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ISSUE 881 // 18 December 2025

# timber & FORESTRY *e*news

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# FWPA Board appoints Fred Chaney as an additional Director

FOREST & Wood Products Australia (FWPA) has added to its leadership and governance capability with the board appointing, an additional director. With the next formal Director Selection process not taking place until next year, the FWPA Board would have otherwise been reduced to 5 Directors until the 2026 AGM.

Following a targeted search and interview process, the Board appointed respected architect and urban design specialist Fred Chaney as an additional Non-Executive Director.

FWPA Chair Craig Taylor said this appointment supports the implementation of the organisation's strategy and fulfills its constitutional requirement to have a skills-based Board.

Mr. Chaney's appointment directly responds to the organisation's identified capability needs following the recent retirements of Professor Arnel and Yvonne Pengilly. A review of the Board's skills matrix identified the necessity to strengthen capability related to the utilisation of forest and wood products - expertise that underpins FWPA's research, development, extension and promotional work.

Mr. Taylor stated, "The use of forest and wood products in the built environment is core to FWPA's mission, and maintaining strong expertise at the board table in this area is essential. Fred's architectural and urban design credentials, combined with his governance experience, will complement the Board's capability and support our industry-wide vision.

"We are delighted to welcome Fred and look forward to his contribution."

Mr. Chaney, a Director at Western Australian



The FWPA board has appointed Fred Chaney as an additional director. Image: FWPA

Building Council of Australia, and is nationally recognised for his expertise in environmentally sustainable design and integrated approaches to the built environment.

Mr. Chaney's appointment is effective immediately, he will serve as a Non-Executive Director until

architecture and urban design practice TRCB, brings extensive experience across major civic, education, cultural and transport projects. His portfolio includes master planning for significant precincts such as the Perth Cultural Centre, the Art Gallery of Western Australia, and the University of Notre Dame's Fremantle campus.

He has also held senior governance roles across the not-for-profit and cultural sectors, including as a Director of the Green

the 2026 AGM and he will be considered for re-appointment through the next Director Selection process, should he choose to nominate. There will be at least three vacant Non-Executive Director positions to be filled during the 2026 Director Selection process and FWPA encourages potential candidates to apply if they believe they would positively contribute to the company. The process will commence and be widely advertised in mid-2026.

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# Millari Group Australia has celebrated its first milestone for 2025

## Millari NZ reaches first milestone, supplying sustainable MANA products to Australian timber industry.

MILLARI Group and its 110-strong Millari NZ whānau (family) have reached their first major milestone for the Australian timber industry this month, with the introduction of their newly branded MANA Timber and MANA LVL products for Australian customers. This follows Millari Group's acquisition of the former Juken (JNL) Gisborne facilities in New Zealand earlier this year.

The MANA brand for Millari NZ is a reflection of the deep respect and acknowledgement the company holds for the Gisborne community. In Māori



**MANA Timber products from Millari NZ.** Image: Millari NZ

culture, mana represents a person's or group's spiritual power, integrity, authority, prestige, and influence. It can

be inherited, earned through actions, or bestowed through connection to the land and people. Millari NZ's MANA

product range has been developed to embody these principles of strength, respect, quality, and responsibility.

The MANA product family includes MANA-Beam, MANA-Joist, MANA-Form, MANA-Edge, MANA-Pine, and MANA-Frame, with additional product lines currently under development.

Further investment remains on track over the next three years to increase the combined capacity of the sawmill, LVL and plywood operations from 130,000m<sup>3</sup>

Cont P 4

## Millari NZ

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From P 3

to 200,000m<sup>3</sup> by 2027. This includes targeted increases across timber (100,000m<sup>3</sup>), LVL (80,000m<sup>3</sup>), and plywood (20,000m<sup>3</sup>).

Since launching in February this year, Millari NZ has reignited production across the LVL, Timber, and Plywood facilities, supplying a full range of products that meet AS/ NZS standards directly to Australia's eastern seaboard.

Owner and CEO Ryan Yari states, "We are excited that Millari NZ is progressing well with production and delivery, especially with our distinctive MANA timber product, which we look forward to celebrating with our Australian customers."



Millari NZ timber sourced locally from FSC certified forest. Image: Millari NZ

"Our growing Gisborne staff and team at Millari NZ have worked above and beyond to provide a reliable source of high-quality EWP (engineered wood products) and timber products for the Australian Timber Industry with the tight turnarounds and direct delivery we are known for".

Yari continues, "We are excited about the future and the opportunity to help ease the burden on local and

Australian businesses, which have been forced to rely on imported products due to the lack of local manufacturing".

