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ISSUE 887 // 26 February 2026

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# New SA timber-framing campaign welcomed

## An education campaign for consumers and builders celebrates SA forestry products.

A NEW campaign promoting the importance of South Australia's forest industries is being funded through the South Australian Wood Fibre and Timber Industry Master Plan.

The Malinauskas Labor Government is contributing \$235,000 towards the project, which is being led by the South Australian Forest Products Association (SAFPA), building on the strong foundations of the successful national The Ultimate Renewable® initiative.

The campaign will promote the importance of the state's forest industry through digital media, pop-up showcases and targeted messaging, aimed at boosting confidence in the industry and social licence support. It also aims to shield against current trade impacts, supporting regional economies and building resilience into the domestic manufacturing base.

SA Forestry Minister Clare Scriven said, "A key focus of the South Australian Wood Fibre and Timber Industry Master Plan is to drive further prosperity, and this project certainly supports that goal.

"More than ever, the industry and its supporting communities are looking at ways to meet the demands of the 21st century, to seize opportunities for continual economic growth, social well-being and environmental sustainability."

The South Australian Wood Fibre



**Minister Clare Scriven with Labor candidate for Mount Gambier Matthew Key (left) and SAFPA CEO Nathan Paine.** Image: Supplied.

and Timber Industry Master Plan was developed by the Forest Industries Advisory Council of South Australia as part of a State Government 2022 election commitment to provide a vision to further grow and develop South Australia's forest industry. It launched in February 2024.

"Recent concerns about record timber imports into Australia due to international trade disruptions means that this

education campaign is particularly timely," said Scriven.

"This campaign provides us with the chance to share our own story about how South Australia's forest products industry is an economic and environmental powerhouse, supplying renewable materials and delivering real carbon benefits."

- Further funding for Master Plan projects was announced earlier this month, including: \$227,000 to move towards standardised training for forest firefighters across the Green Triangle and increase training opportunities.
- \$145,000 for ForestWorks project aimed at mapping major trends to help industry address challenges and take advantage of opportunities.

Local industry groups have welcomed the investment. Nathan Paine, South Australian Forest Products Association CEO, said, "This campaign is about pride in what we grow, what we make and what we build here in South Australia. More importantly, it is about reminding South Australians that we are the birthplace of Australia's plantation forestry industry, and that maintaining the capability to grow and manufacture our own timber products underpins our ability to build homes, support economic growth and sustain our way of life."

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# Enviro campaign based on fantasy

An imaginary threat to a beloved tree is being used to drive engagement.

WHAT it lacks in accuracy, it certainly makes up for in emotion and ingenuity... A campaign from the Nature Conservation Council is calling for the immediate protection of 'Big Spotty', the world's tallest spotted gum, located in the Brooman State Forest.

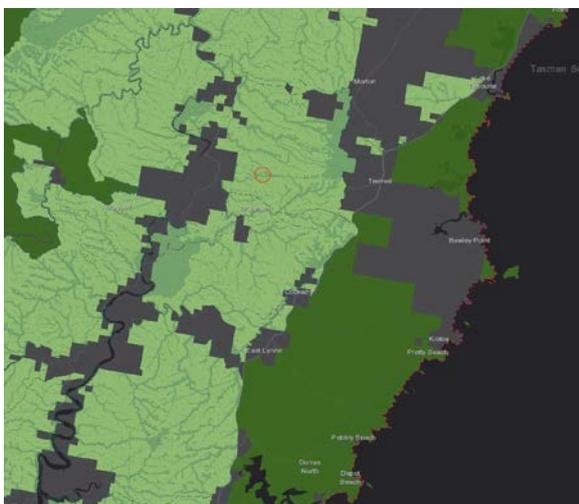
Alongside a beautiful drone shot of the tree and an easy-click petition form, the website copy uses both italics and bold text to drive home its message: "Protecting Big Spotty means protecting North Brooman state forest *now*, before logging begins. **That means we have less than three months to secure permanent protection.**"

There's just one teeny, tiny problem.

Big Spotty is already protected and has been for decades.

Compartment 50A of North Brooman State Forest, where Big Spotty has been growing for about 500 years, was selectively harvested and regrown in 2005, 1978, 1966, 1951 and earlier. The now 72-metre tree has been carefully protected every time and remains well protected into the future with a 60-metre exclusion zone around the tree established in the early 2000s.

A Forestry Corporation spokesperson



South Coast forests showing National Parks (dark green), State Forests (light green) and hatched exclusion zones including Big Spotty's (red circle). Map: FCNSW

said: "There are currently no plans to harvest Compartment 50A of North Brooman State Forest.

"The closest scheduled harvesting operation within North Brooman State Forest is over 2.5km away. This is not intended to be conducted until next financial year.

"The tree known as Big Spotty will continue to be permanently protected well into the future in an area of forest that will never be harvested."

So why is the NCC campaigning on an imaginary threat?

Pop on over to social media and it becomes clear. Now a carefully worded website saying that the forest in which Big Spotty is growing will be logged at some future point (which isn't inaccurate, it is a state forest, but surely the exclusion zone deserves just a little mention?) is translated into passionate messages from young people calling for petition signatures or Big Spotty could meet its maker!

The result is increased engagement with the conservation group that began the campaign. Whether or not they get anywhere with their calls for the government to declare a Big Spotty Flora Reserve or build a boardwalk and nature hike, they have at the time of writing over 12,000 signatures, some of which will be new to them. That's a lovely little mailing list for your next fundraiser or campaign.

So who needs facts when you have all the 'engagement' the digital marketers desire?

## Responsible Wood board changes

RESPONSIBLE Wood's strategic planning session last week saw changes in the organisation's board recognised. Congratulations and thanks were given to former Responsible Wood Board members, former Chair Dr Hans Drielsma AM and Dr Kerrie Catchpoole.

