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Combilift marks 100,000th forklift with €100,000 donation to UNICEF

COVER STORY P 2

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Combilift's 100,000th forklift raises €100,000 for global children's charity

GLOBAL materials handling leader Combilift has celebrated a major manufacturing milestone by transforming its 100,000th forklift into a powerful force for good, raising and donating €100,000 to the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund to support children in crisis worldwide.

To mark the production of its 100,000th forklift, Combilift launched its largest-ever worldwide competition, offering the exclusive 100,000th "Golden Prize" multidirectional Combi-CBE. All proceeds raised were donated to UNICEF Ireland's Children's Emergency Fund.

The campaign generated €56,500 in ticket sales, and at a cheque presentation ceremony, Combilift announced it had topped up the total contribution to an impressive €100,000, underlining the company's long-standing commitment to corporate social responsibility.

Speaking at the handover, Combilift CEO and Co-Founder Martin McVicar said, "This campaign was designed not only to celebrate a major manufacturing achievement for Combilift, but also to make a meaningful difference beyond the factory floor. By supporting UNICEF, we



Martin McVicar (third from right), Owen Buckley and Michaela Plunkett (centre) with the €100,000 donation cheque. Image: Combilift

are supporting one of the world's most effective humanitarian organisations and helping children who need it most."

The cheque was formally presented by Martin McVicar to Owen Buckley, UNICEF Ireland's Head of Corporate Partnerships, and Michaela Plunkett, Business Development Manager, in Monaghan.

Owen Buckley welcomed the donation, saying, "As we enter the winter season, our priority is ensuring children affected by war and natural disasters have access to warm clothing, safe shelter and continued education. This generous contribution from Combilift will help UNICEF respond quickly to urgent needs."

The winning ticket was purchased by Kareen Farrell, who travelled to

Combilift's headquarters in Monaghan to receive the one-of-a-kind 100,000th Combi-CBE "Golden Forklift."

Reacting to her win, Kareen Farrell said, "I was absolutely delighted when I heard I had won, as I'm never lucky. My dad shared the competition details and bought a ticket to support UNICEF

because it's a children's charity that helps children all over the world, so winning the forklift was an incredible bonus."




The Golden Forklift was first unveiled at the IMHX Exhibition in the UK before embarking on a European trade show tour, attracting strong international interest and reflecting Combilift's global customer base and shared commitment to positive social impact.

For more information, click [here](#).

*UNICEF does not endorse any company, brand, product or service.

On the cover: Kareen Farrell, winner of the 100,000th forklift at Combilift's HQ.
Image: Combilift

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Welcome back to *Enews* for 2026

WE hope you had a great Christmas and New Year and were able to spend some quality time with family and friends. We also trust you found a little time to recharge and refresh for the year ahead.

A very big thank you to Evan Shield for the provision of historical articles we published during 2025 ('A walk back in time' – issue #877) and ('Some history of Herons Creek sawmill' – issue #874 and all your original black and white images). Evan is a longtime subscriber to *Enews* and was able to also send us missing publications from our archives from the early days. If by chance any of our readers have some old copies from 2007 - 2010 period we would like to hear from you. Please email: editors@timberandforestryenews.com

timberandforestryenews.com

Issue #875 which included the front-page headline and feature editorial 'Koala numbers dramatically higher than previous estimates' really took off. Using latest technology, accurate counts are dramatically higher which now means Koalas are not endangered but rather, thriving in highly regulated forestry-controlled areas.

We have been systematically reporting key articles for the not so great – GKNP across our social media platforms and appreciate the number of reposts and tagging that have taken place. LinkedIn is our primary platform, and we are delighted by the response to our pages and significant traffic increase to our website. To answer one question – yes you are



Issue #875 covering the report from the government contradicting their previous koala numbers. Image: Timber & Forestry Enews

Koala counts but continue to ask the question.

If you are an employer and considering hiring an apprentice or trainee but concerned about all the compliance and the amount of valuable time it could take away from your day or you are a school leaver thinking about a career in our industry and not sure where to start, then talk to the National Timber and Hardware Association (NTHA) about how they can help you. Issue #878 included a feature editorial with all the key information and just a few success stories. NTHA makes it a simple, straight forward process for employers and new starters alike.

We hope you enjoy the first issue for the new year, and we look forward to serving you throughout the 2026 year.

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Forestry industry vital for reducing and managing bushfire risks

AS the nation braces for the peak 2025-26 bushfire season, it's important to remember the critical role Australia's forestry industry plays in preventing, mitigating and responding to damaging bushfires.

Forest industries across the country have invested heavily in bushfire preparedness to fight threats to forestry assets, farms, reserves, wildlife and regional communities, especially as landscapes dry out from warmer weather.

AFPA Chief Executive Officer Diana Hallam said: "Australia's forest industry has a long tradition of helping to mitigate fire threats to keep our forests, people and communities safe.

