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Enews interview: Timber roundtable at NSW Parliament

COVER STORY P 3



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Australia-European FTA misses the mark

The removal of tariffs in the free trade agreement has upset primary producers.

THE Prime Minister and Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission, were smiling, but not everyone is happy about the new Australia-European Union Free Trade Agreement (A-EU FTA) signed by the Federal Government on Tuesday.

AFPA has expressed disappointment and concerns that under the deal, Australia will eliminate tariffs on European timber imports. These were previously set at 5% on timber products including structural timber, CLT and LVL, which European manufacturers produce in significant quantities.

AFPA CEO Diana Hallam said: "We echo the concerns raised by many other agriculture peak bodies today about the lack of opportunities arising from the deal for Australia's forest industries.

"Furthermore, the removal of trade tariffs – including on timber products – under the new A-EU FTA will challenge Australian sawn timber and engineered wood product manufacturers.

"Australia's domestic timber production is already under extreme pressure, including from surging timber imports, a stagnant housing market and rising domestic costs such as energy, insurance, labour, transport and fuel – and this trade deal will further undermine the competitiveness



Ursula von der Leyen in Brussels late last year.
Image: CC/Wikimedia Commons.

of Australian timber.

"We are disappointed that adding further price advantage to imports into our timber market, while government is adding costs to domestic production, will be highly detrimental to local timber manufacturing, which is one of the few primary industries that doesn't receive Federal Government support for Country-of-Origin labelling."

**“ AUSTRALIA'S DOMESTIC
TIMBER PRODUCTION
IS ALREADY UNDER
EXTREME PRESSURE**

On a more positive note, the A-EU FTA does not include a commitment to subscribe to the EU Deforestation Regulation.

"Fortunately, in a win for the sector, the A-EU FTA does not include deforestation regulation, and we will continue to engage with the EU on these problematic and trade-distorting measures in other international forums alongside the United States, Canada and New Zealand," Hallam said.

"While it's a disappointing outcome overall, we will continue to work with the Government to advocate for our sustainable forestry industry.

"Currently, we don't have a level playing field in Australia. However, with stronger support, sustainable timber industries can continue to grow, create employment, support sovereign capability, address climate change and underpin rural and regional communities."

Other primary producers have also expressed disappointment: "What the Australian government has accepted today appears to offer no material change for key agricultural commodities as what the government rightly rejected in October 2023," said Hamish McIntyre, National Farmers Federation president.

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Timber workers on Macquarie St

Alison Rudman from the TFTU talks to *Enews* about last week's Timber Industry Roundtable at NSW Parliament House.

IT'S been a big year for the NSW branch of the new Timber, Furnishing and Textiles Union (TFTU). Six months ago, the team was helping workers suddenly locked out of supply on the mid-North Coast in the wake of the Great Koala National Park (GKNP) moratorium announcement; last week, they were at NSW Parliament House, along with the AWU (which represents Forestry Corporation workers), members of the Softwoods Working Group, Timber NSW, Forestry Corporation and ForestWorks hosting a two-day roundtable and meeting with roughly 25 MPs to put the case for supporting the future of forestry jobs in NSW.

We spoke with Alison Rudman, NSW secretary for the TFTU, about the goals of the event held last Wednesday and Thursday, and which outcomes look promising. The idea for the roundtable was born out of the fallout from the GKNP, but the goal was to look forwards, not backwards.

"There was a genuine willingness from all parties, but particularly the government, to engage and get the balance right between jobs and the environment," Rudman said. "What we saw was really a resetting tone: a focus on practical solutions, not ideology. Most importantly, of course, workers felt heard, and that really matters after a long period of such uncertainty. All in all, a good couple of days."

The mix of attendees, from academic to industry body, business owner to worker, was strategic on the union's part, particularly with a Bob Brown Foundation-supported 'March for Forests' scheduled for the following Sunday.

"It was a really important opportunity for people to hear from the actual experts, the people who have spent their



About 25 politicians met with roundtable participants, including Janelle Saffin MP (centre in red), who worked closely with local timber businesses after the devastating Lismore floods. Industry figures included Carlie Porteous from the Softwoods Working Group (left), Alison Rudman (in blue) and Andrew Hurford, chairman Timber NSW (centre in graphic T-shirt). All images: courtesy TFTU

lives studying this and the people who spend every day actually doing this work," said Rudman. "To me, one of the most important outcomes was the high level of alignment across workers, employers and industry groups, and scientists on key priorities.

"That unity sends a strong signal to the government that there is a practical way forward, that this is an industry ready to work constructively with the government to secure its future."

Unlike the emotional messaging coming from the Sunday protests, the roundtable rooted itself in facts and data. Along with the scientific contingent who were able to describe the research underpinning responsible forest management in the state, workers whose families have been harvesting timber for generations in the same areas were able to share stories of their coupes and communities.

"While some of the solutions that were proposed were regionally specific,

“WE SHOULD AND CAN HAVE JOBS AND KOALAS. GOOD POLICY DELIVERS BOTH

everyone was grappling with the same types of issues," Rudman said. "Timber supply is top of that list, but also making sure that there is consistent demand for timber, fire management, making sure that the infrastructure is in place to support these communities and, of course, making sure that we back in these good jobs.

"The message from workers was

very clear: there is a future for these jobs, but only if the government takes practical steps now. Extending wood supply agreements is critical to providing certainty for communities and keeping people in work. So is having a look at the zoning around areas of high timber processing so that we make sure that there is access to forestry trees close to where people live and work. I think the message on the environment was clear as well. People said we should and can have jobs *and* koalas. Good policy delivers both."