Drielsma was presented with the inaugural Responsible Wood Life Membership in acknowledgment of his tireless contribution to the organisation, spanning more than 20 years. He



Dr Hans Drielsma AM and Dr Kerrie Catchpoole. Image: Responsible Wood

maintained a distinguished career in the forest industry as a strong advocate for sustainability, with his efforts toward promotion of the highest standards of forestry across Australia and abroad of particular note.

Drielsma was presented with a plaque crafted from Responsible Wood-certified Tasmanian Huon Pine (*Lagarostrobos franklinii*); and Catchpoole with a handcrafted timber chest made from Pencil Cedar (*Polyscias murrayi*) sourced from Queensland.

The board also welcomed newest member Tara Pedersen, who brings extensive operational expertise from the forestry sector.

# TTHG EXPO 2026

## The NTHA team hit the ground running at the huge hardware expo.

HELD over three huge days, the 2026 Total Tools and Hardware Group (TTHG) EXPO delivered powerful insights, practical tools and serious buying opportunities for members across the network.

With hundreds of suppliers and well over 1000 guests in attendance, there was one clear message throughout the event: independents are ready for 2026.

The event's Learning Labs tackled real business drivers, including 'Optimising Young People to Drive Performance' and building a 'Sales-Driven Culture' – giving store owners and managers actionable strategies to lift team capability and sharpen in-store results.

Day two saw a comprehensive strategic update from Doug Jones, Group CEO



**Outdoor or indoor, EXPO featured everything you might want to find at your local hardware store.** Unless otherwise noted, all images: by Event Photos Australia, courtesy TTHG

of Metcash, who shared details of the Metcash business and his clear plans for the future.

"You have heard us talk about championing successful independents, but we have evolved our purpose, and we now speak about winning with independents," Jones said.

"We have a clear aspiration that talks about partnerships and about our unstoppable network of independents, as well as our company stores. Whether they are owned or co-owned, is a very important part of our strategy. It makes our network stronger, fuels our growth and it also allows us to make mistakes on our dime, which we share with you. We then make fewer mistakes than we have success. But we want to win together."

TTHG CEO Scott Marshall also gave a presentation on the group's direction and future plans to ensure TTHG's success.

"We are building long-term sustainable growth and building on really strong, solid foundations," said Marshall. "The people before us, in all of our businesses, have done amazing work to get us here. It is now our job to raise the bar and absolutely change the game.

"Our plans must be simple and executable, but how we bring these plans to life has

to be fundamental as well. Let's push on and get things done. If we know where we are going, we have more of a chance of success than sitting around waiting for the right moment. Lean in. Work together as a team: we need the feedback, otherwise we don't solve anything and we don't make progress. It is all about this concept of momentum and I feel like we are getting momentum."

The remainder of the TTHG team outlined performance, priorities and the roadmap ahead for independent hardware and timber businesses.

Keynote speaker for the event was futurist Simon Kuestenmacher, who delivered a forward-looking briefing on demographic trends, housing demand and the long-term outlook for building and trade, giving delegates clarity on where opportunity lies over the next decade.

### EXHIBITORS AND AWARDS

The sit-down learning section of the event done, EXPO officially opened and the hands-on walking part commenced. On the trade floor, the energy never dipped. Suppliers showcased EXPO-only deals, members locked in key buying decisions, and conversations were focused firmly on growth.

Whether it was snaffing special deals in Pallet Alley, finding new products at exhibitors' stands, networking at the snack

Cont P 5

From P 4

and lunch bars or admiring the ever-popular Dulux dog, attendees were never at a loss for ways to expand their offer to customers – or share a laugh at some of the experiences only retail hardware brings.

The week culminated at the TTHG 2025 Awards of Excellence dinner, hosted by Olympian Giaan Rooney and entertainer Shane Jacobson.

A standout moment? The emotional Hall of Fame induction of Wayne Pink of Pinks Mitre 10 – a fitting tribute to a lifetime dedicated to the industry. The NTHA team congratulates Wayne on his outstanding career and lifelong dedication to the industry.

The gala event was a huge success with the following awards announced:

**Home and Garden Supplier of the Year:** Dulux

**Tools and Hardware Supplier of the Year:** Makita

**Build Supplier of the Year:** ITI Australia

**Paul Murphy Mighty Helpful Service Award:** Yvonne Bosworth, Canegrowers Mitre 10 Ingham, QLD

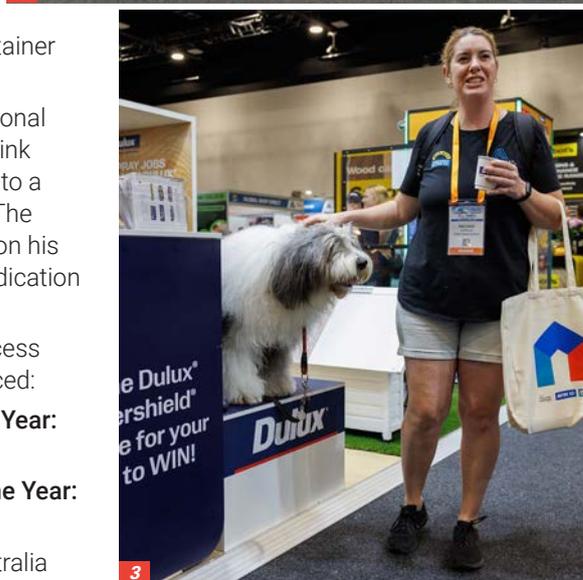
**Village of the Year:** The Apostles

**National Garden Centre of the Year:** Barossa Mitre 10, SA

**National Trade Centre of the Year:** Woodman's Mitre 10 Beenleigh, QLD

**Hall of Fame:** Wayne Pink of Pinks Mitre 10

**National Home Hardware Store of the Year:** Cooper Pedy Home Hardware, SA



- 1/ **The Whole Of House** concept was on full display: everything your home needs in one location. Image: NTHA
- 2/ **Wayne Pink** being congratulated by his wife as his induction into the Hall of Fame was announced.
- 3/ **The Dulux dog** was as popular as ever on the EXPO floor.
- 4/ **Tilling's SmartFrame** team had a chance to walk more retailers through their builder-friendly system. Image: NTHA