Millari Group Australia includes Millari NZ, True Blue Timber and True Blue LVL and supplies FSC 100% timber products to Australia's leading Timber and Hardware retailers. For more information visit <https://truebluetimber.com.au> and <https://millariigroup.com>

The Millari Group also has a video with more details. [Click here to view.](#)

### ABOUT TRUE BLUE TIMBER / MILLARI GROUP AUSTRALIA

- True Blue Timber (TBT) offers a versatile range of products, from Structural framing material in treated and untreated, LVL (laminated Veneer Lumber), I-Joist, GLT, Plywood, and Ancillary products.
- TBT supply FSC 100% timber products to Australia's leading Timber and Hardware retailers
- There are two sites in Australia, True Blue Timber Sydney in Smithfield and

True Blue Timber Melbourne in Clyde North.

- Millari Group Australia was formed in 2024 to support the growth of True Blue Timber operations, including True Blue LVL and True Blue Plywood, adding Millari NZ facilities in 2025 with 35,000m<sup>2</sup> factory space.

### ABOUT MILLARI NZ SAWMILL IN GISBORNE NEW ZEALAND

- Millari Group Australia (True Blue Timber, True Blue LVL, True Blue Plywood) has entered a sales and purchase agreement to acquire 100% of the JUKEN Gisborne facilities (100% owned by Japanese) and will be rebranded as 'MILLARI NZ'.
- The current output capacity of the Millari NZ sawmill is 130,000m<sup>3</sup> per year, 60,000m<sup>3</sup> is timber, LVL is 55,000m<sup>3</sup> and Plywood is 15,000m<sup>3</sup>.
- This is the first Sawmill purchase in the Millari Group Australia portfolio
- Millari NZ opened in February 2025

### INVESTMENT IN MILLARI NZ SAWMILL

- Millari Group will invest a significant amount into the LVL and Plywood manufacturing line in the next two years to upgrade and increase the production capacity.
- The production capacity of the sawmill, LVL and Plywood is expected to increase to 200,000m<sup>3</sup> by 2027. (Timber 100,000m<sup>3</sup>, LVL 80,000m<sup>3</sup> and Plywood 20,000m<sup>3</sup>)
- With the re-opening of the facility by Millari NZ in February 2025, over 110 jobs have been created and are growing.

“ FURTHER INVESTMENT REMAINS ON TRACK OVER THE NEXT THREE YEARS

# Rodwell Logging branches into softwood harvesting

RODWELL Logging of Bomballa NSW recently took delivery of the latest Komatsu 951XC for a new softwood harvesting contract. In recent years, native forest harvesting has declined while softwood plantation operations have expanded in South-Eastern NSW. This shift prompted contractors like Rodwell Logging to adapt their operations to meet the changing demands of the industry.

Having built a strong reputation in native hardwood logging, particularly in log hauling for Harris-Diashowa, Rodwell Logging made the strategic decision to scale down and restructure its operations. This transition recently



Rodwell Logging expanded their fleet with a Komatsu 951XC Harvester to support their new thinning contract. Image: Komatsu

opened a new opportunity for a softwood thinning contract in the Bombala region to supply the Visy Mill. This marked the company's first venture into thinnings operations and required the adoption of a new harvesting system.

Owners Peter and Mark Rodwell had long relied

on Komatsu machinery in their hardwood operations, fostering a close relationship

“XC MODEL PROVIDES EXCEPTIONAL TRACTION, STABILITY AND MANOEUVRABILITY”

with Komatsu. This partnership is several decades old and has been further expanded with the development of their RL21 Firefighting unit, this included the purchase of a Komatsu 895 Forwarder. After exploring their options, Rodwell Logging decided to expand their Komatsu fleet with a Komatsu 951XC Harvester, complemented by another Komatsu 895 Forwarder to support the new thinning contract.

In addition to harvesting, Rodwell Logging's contract includes hauling processed timber to the Visy Mill at Tumut. Meanwhile, their Komatsu 895 Firefighter also fulfills a spraying contract and remains on standby for fire emergencies

Cont P 6

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From P 5

in the Bombala region.

The new contract commenced last June, with newly employed operators now producing around 900 stems per day. "The machines and operators are outperforming our expectations," said Peter. "And so far, we're very pleased with KF's machine maintenance program," he added.

In closing Peter noted, "The local Komatsu Forests agent Hennessey Field Services supported by the Wodonga Branch are both providing professional and highly skilled technicians for all our service requirements."

### KOMATSU'S LONG HARVESTER HISTORY STARTED BY VALMET

The delivery of the latest Komatsu 951XC Harvester to Rodwell Logging in June marked the 40th anniversary of purpose-built wheel harvesters. Komatsu's long-standing history in this field began with its acquisition of the Swedish forest machine manufacturer Partek Forest AB, which originated from the Valmet brand, a pioneer in modern harvester design.