"We are fully committed to reducing and managing

bushfire risks, and our sector invests a significant amount of personnel and financial resources every year."

Recent figures from an AFPA survey showed the sector was responsible for more than \$100 million of direct annual investment in bushfire

prevention, mitigation and response nationally. The survey found AFPA members were responsible for:

- Maintaining 137 fire towers, staff, detection cameras and other costs, totalling around \$8 million.
- Creating firebreaks, roads,



Fire towers allow staff to monitor large areas of forest and catch fires early. Image: Shutterstock

AFPA Senior Policy Manager Dominic Lane said: "Our sector is dedicated to reducing bushfire risks and works hand-in-glove with local fire and emergency management services, as well as regularly conducting hazard reduction burning

to reduce fuel loads.

"We look forward to continuing to work closely with the Federal and State Governments to ensure industry's unwavering investment in bushfire prevention and response continues, and we thank the forestry sector for its strong contribution and work in this critical emergency management area."

undertaking prescribed burning and other maintenance like slashing and pruning, worth almost \$65 million.

- More than 1,200 response appliances, including tankers, bulk water carrier and command units and 1,500 firefighting personnel, worth almost \$30 million.
- Insurance and other levies paid, totalling around \$15 million.

Victorian bushfire update from HVP Plantations

OVER the past week HVP has been actively engaged in bushfire response efforts across Victoria, working closely with authorities to support fire control and the protection of communities and plantations.

Our fire teams continue to work alongside the CFA and Forest Fire Management Victoria to manage several fires across the state. As always, the health, safety and wellbeing of our team members and contractors remains our highest priority.

At this stage, HVP estimates plantation damage to be in excess of 10,000 hectares, with the full extent of the impact

still being assessed. It is early days in what will be a long and complex recovery process.

We recognise the profound grief and loss many are experiencing, and we stand with all affected communities during this difficult time.

HVP acknowledges and thanks everyone supporting the response effort, including our staff and contractors, emergency agencies, our customers, other forest growers, volunteers, neighbours and surrounding communities.

We will work closely with our partners to support recovery and address the challenges that lie ahead.

Australian Forest Products Association

AFPA THE LEADING VOICE FOR AUSTRALIA'S FOREST PRODUCTS SECTOR

Reflecting on recent Live Information Sessions

THE Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF) expressed thanks to all those who attended their Live Information Sessions on Australia's illegal logging laws held on 19 November 2025. They were encouraged to see such strong engagement across the sector in better understanding the obligations under Australia's illegal logging laws (Illegal Logging Prohibition Act 2012 (the Act) and Illegal Logging Prohibition Rules 2024 (the Rules)). The sessions were recorded and are now available for viewing.

For Importers and Processors, click here to view the session, and click here to download.

For Customs Brokers, click here to view the session, and click here to download.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Understanding what a certified timber product/raw log is:

- The department provides guidance in the importer and processor toolkits on how to establish that your timber product/raw log is certified for the purposes of the Rules.
- A supplier FSC or PEFC certification does not equate to timber product/raw log certification.
- The certified product/log risk assessment pathway can only be utilised when the timber product/raw log is certified and where the importer/processor has determined that it is certified in accordance with section 8(4) or 11(3) of the Rules.

◦ If a product carries both a PEFC and



Illegal logging is a serious global issue and everyone has a role to play in combating it. Image: Shutterstock

a FSC claim – both claims should be verified in accordance with section 8(4) (importers) for or 11(3) (processors) of the Rules.

FREQUENCY OF DUE DILIGENCE

- Due diligence must be undertaken in relation to each instance regulated timber product you wish to import or process.
- Depending on the circumstances the exception pathway may apply to the risk assessment and risk mitigation requirements to reduce the due diligence obligations for importers/processors who have imported/processed the same regulated timber product/raw log within the previous 12 months.
- The department provides guidance on due diligence and use of the exception pathway in the FAQs (import and processing) and in the importer and processor toolkits.

INFORMATION GATHERING

- Importers/processors must obtain as much of the prescribed information as is reasonably practicable before import/processing of the timber product/raw log - there is no prescribed process for how you gather the information.
- There is no exception for the information gathering obligations of the Rules - information cannot be obtained once or on any other periodic basis and relied upon for subsequent imports of timber products /processing of raw logs. Information gathering must occur before each import or processing.
- The department provides guidance in the FAQs and in the importer and processor toolkits on the information gathering obligations of the Rules.

RISK ASSESSMENTS

- A written risk assessment is required for the timber product/raw log and must demonstrate that all of the applicable prescribed risk factors have been considered and that the identification and assessment of risk was to a reasonable standard.
- The department provides guidance in the importer and processor toolkits on the risk assessment obligations of the Rules.