**National Small Store of the Year:** Sunlite Mitre 10 Paddington, NSW

**National Medium Store of the Year:** Barrow & Bench Mitre 10, SA

**National Large Store of the Year:** Johnson Brothers Mitre 10 Mona Vale, NSW

NTHA congratulates all award winners,

including NTHA members, for their well-deserved recognition at these prestigious awards.

*On the cover: NTHA's Christine Bannister (left) and Vicki Stableford (centre) caught up with Denise Bast from Permewans Hamilton Mitre 10 and the Home Hardware dog mascots.*  
Image: NTHA

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# Business Grants

Access state and/or federal funding to grow your business!

Enews has partnered with a professional grant writing business. Watch this space as not all grants are made public. We will publish grants for various states/

territories for our industry here in Enews. Our connection might be available to assist you with eligibility criteria, grant writing, application process and

lodgement. They have a high success rate, so contact us if you would like to make an appointment. Contact: editors@timberandforestrynews.com

## Heavy Vehicle Safety Initiative (HVSI)

THIS initiative empowers industry-led solutions that improve safety, strengthen supply chains, and accelerate innovation across Australia's heavy vehicle sector.

To date, the Australian Government has invested more than \$45 million across 181 HVSI projects since the program started in 2016. Over the 10 rounds funded to date, successful projects are delivering safety improvements across Australia's heavy vehicle industry and protecting all road users.

This year's funding round places a strong emphasis on harnessing emerging technologies and forward-thinking approaches. The National Heavy Vehicle regulator (NVHR) is encouraging projects that explore new digital tools, data-driven insights, automation, advanced safety systems, and other innovations that

can transform the way the industry operates.

By working collaboratively with industry, government, and the community, we aim to unlock new opportunities for safer, smarter, and more sustainable heavy vehicle operations.

Funding is available for projects that aim to:

- Enhance safety outcomes for heavy vehicle operators and road users.
- Harness new technologies and innovation.

- Build capability and knowledge across the sector.
- Deliver long-term benefits for the freight and logistics network.

This is an open application process, seeking submissions from participants and stakeholders in the Australian heavy vehicle industry.

You and the activity must be located in Australia.



The HVSI delivers funding for projects that increase safety outcomes for operators of heavy vehicles such as this logging truck. Image: CC First Choice Myrtleford/Luke Robinson1

### GRANT DETAILS

**Provider:** National Heavy Vehicle Regulator

**Amount:** Unspecified

**Funding Round Opens:** 27 January 2026

**Funding Round Closes:** 16 March 2026

**Location:** National

**Who Can Apply:**

Government  
Non-Government  
Community Groups  
Businesses  
Other

**Co-Contribution Required:**

Unspecified by Provider  
<https://www.nhvr.gov.au/about-us/heavy-vehicle-safety-initiative>

## EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

### 28 FEBRUARY: REGISTRATIONS CLOSE.

Forestry Workforce Training Program (FWTP) – EOIs are open if you or your team would be interested in funded training that supports transferable capability and digital literacy for new entrants and operators and/or leadership pathways for supervisors and emerging leaders. Places are limited. Register now: <https://forestworks.com.au/forestry-workforce-training-program/project-2-implementing-stackable-micro-credentials-for-essential-industry-skills/#tab-pilot-eisenrolmentsopen>

## MARCH

### 4: Timber Queensland Webinar – ONLINE, 11.00am (AEST).

Sustainability by design – the impact of certified timber in the build environment Webinar presenter – Lara Maesele. 2025 Australian Timber Design award-winning architect. Sponsored by RW and PEFC. For registrations: [https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_SuLb26lcQNSg\\_JepfM1MOQ#/registration](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_SuLb26lcQNSg_JepfM1MOQ#/registration)

### 6: Queensland Women in Forest & Timber Network (WFTN) International Women's Day Breakfast – Brisbane Airport Conference Centre, 8.00am - 10.00am.

A meaningful morning of connection, inspiration and conversation as we celebrate International Women's Day with industry peers from across the forest and timber sector. For enquiries contact Tahlia: [tahlia@ntha.com.au](mailto:tahlia@ntha.com.au) For membership visit <https://www.ntha.com.au/membership/women-in-forests-timber-network-wftn/>

### 23-24: DANA – 2026 Special event. Global Natural Capital Investment Conference – Melbourne.

Please note: This event has been deferred until late 2026. Details will be announced later in the year.

**30-31: Forestry Australia Forest Valuation Summit – Rendezvous Hotel, Melbourne (includes summit dinner on day one).** Topic: *Valuing and Reporting Sustainability in our Forests*. For full details of speaker topics and to register interest, visit <https://www.forestry.org.au/2026-forest-valuation-summit/>

## APRIL

**29-30: Sydney Build Expo 2026 – Sydney.** Australia's largest construction & design show that includes timber, designers, building and lots of international booths. For more information or to register visit <https://www.sydneybuildexpo.com/>

## 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)

**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)

**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.

## OCTOBER

### 7-9: Forestry Australia 2026 Symposium – Rex Hotel, Canberra.

This Symposium will explore how the forestry sector can articulate and share its values and engage constructively with diverse audiences and stakeholders – from local communities and Traditional Owners, to politicians and policymakers, the media, and the wider public. For more information visit <https://www.forestry.org.au/2026-symposium/>

## NOVEMBER

### 18: SAVE THE DATE: 2026 SIM-PAC Sustainability Awards – Castlereagh Boutique Hotel, Sydney.

The Awards recognise practical leadership in decarbonisation, circular economy, and sustainable industrial practice across the Asia-Pacific region. Further information will be available soon on the Awards website <https://www.sim-pac.live/2026-awards>

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# New Wesbeam CEO onboard

Giles Everest has taken up his new role with the LVL and I-beam manufacturer.

