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ISSUE 879 // 4 December 2025

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Christmas kicks off in Mount Gambier

COVER STORY P2



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Free Christmas trees in Mount Gambier

The annual gifts from OneFortyOne spread cheer.

THERE are subtle signs when Christmas is getting close. The store radios all start playing Mariah Carey, the kids in your life are suddenly angelic, and OneFortyOne harvests and gives away rogue seedlings as Christmas trees to Mount Gambier locals.

OneFortyOne's annual Christmas tree giveaway has returned, giving locals the chance to take home a real tree to decorate this holiday season.

The event is becoming a local custom over the past decade, and this year will be held on 11 and 12 December.

OneFortyOne Estate Manager Marcel Griffiths said

the giveaway was a way to bring people together and spread some cheer leading into the holidays.

"We know that this time of the year can be a struggle for many people," he said.

"So, we hope that by providing free trees we can inspire some cheer and maybe spark fond memories of the fresh pine scent that makes Christmas in the region so special."

The giveaway has proven popular in the community each year, offering hundreds of trees for people to choose from and bring home.

"The trees we give away are special," Griffiths said.

"They've sprouted in curious places throughout the forest, and while they won't bring joy as structural timber, their true calling is to bring people joy as

unique Christmas trees."

Trees will be available from the Glencoe Nursery, OneFortyOne depots in



OneFortyOne's annual Christmas tree giveaway helps clear out random seedlings and brings joy to Mount Gambier locals. All images supplied

Nangwarry and Mount Burr, and Blue Lake Sports Park in Mount Gambier.

"When it's time to pack up your tree after the holidays, make sure to break it up into smaller pieces and dispose of it in your green waste bin," Griffiths said.

Safety is a top priority during the Christmas tree giveaway. Please follow all safety signage at the pickup locations and ensure your tree is securely fastened for the journey home.

EVENT DETAILS

DATES: Thursday-Friday
11-12 December




TIME: 8:30am-5pm

LOCATIONS:

- Glencoe Nursery, Mile Hill Road, Glencoe
- Blue Lake Sports Park, Jubilee Highway East, Mount Gambier
- Nangwarry Depot, Riddoch Highway, Nangwarry
- Mount Burr Depot, Mount Burr Road, Mount Burr

On the cover: OneFortyOne's Marchy Snell Jordaan, Jake Manser and Robyn Patient get into the Christmas spirit. Image: supplied

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Polly waffle

Politicians of all stripes have been ignoring the facts on native forestry.

IN the wake of last week's new EPBC legislation deal between the ALP and the Greens, a strange thing has happened. The Greens and some Independents have crowed about the achieved end to native timber forestry. Multiple National and Liberal members have bemoaned the foreseen end to native timber forestry.

The only party that isn't treating the sector as though it is an ex-sector is the ALP, the very one that has made the changes behind these public obituaries.

Federal Environment Minister Murray Watt told Sky News's Tom Connell "We've been very clear that these changes will not end native forestry, and that is not the Government's policy. The Greens wanted to do that, and we said we wouldn't be prepared to do that," in an interview on Monday.

So what's the story?

Right now, native timber harvesting continues as is in states where it is currently practiced. The sector has definitely been horse traded in the negotiations between the ALP and the Greens (see *Enews* #878), but that is not the same as having been sent to the knacker.

Regional Forest Agreements (RFA), which were previously exempt from the EPBC Act, will only retain that exemption until mid-2027. In



Australian regrowth forest: sustainable harvesting sees trees replanted as they are cut down. Image: Shutterstock

future, RFA forestry operations will need to comply with the same rules and standards as other industries, with the changes coming into effect 1 July 2027. The Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water says that "relevant states, industry and other stakeholders will be consulted as implementation progresses." The same rules will be implemented for the mining industry, housing developers and renewables companies with wind farms and solar farms.

Watt acknowledged in the same interview that some level of native forestry is necessary, as it delivers products that can't be produced by plantations.

In effect, many forestry operations will probably find it simple to meet the new standards, certainly when compared to mining and development projects. However, the new laws also impose a comparatively onerous administrative burden that will add to costs and will

also expose the sector to now easier lawfare attacks from those ideologically opposed to it, which further consumes time and economic resources.

AFPA expressed its deep disappointment at the announcement, saying: "Under the EPBC reforms, the removal of Regional Forest Agreements (RFA) – which have effectively served the nation and managed our forests sustainably for decades – will strangle the native forest industry in green tape and put at risk any future plantation investment.

"As the Federal Court confirmed last year, RFAs are an alternative mechanism by which the objects of the EPBC Act can be achieved."

So while the ALP doesn't plan to actively close down native timber harvesting, it is creating an environment in which it will become more expensive and more difficult to pursue.

AFPA Chief Executive Officer Diana Hallam said: "I

have grave concerns for the future of our native forestry and plantation industries after seeing the new laws.