Valmet Logging AB released the first Valmet 901 Harvester in Sweden at Elmia Logging Expo in June 1985. It was the first single-grip harvester designed with its own specialised chassis, rather than being built on a modified tractor or forwarder chassis. The first Valmet 901 in Australia was purchased



The Komatsu 951XC Harvester is able to navigate tighter spaces with its compact design. Image: Komatsu

soon after FIME Wood Expo 1986 by Rick Korn of Tumbarumba NSW.

Building on the success of the 901, Valmet continued to innovate with larger 6-wheeled machines, the 921 and 941 designed to handle tougher terrain. Valmet's commitment to purpose-built wheeled harvesters established it as a true trailblazer in forestry machinery innovation.

Komatsu entered the forestry business in 2004 with the acquisition of Partek Forest AB which brought decades of Scandinavian forest machine innovation including the Valmet harvester models under the Komatsu name. Today Komatsu Forest AB, headquartered in Umea, Sweden, oversees production of wheel-based machine production and supports its global distribution network. The company continues to advance the Valmet legacy through innovation and development of larger models, including the introduction of eight-wheel versions, with the latest being the Komatsu 951XC.

"We now have a complete

range of eight-wheeled machines specially designed for demanding conditions," says Joakim Johansson, Product Manager Harvesters at Komatsu Forest.

**“ WE NOW HAVE A COMPLETE RANGE OF EIGHT-WHEELED MACHINES SPECIALLY DESIGNED FOR DEMANDING CONDITIONS ”**

The demand for an eight-wheeled harvester for final logging has been strong, and the idea of an eight-wheeled 951 has been around for some time. The challenge was to design a machine for harvesting large trees without making it too cumbersome.

"What's special about the 951XC is that it combines the strength of a 951 with an extremely compact design. It actually has about the same dimensions as a 931XC and so can even be used in denser stands," Joakim explains.

Thanks to the eight-wheel design, the 951XC delivers

lower ground pressure, reducing impact on the forest floor. It is ideally suited for final logging in hilly terrain and on soft ground. Stability is another critical advantage, in addition to Komatsu's proven stability concept, the XC series features a bogie on the rear frame with dual suspension systems, a swinging rear axle and a bogie providing, completely unique handling characteristics.

The key features of the 951XC Harvester are:

• **Komatsu Stability Concept:**

The innovative swing axle with balancing function enhances stability, comfort, and manoeuvrability, especially on uneven ground.

• **3-Pump Hydraulic System:**

The advanced hydraulic setup allows simultaneous operation of multiple crane and head functions at full power, boosting productivity and harvesting cycles.

• **Parallel Crane:** Since 1999, all Komatsu harvesters have featured a parallel crane, simplifying operation by automatically keeping the head level without separate boom controls.

• **XC eight-wheel version:**

The eight-wheeled XC model provides exceptional traction, stability, and manoeuvrability for extremes such as steep slopes and soft ground.

The Komatsu 951 remains the largest and best-selling large harvester in the Australian market, with over 30 six-wheel (6WD) models delivered since its launch in late 2015, and four XC versions (8WD) versions added since its debut last year.

**2026****MARCH 23-24: SAVE THE DATE: DANA – 2026 Special event. Global Natural Capital Investment Conference – Melbourne.**

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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](mailto:jess.hardisty@montgomerygroup.com)

**MAY 18-19: FTMA National Conference – Sunshine Coast Convention Centre, Novotel Twin Waters, QLD.** The conference theme, At the Crossroads – Reframing for Growth, reflects the

pivotal decisions facing our sector as we navigate a rapidly evolving housing market, new technologies and changing material preferences. Delegates will hear from internationally renowned futurist and best-selling author Michael McQueen along with long-time industry expert, Tim Woods, who will provide his comprehensive housing and market update. For more information, contact [kersten@ftma.com.au](mailto:kersten@ftma.com.au)

**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](http://www.fba-events.com) or contact [rafal@forest-analytics.com](mailto: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](http://www.woodexforafrica.com) for more information.

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# Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

We hope that each of you and your friends and family are blessed as we celebrate and ring in the new year!

ON behalf of the team at Timber and Forestry Enews, we would like to wish you a joyful Christmas, filled with wonderful special moments that create those long-lasting memories. May the transition into 2026 be filled with a great time of celebration and hope for the New Year, as we all hope for a better world filled with peace.

For those taking annual leave, we hope you enjoy your holiday and spend some quality time with family and or friends and enjoy some rest and recharge for an exciting year ahead.

Thank you to all our regulars, and a special welcome to our new partners and advertisers throughout 2025. You are all greatly appreciated and without you, *Enews* could not do what *Enews* does best.

