following the native timber sector shutdown in Victoria".

Daniel Wright reached out to say, "Now that anti-forestry campaigners successfully put an end to sustainable native forestry in the State of Victoria (or 'logging' as they conveniently mischaracterise as), VicForests is no longer collecting and supplying seeds to the re-seeding efforts of forests lost to successive fire in national parks and reserves".

"Timber millers who historically purchased forest products in Victoria funded this work through their log royalties tied to the sustainable management



New life - Ash seedling popping through the undergrowth.
Image: Owen Bassett

of these forests, the access roads, and the fire suppression. Is it time for the eNGOs to pick up the tab?" People have long argued that the hundreds of millions of tax-deductible dollars collectively raised by eNGOs each year should be spent on actual conservation efforts. This specific project would be

money well spent for activists and something surely all of us align on. Do the forests matter or not?"

Daniel went on to add "Another great use of donated funds could be toward bushfire management previously tied to log purchases. The Victorian

Government is now forced to pay an extra \$72m annually for bushfire management. These two issues are significant to the health of a forest, and they are intrinsically related."

Enews says take note NSW as you could find yourself in the same situation!



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FWPA launches new industry research archive

The largest collection of research reports spanning the last two decades.

FOREST & Wood Products Australia (FWPA) has launched a new digital research archive, bringing together decades of valuable research to make it easier for the forest and wood products sector to access and apply knowledge that drives innovation.

The FWPA Industry Research Archive represents the largest collection of industry research spanning the last two decades. It consolidates hundreds of reports, technical papers and findings into one central, searchable platform, streamlining access to information, and ensuring research investments continue to deliver value long after publication.

PHASE ONE

The first phase of the project brings together more than 40 research reports from the National Institute for Forest Products Innovation (NIFPI) and combines them with FWPA's existing research. The result is a collection of more than 350 reports, making it by far the most comprehensive industry knowledge base in Australia.

FWPA CEO Andrew Leighton said the initiative reflects FWPA's ongoing role



The FWPA Industry Research Archive is now live. Image:supplied

in supporting evidence-based decision-making and driving collaboration across the sector.

"FWPA's role as the enduring organisation supporting the forestry and wood products sector places us in the best position to serve as custodian of these outputs," Leighton said. "This initiative will help industry partners make better-informed decisions, accelerate innovation, and make past research outputs easier to find and adopt."

The new platform has been designed with usability and longevity in mind. Its advanced search and filtering tools make it easy to locate

relevant information, while reports are categorised by topic, date, and research theme. Long-term archival functions ensure valuable data is preserved and accessible well into the future.

FWPA's Head of Research, Development and Extension, Ian Blanden, said the resource will help researchers and industry stakeholders work more strategically.

"By consolidating decades of research in one place, we're helping people find what's already been done, identify knowledge gaps and focus new investment where it's most needed," Blanden

said. "It's about making the most of the work that's come before to deliver real outcomes for the industry."

PHASE TWO

The next phase of the project will see the addition of more than 120 completed reports from Australia's Regional Forestry Hubs and the integration of AI technology to support data

mining and deeper analysis. These enhancements will allow users to uncover insights into both research gaps and areas where existing knowledge can be rapidly applied.

By centralising access to research outputs, FWPA is helping the sector harness its collective knowledge, strengthen collaboration, and continue building a sustainable future for Australia's forest and wood products sector.

The FWPA Industry Research Archive is now live and can be accessed via this link.

Tiwi and Gumatj strengthen First Nations forestry through on-country knowledge exchange

By HANNA LILICRAP, NORTHERN TERRITORY ORD VALLEY FORESTRY HUB

Two Aboriginal owned forestry enterprises: Tiwi Plantations Corporation and Gumatj Corporation

have come together in a landmark knowledge exchange to share expertise, strengthen cultural ties and build

pathways for future Aboriginal-led forestry development across northern Australia.

A LANDMARK knowledge exchange between Tiwi Plantations Corporation (TPC) and Gumatj Corporation has brought together two Aboriginal-owned forestry enterprises from opposite sides of the Northern Territory to share ideas, culture, and experiences in forestry business development.

Supported by the Northern Territory Ord Valley Forestry Hub and with funding from the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry and



TPC directors visit the Gumatj sawmill at Gunyangara to learn about native hardwood milling and product development. All images: FIANT

the Northern Hub, the three-day exchange took place

on Gumatj Country near Nhulunbuy in early September

and marked the first formal meeting between the two corporations' boards. The visit is the first part of a two-way Forestry Business Model Exchange project, designed to build mutual understanding and open up opportunities for collaboration in forestry, training, and regional economic development.

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Cont P 14

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From P 13

The Tiwi delegation of directors and community representatives travelled from the Tiwi Islands to Nhulunbuy to meet their Gumatj counterparts and tour local forestry operations.