"With the loss of RFAs, native forestry will be effectively treated as 'high-risk land-clearing', and the Commonwealth Government will likely find themselves, once again, in the middle of every disputed forestry decision."

She noted that we had already seen the scenario play out at a state level. "The loss of Victoria's RFA last year has had a terrible impact on local jobs and communities and undermined new plantation establishment," Hallam said.

"The suggestions that plantations can replace the timber from our native forest estates are false – it will just lead to more imports from Brazil, Indonesia and countries with worse environmental standards than ours.

"The Federal Government claims it supports our ongoing

“RFAS HAVE EFFECTIVELY MANAGED OUR FORESTS SUSTAINABLY FOR DECADES

Cont P 4

From P 3

sustainable native forestry sector, so it will be incumbent on them to prove this following the draconian deal with the Greens, who want to end native forestry.”

While Minister Watt referred multiple times in pressers and parliament to the \$300 million forestry growth fund the government has established to “deliver a bigger forestry industry that supports more secure jobs, better pay and more high-value output”, Hallam was unconvinced.

“Unfortunately, the \$300 million forest growth fund

“THE GREENS ARE WAY OFF THE MARK BY CLAIMING THIS IS THE DEATH OF NATIVE FORESTRY



1/ Diana Hallam, AFPA CEO, with Federal Nationals Leader, David Littleproud MP. Image: courtesy AFPA/Instagram



2/ Senator Murray Watt, Minister for the Environment and Water, says the new laws are pro-forestry, but that will depend very much on how they are administered. Image: supplied

relies heavily on concessional loans, which will be of little help to a sector under immense financial pressure due to the depressed housing market, a flood of cheap imports, increasing energy costs and considerable uncertainty around their operating arrangements,” Hallam said.

“We expect any federal support for timber processing facilities will likely be used to process imported timber from less sustainable sources, which is a worse outcome for the environment, the economy and rural and regional communities that rely on this wonderful industry for their livelihood.”

Hallam has spent significant parts of the past month in Canberra trying to show politicians that the proposed changes will not lead to improved environmental outcomes in our native forests but instead undermine the future of Australia’s world-class and sustainable native forest industry. The minutes of the Senate Environment and Communications Legislation Committee discussing the Environment Protection Reform Bill 2025 on 20 November 2025 (click here to download, see page 14 onwards) make it clear that there is deep misunderstanding in some politicians’ minds about the sustainability of forestry, with established facts regarding the small amount of timber harvested, the safeguards around that and the comparative health of fauna and flora in state

forests versus National Parks all receiving a dismissive response.

TFTU national secretary Michael O’Connor said the full impact of the new laws on timber supply is yet to be established, but the union expects the industry’s environmental management system to stack up well when assessed against the new, stricter standards.

“The Greens are way off the mark by claiming this is the death of native forestry,” O’Connor said.

“Some Liberal and National Party MPs and industry bodies should be cautious about mimicking Green talking points.

“Our union expects the sector to do well if the new standards are sensible and applied in a reasonable, evidence-based way – which we’ll be pushing for.”

Submissions containing your opinions and proposals on the Bill are still being accepted until tomorrow (5 December), click here for details. While the what of the legislation may have passed, the how is still being thrashed out and it is very much worth our engagement.

Clarification

Last week *Enews* ran a quote from Kersten Gentle talking about these law changes on LinkedIn. While we sought permission to reproduce the text, we referred to her in her role as FTMA CEO. Gentle in fact made the comments in a personal capacity as an industry member with substantial experience and expertise. The FTMA does not take a position on native timber forestry.

Australian Forest Products Association

AFPA THE LEADING VOICE FOR AUSTRALIA'S FOREST PRODUCTS SECTOR

Timber futures

A note from the Publisher

EMPLOYERS, parents and students need to be thinking about traineeships and apprenticeships for 2026. For students, this is a particularly important decision. As the direction you select for your future, it is critical to select an industry you enjoy and work in an area you are passionate about. After all, you have a lot of hours and years to cover before retirement.

Last week we published an interview with Melissa Clark, general manager of the National Timber and Hardware Association (NTHA) about the easy process and direct support NTHA provide. Within the article we included just two successful outcomes from very different perspectives. These showed how timber-sector training and qualifications are portable to other industries.

For employers, NTHA takes on all the complex paperwork; they are effectively the employer looking after all the legal, employment and compliance

requirements. For students, NTHA will be your mentor, guide and provide a communication link between you and your host, which is so helpful, particularly in the first year. NTHA will happily answer all those questions you might be embarrassed to ask a work supervisor.

They will also work with you and discuss your progress on a regular basis. Some traineeships and apprenticeships can include flexibility, like completing a course faster than standard or including course modules based on new experiences or areas within the employment they found interesting.



NTHA's work as a GTO and RTO makes life easier for employer and increases student's rates of success.
Image: courtesy NTHA

The extra support has been proven to be highly successful with improved completion rates leading to qualifications, experience and long-term employment. Students get paid while they learn.