We have introduced significant rate reductions for advertisers listing positions vacant on our Jobs Board, recognising the need for a dedicated Australian platform where the Forest & Timber Industry can promote industry-specific career opportunities. We sincerely thank those who have already utilised the Jobs Board, and we look forward to seeing this service continue to grow and evolve into Australia's go-to destination for industry job opportunities.

We would like to acknowledge the efforts of our editors, Donyale and Jess who work hard to track down, fact check and bring the stories to you each week. Working hard to set the layout and juggling items, sometimes last minute when an important breaking story hits. Of course, the magazine would not be presented in the professional, easy to read format with all the links and in the various formats for PDF, computer, tablet and mobile phone viewing, without the hard work of Zonya. *Enews* is further supported by our professional writers and contributors, including Michael Smith based in New Zealand, bringing us stories and great interest pieces from across the ditch. Thank you all, for your hard work and dedication, you are all amazing and appreciated.

During the year we have endeavoured to bring you the articles which matter. We have celebrated some victories and lamented over the pending loss of the not-so-great GKNP, especially given accurate Koala numbers now mean they are not endangered but rather, thriving in forestry controlled highly regulated areas.

*Enews* has been working closely with forestry authorities, private growers, chain of custody certification, and industry associations like Responsible Wood, FSC, NTHA, FWPA and AFPA, just to name a few, bringing you accurate information impacting our industry, environment and communities. We are fortunate to work in an industry that has such a precious resource, as FWPA say – “Wood – the ultimate renewable”.

We partnered with a professional grant writing business 18 months ago and have continued to bring a range of state and federal industry grants to your attention. Congratulations to all those who have successfully applied for a grant and received it or eagerly waiting for a decision. Keep a watchful eye on your *Enews* publication for more grants as they are announced during 2026.

Thank you to everyone who has connected to our growing social media platforms. It is a privilege to work with you and distribute additional information between publications.

As we look ahead to 2026, we're excited about some new strategic partnerships we have been working on. Our *Enews* magazine will return with the first edition for the year on Thursday, 22 January.

We wish you all a joyful, safe Christmas and New Year, filled with lots of great memories.

*Chris & Campbell*

# Descartes builds specialist capability for agriculture and forestry resilience

2025 MARKS a year of strong growth for Descartes Underwriting's Australian office, highlighted by the appointment of Will Cripps as Business Development Associate specialising in the agricultural sector. Agriculture remains one of Australia's most climate-exposed industries, reliant on natural resources and highly sensitive to extreme weather.

With a background in Agricultural Science, Will enhances Descartes' ability to support brokers and clients across the sector, bringing firsthand insight into the challenges facing modern agribusinesses. He is the third addition to the Sydney team this year, following Michael Lau, Business Development Analyst, in January and Thibault Calvet, Lead

Underwriter ANZ, in April.

Lynn Roehrig, Head of Business Development Australia and New Zealand, said the team's expansion reflects rising demand from brokers and clients seeking more effective protection against climate and emerging risks.

"Our clients often operate in some of the most climate-exposed regions of Australia, where traditional insurance capacity has become increasingly limited or unaffordable," Lynn said.



1/ L-R: Ben Qin, Michael Lau, Thibault Calvet, Ronan Clifford, Lynn Roehrig, Will Cripps.

2/ Descartes Australian HQ . Images: Descartes

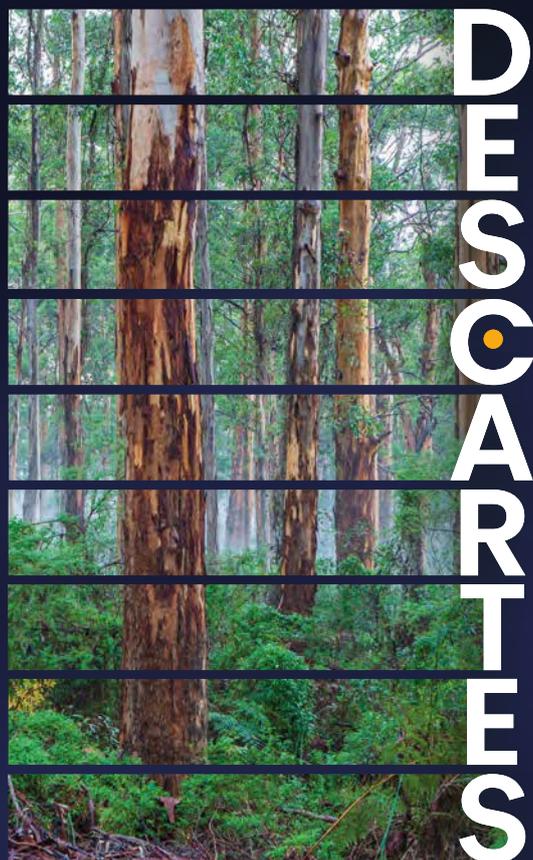
focused on delivering practical, data-driven solutions that provide transparency, speed and reliability."