PRACTICAL ACTIONS

Rudman said she and others were impressed by the willingness of many politicians to look in great detail at proposals such as a NSW timber-first approach to procurement.

"I know the Minns team have a more general procurement bill they're considering at the moment about local content, and we are hopeful that once that's in place, it will create a framework to then have a New South Wales timber-first policy," she said.

When it comes to zoning, the fallout

From P 3

from the GKNP has highlighted the fact that the timber sector is not prioritised in the ways that development and wildlife habitat are. "The Great Koala National Park has been a huge and incredibly distressing moment for timber workers, but there are a range of steps that need to be taken, not just addressing the koala park, but actually addressing the future of the industry," Rudman said. "Similarly to the way that you have renewable energy zones or special activation precincts as recognised zoning concepts, we want to make sure that there are timber zones recognised as places where those trees are for forestry because they're close to where timber workers live and work."

Skills development issues also had



The roundtable discussions looked for areas of commonality so that different interests and areas could work together for solutions.

particularly strong responses from members of the State Government, which has flagged this as a priority issue. Rudman spoke of the importance of creative solutions that deliver appropriate training locally, talking about her time in Tumut in the wake of Black Summer. "Some of that bushfire recovery funding was used to fund a skills development coordinator," she said.

"That skills development coordinator was able to engage with over 40

businesses and get over 400 people through training, because they could be that missing link who could say, 'Who needs chainsaw training?' and then determine, for example, that Forestry Corp had five people, Hyne Timber had three and AKD had two. No RTO is going to come out for any of those groups individually, but once you start piecing them together, suddenly you've got enough people to be able to run training close to home."

The roundtable group has asked the NSW Government to



Handy door hangers were provided to politicians who took time to meet with the group – to remind them of the importance of timber every time they take a meeting!

repeat the model in more towns and regions, delivering the practical steps it will take to make that training possible.

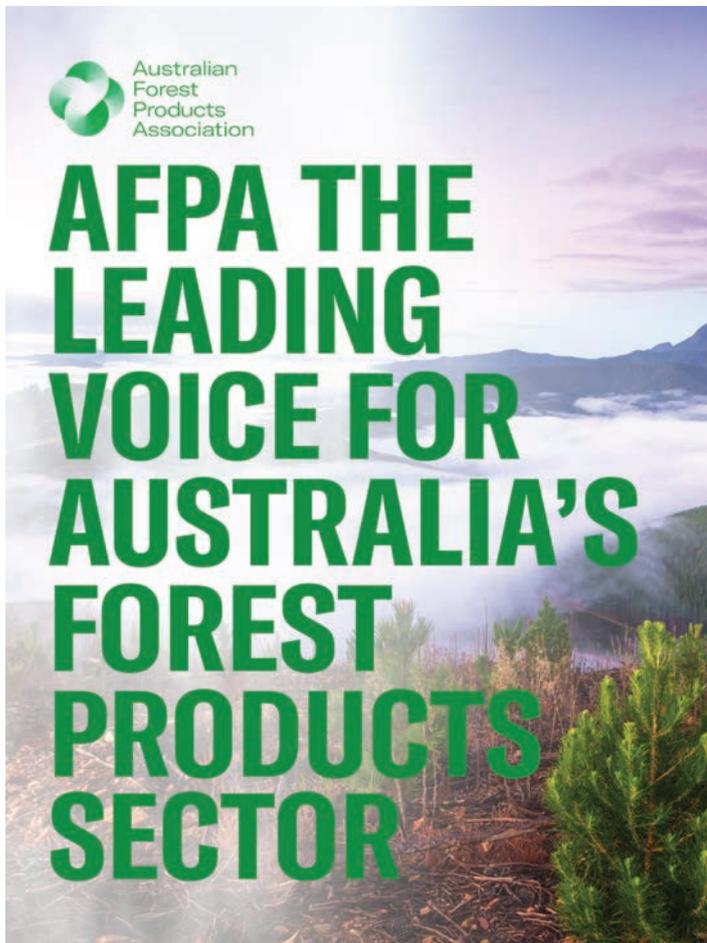
"So often we see small contractors with one or two employees, who are incredibly skilled at what they do, but they're not across all the opportunities. There might be free or subsidised training available that they need, but the ability to access it isn't there. Delivering services that connect the needs with what's available is a really critical part of closing that skills gap.

"That Tumut skills manager would say to some of those mill managers, 'I know you're busy, let me drop by. I'll even bring the coffees, let's just figure out who you need.' It makes so much sense rather than asking people who don't do paperwork all day to become paperwork experts."

IN THE SHADOW OF THE GKNP

While participants were working to ensure a future for NSW forestry, recent history hasn't been forgotten.

"It's been a really tough time for timber workers, and I think that the idea that the most extensive version of the GKNP



Cont P 5

From P 4

was implemented because it created a political fix with independents in inner-city Sydney is not something that sits comfortably with our members,” Rudman said.

“A number of the workers who were present are seventh-generation or sixth-generation forestry. They’re frustrated that people who are hobbyists feel very comfortable commenting on their work, because it’s not something that we see in any other industry. I always give the example that my hobby is binge-watching *Grey’s Anatomy*, but nobody thinks I should write health policy. Why are people for whom this is a hobby somehow writing forestry policy?”