GILES Everest, appointed to the Wesbeam CEO position last year, has commenced work at the West Australian LVL and I-joist manufacturer.

Coming from a strong management background that includes prefabricated construction (a major market for LVL), Everest said he was drawn to Wesbeam's strong platform of quality, reliability and national reach, and the opportunity to lead a respected Australian manufacturer into its next phase of disciplined growth.

"Wesbeam has a foundation where



1/ Wesbeam's executive leadership team, (from left) Simon Rutter, chief technology officer; Giles Everest, CEO; Kathy Morris, general manager – manufacturing; Gino Paolino, general manager – logistics; Peter Board, general manager – sales and Marketing; and Briana Wills, chief financial officer. Images: supplied

2/ Giles Everest is Wesbeam's new CEO.



as engineered timber continues to gain broader acceptance in residential and commercial construction."

Everest acknowledged the contribution of outgoing CEO James Malone, who retired after leading the business through significant growth and capability development.

"James and the team have built strong foundations," Everest said. "My focus is on respecting that legacy while

helping the organisation continue to evolve, execute and perform."

Looking ahead, Everest said Wesbeam will continue to help shape the future of Australian construction as the sector demands improved sustainability outcomes, faster delivery and greater certainty.

capable, committed people are aligned to a clear purpose and take pride in what they deliver, my focus is on strengthening that culture while driving disciplined performance and operational excellence," he said. "Wesbeam's scale and national reach, combined with its reputation for quality and reliability, positions us strongly

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# Rare timber failure

## Mistakes doom popular Scottish viewing platform.

ANY reader of this publication can tell you that timber is the most sustainable building material around, and that timber structures must be designed fit for purpose.

The BBC reported this week on a sad case where only one of these points was considered.

An Ceann Mor was an 8m-tall viewpoint on Loch Lomond, in southern Scotland. Shaped like a pyramid, it had 31 steps leading up to a telescope and plenty of room for sightseeing and resting.

It was designed by Daniel Bar, Stephane Toussaint and Sean Edwards (then BTE Architecture), who were selected as one of four winners in the Scottish Scenic Routes competition. The competition sought to support emerging architects by commissioning designs for viewpoints, which would be delivered working with a mentor from the Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Authority. The



**An Ceann Mor was built with a focus on sustainable materials, but insufficient concern for drainage.** Image: Shutterstock/YF Productions

viewpoints were opened in 2015.

Sadly, this design has now been demolished as the timber rotted severely. Although repair works were budgeted for, the structural damage was too great.

A spokesperson for the national park authority told BBC journalist Jonathan Geddes that “The primary cause of the structural deterioration was a design issue which did not include adequate drainage

and ventilation provision.

“As a result, water ingress occurred, leading to pooling and moisture becoming trapped within the structure, which resulted in timber rot.”

BTE Architecture has since been dissolved but a spokesperson said its design was amended before and during construction, and the completed structure “did not fully reflect our original proposals”.

They added: “In line with the brief, none of our team were registered architects at the time, and the design – including drainage and ventilation provisions – was overseen and signed off by the authority’s senior architect.”

The other three winning viewpoints are still going strong and the park authority has reaffirmed its commitment to sustainable design – with a focus on appropriate design next time.

To read the full story, [click here](#).

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# Training base gets SA funding

A \$400,000 grant from the Malinauskas Labor Government will support the completion of a new training base for the Logging Investigation and Training Association (LITA).

LITA has been providing high quality education and essential skills training in the region since 1973, tailored for the forest and timber industries, agriculture, civil construction, First Nations groups, emergency services and community bus drivers.

“LITA has been a long-standing provider of critical industry training in the Limestone Coast, and we are proud to be able to support them through this important transition to their own purpose-built facility,” said the Hon Clare Scriven, Minister for Forest Industries.

“Regional South Australia thrives when we invest in local capability and LITA’s new facility will help ensure that the Limestone Coast can continue to access the best in training close to home, not only securing the skilled workforce that industry requires now but creating opportunities for the next generation.”

Construction has already begun on LITA’s new training base off Jubilee Highway West. When completed, it will deliver fit-for-purpose facilities that reflect contemporary industry needs and emerging technologies, backing long-term regional skills development and industry capability in the Limestone Coast.

The new facility will also improve



Left to right: Minister Scriven with LITA Training CEO Sandy Kanahs, SAFFA CEO Nathan Paine, and LITA Chair Mark Wells. Image: supplied

access to vocational pathways for young people and career changers in regional areas, helping retain talent locally while strengthening the long-term economic resilience of the region.

The \$400,000 grant will fund completion of the new base and LITA’s transition from its current location in the TAFE precinct. The new facility is expected to be fully operational later this year.

Sandy Kanahs, LITA Training CEO, said, “Many of LITA’s services are essential not only to the functioning of our regional

economy but also ensuring the safety of our workforce.

“It is for that reason we believe a purpose-built facility was a necessity to ensure the continual growth, strengthened employment opportunities and prosperity of local industries. Once the relocation to our new facilities is complete, the association is looking forward to continuing its commitment of serving South-East industries and workforce for decades to come.”