Descartes Underwriting established its Australian presence in 2021 under the leadership of Ben Qin, then Head of North Asia & Australia and now Head of Asia Pacific, with Lynn joining in 2022.

Today, the Descartes Australia team continues to source, structure and place tailored parametric insurance solutions that address critical protection gaps across Australia and New Zealand.

"We're committed to elevating awareness of climate risk and advancing the role of parametric insurance across the insurance sector," Lynn said.

"Recognising the economic and social impacts of these protection gaps, our team is



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# Hardwood marketing opportunity for NZ durable eucalypt growers

**PART TWO. By MICHAEL SMITH**

NEW Zealand Dryland Forests Innovation (NZDFI) is currently in the process of developing superior genetic material for the establishment of a significant new hardwood supply chain for a diversity of products and markets.

Following on from part one in last week's edition of *Enews*, we invited NZDFI's manager, Paul Millen, to comment further on progress – including the possibility of New Zealand forest growers investing in durable eucalypt plantations to produce hardwood for export to Australia.

In a 2018 article for the *NZ Journal of Forestry*, Mr Millen (et al) noted that three key eucalyptus species were selected as the focus of tree improvement work – *E. bosistoana*, *E. globoidea* and *E. quadrangulata* (with six more identified as being of interest).

“Our tree breeding focus has narrowed to the first two species, while our *E. quadrangulata* program is on hold.”

*E. bosistoana* was selected by NZDFI for genetic improvement, given its proven adaptability in many New Zealand regions, and produces Class 1 durable timber with excellent strength properties. Meantime, *E. globoidea* grows well over a range of sites, and produces Class 2 durable timber which is heavy, versatile and attractive.

It's interesting to note that the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment stated in his report *Alt-F Reset: Examining the drivers of forestry in New Zealand that E. fastigata* has been referred to as “the



**New Zealand forest growers could invest in durable eucalypt plantations to produce hardwood for export to Australia.** Image: NZDFI

*radiata* of eucalypts, due to its tolerance of a wide range of sites and high-volume production”.

However, Mr Millen says *E. fastigata* produces Class 3 durable timber, which restricts its uses and market options. “Also, the species has high growth stresses resulting in significant log end splitting, which limits processing options and lowers sawn recoveries.

“It's my understanding that it isn't a favoured plantation species in Australia. The Commissioner's comment is based on the views of a history of this species being

Scion, there's no solid wood industry developed that is based on this species.

“Based on our data from over 100 permanent sample plots, *E. globoidea* has the potential to grow as well as *E. fastigata* in the North Island and the northern South Island. It has low growth stress and a high percentage of heartwood, even in young trees. And it offers greater drought tolerance, so is a strong candidate for the northern East Coast regions and Northland where drier and hotter summers are predicted to increase.”

## NZDFI WEBINAR

Mr Millen recently co-hosted a webinar with Ruth McConnochie, a tree breeding consultant who has led the deployment of NZDFI's breeding programme since 2008.

She noted the challenges faced when domesticating a new eucalypt species, and undertaking a breeding programme:

- selecting the right species from a long list of candidates and matching to the right site
- collecting and testing germplasm with a broad genetic base
- species identification and diversity (eucalypts have a propensity to hybridise and distinguishing species can be a challenge)
- measuring the important traits to maximise product quality
- early multiplication and deployment of best genetics

“AUSTRALIANS LOVE THEIR HARDWOODS, THEY ARE EXPERTS IN HARDWOOD PROCESSING”

From P 10

She adds that “significant gains have been made by screening for growth and form, and wood quality traits; heartwood development and extractive content”.

The success of NZDFI’s breeding programme is reflected in the introduction of high-quality XyloGene® seed (beginning in 2021), which ensures “eucalypt growers can plant the best genetics available and scale-up planting a durable hardwood forest resource”.

**NEW OPPORTUNITY**

Mr Millen’s webinar presentation centred on the Australian hardwood market opportunity for New Zealand durable eucalypt growers.

“Over the past two years, the end of sustainable harvesting of public native forests in several Australian states has cut hardwood log supply. Australia’s 200,000 hectares



**Gippsland Performing Arts Centre, Traralgon: features LVL manufactured by Australian Sustainable Hardwoods.** Image: NZDFI - Special acknowledgment: Paul Millen at NZDF

of eucalypt plantations cannot replace native forest hardwood sawlog supply because the large majority are *E. globulus/nitens* plantations – species that have poor stability, durability and finishing properties compared with the native forest species.”