However, Rudman emphasised that both TFTU and AWU members are also incredibly pragmatic, and they saw a genuine willingness from the government to engage: “As they said to me, there is a real opportunity here for the government to get this right. What they saw at the roundtable was a shared understanding that these jobs matter, these communities matter, and there are practical steps available right now to



Kate Washington MP, Member for Port Stephens (centre in red), was one of the politicians who met with roundtable participants.

secure both industry and environmental outcomes. The next step, of course, is turning that goodwill into action, and that is now where we hope the government continues to work with us.”

Only one proposition was rejected by the forestry team: it is not a jobs or the environment question, it must be both.

“We all want to see good, healthy, thriving forest, but there is a genuine scientific disagreement about the best method to do that,” Rudman said. “Timber workers do not resile from the way that they’ve cared for those forests, often for generations, because that is the way that we make sure we have forests well into the future.

“The other message that timber workers took forward was that these are communities already doing it tough, and uncertainty in the industry is making that worse. Secure jobs in forestry and timber are essential to the economic stability of regional towns, and a practical step

to redress the cost-of-living crisis. Government inaction will only deepen that cost-of-living pressure in these communities.”

Rudman talked about the ‘Herons Creek problem’, saying “that 80 jobs in Sydney might not sound like much, but 80-85 jobs in a town of approximately 240, that’s critical. You’d never take a third of the jobs out of Sydney and think there’d be no impact.”

But there have been positive GKNP impacts, too, such as the ways in which many employers have fought hand-in-hand with their workers for either jobs or fair compensation if those jobs couldn’t be saved.

“Our members are very clear, we really are stronger together,” Rudman said. “While, as a union, we will occasionally have disputes with employers, most of the time we have shared interests and there has been a tremendous level of respect built up, because everybody has seen that the others are there, doing their best in a difficult situation. I think that if everyone goes in assuming good intentions, it always makes it a bit easier to get to an outcome, and I have hope that will be the case here.”

“YOU’D NEVER TAKE A THIRD OF THE JOBS OUT OF SYDNEY AND THINK THERE’D BE NO IMPACT

On the cover: The roundtable brought together industry experts and associations, scientists, politicians and union members, including Alison Rudman, second from left. Image: courtesy TFTU

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FSC in action

A new video highlights the benefits of certification in Aotearoa New Zealand.

A NEW video from FSC Australia and New Zealand highlights the ways in which certification connects forests, people and products in Aotearoa New Zealand

From the sweeping stands of Kaingaroa Forest, where the iconic kārearea soars through the canopy, to the responsibly sourced timber shaping the homes and buildings of tomorrow, FSC's influence can be seen across Aotearoa New Zealand's wood-based economy. FSC-certified materials help connect people with the importance of responsible forest management, while highlighting the relationship between forests and the communities and wildlife that depend on them, both in Aotearoa and around the world. Through these connections, the FSC system weaves together forests, products, and people across the country.

Three people who have worked closely with the FSC team talked about how it has benefited their workplaces in the video. The first is Colin Maunder, general manager sustainability at Kaingaroa Tipu. His team has been managing a number of forests on the Central North Island of New Zealand for over 20 years, with FSC certification for all that time.

"Kārearea, or New Zealand Falcon, have been associated with our forest for the whole time the forest has been around," Maunder said.

"With FSC helping guide the way through some really strong standards around biodiversity, we've really taken the falcon on as our talisman. It's reputedly found at the highest density in New Zealand in Kaingaroa forest— the reason for that is a lot of other biodiversity there. The falcon being at the top of the food chain, it needs food to survive and there



1/ **FSC-protected New Zealand forest.**

2/ **The cycle of managed harvest and regrowth underpins sustainable forestry.**

All images: supplied

is plenty of food there for it."

At the same time, the local council has surveyed 800,000 recreational visits per annum to the forest, which is particularly popular with mountain bikers, who add \$120 million a year to the local economy.

"FSC is really important to us, because it proves ... that the wood comes from a responsibly managed forest, which is what we strive to be," Maunder concluded.

Ben Campbell, head of innovation at Abodo Wood Ltd, talked about the ways in which sustainability has helped the company. He said, "We've been FSC certified for 16 years now. The focus for us is producing what we call 'new growth feature timbers', by that I mean creating timber products that come from our renewable New Zealand radiata pine

resource and taking that wood fibre and adding processes to it to allow it to compete with the old growth timbers and really give consumers, builders and architects an opportunity to use something that solves some of the issues that we have in terms of deforestation and global climate warming."

Abodo Wood has been heavily involved with New Zealand's Living Wood projects, working alongside the Tūhoe iwi (tribe) who have been driving the movement. This has led the team supplying to global projects where architects have been calling for natural materials with comprehensive transparency in their provenance.

Karen Fifield, chief executive Te Nukuaio Wellington Zoo, is the final speaker. Forest conservation is critical to the zoo's mission, with many of its animals forest-dwelling species. The zoo features FSC messaging on its signage and zoo staff

also explain how visitors can help preserve vital habitat by choosing FSC products.

"One of the biggest outcomes we have at Nukuaio is that we give people understandable messages and understandable tools that they can use in their daily lives around conservation of species," Fifield said.

When they share the message about FSC products, "People go 'I can do that' and 'I can make that one difference in my life that's going to have a huge difference for animals if all of us do that. With a quarter of a million people coming through our zoo, if all of those people made one choice to use FSC products, that's a huge critical mass of change."

To see the full video, [click here](#).

For more on FSC ANZ, [click here](#).