The increased capacity for LITA has been warmly welcomed by local forestry businesses and industry groups.

“Alongside investments in TAFE, the new Technical College, the Forestry Centre of Excellence and Tree Breeding Australia, this funding reflects a strong and consistent commitment to education, training, research and development in Mount Gambier and the future of the Limestone Coast,” said Nathan Paine, South Australian Forest Products Association CEO.

“This commitment shows strong recognition that training capability is not just a forest industries issue, it is a community and regional development priority.

“I congratulate the State Government, and in particular Minister Clare Scriven for her support for LITA Training, which will deliver positive outcomes for students, employers and regional communities alike.”

## Timber politics in SA

YOU’VE probably noticed an uptick in South Australian announcements regarding the timber industry recently (see above and pages 2 and 15 in this issue, as well as *Enews* #886’s cover story and *Enews* #884 pages 2 and 6). Only a hardened cynic would suggest it was all to do with the upcoming state election (21 March), but the candidates are definitely getting their good news and plans out to the public.

Accordingly, the South Australian Forest Products Association (SAFFA) will host a series of State Election

forums across the South East in early March, providing an important platform for voters to hear directly from candidates and understand where they stand on the issues that matter most to the Limestone Coast.

These forums are designed to shine a light on the priorities, policies and values of candidates, giving an opportunity for

industry, community and constituents to engage in informed and meaningful pre-election discussion.

The three events will bring together political leaders and local candidates to articulate their vision for the South East, outline their approach to supporting the region and its industries – particularly forest industries – and respond to critical issues including land use conflict, rare earth mining, water allocation planning, housing and infrastructure.

“THESE DEBATES ARE ABOUT GIVING VOTERS A CLEAR AND DIRECT INSIGHT

Cont P 11

From P 10

Scheduled events include a MacKillop Candidates Forum, a Forest Industries Debate featuring Minister Clare Scriven MLC and Shadow Minister Nicola Centofanti MLC, and a Mount Gambier Candidates Forum. SAFPA Chief Executive Officer Nathan Paine said the forums play a critical role in ensuring transparency and accountability in the lead-up to the election.

“These debates are about giving voters a clear and direct insight into what candidates stand for,” Paine said. “They provide a rare opportunity to hear how each candidate intends to support regional communities and industries, and to test their understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing the South East.”

The forest and timber industry has a \$3bn-plus annual worth to the South Australian economy, and produces about a third of Australia’s house framing timbers, as well as other essential products. Along with agriculture, it is the major driver of jobs in the region.

“These forums will place a strong



**The Hon. Clare Scriven MLC, Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development and Minister for Forest Industries, and Hon. Nicola Centofanti MLC, Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Council and Shadow Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development, will feature in a Forest Industries Debate as part of SAFPA’s program.** Images: supplied



focus on the role of forest industries and primary production, and the importance of policy settings that support their long-term growth and sustainability,” Paine said.

“The forest industry is a cornerstone of the South East economy – supporting jobs, investment and regional development – and provides the essential fibre that underpins South Australia’s economic growth and supply chains.

“These forums will highlight the importance of the industry and provide a platform to examine how SAFPA’s Policy Platform – including sovereign manufacturing, infrastructure, workforce development and investment certainty – is reflected in each candidate’s agenda.”

SAFPA encourages industry participants, business owners and community members to attend and take part in these important discussions ahead of the State Election.

Full details and RSVP links will be on SAFPA’s social channels.

## Job position to fill?

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# Gen-Z trainees and apprentices become top performers with the right support

TODAY'S workforce is evolving rapidly – bringing with it the challenge of bridging generational divides. Younger employees often arrive with different expectations, communication styles and learning habits that can feel unfamiliar in traditional workplaces.

These differences may seem like obstacles, but for employers prepared to adapt, guide and invest in understanding their younger team members, the rewards can be significant.

NTHA apprentices Joshua and Noah are two powerful examples of what happens when young people are backed properly. Their journeys were not smooth. But with structure, belief and consistency, both have stepped into roles of real responsibility and performance.

These are their stories.

## JOSHUA FINDS A BETTER WAY AT ITI

When ITI HR Manager Tiarnna McNamara and NTHA GTO GM Melissa Clark brought Joshua on as a new apprentice, it wasn't because he had a mapped-out career plan.

Melissa explains: "It was because his mum was worried about the path he was heading down. She told him bluntly that if he didn't change, he would 'end up in jail or dead'."

Joshua admits he had fallen in with the wrong crowd – and attended court just one week into his employment. It was far from the ideal start. Many employers might have reconsidered. Instead, both ITI and NTHA chose to stand beside him rather than turn away.

Working with young people, Tiarnna says, is a genuine partnership:

"An apprenticeship is an 18–24 month promise to themselves, to NTHA and to their host company. The early stages require patience, structure and consistency."

When Josh finally started, he arrived keen and energetic, ready to "run the place" on day one as a yard hand. But enthusiasm alone isn't enough.

"He needed guidance, structure,



**Joshua has found success and community as an apprentice with ITI after a rocky start.** All images: NTHA

patience and consistency. We struggled with attendance, with constructive feedback, with shifting his mindset from 'school mode' to 'workforce mode,'" Tiarnna says.

The turning point came when Josh realised people were relying on him.

Melissa says, "He began forming genuine friendships at ITI, friendships that helped him leave his old life behind. The sense of belonging started to replace the pull of his previous environment."

Nearly a year on, at 17, Joshua now runs ITI's Hardware section independently after a previous cadet progressed into a new role. He is preparing to operate the Hundegger machine – a critical part of the operation.

His attendance has improved. His response to feedback has strengthened. He takes pride in his work.