STAY INFORMED

Many questions raised during the live information sessions are addressed on the DAFF webpage and recent e-updates. In particular, E-update 54 lists common contraventions and E-update 56 busts a range of popular myths about compliance with the law.

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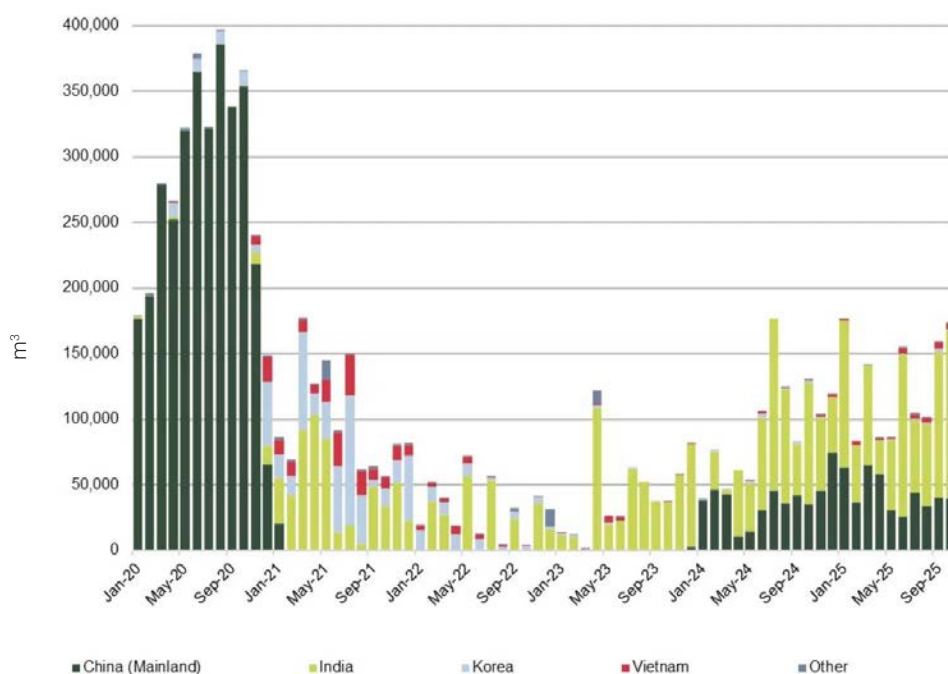
Softwood log exports hit 1.491 million m³

India emerges as dominant market in major shift from China.

AUSTRALIA'S softwood log exports have shown a notable resurgence, reaching 1.491 million cubic metres (m³) for the year ended October 2025. This represents a strong 43.5% increase compared to the previous year. However, volumes remain well below the peak levels seen in the period ending in 2020, when exports were significantly higher.

In October 2025 alone, Australia exported 173,247 m³ of softwood logs, achieving a weighted average price of AU\$136.62 per m³ free on board (FOB). The market dynamics have shifted markedly in recent years. India has emerged as the dominant destination, receiving 74% of October's exports, while China accounted for 23%. This marks a dramatic change from earlier periods, when China absorbed almost all of Australia's softwood log shipments.

Over the full year to October 2025, India took nearly 60% of total exports, equating to just over 888,000 m³. These shipments were valued at AU\$126.2 million, with a weighted average price of AU\$142.01 per m³. The rise of India as a key market reflects the industry's need to diversify following fluctuations in trade with China. For many years, India was seen as a promising but challenging prospect due to logistical issues, inconsistent demand, and complex regulations. Log exports were often viewed as a secondary option compared to the more reliable Chinese market. Recent growth, however, suggests greater stability in volumes, signalling



Australian softwood log exports by country: Jan 2020 – Oct 2025 (m³). Image: FWPA

that Australia may be entering an "India era" for softwood logs.

Softwood logs are classified by diameter: smaller (under 15 cm at the small end) or larger (over 15 cm). Larger logs have dominated exports since a shift began around 2021, reversing the previous preference for smaller diameters. For the year ended October 2025, smaller logs made up 0.176 million m³ (11.8% of the total), while larger logs accounted for 1.315 million m³ (88.2%). Industry insights indicate that even these larger logs are rarely suitable as sawlogs, with most under 22 cm at the small end.

Price trends vary by size. Smaller logs have shown relative stability in recent months, trading in a narrow range. Larger logs have experienced more fluctuation. In October 2025, smaller logs averaged AU\$130.43 per m³, while larger

ones reached AU\$138.77 per m³.

In contrast, hardwood log exports have declined sharply. For the year ended October 2025, they totalled just 10,015 m³, down 74.3% from the prior year. October's volume was a modest 1,904 m³ at an average price of AU\$1,010.67 per m³, reflecting the much higher value but far lower volume of hardwood compared to softwood.