If you missed the feature, click here for issue #878 and turn to page 3.

TRUSTED TIMBER

Reading about large international illegal logging cases – and blatant breaches – on the Federal Government's Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry website, it is really confronting just how bad some of the world is. The problem is not just confined to a few countries (see p17, issue #877). Following DNA testing, Russian conflict timber has also been discovered within containers of other imported timber.

If this concerns you, please check your timber is either PEFC or FSC certified.

Australia is highly regulated and our forestry industry is one of the best in the world (see story page 3). It forms a vital part of the carbon cycle, locking carbon into both the timbers we harvest and the trees we regrow. When we lock up our forests, we reduce our supply economy, impact rural areas and increase our reliance on less regulated countries.

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New Tasmanian fire detection platform

The statewide, centralised fire detection platform across multiple agencies will deliver broad community and economic benefits.

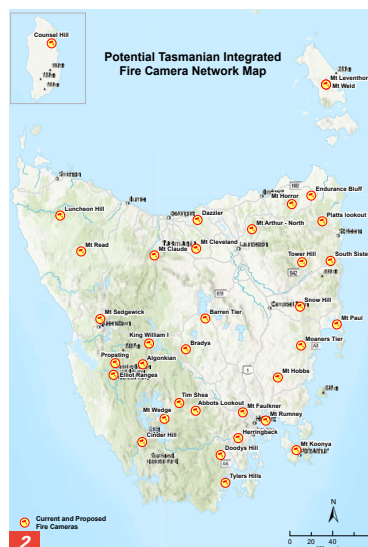
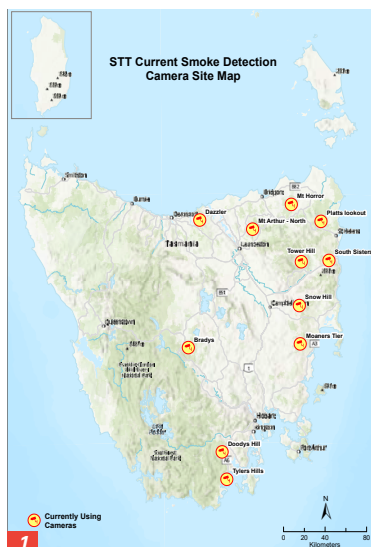
SUSTAINABLE Timber Tasmania has received a \$1.44 million grant to lead the creation of a Tasmanian Integrated Fire Camera Network (TIFCN), in collaboration with the Tasmania Fire Service and the Tasmania Parks and Wildlife Service, with Indicum Dynamics as delivery partner.

When completed, the network is expected to become Australia's largest integrated bushfire detection camera system.

The project is funded by the Australian and Tasmanian governments through Round Three of the \$1 billion Disaster Ready Fund (DRF), administered by the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), as part of the commitment to reduce disaster risk and build resilience nationwide. Cash and in-kind contributions from all three agencies will combine to give the project a \$3.62 million value.

TIFCN will form a broad-scale AI-enabled fire detection network providing real-time monitoring and early bushfire detection – projected to become Australia's largest integrated bushfire detection camera network. The network will enhance cross-agency coordination through a shared real-time centralised fire management portal.

New 24/7 AI fire detection cameras will be installed across high-risk areas statewide, almost doubling the combined network to



1 & 2/ The implementation of TIFCN has the potential to dramatically improve bushfire detection in Tasmania.
3/ Elevated cameras combine with AI detection tools and other sensors to spot and report fire activity quickly. Images: supplied

information. We are providing our emergency services with the next generation tools they need to protect communities, infrastructure and our natural environment. This project demonstrates the power of partnership and innovation in building a more resilient Tasmania."

Short-term, the project will deliver fast, accurate, round-the-clock integrated fire detection—improving multi-agency efficiency, real-time decision-making and community preparedness. It will allow quicker response and mobilisation of suppression resources,

helping to reduce costs and lower risks to life, property and the environment.

Long-term, TIFCN will support a more fire-resilient Tasmania through a scalable, technology-driven detection system that protects people, infrastructure, industries and ecosystems, while reducing reliance on manual detection methods.

Sustainable Timber Tasmania and Indicum Dynamics, an emerging Tasmanian technology company, have spent more than four years investing in advanced fire-management technologies including AI-supported fire detection cameras, Internet of Things (IoT) sensors and a state-wide Long Range Wide Area Network (LoRaWAN).

Suzette Weeding, Sustainable Timber Tasmania, general manager, conservation and land management, said: "Sustainable Timber Tasmania is leading innovation in early bushfire detection as a vital part of our role in protecting and managing Tasmania's public production forests. Faster, smarter and more coordinated detection is essential to safeguarding forests, people, and communities. This project builds on years of research and innovation, strengthens early detection and response, and will help reduce the impact of bushfires across the state. We are proud to expand this technology to support a more resilient Tasmania."

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>

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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The importance of engagement

We spoke with WoodSolutions about its involvement in recent awards and workshops.