He says that although New Zealand may only have a modest area of maturing durable eucalypt plantations and woodlots, much of the resource is conveniently located in Northland where there is local expertise in eucalypt logging – and it is

well served by the Marsden Point port.

“This region could take the lead in developing a hardwood log supply chain economics project to evaluate the commercial logistics and economic value of exporting from our forests to Australian mills. This would include partnering with Australian sawmillers to buy logs or slabbed logs.”

He adds that, as our closest neighbour, we have a long history of open trade with few barriers. “Australians love their hardwoods, they are experts in hardwood processing, and there is huge demand for new housing and infrastructure.”

# TimberTrader<sub>news</sub>

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The collage features several magazine covers:
 

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- Issue NO. 450 (MAY/JUNE 2025):** Meyer Timber: 50 years strong
- Issue NO. 442 (SEP/OCT 2025):** TOMORROW'S WORLD, MACHINERY SHOW 2025, One Touch
- Issue NO. 441 (JULY/AUG 2025):** VALE - JUDY TALLING, A TIMBER MATRIARCH
- Issue NO. 440 (MAY/JUNE 2025):** NEW ZEALAND UPDATE, THE LIVING HOUSE
- Issue NO. 439 (MAY/JUNE 2025):** THE COMING CRISIS, NAIL PLATE EJECTION

# New ABARES productivity report offers a clear and optimistic national picture

AUSTRALIA now has its first comprehensive look at plantation productivity. The new ABARES report, commissioned and supported by Forest and Wood Products Australia (FWPA), confirms steady softwood performance and highlights opportunities to improve hardwood outcomes, offering a clear national view of long-term trends and cautious optimism for future supply.

## A NATIONAL BENCHMARK BUILT ON LONG-TERM DATA

The study uses a widely accepted metric, the Mean Annual Increment (MAI), which measures the average volume growth per hectare per year, to track how productivity has changed over the past 15–20 years.

In south-eastern Australia's dominant softwood plantations, particularly those of *Pinus radiata* (radiata pine), the Mean Annual Increment (MAI) has held steady or even moderately increased over the past 15 years. This trend indicates a consistent and reliable growth performance for this vital timber species.

Hardwood results are more variable. The report notes that Australia's hardwood plantations have a smaller and more diverse footprint, alongside different establishment windows and management purposes such as pulplog versus sawlog. These factors make national

trends harder to draw, though the data highlights both strengths and constraints within the estate.

## WHAT GROWERS ARE SEEING ON THE GROUND

Growers consulted for the study pointed to the drivers behind recent gains. Improved silviculture, improved genetics and better genetic matching to site conditions, and refinements in harvesting, processing and logistics are all contributing to consistent MAI performance.

They also flagged challenges that will shape the next decade. Climate variability, evolving regulatory settings and increasing community expectations around social licence are prompting more active risk management. Many growers reported ongoing investments in more resilient practices, including adaptive silviculture and improved supply-chain systems.

## FOUR REASONS THESE FINDINGS MATTER

For FWPA members, the report reinforces several important signals for planning, investment and R&D.

### 1 Confidence in softwood supply

Stable or improving MAI



**Key factors driving improved plantation productivity in Australian softwood and hardwood estates, highlighting opportunities for innovation and the need for resilience against climate and physical risks.** Image: FWPA

in radiata pine provides assurance for processors and downstream markets that rely on predictable feedstock. For construction and manufacturing sectors, that reliability is critical.

### 2 Scope for further innovation

As plantation managers adopt better genetics and management systems, there is clear potential to increase both yield and product quality. This positions Australian processors to maintain competitiveness in domestic and export markets.

### 3 Need for targeted hardwood strategies

The more mixed hardwood picture highlights the value of site-specific decisions, tailored research and careful planning around species selection,

silviculture and rotation management.

### 4 Building resilience into the system

The industry's focus on adaptation reflects broader pressures. Strengthening risk mitigation now will support future productivity and ensure the sector remains responsive to emerging conditions.

## WHAT COMES NEXT

The report establishes a foundation for more consistent national measurement. It also sets the stage for future work to develop a long-term productivity index and more refined yield tables, both areas FWPA is actively progressing through its research program.

This will help the sector identify risks earlier, target investment more effectively and support sound policy and planning across the supply chain.

For the industry, the takeaway is clear. Productivity gains are occurring, particularly in softwoods, and there is room to build on them. Realising that opportunity will depend on sustained commitment to good forestry practice, innovation and resilience across the estate.