Regionally, New Zealand's softwood log exports remain focused on China. For the year ended October 2025, they reached 22.175 million m³, up 4.6% on the previous year, at an average price of NZ\$150.94 per m³ (a 0.8% increase). Unlike Australia, New Zealand shows limited price differentials by log size.

The combined Australian and New Zealand export log price index, compiled by IndustryEdge, stood at 81.0335 points in October 2025. This equates to an average regional price of US\$87.24 per m³, down slightly for the month. New Zealand's larger volumes heavily influence the index. In cash terms (pre-inflation), prices are about 19% lower than the January 2017 baseline.

Australia's export volumes rose 8.4% month-on-month in October, while New Zealand's increased 4.6%. These figures highlight the ongoing adaptation of the Australian forest industry to changing global demand, with India providing a vital new outlet for softwood logs amid a more diversified trade landscape.

Source: Forest and Wood Products Australia

“INDIA HAS EMERGED AS THE DOMINANT DESTINATION, RECEIVING 74% OF OCTOBER'S EXPORTS

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 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

MAY 20-21: SAVE THE DATE: 5th International Forest Business

Conference – Sheraton Sopot Hotel, Poland. A two-day conference on megatrends that shape responsible forest and wood industry investments. The conference aims to bring together leading timberland investment management organizations, investors interested in forestry asset class and sustainable wood industry representatives in order to exchange and share experiences and ideas about new forest business frontiers. Register at www.fba-events.com or contact rafal@forest-analytics.com

JUNE 9-11: SAVE THE DATE: Woodex Trade Exhibition – Gallagher Convention Centre, Johannesburg, South Africa. Africa's premier trade exhibition for timber, woodworking machinery, tools, and forestry. WoodEX for Africa has evolved into a true international event, consistently attracting visitors and exhibitors from more than 20 countries. Visit www.woodexforafrica.com for more information.

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A new chapter of Tree Alliance

Bringing together farmers and landowners in Tasmania who support trees on farms.

PRIVATE Forests Tasmania's Tree Alliance has entered an exciting new chapter. Tasmanian farmers and landowners who support trees on farms and agree that managing trees on farms are a win-win for the environment, society and sustainability will be unified under the new chapter of the Tree Alliance.

Moving forward, the Tree Alliance will have a strong but simple purpose – to bring together Tasmanian farmers and landowners who support trees on farms as a community. Private Forests Tasmania will continue to facilitate the Tree Alliance initiative.

Private Forests Tasmania's Chief Executive Officer Dr Elizabeth Pietrzykowski said the new direction reflected a realignment which prioritises value for stakeholders in line with PFT's strategic priorities and Australia's climate change targets.

"PFT knows that both the triple bottom line and sustainability are important to Tasmanian farmers and landowners.

"This year's announcements by the Federal Government as part of its Net Zero Plan outline aims to cut greenhouse gas emissions across the state by up to 70 per cent by 2035.

"A sustainable and income-diversifying way Tasmanian farmers and landowners can support this is by planting and managing trees on farms.

"PFT's new chapter of



The Tree Alliance is a great opportunity for privately managed forests and farm and landowners intending to plant trees on their land to connect and be part of a supportive community. Image: Private Forests Tasmania

the Tree Alliance provides a community of like-minded farmers and landowners who understand these benefits and would like to be part of a space which facilitates sharing and learning from others doing similar things.

"PFT is excited to facilitate the Tree Alliance community to provide these opportunities for farmers and landowners and to assist them in staying connected and informed about managing trees on farms and highlighting the sustainability benefits associated with it.

The Tree Alliance community is free to join for any Tasmanian farmer or landowner managing native forest, plantations or environmental plantings on properties greater than five hectares in size.

Importantly, Tasmanian farmers or landowners who are intending to plant trees on properties greater than

five hectares in size are also invited to become members of the Tree Alliance.

For their free membership, Tree Alliance members will receive an invite to an annual networking event, a gate sign to install on their property and a quarterly storybook publication which will be posted to them every three months.

In return, Private Forests Tasmania would be appreciative of Tree Alliance members simply engaging in its offerings – including putting up their gate signs, reading and engaging with the quarterly storybook publication, attending the annual networking event and

simply sharing their story about how they're managing trees on farms.

Regardless of the Tree Alliance member focus being on Tasmanian farmers and landowners, Private Forests Tasmania welcomes others to be supporters of the initiative. Tree Alliance supporters can share the word about the Tree Alliance community and encourage farmers and landowners they know to become members.

In 2026, Private Forests Tasmania will host the inaugural Tree Alliance networking event for members and facilitate opportunities for the bringing the community to life. Tasmanian farmers and landowners wanting to become members of the Tree Alliance should visit www.pft.tas.gov.au/join-the-tree-alliance on the Private Forests Tasmania website to fill in a membership form.

“PFT IS EXCITED TO FACILITATE THE TREE ALLIANCE COMMUNITY”

Conclude the school holidays with a camping trip!