At the recent Architecture & Design 2025 Sustainability Awards, there were a lot of familiar names. One that stood out was WoodSolutions, which sponsored the Education & Research category, won by McIlldowie Partners' Woodleigh Regenerative Futures Studio.

More used to seeing the WoodSolutions team on the educational side of timber, we asked what benefits there are to engaging with awards like this and how such sponsorships sit alongside their more traditional work. The following is an edited version of their answers.

"WHILE not directly involved in the judging of this year's awards, WoodSolutions supports initiatives that recognise innovation, sustainability and the application of timber in design. Many of the winning projects demonstrate how timber can be used creatively and responsibly to deliver both functional and aesthetic outcomes. These designs highlight that sustainable timber use is not just an option – it's a key part of shaping the future of architecture and design in Australia.

"WoodSolutions was proud to sponsor the Education & Research category, celebrating projects that advance innovation and sustainable practice. Congratulations to Woodleigh Regenerative Futures Studio by McIlldowie Partners Architects for taking out the award, and to Newington College Eungai Creek Campus – Stage 1 by ajc architects for being highly commended.

"Among the other inspiring winners was Guulabaa – Place of Koala, the world's first purpose-built wild koala breeding and rehabilitation centre in Cowarra State Forest, NSW. That project demonstrates how innovative design, timber, and sustainable forestry practices can create resilient, nature-based solutions that benefit both communities and the environment. Congratulations

to Forestry Corporation of NSW, Gensler, Koala Conservation Australia, and the Bunyah Local Aboriginal Land Council (See *Enews* #878).

"Through sponsorship, WoodSolutions provides information, education and inspiration to the wider design community, encouraging the use of timber in the built environment. Timber is the ultimate renewable and a high-performance building material that stores carbon for the life of the building. By providing guidance, case studies, and visibility to exemplary projects, we help designers see the possibilities of timber in practice.

"Our engagement with the wider design community has changed over time, as architects' and designers' knowledge of the benefits of timber as a construction material increases. We are seeing more requests for specific and detailed information on timber construction, which is great to see."

WORKSHOP TIE-INS

WoodSolutions also ran its annual Industry Academia Workshop last month (see *Enews* #878). "This year, a major theme raised by academics and practitioners was how timber can help address Australia's housing shortage. Participants were particularly interested in how codes, standards, and

industry standard, underpinned by research and market insights, could simplify specification and accelerate housing supply.

"There was also strong discussion around workforce development, particularly attracting young people into careers in timber design, construction, and engineering. Across the workshops, participants



The WoodSolutions team at the Architecture & Design 2025 Sustainability Awards. All images: supplied

guidance could make timber construction easier and more widely adopted. A key focus was the Future Framing Initiative (FFI), which is leading the way to a smarter, more sustainable timber framing future. The FFI brings together the entire building ecosystem – from lightweight timber suppliers and fixings manufacturers to designers, fabricators, educators, builders, and installers, to create a coordinated national approach to mid-rise timber construction.

"The initiative aims to streamline compliance, improve supply reliability, establish performance expectations, and deliver low-carbon, high-performance homes faster through Modern Methods of Construction (MMC). Participants were keen to understand how the FFI's development of a new

consistently requested practical guidance, technical resources, case studies, and real-world examples that demonstrate how timber can be specified confidently, perform reliably, and contribute to sustainable, efficient building outcomes.

"Rising housing demand in Australia is driving increased interest in a range of timber products, including sawn plantation softwood and engineered wood products (EWPs). The ATMAC-supported Splinters to Structures initiative, led by the Green Triangle Forest Industries Hub (GTFIH) with support from Forest & Wood Products Australia (FWPA) and the Australian Forest Products Association (AFPA),

Cont P 9

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is exploring ways to use plantation-grown Blue Gum to produce high-value EWPs, creating new domestic and export opportunities. This work demonstrates improvements in how timber can be used in the built environment, with exciting potential for EWPs as well as mass timber products in mid-rise and taller structures.

"Finally, while there has been a reduction in the area of native forest management in Australia, there is still strong demand for certified and sustainably grown native forest hardwood building products. These continue to be very popular with consumers, whether it be for a feature staircase, hardwood flooring, or one of the many other



Participants at the recent Industry Academia Workshop went out into a working forest for a very hands-on encounter.

applications of hardwood building products.

"At WoodSolutions, our core mission is to provide designers, architects, and builders with the knowledge and confidence to specify timber and other sustainable materials in their projects. Through initiatives such as our Campus online courses, articles, workshops, case studies, and technical resources, we've aimed to show that timber is not only environmentally responsible but also versatile and high-

performing in real-world applications.

"In addition to these resources, there is also a dedicated microcredential in Timber Design for Residential Construction, developed by the University of Tasmania in collaboration with WoodSolutions and industry

experts. This flexible, fully online program provides professionals with specialised knowledge in sustainable residential construction, covering modern timber design principles, strategies to reduce embodied carbon, and how to design in line with the National Construction Code.