For Tiwi, whose forestry business currently manage around 30,000 hectares of plantation estate, the visit provided a valuable opportunity to learn about native forest management, small-scale sawmilling, and value-adding to timber products.

"Bringing the TPC board and other stakeholders here has been a great opportunity to see the sawmill and give us ideas as to what we can do on our island," said Kim Puruntatameri, Chairman of Tiwi Plantations Corporation. "We're keen to share knowledge and experiences with Gumatj and

support Aboriginal involvement in forestry."

Gumatj's forestry business operates from a base in Gunyangara and processes Darwin stringybark (*Eucalyptus tetrodonta*) harvested from areas scheduled for bauxite mining. Timber is milled and manufactured locally into decking, flooring, bollards and other products for regional use and sale.

Participants toured the Gumatj sawmill, observing sawing, drying, and finishing processes, and later visited a harvesting site south of Nhulunbuy where pre-mining salvage operations were underway. The group also inspected mine rehabilitation areas at the Gulkula mine



TPC Deputy Chairman Gibson Farmer Illortaminni with recently produced hardwood bollards made from Darwin stringybark – a naturally durable, termite-resistant species also found on the Tiwi Islands.

and the Garma Cultural Knowledge Centre, partially constructed from local timber, where participants learned about how Yolngu culture, language, and traditional design are incorporated into modern construction and education programs.

INSPIRING FUTURE GENERATIONS

For many Tiwi participants, the experience of seeing a

working sawmill firsthand and understanding the potential for local processing was one of the most valuable parts of the exchange.

The visit also strengthened the focus on youth engagement and skills development. Directors from both corporations emphasised the importance of

creating meaningful work opportunities that keep young people engaged in community life and connected to country.

"Tiwi have always been involved in forestry and the chance to visit Gumatj country and see what they do has been really great," said Gibson Farmer Illortaminni, TPC Deputy Chairman.

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1, 2 & 3/ TPC and Gumatj directors discuss native forest harvesting techniques during a visit to a Gumatj harvest site south of Nhulunbuy. All photos: FIANT

From P 14

“Having our young people here with us helps to get everyone ready for the next stages of the plantation and keep the forestry business strong.”

Discussions during the visit highlighted the importance of training pathways through the Tiwi Islands Training and Employment Board (TITEB), which is currently delivering a Forestry Workforce Training Program supported by the Australian Government’s Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry. A separate project, commencing early next year, will train Tiwi people in native forest inventory, harvesting, and milling, a natural progression of the learning sparked by the Gumatj visit.

A SHARED VISION FOR FIRST NATIONS FORESTRY

The exchange revealed how both communities are building forestry enterprises around their own cultural and environmental values. For Gumatj, native forest management supports local employment and resource use in balance with country. For Tiwi, plantation forestry provides a foundation for long-term economic independence, with aspirations to diversify into timber processing, training, and potentially native forestry in the future.



Tiwi and Gumatj directors and staff members at Gumatj office.

Discussions also touched on the potential for both groups to influence the direction of forestry policy in northern Australia — particularly as opportunities for small-scale sustainable native forestry expand in the wake of native forest closures in other states.

Elders from both communities noted the historical ties between the Tiwi and Yolngu peoples, including past connections through forestry. The visit allowed some directors to reconnect with extended family and strengthen cultural bonds alongside the professional exchange.

A return visit is now being planned for Gumatj board members to travel to the Tiwi Islands, where they will see plantation operations, meet training providers,

and experience Tiwi culture firsthand. Storytelling, dancing and Tiwi football are expected to feature as part of the cultural exchange.

LOOKING AHEAD

Feedback from both corporations has been overwhelmingly positive. The Tiwi directors have since expressed strong interest in progressing local milling and product development opportunities based on what they learned in East Arnhem land.

The exchange has also opened the door to broader collaboration between First Nations-led forestry enterprises in the Northern Territory — sharing knowledge, building capability, and demonstrating the value of forestry as a sustainable industry for remote communities.

Both organisations agreed that this kind of direct, on-country collaboration is invaluable in strengthening business leadership, cultural understanding, and confidence in managing forestry enterprises. Both boards view this partnership as a step toward greater Aboriginal participation and leadership in

forestry.

ABOUT THE PARTNERS

- Tiwi Plantations Corporation (TPC) is a 100% Tiwi-owned business managing around 30,000 hectares of plantation forestry on Melville and Bathurst Islands.
- Gumatj Corporation, also 100% Indigenous owned, operates a native forest harvesting and sawmilling business on the Gove Peninsula in northeast Arnhem Land.
- The project was supported by the Northern Territory Ord Valley Forestry Hub, one of eleven regional forestry hubs established under the Australian Government’s National Forest Industries Plan.