Tiarnna says that Josh's journey, "has been a learning curve for us, too, understanding different personalities, providing the right structure and boundaries, and making sure we follow



**WORKING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE IS A GENUINE PARTNERSHIP**

through on the promises we make to our cadets."

Through the combined support of NTHA Trainees & Apprentices as his GTO and the commitment of ITI, Josh has a moved away from a life of instability to a bright future ahead.

## FIRST-YEAR APPRENTICE SUCCEEDS AGAINST ALL ODDS

For Noah Rodgers, the road to success began with disruption.

In his first month as a bricklaying apprentice with KR Masonry Adelaide, Noah was involved in a car accident that could have derailed his start.

Many would have stepped back. Noah stepped forward.

With encouragement from his employer and trainers at FCTA, he returned – determined to make the opportunity count. He arrived first on site each morning, pushed himself daily and absorbed every piece of advice. And Noah's commitment did not go unnoticed.

KR Masonry's Kobi Russell shared: "Noah has really embraced the mindset that good enough is not actually good enough. He is always striving to do his best and it shows."

Noah's passion for bricklaying, first sparked at St Patrick's Technical College, carried him through uncertainty. His resilience and effort earned him a place as a finalist for the AEN SA First Year Apprentice of the Year Award.

Josh and Noah's inspirational stories are proof that when employers commit to structure, patience and belief, Gen-Z apprentices do not just overcome setbacks, they become top performers within the timber and hardware industry.

## BACKING POTENTIAL

Supporting a trainee/cadet or apprentice is never just about filling a position – it's about opening a door for people like Joshua and Noah. For many businesses, taking that step can feel like a leap of

From P 12

faith. For young people, it's often their first real opportunity to step into a professional environment.

But when the right support systems are in place, that leap becomes far less daunting – and far more rewarding.

That's where NTHA Trainees & Apprentices plays a critical role.

Employers acknowledge that bringing a young person into their business carries responsibility. There's training, mentoring, compliance, paperwork and supervision to consider. For smaller and independent businesses especially, these obligations can seem overwhelming.

However, NTHA exists to remove those barriers.

By managing the compliance requirements, government paperwork, training contracts, payroll administration, Workcover and ongoing monitoring, NTHA allows host employers to focus on what they do best – running their business and developing talent on the job.

The result? Businesses gain enthusiastic team members without being burdened by complex administration.

### A GENUINE PARTNERSHIP

Working with young people is a partnership. It requires patience, communication and a willingness to guide. With structured support, clear expectations and consistent mentoring, that partnership can produce exceptional outcomes.



1/ A car accident didn't derail Noah's bricklaying apprenticeship, instead, he returned with even more focus.

2/ Noah is a valued member of the KR Masonry team.



straightforward. A simple phone call or online enquiry to NTHA begins the conversation. From there, the team will:

1. Discuss your business needs
2. Identify suitable candidates
3. Handle all regulatory requirements
4. Manage contracts and onboarding
5. Provide continuous support throughout the placement

NTHA works closely with both the host employer and the apprentice or trainee, providing:

- Recruitment and screening of suitable candidates
- Management of all compliance and contractual documentation
- Liaison with Registered Training Organisations (RTOs)
- Ongoing pastoral care and performance monitoring
- Workplace visits and regular check-ins
- Payroll, payroll tax, superannuation, workers compensation, RTO fees, PPE and administrative management.

This wraparound support ensures both parties feel confident and supported throughout the journey.

### GET STARTED

For employers interested in hosting an apprentice or trainee, the process is

“ REMOVE COMPLEXITY SO BUSINESSES CAN INVEST CONFIDENTLY IN THE NEXT GENERATION ”

For individuals seeking to begin an apprenticeship or traineeship, NTHA provides guidance on pathways, industry opportunities and connecting with host employers.

The goal is simple: remove the complexity so businesses can invest confidently in the next generation. Zero risk to businesses! NTHA eliminates the need for long-term commitment, giving you flexibility throughout the apprenticeship or traineeship.

When employers are supported properly, the perceived risks of hiring young people diminish and the rewards become clear. Trainees and apprentices gain skills, confidence and career direction. Businesses develop loyal, capable team members. Industries strengthen from within.

NTHA makes that process seamless, compliant and manageable.

For more information about becoming a host employer or starting an apprenticeship, contact NTHA Trainees & Apprentices to explore how simple it can be to make a lasting impact.

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# US miner illegally clearing jarrah

A deal with the Trump administration means the clearing can continue.

WHEN Western Australia closed its native forestry sector at the start of 2024, protecting jarrah forest was a major reason for the decision.

Which makes it particularly galling that US bauxite mining giant Alcoa has both been fined \$55 million for six years of illegal clearing and granted a national interest exemption by Federal Environment Minister Murray Watt to allow it to continue clearing in the northern jarrah forest for 18 months while the government considers a proposal for an expansion of the company's Huntly and Willowdale mining operations to 2045.

Lisa Cox at *The Guardian* reports that a newly uncovered document shows the government had been telling Alcoa it was in breach of Australia's environmental laws for 14 years, not six. It also shows that the minister believed the 18-month



**Bauxite mining operations in WA jarrah forests in 2022.** Image: Forestry Australia

exemption was justified because of Alcoa's links to a critical minerals deal reached between Australia and the Trump administration last year, which included selling gallium to the US for use in the defence and renewable energy sectors – a project with Japanese partners.

The document details Watt's decision that the exemption was a means of "reinforcing and giving confidence"

to both countries about Australia's commitment to the project and the critical minerals framework.

The news has been met with horror by anti-mining activists. Georgina Woods, the head of research and investigations at Lock the Gate, called the decision "disgraceful".