"The winning projects this year are a clear example of how these actions impact. They demonstrate how

designers are integrating sustainable timber solutions thoughtfully and creatively, reflecting the principles we promote. It's very encouraging to see timber being used in ways that are both innovative and aligned with long-term sustainability goals, showing that our educational work is helping to shift industry practice in Australia.

"This trend isn't just happening locally. Around the world, organisations such as Built by Nature are promoting key principles, advocating for the sustainable use of timber at scale. Their principles, which we endorse, highlight global best practice in responsible forestry, material innovation, and low-carbon design. By aligning our guidance with these principles, WoodSolutions is helping to ensure that Australian designers are part of a broader, worldwide movement toward timber-based, sustainable architecture."

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Free seedlings for farmers

Farmers in south-west WA are encouraged to apply for the Farm Forestry Assist Program.

THE Forest Products Commission (FPC) manages the Farm Forestry Assist Program, a one-off grant for farmers and other landowners to plant pine trees on their land.

Successful applicants located within the State's South West are provided with high-quality radiata pine seedlings from the FPC at no cost to the successful applicant.

Farmers and landowners interested in establishing 10 to 50-hectare pine plantations on their properties are invited to apply.

Interested parties can register their interest via the Farm Forestry Assist Program Expression of



Free seedlings are designed to help lower the entry barriers of farm forestry plantations. Image: courtesy Forest Products Commission

Interest (EOI) form (click here for the form and how to submit) . Applicants must review the Grant Eligibility Criteria addressing the property location, scale, soil, access and management of the plantations. The Establishment Checklist can be completed after the application has been approved and site checked by

an FPC Officer, assistance from the FPC can be provided.

Plantings should be a minimum 10-hectare in size. The plantation must be established within Dardanup cell of the Softwood Industry Hubs as outlined in the FPC's Softwood Industry Strategy for Western Australia (click here to view).

To ensure that eligible plantations will be able to contribute to WA's softwood industry, grant criteria may include:

- located within a viable haul distance from processing facilities;

- located in areas which have at least 600 mm annual rainfall in order to support healthy plantation growth;
- have access suitable for heavy vehicles and trucks to facilitate harvesting in the future; and
- soils that are free draining to a minimum of 2.5m and not saline.

Please refer to the Grant Eligibility Criteria and the Establishment Checklist on the EOI form prior to registering your interest.

Applications close at 5 pm on Friday, 27 March 2026. Late applications may be considered for the 2026 program at the discretion of FPC but are discouraged. If not considered for 2026, they may be eligible for the 2027 program.

Apprentice extension welcome

"THE Housing Industry Association (HIA) welcomes [the government's] commitment to extend both apprentice and employer funding as a pivotal step in delivering more skills that will result in more homes delivered faster," said HIA managing director Jocelyn Martin.

The announcement includes an extension of the \$10,000 Keeping Apprenticeship Program (KAP) and continuation of the Priority Hiring Incentive for employers for a further 12 months while the Australian Apprenticeship Scheme Review is completed.

"These are welcomed responses to the crippling labour shortages in the housing industry and will play a vital role in providing employers and apprentices with much needed certainty and stability in attracting the school leavers of 2025," Martin said.

"The number one challenge every builder or tradie is facing around the country is skills shortages and without the workers, the homes Australia needs will remain a



HIA managing director Jocelyn Martin at the recent South Australian Building Women awards. Image: courtesy Jocelyn Martin/LinkedIn.

pipe dream.

"HIA's recent All Hands On Deck report found that if Australia is to reach the Housing Accord target of 1.2 million homes there needs to be an injection of 83,000 tradespeople."

HIA has been a key advocate for targeted apprentice incentives to grow and maintain the domestic workforce, alongside employer support to take on new apprentices, with KAP playing a core role and the Priority Hiring Incentive described as even more important.

"Employer incentives are strategic investments that underpin the entire apprenticeship system. Without businesses willing to employ and train apprentices, there is no system," said Martin.

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Managing shared landscapes: Timberlands Pacific's consultative approach in Tasmania

IN northeast Tasmania, the former mining town of Derby has transformed into an adventure tourism destination in recent years, thanks to the global mountain biking community's discovery of the Blue Derby network. This internationally recognised trail system, set in the region's temperate rainforests, draws thousands of visitors each year and has hosted major events such as the Enduro World Series.

While forestry and mountain biking can sometimes overlap in shared landscapes, and operational activities like harvesting can temporarily impact trail access, there are strong examples of coexistence and collaboration. One such example is Timberlands Pacific, which manages FSC-certified plantation forests surrounding the Blue Derby network and works to ensure both responsible forestry and world-class recreation can thrive side by side.

Since 2021, Timberlands Pacific Pty Ltd has implemented an engagement strategy that responds to the unique needs of the Derby region. As part of



1/ A strong relationship between Timberlands Pacific and the local mountain biking community benefits all of Derby.