MARCH

27: Perth Timber Construction Playbook – Fraser's, Kings Park, Perth, 8.00am - 10.30am. Hear directly from Playbook contributors as they unpack key insights, practical guidance and real-world case studies demonstrating timber innovation in action at this Timber Insight-hosted event. To register, visit: <https://events.humanitix.com/perths-timber-construction-playbook-launch/tickets>

31: NTHA Illegal logging and compliance webinar – ONLINE, 11.00am - 12.00pm (AEDT). Call timber merchants – stay compliant, informed and avoid the risks. Speakers: Simon Dorries and Matt de Jongh from Responsible Wood. To register, visit <https://www.ntha.com.au/events/events/>

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

15: Victoria & Tasmania Timber & Hardware Industry Awards – Arts Centre Melbourne, 6.30pm - 11.30pm. Join us in celebrating the Victorian/Tasmanian Timber and Hardware Industry. For more information,

visit <https://www.ntha.com.au/eventdetails/37604/2026-victoria-tasmania-timber-hardware-industry-awards> or contact Tahlia at events@ntha.com.au

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

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

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

[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 for more information.

23: SAVE THE DATE: AFPA members dinner – QT Hotel, Canberra, 6.30pm - 9.30pm. Further information, including speakers and registration details coming soon.

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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Illegal logging webinar

NTHA is hosting a free Illegal Logging Compliance webinar on 31 March, designed to help businesses navigate their obligations under the Illegal Logging Prohibition Act 2012.

If you are involved in sourcing, processing, or supplying timber, this session will give you clarity on what's required and how to get it right.

Industry experts Simon Dorries and Matt de Jongh from Responsible Wood will guide you through the essentials, including:

- Forest certification and chain of custody

- Sustainable forest management practices
- Timber legality requirements
- Due diligence systems for importers and domestic processors

This webinar is tailored for mill managers, production managers, supply



Illegally logged timber in Brazil.
Image: CC/Wikimedia Commons/Wilson Dias/Agência Brasil

managers, and quality assurance professionals who need confidence that their systems are compliant and up to standard. With increasing scrutiny on timber supply chains, understanding your responsibilities isn't optional: it's critical to avoiding costly delays and potential penalties.

When: Tuesday 31 March, 11.00am–12.00pm AEDT

Where: Online, free to join.

For registration, click here.

Good news from Europe

LAST week for International Day of Forests, Eurostat did a little maths to work out just how sustainable European forestry is. The answer is very.

For forests to grow healthily, the amount of wood harvested or removed in a given year should be lower than the

forest's natural growth rate (net annual increment). The difference between these two variables can serve as a proxy for sustainably harvested wood.

In 2023, 23 of the EU countries with available data recorded a net annual increment higher than wood removals.

Forest growth after harvest was the highest in Romania (39.9 million cubic meters), followed by Sweden (26.4 million) and Poland (26.3 million). Good news indeed!

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Thurgoona on toad watch

Residents have been asked to get the jump on a missing cane toad.

ANYONE playing Biblical Bingo in the Albury region will be having a good week: the last few years have seen fire, flood, pestilence if you count Covid and now the potential of a plague of toads. Or, fingers crossed, just one very lost cane toad that's hitched a ride to Albury Airport.

The invasive pest was recently captured and reported to FeralScan/ToadScan but was subsequently released. It was last seen on the Albury Airport site but remains at large. The NSW Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) has asked Thurgoona residents to join the hunt.

While the known range for these warty little sods is well north of the NSW/Victoria border region, they're famous for hitching rides on vehicles and in loads of building materials, nursery stock and landscaping supplies.



A young cane toad in the Northern Territory.
Image: CC Wikimedia Commons/Bidgee

Most likely, this is a lone escapee but, given how quickly they reproduce, capture is important in case there is a second.

Cane toads also pose a threat to pets and native animals as they produce a toxin that can poison dogs, cats and wildlife. Even a single adult toad represents a risk to local animals.

You can learn how to ID cane toads

and report sightings at ToadScan (click here).

If you suspect you have found a cane toad:

- Contain it by placing a bucket or container over it to stop it moving away.
- If it is safe to do so, and you are comfortable handling it, use gloves (cane toads release toxins) and place the animal in a container with a lid and air holes. Wash your hands after removing gloves.
- Take a clear photo and upload it to ToadScan.
- Do not harm the animal until it has been identified. Native frogs are often mistaken for cane toads.

When travelling into cane toad areas and returning home, please check vehicles, trailers and gear for stowaway toads.

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International Day of Zero Waste

The timber sector is ahead of the curve on sustainability, but we can do even better.

SOME 40-odd years ago, Australia introduced Cash for Cans, a precursor to today's container deposit scheme. It was an elegant solution to the emerging problem of aluminium can waste: the new soft drink container didn't rust away in the environment the way the old steel cans had, so, by making it financially worthwhile to collect them, an emerging waste problem was solved.

Four decades later and most of us dutifully separate out our recyclables and compostables. About 70% of cans are recycled annually. At the residential level, we're not bad at reducing waste. At an industrial level, things are less organised.

Next Monday (30 March) is the International Day of Zero Waste. While timber as an industry does better than most at working towards this target, we still have a way to go.

Sustainability is at our heart: what we cut from our forests, we grow again. If there's one lesson Australian consumers and activists still need to internalise, it's how effective the forestry sector is at regeneration. Waste from logs returns to the forest floor or is utilised by mills in their kilns and for other energy requirements. Biomass energy has long been popular in the industry and is only increasing with the new generation of highly efficient boilers.

Old timbers find new uses with specialist firms like Kennedy's Timbers turning them into high-end retail products. Timbers not suitable for structural lengths may be upcycled into engineered wood products, such as ply, CLT, LVL and glulam, and those products may also find a second life.