NSW State Forests make summer getaways simple with free, pet friendly camping from the coast to the high country. State Forests offer the perfect summer escape for nature lovers where you can enjoy the great outdoors without worrying about crowds, booking fees and pet accommodation.

NSW has almost 500 State Forests spread across every corner of the state and many offer camping facilities where dogs, under their owner's control, are welcome and campfires are permitted, outside of fire bans.

"State forests are a fabulous resource for the community – they are free to



Kick the year off by getting back into nature and enjoying an unplugged trip. Image: FCNSW

use, offer an array of facilities and 'back to nature' camping. Visitors can even bring their family dog along to join the holiday," Manager Tourism and Partnerships Louise Faulkner said.

"We love seeing people enjoying an 'unplugged' experience in State Forests. All we ask is that people respect these special, natural environments, so that visitors can keep on enjoying them year on year."

To assist campers researching the best campsites on offer, Forestry Corporation has put together a guide that lists the pick of State Forest campgrounds, with GPS locations and a list of what facilities are available.

Among the most popular family and dog-friendly campgrounds are Mogo State Forest, Blowering Dam, Bago and Tumut State forests in southern NSW, Strickland,

Chichester and Heaton State forests in central NSW and Coopernook, Wild Cattle Creek and Styx River State Forests in the state's north.

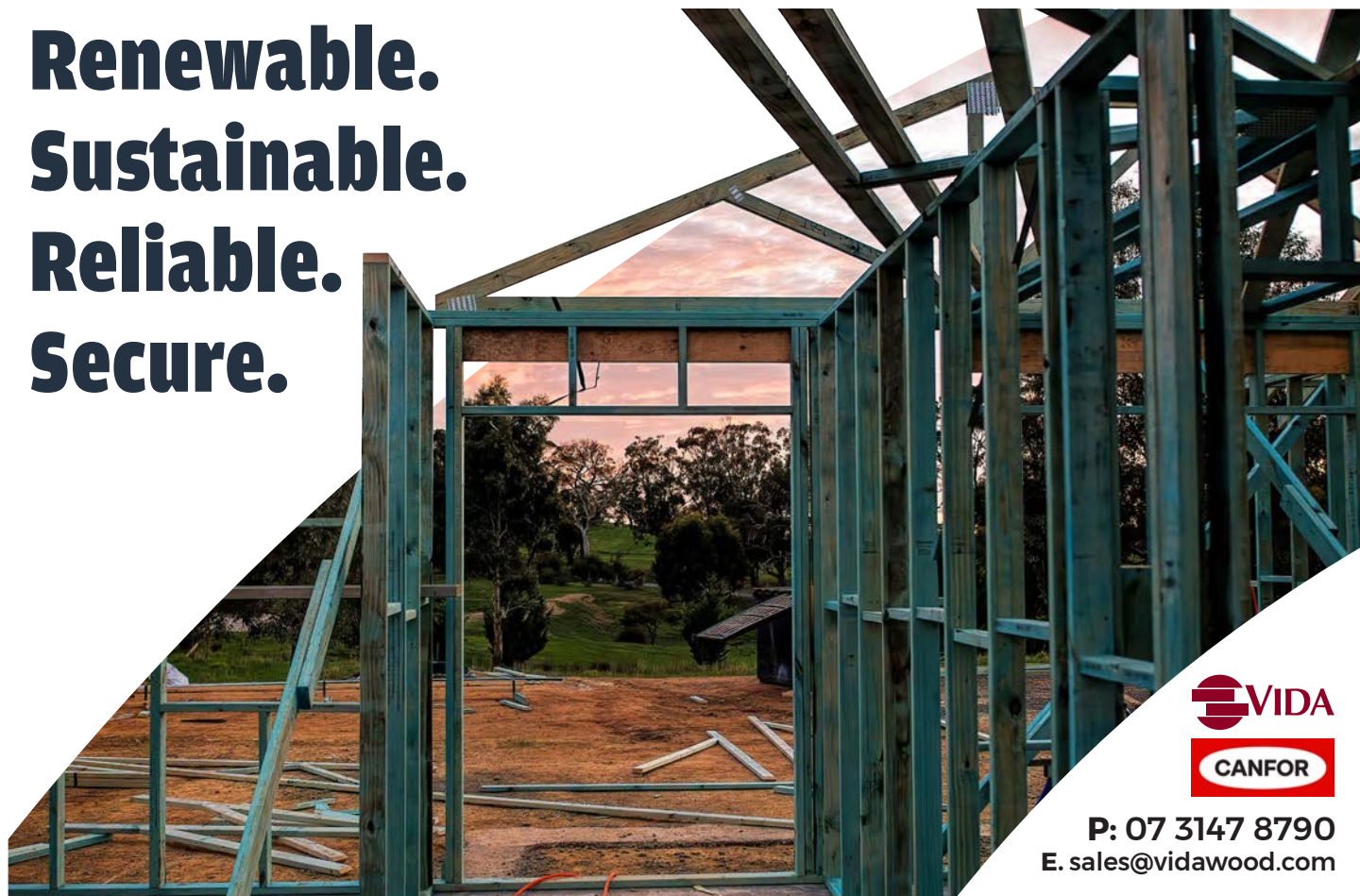
Forestry Corporation reminds campers to check for forest and road closures before setting out and to stay up to date with fire bans on the RFS website.