2/ Forestry operations are scheduled around the mountain biking season and communicated to community groups well in advance. All images: © Timberlands Pacific Pty Ltd, used by FSC with permission



their FSC certification, the company is required to engage meaningfully with stakeholders who may be affected by forest operations. In Derby, this includes shuttle operators, tourism businesses, local government, the mountain bikers and the broader community.

To cater to the needs of the mountain biking industry that has emerged in Derby and ensure the safety of mountain bikers, harvesting operations are carefully scheduled to avoid peak tourism periods, such as summer holidays and major mountain biking events. Early coordination with shuttle operators and tourism providers is standard practice, and operations are adjusted as needed to minimise disruptions.

"Operations can sometimes directly impact the local shuttle business

and community," notes Brock Davey, planning manager for Timberlands Pacific operations, "but with a continuous early notification and communication plan, supported by the active on-site management, our partnership remains positive and strong."

Davey explained that additional benefits include increased public awareness and carefully considered timing of operations, to minimise the impact felt by local businesses in the region.

To support real-time communication, Timberlands Pacific participates in the Derby Business and Community Discord group, a locally preferred platform, and uses on-site signage to notify recreational users who may not be online. This includes prominent road signage near trailheads and closures timed

to minimise inconvenience.

These efforts have enabled agreed-upon access closures during quieter seasons, improved contingency planning for weather events, and built trust among local stakeholders.

Peter Coleborn, Dorset Council bikes and trails manager, said, "We appreciate the quality of notifications sent via the Discord app, which are accessible for review by various Derby community groups. The information is consistently thorough, informative, and well received."

Timberlands Pacific's approach aligns with the FSC system's focus on proactive stakeholder engagement and shared land use. By working collaboratively and openly, the company demonstrates that responsible forestry can coexist with tourism and recreation while providing environmental, social, and economic benefits to the region.

For more on Timberlands Pacific, click [here](#).



A leader in sustainable forestry with a common goal: protect healthy, resilient forests for all, forever.
Visit us at anz.fsc.org

New STT CEO

TASMANIAN Minister for Business, Industry and Resources, Felix Ellis, and the board of Sustainable Timber Tasmania announced last Tuesday that Dean Kearney has been appointed as the new CEO of Sustainable Timber Tasmania (STT).

Kearney brings over two decades of experience in Australian public forestry to STT, including his recent role as executive director of forestry at the NSW Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development and his previous position as manager, environment and sustainability at the Forestry Corporation of New South Wales. He will formally commence in the role in early January 2026.

STT chair Rob de Fégely

AM said the appointment represents both renewal and continuity for the organisation: "Dean brings deep operational knowledge, a steady leadership style, and a strong commitment to sustainability.

"He understands that forestry in Tasmania is about balance – using and caring for forests so they remain healthy, productive, and resilient for future generations.

"The board looks forward to working with Dean to strengthen our stewardship role, support our people, and continue building community confidence in sustainable forestry," de Fégely added.

Kearney said he was honoured to join STT at a pivotal moment for



Dean Kearney has a strong background in forestry and management. Image: supplied

Tasmania's forestry sector.

"Sustainable Timber Tasmania is known nationally for its expertise and its people," he said.

"Tasmania's forests are among the most diverse and carefully managed in the country, and I'm genuinely

optimistic about the future. I'm committed to building on that strength – ensuring they continue to deliver value for the community, economy, and environment."

Kearney began his forestry career in research and plantation management before progressing through senior operational and strategic planning roles across NSW. His work has focused on forest resource management, sustainability, and stakeholder engagement.

de Fégely thanked acting CEO Greg Hickey for his leadership during the transition period and acknowledged the professionalism of STT's staff: "Our people remain the heart of this organisation. Their knowledge and commitment underpin everything we do."

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New Forestry Australia board

Three new directors will bring insights and fresh energy to the board.

FORESTRY Australia's President, Dr Michelle Freeman has welcomed Dr Lyndall Bull (as Vice President), Leon Holt and Anne Chuter to the board of Forestry Australia. The three new Directors joined following last month's Annual General Meeting.

"The new Board represents a fresh chapter for the association, combining deep experience with emerging leadership from a more diverse cohort and will build on the momentum achieved in recent years," Dr Freeman said.

"With strong member engagement and record participation in this year's director elections, the board is well positioned to guide Forestry Australia through the opportunities and challenges ahead.

"The election attracted a very strong field of candidates, reflecting the depth of expertise and commitment within our membership. More members voted in this year's election than in recent history, demonstrating strong confidence in the association's strategic direction and leadership."

New vice president Dr Lyndall Bull is a forester with expertise in innovation and the bioeconomy. Bull has worked in a senior capacity in the government, private education and intergovernmental sectors.