"This mining company got away with breaking the law for 15 years under successive Australian governments, illegally clearing in a global

biodiversity hotspot and then, when it finally admitted it needed some paperwork to continue its destruction, applied for and was granted an exemption to the law within 19 days," she said. "It's flagrant and it's staggering."

Meanwhile, the sustainable native timber industry in WA remains closed.

For the full story, [click here](#).

## WA shires lose forestry rates

THE ABC reports this week that the Forest Products Commission (FPC) will no longer pay rates on state-owned timber plantations directly to local councils, instead making payments to the state Treasury.

Seven local governments in the Warren-Blackwood region of WA are set to lose a combined \$325,000 this financial year.

FPC owns and manages approximately 74,000 hectares of softwood plantations in the southwest of Western Australia. A government entity, FPC reports to the Minister for Forestry, the Hon. Jackie Jarvis MLC. Its pine plantations have long been a small but significant percentage of the region's council rates.

However, these payments appear to have been made in error as the FPC is exempt from paying local government rates on freehold land under the Forest



**Rates from FPC's pine plantations were previously paid to councils but now an equivalent goes directly to Treasury.** Image: FPC

Products Act 2000. Instead, the act requires the FPC to pay a rate equivalent to Treasury.

Forestry Minister Jackie Jarvis has been meeting with affected councils to discuss options to help mitigate the financial impact of the changes.

Helen O'Connell, president of the Shire of Boyup Brook, told ABC journalist Rachel Boothman her council would lose \$135,000 this financial year.

"This could affect community grants, road maintenance, and our agreements

with local groups like the visitor centre and the CRC library," O'Connell said.

"We also help fund the town's only doctor. Losing this revenue puts essential health services at risk – without support, residents would have to travel out of town for medical care."

Seven local governments in the Warren-Blackwood region of WA are set to lose a combined \$325,000 this financial year.

Council leaders have been asking the state government to redistribute the money from Treasury back to the affected councils, concerned that it will impact on core services, including roads, community facilities and emergency access.

The change has occurred midway through the financial year, when budgets are already finalised and committed and there are concerns that ongoing FPC land acquisitions could see the gap grow over the coming years.

For the full story, [click here](#).

# Posts get second lives

## A pilot timber circularity project reuses vineyard trellis posts in South Australia.

ANYONE who has ever visited South Australia knows McLaren Vale is home to some of the best wines in the world. Now it's also home to a groundbreaking pilot project that will see vineyard posts receive second lives as valuable treated timber products.

Currently, vineyard posts cost about \$3000 per hectare in disposal costs at end of life. There are an estimated 89 million posts in Australia, with half of these in South Australia. While the treated timber has a long service life, posts are subject to damage from the weight of the vines, especially when coupled with storms. It's estimated that 1.3–3.3 million posts are replaced annually.

Disposal is difficult as licensed landfill costs are expensive; the CCA treatment applied to most posts makes them extremely slow to biodegrade and releases arsenic when burned, so many vineyards will stash old posts on site rather than pay for their removal. This represents a fire risk for those properties, as well as the loss of a potentially valuable resource.

In response to this problem, the National Centre for Timber Durability and Design Life (NCTDDL), together with Forest & Wood Products Australia (FWPA) and Wine Australia, last week launched its Vineyard Post Reuse Pilot as part of the Timber Circularity Project in McLaren Vale, which will be delivered by the FABAL Group, one of Australia's leading vineyard management companies.

The pilot is a practical trial testing how end-of-life treated vineyard posts can be recovered, processed and reused in a commercially and environmentally viable way. It features a mobile processing unit



**Members of the Project team including Prof. Singh in yellow and Ashley Keegan (eighth from left) at the launch.** Image: supplied

that removes fasteners such as clips, staples, and nails, then cuts the posts to size using a guillotine. This process avoids hazardous sawdust and prepares the posts for reuse as agricultural fencing or landscape timber.

Professor Tripti Singh, director of the NCTDDL, said, "Together with our partners in both the forestry and viticulture sectors, we are developing practical pathways for the reuse of treated posts and other end-of-life timber products, demonstrating what collaboration across sectors, in research, industry and government can achieve.

"There will not be one single recovery solution for posts. A diverse range of options from small mobile solutions to large scale technologies will be required to ensure a shift towards a net positive future."

Ashley Keegan, CEO of the FABAL Group, highlighted the practical benefits of the pilot. "Our goal is to convert a problematic vineyard waste stream into a product that others are willing to confidently use," he said.

The pilot is one of several being planned to test other options in locations around Australia. For more on the re-use

of vineyard posts, read the Timber Circularity Project's report *Storage, Handling, and End-of-Life Management of Treated Timber Vineyard Posts* (click here to download.)

The Timber Circularity Project is led by the NCTDDL at the University of the Sunshine Coast, and funded by FWPA, AFPA, Wine Australia, Frame & Truss Manufacturing Association (FTMA), Koppers Performance Chemicals, Engineered Wood Products Association of Australasia, Hexion and Azelis.

It aims to identify and implement strategies to keep wood fibre in the supply chain, particularly treated timber and engineered wood products that are currently problematic at end-of-life. These products represent significant carbon stores that could have multiple usage lifespans if the systems for their repurposing were easy to access. Currently, they are a notable part of the 2.5 million tonnes of timber waste produced in this country every year.

Activities driven by the Project include mapping the volume and condition of unused wood resources, assessing national regulations and logistics challenges, and evaluating potential recovery solutions. Diverting treated and engineered wood products from waste streams both removes the problem of large-scale disposal requirements for timber treated with preservative chemicals and adhesives and also raises the possibility of cost-effective re-use or even take-back schemes that would fund themselves with new products made from the old.

For more on the Timber Circularity Project, click here.