With the start of the Bushfire Danger Period, solid fuel fire bans are currently in place across southern NSW, western NSW and Riverina State forests.

Campfires are prohibited in these forests and campers are urged to use gas appliances.

To find out more click [here](#).

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FSC public consultation open

FSC invites stakeholders to participate in a public consultation on the second draft interpretation of Indicators 10.1.1 and 10.1.2 in the FSC National Forest Stewardship Standard of Australia (NFSS) FSC-STD-AUS-01-2018. The consultation is open from Friday, 16 January to Sunday, 8 February.

Formal interpretations are used to clarify ambiguities in FSC's normative requirements. In 2025, an FSC-accredited certification body submitted a request to FSC International seeking clarification on the application of Indicators 10.1.1 and 10.1.2 where a plantation of native species is harvested and proposed to be re-established with an exotic species.

In response, FSC International developed a draft



Interpreting the re-establishment of plantation requirements is underway, give your feedback now to help shape the interpretation. Image: © FSC / Adel Strydom

interpretation that was open for public consultation from 6 June to 18 July, 2025.

Following the consultation period, it was determined that the Australian Standards Development Group (SDG), which is currently revising the NFSS, is best positioned to develop a second draft of the interpretation. The

SDG has now prepared this based on feedback from the consultation and invites further input from stakeholders.

The SDG will meet after the consultation window closes to review submissions and determine whether further amendments to the interpretation are required. If

no substantive changes are identified, the interpretation will be submitted to the FSC ANZ Board for review and approval, followed by submission to FSC International for final approval and publication. Once published, the interpretation will become normative.

We encourage interested stakeholders to visit the Consultation Platform and provide their feedback before Sunday, 8 February.

Please note that, to be considered, feedback should be submitted via the Consultation Platform.

To participate in the Consultation, click here.

If you have any questions or need more information, contact Stefan Jensen, Senior Policy Manager, at s.jensen@au.fsc.org.

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Greenwood Protect successfully petrifies wood

IN a groundbreaking development, Greenwood Protect in Austria has announced its successful reproduction of the wood petrification process, which has historically taken thousands of years to occur in nature. This scientific achievement offers exciting new possibilities for the wood treatment industry.

Wood petrification is the natural process where organic materials, such as wood, are gradually replaced by minerals over time, eventually turning the wood into a solid stone-like substance. Often, this



Petrified wood exists in nature but takes thousands of years to occur. Being able to petrify wood manually opens up a lot of potential doors for exploration. Image: Shutterstock

phenomenon is observed in fossilised wood found in regions like the Petrified Forest National Park in Arizona, where trees have been preserved for millions of years.

Petrified wood is protected against termites, worms, fire, mould, rot, mushrooms,

fresh and sea water and UV radiation. The wood also remains bee friendly. Petrified wood can only be destroyed mechanically.

The breakthrough G5 product from Greenwood Protect is certified by the Universities of Stuttgart in Germany and Mississippi in

the USA and conforms to all EU norms. It does not contain any chemicals harmful to humans, animals or the environment. It is a water-based product with silicates that enter the wood fibre and do not leach out over time. The product initialises and accelerates the petrification process and once begun the process is irreversible.

The G5 product has the potential to revolutionise multiple wood industries with its practical applications from house construction to outdoor spaces as an ultra-durable material for any wood project or other sustainable technologies.

For further information please email Steven Harris: hsteven@greenwoodprotect.com

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FIMMA + Maderalia outlines key details for its next event

The premier gathering for national and international companies in the wood, carpentry, and decoration industry.

ON the afternoon of Monday, 12 January, the assembly hall at FEVAMA—the regional employers' association for the wood and furniture sector—hosted a presentation for the carpentry industry on the upcoming edition of FIMMA + Maderalia. Organised by the sectoral carpentry association ASEMAD, the event attracted more than thirty leading companies in the sector.

Attendees learned about the key features of the next biennial edition, as well as the advantages of the grouped participation format that ASEMAD will offer within the FIMMA + Maderalia exhibition space. The fair will run from 10 to 13 November at Feria Valencia, Spain.

The meeting included Alejandro Bermejo, president of the Maderalia Organising Committee (who also holds the presidencies of FEVAMA and ASEMAD, and is vice president of Feria Valencia), alongside fair director Alejandro Roda and FEVAMA secretary general Rafael Pérez.