"The Australian forest sector enhances Australia's social well-being, drives sustainable economic growth, and delivers nature-positive outcomes," said Bull. "As the nation's only professional association representing forest scientists, farm foresters, and forestry professionals, no organisation



1/ **New vice president of the Forestry Australia board, Dr Lyndall Bull.**



2/ **Leon Holt, one of the new directors voted in, comes from a farm forestry background specialising in native forestry management.**

is better positioned than Forestry Australia to lead the vision for healthy, resilient forests grounded in evidence and robust science.

"Forestry Australia benefits from an exceptionally capable leadership team that has successfully advanced a dynamic and impactful program of work in recent years. It is both an honour and a privilege to be nominated to the Board and to contribute to the organisation's continued evolution and growth."

Bull is principal of Lynea Advisory, a specialist consulting business serving the global forest sector. She is also the co-chair of the World Economic Forum's Global Future Council on the Forest-Economy and co-lead for the IUFRO Task Force on Scaling-Up Science-based Forest-Sector Innovation. Until recently she was the forestry innovation coordinator at the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations. She has a PhD in innovation in the forest sector from the University of Melbourne.

Leon Holt is a farm forester and mid-career professional with a background in native

forest management and regulation in Victoria. He has a Master of Forest Ecosystems Science and a Bachelor of Arts & Science from the University of Melbourne. Holt has worked in forestry for over 10 years in the public sector, in roles ranging from district forester to manager of the Victorian Government's timber harvesting regulatory strategy team. He was the 2019 recipient of the Prince of Wales Award for Sustainable Forest Management and was a Forestry Australia board observer from 2021 to 2025. Holt helped establish the Future Foresters Initiative and Forestry Australia's long-running webinar program.

Holt said, "I am delighted to join the board of Forestry Australia as a Director, after contributing as a board observer over the last few years. I look forward to continue supporting our

wonderful association and I hope to share my perspective as a farm forester and early to mid-career professional."

Anne Chuter is a forest ecologist with a commitment to sustainable forest management and balancing environmental value with timber industry needs. She holds a Bachelor of Science with Honours from the University of Tasmania and has built her career within the Tasmanian government, working across biodiversity management, forestry regulation, and policy development.

Through her commitment to practical, science-based solutions, Chuter has played a key role in shaping Tasmania's approach to forest management. She currently serves as the chief forest practices officer at the Forest Practices Authority in Tasmania.

She said, "I am honoured to join Forestry Australia as a director. Throughout my career, I've focused on finding practical, science-based approaches to forest management that respect both ecological values and sector needs. I look forward to contributing to the profession and supporting sustainable outcomes for Australia's forests."

Dr Freeman said that the organisation extends its sincere gratitude to retiring directors Jim Wilson and Blair Freeman for their exceptional service and leadership.

"Blair Freeman, completing his maximum term, and Jim Wilson, retiring, leave

“FORESTRY AUSTRALIA BENEFITS FROM AN EXCEPTIONALLY CAPABLE LEADERSHIP TEAM”

From P 14

a profound legacy that has shaped the strength, stability and professionalism of the association," she said. "Their leadership has had a lasting impact, and Forestry Australia would not be where it is today without their dedication, experience and commitment to our members and mission.

"Directors will continue to champion evidence-based decision-making, professional excellence, and the critical role that forest science plays in solving climate, biodiversity and sustainability challenges.

"Forestry Australia is well placed to support the next generation of scientists, professionals and growers. The board is united in its commitment to a strong future for Australia's forests and those who study, manage and care for them," Freeman concluded.



1/ Anne Chuter, another new director, is a forest ecologist with a strong background in sustainability.

2/ Newly appointed board observer Dr Sam Van Holsbeeck is keen to promote member engagement and professional development.

All images: supplied



The Board also appointed Dr Sam Van Holsbeeck as a board observer to support emerging leaders with exposure to governance and strategic decision-making, build Forestry Australia's future leadership pipeline and bring diverse perspectives into Board discussions.

Van Holsbeeck is a forest scientist with expertise in forest health, silviculture,

and sustainable biomass utilisation. He holds a PhD in Forestry Studies from the University of the Sunshine Coast and a Master's in Bioscience Engineering from Ghent University. Sam has led national research programs in Australia focused on herbicide use, pest management, and the use of forestry residues for bioenergy. He currently serves as a research fellow

at UniSC's Forest Research Institute and coordinates the Forest Pest Management Research Consortium. Sam is passionate about bridging applied research and industry to support evidence-based forest management.

He said, "I'm excited to join the Forestry Australia Board as an observer to represent early-career professionals and contribute to the future of our sector. I'm passionate about fostering connection between research and practice and I'm committed to supporting strong member engagement and professional development opportunities across our community."

The Forestry Australia board is Dr Michelle Freeman (president), Dr Lyndall Bull (vice president), Dr Bill Jackson (vice president), Anne Chuter, Matt de Jongh, Leon Holt, Prof Rod Keenan and board observers Emily Post and Dr Sam Van Holsbeeck.