At the top end of the scale, architects and building designers are building re-use plans into their CLT and glulam panels and members. In the short-term,



Timber and panel waste picked up by reDirect is recycled back into Borg products. Image: courtesy Borg, via Timber Trader News

this has already been successful with multiple buildings at special events such as Expos and Olympics picked up and re-assembled or rebuilt into new structures elsewhere. We're waiting to see what happens with the first generation of major structures designed for re-use, but their owners say they have plans.

At the more day-to-day level, industrial recycling schemes run by companies such as Borg divert many thousands of tonnes of timber fibre from waste disposal every year. Through reDirect Recycling (another Borg company), the business collects particle board and softwood offcuts from their customers at a cost well below standard waste removal, this is then redirected into Polytec and Porta products where it is made into boards and laminates, which can again be recycled. The company also collects wood waste through local partners, such as transport companies with lots of pallet waste, and allows delivery from other businesses. All this means a high recycled content in products such as particleboard and

STRUCTAflor, using less new fibre for the same quality product.

With all that, only about half the wood waste generated in Australia is recycled. More than 40 years after aluminium can recycling kicked off, Australia still doesn't have any centralised systems for

wood recycling. Programs like the current Vineyard Post Reuse Pilot (see Enews #887) have their genesis from the ground up, with industry groups including FWPA and Wine Australia making it possible to run at scale.

For the most part, timber recycling is run on a peer-to-peer basis, with demolition teams letting local yards know when they come across something special and companies like Borg setting up local networks.

Despite the Federal Government targeting timber as one of the waste streams to reduce in its 2024 National Waste Policy Action Plan, it's just a target. There are guidelines for identifying and tracing recycled content, but no one coordinating how to implement them. The biggest government impact has come from energy subsidies that have helped companies update their biomass facilities.

So next Monday, as well as looking for ways you can close the waste loops in your own business, ask what assistance would help you get there and then call for it from your MP. The next Federal Election is only two years (probably) away and all parties should welcome policies that mean wins on the business and environmental fronts.

“SUSTAINABILITY IS AT OUR HEART: WHAT WE CUT FROM OUR FORESTS, WE GROW AGAIN”

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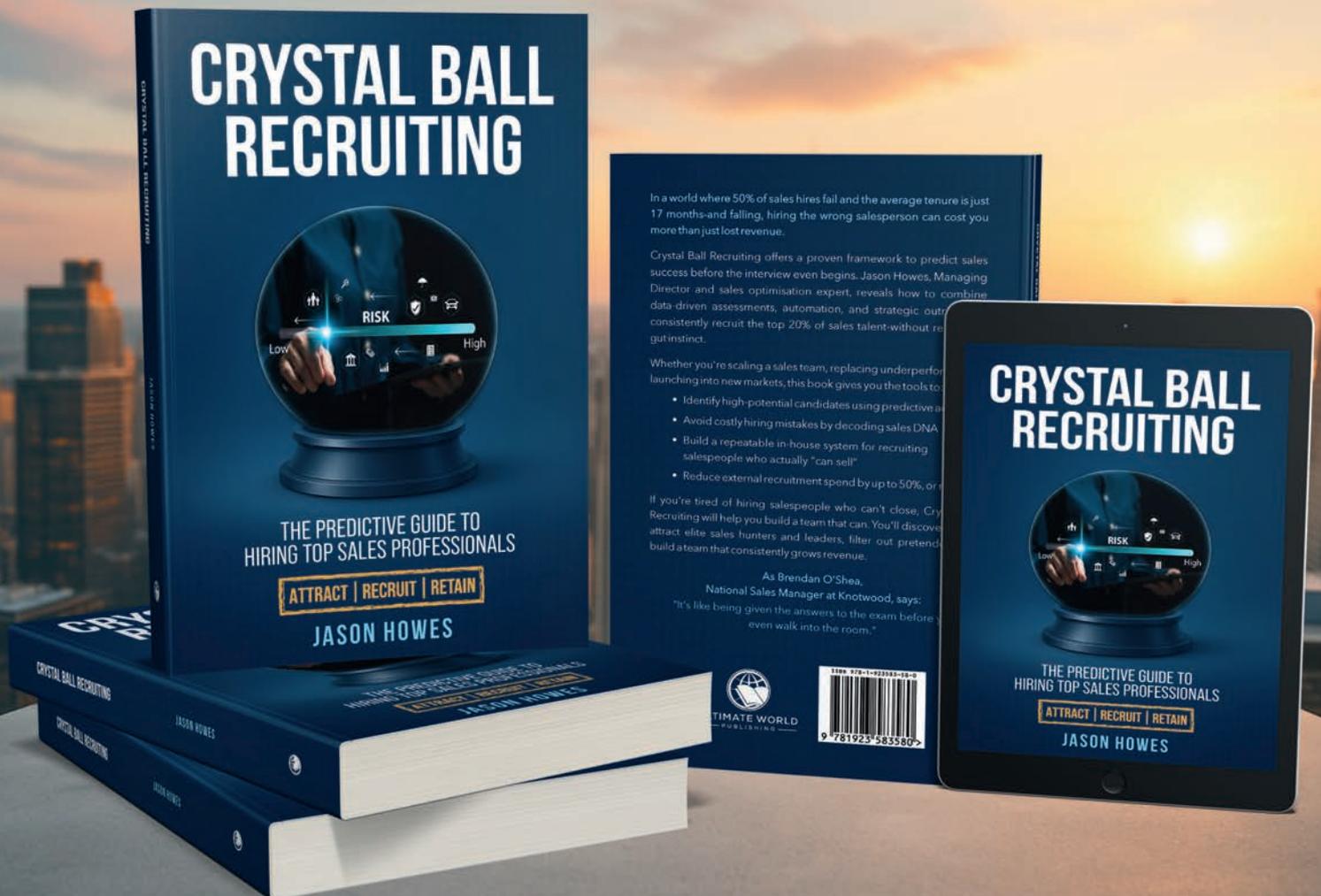
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Australia & New Zealand forest valuation standard

The new Standard will represent plantation and native forest values accurately.