STRONG OUTLOOK AND GROUPED PARTICIPATION

Those present confirmed the excellent prospects for the next edition of FIMMA + Maderalia. Key strategic pillars include a strong focus

on international buyers, the expansion to new visitor profiles in the contract and architecture sectors, and greater emphasis on areas such as timber construction.

Once again, ASEMAD will promote grouped participation for its member companies through a shared space that will serve as the central reference point for the carpentry sector at FIMMA + Maderalia. This area will showcase the latest innovations and highlight the sector's top companies to professional visitors.

COMPANY INTEREST SIGNALS A SUCCESSFUL TRADE FAIR

Alejandro Bermejo commented: "The large attendance at this presentation by companies in the sector is, without a doubt, a sign of the good prospects and the great expectation



1/ Left to Right: Rafael Pérez, Alejandro Bermejo, and Alejandro Roda.

2/ The presentation event was attended by representatives of over thirty companies. All images: FIMMA + Maderalia

surrounding the next edition of FIMMA + Maderalia." He also praised initiatives like the grouped participation promoted by ASEMAD, noting that "it makes it easier, especially for smaller companies, to commit to events of the scale of FIMMA + Maderalia. Without a doubt, it represents a solution so that all participants achieve the desired visibility within the broad showcase of FIMMA +

Maderalia."

Participants at the meeting applauded the ASEMAD and FIMMA + Maderalia initiative and expressed confidence in the value of such platforms for strengthening and growing business in the sector.

It is worth noting that, with nearly 450 direct exhibitors at the last edition and more than 35,000 visitors expected, FIMMA + Maderalia has established itself as one of Feria Valencia's most powerful professional events.

FIMMA + Maderalia is the leading event for installation professionals, specifiers, the furniture industry, decorators, carpenters, interior designers, and architects. The premier gathering for the sector, featuring leading national and international companies in the wood, carpentry, and decoration industry

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New Zealand inks historic Free Trade Agreement with India

IN a major win for the forestry and timber sectors, New Zealand has finalised a landmark Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with India, announced on 22 December 2025 by Trade and Investment Minister Todd McClay. The deal grants unprecedented access to India's 1.4 billion consumers and eliminates or sharply reduces tariffs on 95 per cent of New Zealand's exports—one of the most generous outcomes in any Indian FTA.

Negotiations, which began on 21 March 2025, wrapped up after nine intensive months of virtual and in-person rounds across New Delhi, Auckland, Rotorua, and Queenstown. This revives earlier efforts that stalled in 2015, positioning the FTA as a game-changer



Minister McClay believes the FTA between New Zealand and India will bring billions in exports, with forestry being the largest export to India it could see extensive growth. Image: Shutterstock

for Kiwi exporters facing challenging global markets.

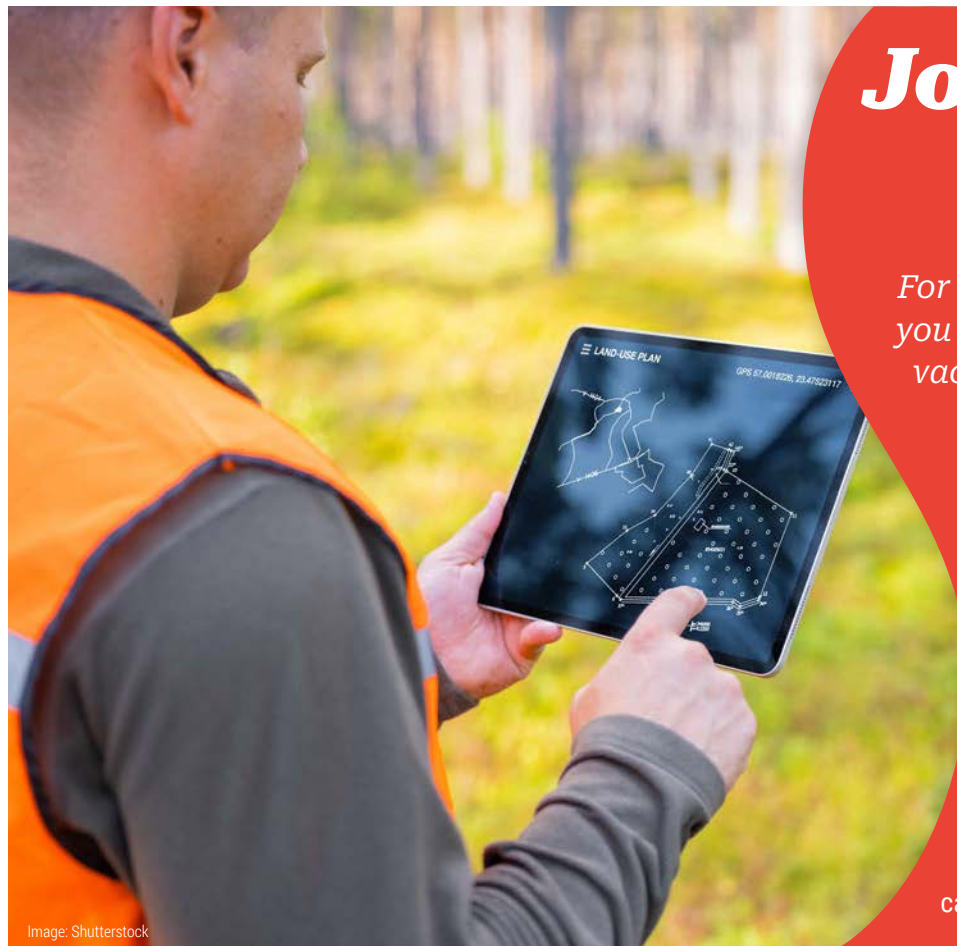
Forestry and wood products stand out as a cornerstone benefit. Forestry is already