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# Xylino shows LVL's strength

**A massive residential complex made of timber modules has just been completed.**

EUROPE has long been a leader in modular construction and also has notable runs on the board when it comes to sustainable design for manufacture – and high-quality engineered wood products such as LVL. Which makes it a surprise to see how few builds bring these three factors together at scale.

In Almere, near Amsterdam in the Netherlands, a new five-storey residential complex called Xylino has done just that. The project takes its name from the Greek word for wood and represents the first large-scale modular housing development in the Netherlands built entirely from LVL.

Recently completed by property developer De Alliantie Ontwikkeling B.V., part of housing corporation De Alliantie, together with constructor Koopmans Bouwgroep, the building provides 103 homes, including mid-market rental units, social housing apartments and ground-level residences, supported by a semi-underground parking structure and a shared car-free courtyard.

The building is assembled from 436 prefabricated wooden modules manufactured by geWOONhout. Each module was delivered to the construction site with integrated technical systems. Built entirely from Metsä's Kerto LVL, the structural system consists of four corner columns and integrated floor and roof elements. The interlocking assembly creates a strong



**1/ The modular design allows for a fast, almost Lego-like construction.**

Image: Marnix Klooster, supplied.

**2/ Despite the repeated modules, the building has individuality and charm.**

Image: Marnix Klooster, supplied.

**3/ Constructed from Kerto LVL, the modules were standardised in shape but had wide variety in design.** Image: Robert Aarts, supplied

and precise structure without the need for a concrete core.

Construction teams placed eight to 12 modules per day – three to four complete apartments. Every real-world component has a digital twin containing

dimensions, specifications and end-of-life instructions. Each module includes a QR code linking to this data, supporting precise fabrication today and reuse or recycling in the future. The approach creates consistency in manufacturing while still allowing flexibility in layout and housing typologies.

Performance requirements for acoustic comfort and fire safety were key considerations. Lighter foundations reduced transportation emissions, smaller on-site cranes and PEFC-certified wood sourcing contributed to a significantly lower carbon footprint compared to conventional building methods. Modules are designed for disassembly, reuse and material recovery, supported by the integrated digital system.

Aafke Van der Werf, director of geWOONhout, said, "The best thing about Xylino is that you can't tell from the outside that it was built using industrialised methods. To me, that proves that architectural freedom and modular construction can go hand in hand."

With its combination of speed, circularity, comfort and performance, Xylino demonstrates that modular LVL construction can deliver affordable, high-quality housing at scale. Bas Broeke, project manager from

Koopmans Bouwgroep, said, "This system is ready to be repeated. The way it works here means we can apply it in many more places."

To learn more about the build, click [here](#).

# Tooma Hall revitalisation

MAJOR Australian timber companies do more than just provide jobs and economic enrichment to the regions in which they operate: most are also philanthropic entities. The Hyne Community Trust is an excellent case in point for the Tumbarumba region, as demonstrated by the Tooma Hall revitalisation project.

This important community hub, backed by a small army of passionate volunteers, has been undergoing a revitalisation project, with a new deck and a commercial-grade kitchen almost complete.

The Hall is nestled amid the rolling hills of Tooma, a rural town just 20 minutes drive from Tumbarumba.

Importantly, Tooma Hall is officially recognised as a local evacuation centre in the event of an emergency, making its catering facilities and capability even more critical.

Overseen by a specialist subcommittee and supported by various grants, renovation works by local builder Hugh McGrath and Tooma-based architect Sarah Lebner have included general remodelling and restoration work, the installation of a large deck, accessibility compliance and overall aesthetic revitalisation.

The Hyne Community Trust has further contributed specifically to the commercial kitchen fit-out including commercial fridge and dishwasher, a food preparation trolley, event tables, crockery and cutlery.

Committee member and local resident, Sarah Whiteley said the Hall revitalisation is a labour of love and already delivering huge benefits,

“The Committee is focused on its vision to make this Hall an exceptional venue for quality events and the Hyne

Community Trust has helped us to deliver this,” said Whiteley.

“At the end of 2025, we held our first community Christmas Tree party featuring a long-table lunch along the new deck. Shortly thereafter, we hosted our first 21st birthday party. Both events were a huge success.

“Soon, we will have our first Tooma Easter Gymkhana since the Hall was renovated, plus we have grand plans for a big opening, an annual ball and weddings. This is in addition to small, regular community events such as workshops, quiz nights, exercise classes, guest speakers and much more.

“The committee is also working on bringing back the Tooma markets using this venue to meet the increasing regulatory and licencing needs as a result of the large crowds the market attracted,” Whiteley added.

Hyne Community Trust Director, Katie Fowden said the Tooma Hall is a good example of a successful Grant recipient: “All grant applications are assessed competitively, within Trust budget and in consideration of the lasting benefits to the community.

“The Tooma Hall is a great project, backed by a talented committee with demonstrated ability to deliver their vision. We look forward to following the journey of the Tooma Hall revitalisation project and the



**1/ The revitalised hall has a larger deck and a nearly completed commercial-grade kitchen, both as important for community events as for during emergencies.** All image: Hyne

**2/ A commercial fridge is part of the Hyne Community Trust contribution.**

many benefits this will deliver for the region.”

Local groups with similar projects are encouraged to seek funding. The Hyne Community Trust will open for applications in June 2026 for this year’s round of grants.

Eligible community organisations are encouraged to consider how the Hyne Community Trust can support them.

Projects must be valued over \$10,000 and demonstrate how they will provide lasting benefits for the community to meet the eligibility criteria.

The Hyne Community Trust was established in 2007 and has provided almost \$1,000,000 to the Tumbarumba region to date.

For more information, contact [tumbatrust@hyne.com.au](mailto:tumbatrust@hyne.com.au).



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