FORESTS have been accorded important roles in future planning by governments in this region. They are seen as future building materials, current and future carbon stores and important agricultural supports. Add to this their multiple habitat and recreational uses and they are undeniably valuable assets.

When it comes to everything from making industry predictions to economic assessments to financing those assets, we need to know exactly how valuable they are.

Which is why Forestry Australia and the New Zealand Institute of Forestry (NZIF) launched the Australia & New Zealand Forest Valuation Standard late last week.

The ANZ Forest Valuation Standard, a joint NZIF and Forestry Australia initiative, is the result of nearly a decade's work by the national associations to bring together their country-level forest standards into a single document capable of representing plantation and native forests.

The first Australia & New Zealand Forest Valuation Standard was developed in consultation with forest professionals, researchers, industry and practitioners on both sides of the Tasman. It reflects the latest thinking and best practice in forest valuation across both countries and is designed to assist valuation practitioners, forest managers, investors, and those reporting forest values.

Dr Michelle Freeman, president of Forestry Australia, said: "The merging of the separate country-level standards held by Forestry Australia and New Zealand



1/ While Australian forests like Milbrulong State Forest may look nothing like their New Zealand counterparts, the new Standard provides consistent benchmarks for valuing them. Image: CC Wikimedia Commons/B897

2/ The new standard will help accurately value forests before they become timber logs. Image: CC/Wikimedia Commons/Marek Slusarczyk

Institute of Forestry is a significant milestone. It reflects the strength and value of ongoing collaboration and partnership between our countries, our industries and professional organisations.

"Importantly, while the ANZ Forest Valuation Standard is intended to address common interests of our national forest industries, it is flexible enough to allow for differences. The Standard will be an evolving tool to help shape the forest sector's future and support continued innovation and improvement, as markets, reporting expectations, and sustainability considerations continue to evolve.

Concurrent with the ANZ Forest Valuation Standard, Forestry Australia

has launched the Australian Carbon Standard Exposure Draft, to sit alongside the existing New Zealand Carbon Standard.

Forestry Australia has also recently examined the implications for Australian reporting entities arising from the newly mandated Australian Accounting Standards Board Climate Related Disclosures (AASB S2).

These latest developments will be examined at the upcoming Forestry Australia Valuation Standard Summit, to be held next week in Melbourne. (Click here for details.)

Convenor of the Forestry Australia Valuation Committee Keith Lamb said "We are proud to celebrate the launch of the new ANZ Forest Valuation Standards and to showcase our work in Climate Related Disclosures. The Summit will also provide us an opportunity to recognise

the work of those who preceded us. Professor Ian Ferguson and Dr Jerry Leech who prepared the first Australian Standard in the early 2000s, and Professor Bruce Manley and Messrs Bill Liley and Brian Rawley who pioneered the New Zealand Standard over 30 years ago."

James Treadwell, President of the New Zealand Institute of Forestry, said: "Our members have contributed voluntary time and expertise to forest valuation standards for more than three decades. The first New Zealand standard was developed in the 1990s and has been continually refined since

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then as markets, reporting expectations, and forest management practices have evolved.

"This joint Australia and New Zealand Forest Valuation Standard is an important step forward. It reflects the strong professional relationship between the New Zealand Institute of Forestry and Forestry Australia and provides a consistent framework which will strengthen valuation practice across both countries.

"On behalf of NZIF, I would like to acknowledge the many members, in particular Bruce Manley (convenor since 1993) and Bill Liley, who have contributed their time over the years to developing and maintaining these standards. Their voluntary work underpins confidence in how forest assets are valued and reported."

The development of the Standard has been supported by Forest & Wood Products Australia (FWPA), Jodie Mason, Head of Forest Research at FWPA remarked that, "FWPA is proud to have supported the finalisation of the Standard

and development of the Australian Carbon Standard Exposure Draft.

"Forests deliver significant economic, social, environmental and carbon value – and this Standard sets an important benchmark for conventional forest valuations and provides a strong platform for building on valuation of non-wood forest values. Recognising value consistently and transparently strengthens confidence in forestry across Australia and New Zealand."

The Standard will be unpacked at the Forest Valuation Summit in Melbourne next Monday and Tuesday, featuring more than 23 speakers from Australia, New Zealand and overseas. The program includes Professor Rodney Keenan (University of Melbourne), Dr Michelle Freeman (Forestry Australia), James Treadwell (NZIF), Jodie Mason (FWPA), Nick Ping (Manulife Investment Management), Dr Eleanor Tew (Forestry

England), Michael Barbara (J.P. Morgan), Alexandra White (Deloitte), and Shakir Rahman (Clean Energy Regulator).