New Zealand's largest goods export to India, valued at NZ\$134 million in the year to June 2025 (including NZ\$77 million in logs). The agreement delivers immediate tariff-free

access for over 95 per cent of these exports from day one, with tariffs on almost all existing trade phased out over seven years. This covers logs, sawn timber, lumber, pulp, paperboard, and a wide range of processed wood products under relevant Harmonised System codes.

Industry leaders have welcomed the move. The New Zealand Forest Owners Association described it as a "big win" for the sector, noting that it eliminates tariffs on over 95 per cent of forestry and wood exports, offering new opportunities in a high-growth market. Chief Executive Dr Elizabeth Heeg highlighted New Zealand's

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reputation as a reliable supplier of premium wood products, stating the FTA provides a platform to lift export volumes and shift towards higher-value processed wood and building products. The NZ Timber Industry Federation echoed this, calling it "huge opportunities" for saw-millers and processors nationwide.

The deal levels the playing field against competitors like Australia, the UK, and Chile, who already hold FTAs with India. With India's wood products market projected to grow from around USD\$1 billion in 2025 to USD\$1.47 billion by 2029—driven by rapid urbanisation, economic expansion of about 8 per cent annually, and demand for sustainable construction materials—New Zealand's radiata pine and engineered products are well-placed to capitalise.



The FTA will not only benefit the businesses exporting their goods but also all the supporting businesses such as transport and handling services. Image: Shutterstock

The FTA fosters long-term collaboration through a chapter on cultural trade, traditional knowledge, and economic cooperation, explicitly including forestry. This supports technical assistance, joint initiatives, and durable partnerships between New Zealand and Indian sectors. Recent trade missions, including one led by Minister McClay in late 2025 showcasing premium timbers and processing tech, underscore growing momentum, with an Indian

forestry delegation planned for New Zealand in February 2026.

Broader outcomes include tariff elimination from day one on sheep meat, wool, and coal. Horticulture gains include large quotas for apples and kiwifruit with preferential tariffs, plus phased reductions for other fruits. Wine tariffs fall from 150 per cent to 25 or 50 per cent over ten years, with an MFN clause for future proofing. Mānuka honey sees a cut from 66 per cent to 16.5 per cent in five years—a first for any Indian FTA.

Aligning with New Zealand's goal to double exports in ten years, the FTA taps India's projected NZ\$12 trillion economy by 2030 and burgeoning middle class. Current two-way trade is NZ\$3.68 billion, with tariff savings starting at NZ\$43 million and rising to NZ\$62 million.

Minister McClay called it a "once-in-a-generation" opportunity: "This deal is in New Zealand's best interest and will deliver thousands of jobs and billions in additional exports" (MFAT, 2025). Signing is expected in the first half of 2026, followed by parliamentary processes.

For the timber and forestry industry, this pact not only removes major barriers but opens doors to sustained growth in a dynamic market, boosting confidence for investment in processing and value-added products.



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HEAD OFFICE

Timber Media Australasia Pty Ltd
PO Box 3001
Maraylya NSW 2765

PUBLISHER

Timber Media Australasia Pty Ltd

EDITORS

Donyale Harrison
Jess Hockridge
Nicky Ainley
editors@timberandforestryenews.com

ADVERTISING

Campbell McInnes // +61 (0) 406 223 007
campbellm@timberandforestryenews.com

ACCOUNTS

Chris Parker // +61 (0) 413 710 203
cparker@ttnews.com.au

SUBSCRIBE

www.timberandforestryenews.com



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CONTACTS

Media releases and editorial:

Donyale Harrison // Jessica Hockridge // Nicky Ainley
e: editors@timberandforestryenews.com

Display ad bookings:

Campbell McInnes // e: campbellm@timberandforestryenews.com

Accounts:

Chris Parker // e: cparker@ttnews.com.au

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