# Forestry pioneer and leader applauded for outstanding service

AUSTRALIAN forestry pioneer, innovator and long-serving AFPA Board member James Malone has been honoured for his outstanding service and leadership of the industry.

As a well-known leader of the forestry sector, Mr Malone – a co-founder of Wesbeam – recently announced his retirement, and has stepped down from AFPA's Board after serving for almost a decade.

AFPA Chief Executive Officer Diana Hallam said: "James is a true pioneer, entrepreneur and highly respected leader of our industry, who has led the way with distinction and foresight over many years.

"I sincerely congratulate James on his remarkable forestry and business career, and his innovative and valuable contributions to our sector through AFPA's Board and numerous other committees and industry leadership roles.

"I congratulate James on his upcoming retirement as Managing Director and CEO of Wesbeam."

Some of Mr Malone's impressive career achievements have included:

- Pioneering Australia's only laminated veneer lumber (LVL) manufacturer, based in Perth.
- Former CEO and Managing Director of WESFI Ltd.
- Former Chairman and



**James Malone is a pioneer and an innovator in the forestry industry and is highly regarded by many.** Image: AFPA

- longstanding board member of Wespine.
- Being awarded the Forest Industries of WA leader of the year in 2006, and
- Undertaking numerous industry leadership

positions, Director of Dyno Industries WA, President of the Forest Industries Federation of WA, Director of Engineered Wood Products Association of Australasia, and Director of Australian Wood Panels Association.

In 2023, Mr Malone was named one of Business News WA's Power 500 leaders for Industrial & Logistics, and he is also a Trustee of the Gottstein Trust.

"On behalf of the sector, I extend a sincere thanks to James for his long service, dedication, achievements and outstanding leadership of the industry, and wish him well for the future," Ms Hallam said.

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# OneFortyOne 2025: strong results, sustainable future

ONEFORTYONE is proud to announce the release of its 2025 Annual Review reflecting a year of disciplined performance and strategic investment. In 2025 we delivered strong financial results, advanced our climate commitments, and continued our engagement with the communities where we live and work. Now in its 13th year of operation, OneFortyOne continues to build on its firm foundation, delivering long-term value for stakeholders.

Michael Barbara, Interim CEO, said "Our Annual Review is more than a reflection of the past year, it's a statement of our purpose. We are here for the long term, committed to growing a better tomorrow for our people, our communities, and the planet."

OneFortyOne delivered strong financial returns while continuing to invest in safety, sustainability, and long-term growth. Key milestones include:

- Home Safe and Well: Our Total Recordable Injury Frequency Rate (TRIFR) improved, achieving our best result to date, reflecting a company-wide commitment to everyone going home safe and well.
- Sustainability in Action: Progress toward our 2030 target of reducing Scope 1 and 2 emissions by 75%, supported by major projects like the A\$88 million Jubilee Boiler and Co-Generation Project, which will eliminate Scope 2 emissions and generate renewable energy at the Jubilee Sawmill.
- Community Partnerships: Over 60 grassroots initiatives funded through the PINE



**With safety at the core of everything they do, this careful planting embodies the resilience and teamwork that delivered OneFortyOne's record safety results in 2025.** Image: Shutterstock

Community Grants Program, alongside biodiversity projects such as the Powelliphanta snail sanctuary in New Zealand and wetland restoration in South Australia and Victoria.

- Innovation for the Future: Advancing renewable energy and circular economy initiatives, including MCA-treated timber solutions and expanding markets for wood residue.

Jessica Douglas, Director of Corporate Affairs and Sustainability said "Sustainability is at the heart of everything we do. Every project, every partnership, and every innovation reflects our commitment to creating a positive impact for future generations. We're proud of the progress we've made and even more excited about what's ahead."

Michael added, "2025 was a year of challenges and

achievements. Markets didn't bounce back the way we hoped, but our people showed resilience, teamwork, and a commitment to doing things right. From improving safety to investing in growing the highest quality sustainable wood products, we're setting ourselves up for a stronger future. The Jubilee Co-Gen Project is a game changer. By 2028, 100% of residue fibre onsite will be utilised, nothing to landfill. That's the kind of thinking that keeps us moving forward."

Despite operating in one of the most challenging market environments in recent years, OneFortyOne remains a stable, high-performing business with a clear long-term strategy. Michael said "I encourage everyone to read the Annual Review and check out the videos we've included. They bring our story to life and show the incredible work our teams are doing every day."

[Click here for Annual Review.](#)

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Image: AKD

# NSW koala baseline survey reinforces higher population estimates

BUILDING on the CSIRO's National Koala Monitoring Program findings discussed in issue #875 (page 6), the New South Wales government has released its own detailed statewide baseline survey, estimating around 274,000 koalas across the state (with a 95% confidence interval of 231,000–320,000). This NSW-specific figure aligns closely with the national program's updated estimates for the listed endangered population (QLD/NSW/ACT) and underscores that advanced surveying techniques are revealing far more robust numbers than earlier, conservative assumptions.