In addition to the launch of the standard, key topics discussed at the Summit will include: trends in valuing land under forests; good practice in forest valuation; climate-related financial disclosures (CFRD) and why this is important for forestry; getting ready for the new CRFD compliance regime – reporting obligations and implications for forest owners and managers; the Carbon Standard Australian Exposure Draft; turning carbon into capital; natural capital and financial statements; and the future of forest valuation

Dr Freeman concluded, "the release of the Standard is more than just a launch. It is a practical step toward stronger valuation practices, better reporting, and greater confidence in forestry's role in investment, sustainability, and the economy. By combining trans-Tasman expertise, the Standard aims to provide a stronger foundation for assessing, communicating, and understanding forest value across the sector."

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

“THE STANDARD WILL BE AN EVOLVING TOOL TO HELP SHAPE THE FOREST SECTOR'S FUTURE

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Image: AKD

James Hyne retires

The fifth-generation Hyne stalwart is wrapping up a 50-year career in timber next week.

FOR James Hyne, his career at the family business began as a school holiday job in 1976 when, aged 15, he would ride his push bike to work in the Maryborough pole yard.

Two years later he officially began as an employee, with his grandfather, third-generation Lambert Hyne, telling everyone that he was not to receive any special treatment. His first job was shovelling mud at the treatment plant.

From hardwood to softwood, pole yards to log yards, operations to the office, James worked across many parts of the business including as a director on the board. He has seen and been part of many acquisitions, restructures, leadership changes and new locations.

However, James says it is the many faces and characters he has had the privilege to work with over the years, that are his most treasured experiences and memories: "It has always been said, from generation to generation, that Hyne is about its people and I couldn't agree more. I thank all those who have been part of my journey over the years – far too many to mention.

"There have been many great leaders that have provided inspiring mentoring, and it has been a privilege to be part of a company built on the strength of its people. From riding my push bike into the pole yard at 15 to walking out after 50 years, it has been an extraordinary journey and one I will always be grateful for.

"As I retire, I acknowledge the exciting



1/ James Hyne on his first day, cycling to work at the family business. Image: courtesy Hyne

2/ Official launch of the Parliamentary Friends of the Queensland Forest and Timber Industry in 2019, Parliament House. (L-R) James Hyne (TQ Chair), Bruce Saunders (Member for Maryborough), Tony Perrett (Member for Gympie), Mick Stephens (TQ CEO). Image: courtesy Timber Queensland

3/ Local schools have benefitted from James Hyne's career, both with charitable support and career advice. Here he is at Riverside Christian College with Tuan Site Manager Dave McInnes (right). Image: Hyne?

times for Hyne, particularly through the partnership with James Jones and the continued global growth and expansion.

"I wish the business and the broader

industry, every success for the future."

In paying tribute to James' 50 years of service, Hyne Group chair, Tom Bruce-Jones said his retirement is extremely well-deserved.

"James has made a remarkable contribution to both the business and the community with an incredible 50 years of service," he said.

"Being highly regarded throughout the company and as a local, Maryborough man, the announcement of his retirement will no doubt be met with mixed emotions. However, I am sure we can all agree it is well-deserved to say the least, and I wish him all the very best with this next, hopefully more relaxed, chapter."

In his most recent role at Hyne, James has been a particularly active member of the Maryborough region community including supporting local men's sheds and charities such as Rally for a Cause. He has often been seen at the forefront of recruitment expos as well as speaking at many events and in classrooms, promoting the long history, sustainability and future opportunities within the industry.

James Hyne also gave 16 years of dedicated service as a highly respected Timber Queensland director, with the peak body saying James has strengthened the industry.

Timber Queensland chair Ross Lakin said the commitment James demonstrated over five decades with

Diesel costs up, business down

Fuel hikes are severely impacting transport operators.

WE probably weren't grim enough with last week's predictions regarding the fuel crisis (*Enews* 890), because it took less than a week for diesel to crack \$3.50 in some towns and disappear entirely from more than 200 servos across the country.

Despite government calls for people to only buy the fuel they need, demand has remained sky-high and the flow-on effects are already showing.

Forest and Wood Communities Australia is calling on federal and state governments to act after one of New South Wales's largest timber haulage operators revealed he can no longer guarantee his business will survive.

"With 90% of our population living on just 0.25% of Australia's land mass, regional communities are feeling the impact of surging fuel prices more acutely than their city cousins," said FWCA Chairman Steve Dobbins.

He shared the story of Denis Greensill, who runs more than 35 trucks across NSW, moving between 5000 and 10,000m³ of hardwood every month. Greensill said fuel prices have risen 58% in recent weeks, adding 86 cents a litre to his operating costs.

At 43 to 45 cents per kilometre in fuel costs and 50,000 litres consumed weekly across the fleet, Greensill is losing \$4 on every tonne he moves. He is unable to



Steve Dobbins of FWCA says that rising diesel costs may push some log transport firms out of business. Image: supplied

immediately pass the costs on because his customer is the NSW Government (Forestry Corporation) and under his contract, he is only entitled to a quarterly review.

"I need to find \$40,000 every week," he said. "Otherwise, it comes out of my bank account, and I go out the door."

FWCA is calling on the Government to temporarily cut the fuel excise by removing the Road User Charge (RUC) and GST for heavy vehicle users.

While the Treasurer has so far resisted those calls, Amanda Rishworth,

Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations, has announced changes to the Fair Work Act: under the amendment, truck drivers and road support businesses will be able to make an emergency application for a contract chain order, replacing the current wait time of at least six months.

A contract chain order allows the Fair Work Commission to demand retailers, mining companies, manufacturers and other transport clients to offer fair pay and conditions for contractors like truck drivers.