AFCA restructures

THE Australian Forest Contractors Association (AFCA) is dedicated to fostering strong partnerships with our members, industry sectors and all levels of government. Our primary goal is to provide a value-add advantage for our members through meaningful collaboration and advocacy. Our strong collective voice represents the interests of a diverse range of professional forest services which include harvest, haulage, civil and silviculture. These businesses range from sole providers to 100+ employees. However, the majority are small to medium sized, and many are intergenerational family successions.

Since 2002 AFCA has been working on behalf of our members to improve business outcomes and the sustainability of our working forests.

AFCA is a lean operation overseen by a volunteer Board of Directors with flexible management team arrangements that can be adapted to meet operational requirements.

Our advocacy ensures that AFCA members, the forest industry, supply chain and governments are well-informed about the latest developments and best practices for a sustainable and viable forest industry.

AFCA is also the owner of the nationally accredited ForestFit™ Standard and Certification Scheme.



STRENGTHENING THE VOICE OF AFCA MEMBERS

There has always been strength in the national collective voice of AFCA members and we are pleased to announce it will be growing stronger. It may sound cliché but adapting to more complex and demanding business changes through innovation and continuous improvement has been a hallmark of the professional forest service businesses AFCA has been serving.

“For almost 25 years, AFCA has been a lean, member-driven organisation,” said Lloyd Martin, Chair of the AFCA Board of Directors. “We know the financial and operational challenges facing our industry and our member businesses. Like them, we are evolving to ensure AFCA is positioned for the next 25 years.”

AFCA's success has always come from the strength of its member

businesses who are known for their professionalism and adaptability in changing environments. The next stage of AFCA's evolution builds on that strength through a renewed organisational structure designed to increase engagement and enhance member representation.

As part of this transition, AFCA is streamlining its operations with the ending of the CEO role and the introduction of a new Operational Engagement Manager position, reporting directly to the Board. This role will act as a direct conduit between members and the Board, collating issues, facilitating discussion, and ensuring member priorities are represented both regionally and nationally. “With guidance from the Board, the Operational Engagement Manager will help us remain adaptable and responsive to emerging issues,” Mr Martin explained. “It also gives us the flexibility to bring in subject matter experts when

needed, ensuring AFCA's voice remains informed, credible and influential.”

AFCA is also undertaking internal process improvements to maximise efficiency and focus resources where they deliver the most value. “We're reshaping how we operate to get the best out of what we have and remove what we don't need,” said Mr Martin. “This change is about ensuring AFCA continues to deliver strong outcomes for members in a sustainable way.”

As AFCA reaches out to members, sponsors, and partners to share this new direction, the organisation will also be seeking member input on AFCA's future priorities. “After all,” said Mr Martin, “we are here for our members, so who better to guide our direction than the people we represent.” AFCA member businesses remain vital to Australia's forestry supply chain, and AFCA is committed to supporting their success for another 25 years and beyond.

Enews reached out to AFCA and were able to learn the new Board will be meeting next week for a strategic planning day to review the entire operation, seek member feedback and complete a review. We have also been able to clarify the new appointment won't take place until early 2026. The office is still running with Charlotte Hobbs (Engagement manager) and Dionne, her Projects and Services assistant. More information will be made available early next year.



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Illegal logging update

A globally significant issue.



Australian Government

**Department of Agriculture,
Fisheries and Forestry**

THIS update is provided by Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry.

- **Brazil** - April 2025, Environmental Investigation Agency released a report on their investigation into illegal logging in the Brazilian Amazon
- **Columbia** - May 2025, Environmental Investigation Agency released a report on their multi-year investigation into timber exports from Columbia appearing to have lacked proof of legal origin
- **PNG** - May 2025, ACT Now and Jubilee Australia released a report highlighting concerns of logging occurring outside the scope of Forest Clearance Authorities in Papua New Guinea
- **Thailand & Cambodia** - June 2025, a senate committee in Thailand met to discuss environmental issues affecting four border provinces along the Thailand Cambodia borders. This article mentions 6,033 illegal logging cases in the four border provinces.
- **Sri Lanka** - villagers of Tanamalwila have reported facing death threats after exposing illegal logging activities.
- **India** - officials have intercepted timber smuggling and illegal logging activities, an illicit timber activity, seized illegally logged deodar



Illegal logging is one of the main threats to forests today. Deforestation in the Amazon rainforest by illegal logging of loggers. Image: Shutterstock/ Paralaxis

timber, charged Indian Forest Service officers with corruption associated with facilitating illegal logging; and there are additional reports of a surge in illegal timber transportation in the West Kamrup Forest Division

- **Malaysia** - officials arrested persons involved in illegal logging in the jungles of Kelantan, including the confiscation of 500 logs and equipment used in the illegal logging activities and in Sarawak officials also intercepted illegal logging activities, resulting in arrests and seizures of timber and equipment used in the illegal logging activities.
- **Uganda** - illegal logging activities continue to occur in South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, including arrests made following a joint 2024 operation.



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