The \$20.5 million NSW initiative surveyed over 1,000 sites using thermal drones and



**NSW data shows koala numbers are far higher than previously estimated, closely aligning with CSIRO findings.** Image: Shutterstock

acoustic recorders, capturing data during the breeding season to detect male bellows and nighttime sightings. Incorporating additional inputs from prior programs, the total dataset exceeded

3,500 sites. Models factored in habitat preferences, showing koalas thrive in areas with tall, nutrient-rich feed trees near water, stable climates, and low wind—primarily along the northeast coast and ranges,

with fragmented inland groups.

Ecologist Brad Law, whose team processed 400,000 hours of audio, described the results as "incredible" and welcome news for conservation. These methods explain the leap from outdated figures (like the 20,000 used in the 2021 Koala Strategy) without implying explosive growth; instead, they correct decades of undercounting in hard-to-access forests. Notably, many of these high-density areas overlap with state forests under regulated management, where longterm acoustic monitoring has revealed stable, thriving koala metapopulations—further

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From P 15

evidence that science-based forestry can support robust wildlife outcomes.

Critically, the survey emphasises that higher estimates do not diminish ongoing threats such as habitat fragmentation, climate change, disease, vehicle strikes, bushfires, and dog attacks—and long-term trend monitoring remains essential to guide targeted actions under the NSW Koala Research Plan.

However, these robust new figures of around 274,000 koalas statewide, revealed through advanced surveying, underscore a key point often overlooked: sustainable forestry in state forests has coexisted with—and even supported—healthy koala populations for decades. The study by the NSW Department of Primary Industries, including the extensive acoustic and GPS-tracking research led by Dr Brad Law, have consistently shown no negative impact from regulated selective harvesting on koala occupancy or density in north-east NSW forests. In fact, post-harvest regeneration promotes a mosaic of forest ages, producing abundant young, nutrient-rich browse trees that koalas prefer, while thinning operations help maintain open understories and reduce extreme fire risks—benefits not always achieved in passively managed areas.

Research has shown no negative impact from past timber harvesting on koala occupancy or density in north-east NSW, with many thriving populations in actively managed areas. This active approach also sustains renewable timber resources, supporting thousands of regional jobs, local economies, and community infrastructure.



**Koalas and forestry can coexist and sustainable forestry helps to keep the forest healthy and safe for koalas.** Image: Shutterstock

The proposed Great Koala National Park (GKNP) continues to raise serious concerns, particularly with this new report confirming the CSIRO's data. Industry representatives, including those from Forest & Wood Communities Australia, argue that the park's scale—based on outdated low estimates—overlooks the new survey data and risks disrupting a proven model of coexistence. Shifting large productive areas to passive management could lead to denser, uniform regrowth vulnerable to disease outbreaks and catastrophic fires, potentially harming koala resilience long-term.

Steve Dobbys of Jamax Forest Solutions is one of those industry voices. Dobbys is a second-generation forest scientist and advocate for balanced, evidence-based policies. After the release of the NSW data he shared, "The claim that there were only 50,000 koalas left in the wild in NSW was a politically convenient fiction. The declaration that the Great Koala National Park was essential to "save the koala

**“KOALAS THRIVE ALONGSIDE PRODUCTIVE, RESILIENT FORESTS**

from extinction by 2050" was pure political expediency, not science.

"This emotional and political expediency has come at a direct cost: the destruction of the native timber industry and the livelihoods of regional communities that rely on it. It's time for honest decision making based on facts, not political expediency.

"We should aim to support a healthy environment AND thriving regional communities. We need policy decisions based on science and balance, not political scare campaigns", Dobbys explained.

Locking up large tracts of productively managed state forests such as the proposed GKNP risks unintended consequences: without active intervention, dense regrowth can lead to overcrowded, less resilient ecosystems prone to disease, fire, and decline—as seen in some unmanaged reserves where koala numbers have plummeted despite full protection. Forestry experts warn that abandoning science-based management for passive lock-up ignores evidence that responsible harvesting sustains renewable resources, supports regional jobs and economies, and maintains healthier habitats for koalas and other species.

With confirmed higher populations debunking earlier low estimates that drove alarmist policies, now is the time for balanced, evidence-based approaches: prioritise threat mitigation across all lands, invest in active forest management outside any protected zones, and recognise the vital role of a sustainable timber industry in delivering environmental, economic, and community benefits—ensuring koalas thrive alongside productive, resilient forests.



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