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AFWI-backed fibre-to-fuels project

LOW-CARBON liquid fuels (LCLF) company HAMR Energy has been awarded a \$1.1 million grant from the Australian Forest and Wood Innovations Centre for Sustainable Futures (AFWI-CSF) as part of a national initiative to convert Australian forestry residues into low-carbon fuels for aviation, shipping, and chemicals.

The Fibre to Fuels (F2F) project – recently approved for funding by the AFWI-CSF, hosted at the University of the Sunshine Coast, will validate the technical, commercial and emissions-reduction potential of producing methanol from key forestry residue streams via entrained-flow gasification. The project directly aligns with a key AFWI goal of making the most of our available wood fibre.

The announcement comes as the Australian Government confirms a major new commitment to cleaner fuel production pathways, including the expansion of domestic sustainable fuel manufacturing, outlined in the Minister for Infrastructure's recent release, 'Fuelling the future: \$1.1 billion to power cleaner Aussie fuel production' (click here to read).

HAMR Energy Director, Alex Smith, said the Fibre-to-Fuels project will demonstrate forestry residues from plantations across Australia can be converted into low-carbon liquid fuels using proven technology.

"The findings will help forestry businesses



HAMR Energy Director, Alex Smith.
Image: supplied

unlock new value from their plantations, support Australia's renewable fuels industry, and help reduce emissions from aviation and shipping," he said.

HAMR Energy has brought together a consortium of multiregional forestry stakeholders and leading

Australian researchers from CSIRO, the University of Sunshine Coast and the University of South Australia.

Professor Mark Brown, Director of the AFWI-CSF, said this kind of translational research and industry partnership is at the core of AFWI's national mission.

"Forestry residues are a high-quality resource that can become a valuable domestic feedstock for renewable fuel production," Professor Brown said.

"Fibre to Fuels exemplifies the type of commercially minded innovation that can move Australia to the forefront of low-carbon manufacturing, delivering regional benefits, building sovereign capability, and contributing to the decarbonisation of hard-to-abate sectors."

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Image: AKD

Tree graduates

A new UK degree joins academic and practical forestry.

THE first cohort of graduates have just completed a groundbreaking UK degree-level forestry apprenticeship. Last week, 21 apprentices graduated from the UK's first degree-level forestry apprenticeship at the University of Cumbria. The date coincided with National Tree Week in Britain, with the 2025 theme of 'A Future Filled with Trees' particularly apt.

Launched in 2022, the Professional Forester Degree Apprenticeship equips students with both academic expertise and hands-on forestry experience. Over three years, apprentices earn a Level 6 BSc (Hons) Professional Forester qualification whilst working in real woodland environments across England.

Developed by the Forestry Commission, the National School of Forestry at the University of Cumbria and the Institute of Chartered Foresters, the apprenticeship addresses a critical skills shortage in the forestry sector.

Nature Minister Mary Creagh said: "I'd like to congratulate all graduates from the first Professional Forester Degree Apprenticeship cohort, whose expertise will keep tree planting at record highs, and care for the forests of the future."

The graduates have been hosted by major woodland



The first cohort of Forestry Graduates with the University of Cumbria's academic team and the Forestry Commission's apprenticeship team. Image: supplied

organisations. They spent the majority of their time building practical skills in working forests and woodlands, embedded within teams including the Forestry Commission, Forestry England, the National Trust, Woodland Trust and Clinton Devon Estate.

The apprentice foresters covered a wide range of topics including tree and woodland measurement, silviculture, woodland ecology, and the safe use of forestry tools. They learnt how to use Geographical Information Systems (GIS), the importance of forest health, protection, how to manage sustainable forest operations – from harvesting to replanting – and the vital relationship between forests and communities.

Their learning was put to the test in the final assessment with the production of a forest or establishment plan for a real site which the apprentices presented to a professional audience from the Institute of Chartered Foresters.

Multiple students have already gone on to take up jobs in the sector. Luke Ellis is now a woodland officer

at the Forestry Commission. He said, "I joined the program because I wanted to learn more about forestry and make a career change from teaching geography. Through the apprenticeship, I've gained new knowledge, practical experience, and lasting friendships.

I've learned about silviculture – choosing the right tree for the right place and soil conditions, understanding how species interact and grow, and the wider ecology of a forest.

"I've since secured a role covering the North York Moors. I really enjoy the variety – thinking about trees and woodland on the ground and how they fit into the regulatory process – and being out and about, seeing forestry in practice."

The apprenticeship has attracted significant interest from people wanting to build careers in forestry, with 77 apprentices joining in the 2023, 2024 and 2025 intakes as well as 17 new employers now hosting apprentices.

"Forestry is a hugely rewarding sector to work in and plays a key role in helping with the climate crisis," said Forestry Commission apprenticeship programme manager Gareth Hopkins MBE. "It's immensely exciting to see so much achievement from the first cohort of Professional Forester Degree Apprenticeship graduates."



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