Energy Minister Chris Bowen also announced on Tuesday the standard for diesel had been adjusted for the next six months, which would bring more fuel into the system for farmers, truckers and regional communities without harming engines.

Shadow Transport Minister Bridget McKenzie called on the government to put biofuels on the next national cabinet agenda as a potential practical way to mitigate fuel shocks sparked by overseas events.

"Alternative homegrown Australia biofuel, blended fuel, can help reduce this exposure, support national energy resilience and reduce emissions," she said.

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Hyne was reflected equally in his efforts to champion the needs and priorities of the forest and timber industry during his tenure on Timber Queensland's board of directors.

"James's guidance, insight and deep understanding of our industry have made him a wise and trusted voice representing members across the sector," Lakin said.

"During his terms as Chair and Deputy Chair of Timber Queensland there have been many challenging periods, including resource security and market pressures, Covid and labour shortages, but his steady approach and willingness to put

in the time have helped keep Timber Queensland focused and deliver for industry."

Timber Queensland CEO Mick Stephens praised James for his passion and long-term commitment to the interests of the industry across Queensland.

"In his role as a director and more broadly, James contributed to many positive developments from the establishment of the Parliamentary Friends of the Queensland Forest and Timber Industry network through to training and skills initiatives, and the formation and governance of the Queensland regional forestry hubs, including his role as Chair of the South

East and Central Queensland forestry hub," Stephens said.

"More recently, he has been actively involved in board deliberations into the Queensland Future Timber Plan, a major initiative being co-designed and implemented with the Queensland Government.

"The Hyne name is widely recognised in the Queensland timber industry with a rich family history, and James is testimony to this enduring legacy which continues on through the industry he has helped shape and grow into the future," Stephens concluded.

James Hyne's official last day will be 31 March.

NEFD upgrades underway

New Zealand's exotic forestry data system is being improved to become more accurate, easier to update and faster to use.

THE Bioeconomy Science Institute Maiangi Taiao is partnering with the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) to improve New Zealand's exotic forestry data system.

The partnership will focus on upgrading New Zealand's National Exotic Forest Description (NEFD), using Bioeconomy Science Institute technology, expertise and analytics to ensure it remains fit for purpose in a rapidly evolving data environment.

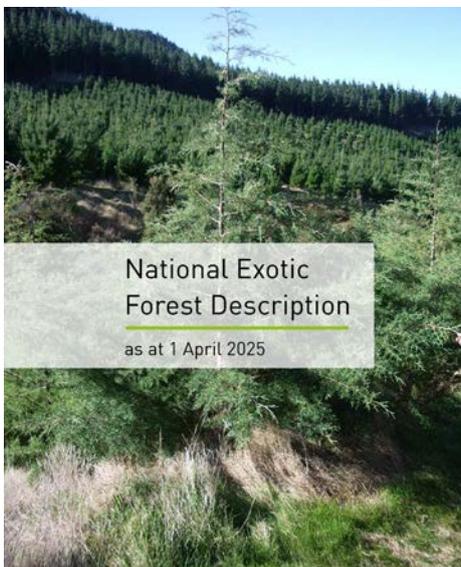
The NEFD is a key annual dataset that outlines plantation forest area by species, age, and location. Its insights support wood supply forecasting, climate reporting, policy development, and investment planning across the forestry sector.

As the main source of facts about New Zealand's exotic production forests, the NEFD helps the MPI make informed decisions about the future, and has been published every year since 1985. The NEFD is a tier 1 statistic, which means it's one of New Zealand's most important national measures.

The upgrade aims to make the NEFD more accurate, faster to update, and easier for people to use. To do this, changes made over three projects will include:

- combining several forestry surveys;
- cutting down repeated requests for the same information;
- using spatial data, like satellite images, along with computer modelling and machine learning to produce the description of New Zealand's forest estate;
- only asking for details that can't be gathered from this technology;
- improving MPI's internal data systems.

"By moving from traditional survey-based reporting to spatial data analysis,



The 2025 NEFD Report. Image: supplied

the improved process will deliver more timely and higher quality information to government, industry, and researchers, strengthening evidence-based decision making," said MPI director forestry insights Debbie Ward.

"The planned improvements are a major step forward and will ensure the NEFD continues to provide accurate and consistent information about the country's exotic forest estate. This will reduce reporting pressure on forest owners and survey participants while improving the precision and depth of national forestry insights."

MPI has contracted the Bioeconomy Science Institute to deliver core components of the NEFD, producing the exotic forest description from freely available imagery. The first results are expected in September 2026. These will be included in the NEFD release in December 2026.

"The Bioeconomy Science Institute brings specialist expertise in remote sensing, forestry science and spatial analytics, supported by its Forest Insights model, which uses advanced spatial imagery interpretation to describe forest

characteristics with greater accuracy," Ward says.

Michael Watt, Bioeconomy Science Institute New Value from a Digital Forest and Wood Sector portfolio lead, says the upgrade represents a significant milestone for the sector.

"New Zealand has long been a leader in forestry innovation," Watt said. "By embedding advanced remote sensing and spatial analytics into the NEFD, we are building a next-generation forest information system that reflects the scale and sophistication of today's data environment."

Alongside this project, MPI is also reviewing intentions and forest management details of the NEFD to ensure the modernised system continues to meet the needs of participants and the wider forestry sector. Further updates will be provided as the program progresses and more updates about the improvement programme and its three projects will be released next month.

What this means for people who use NEFD data

Some NEFD information will now come from satellite images and modelling instead of surveys. This will make the data more complete and up to date. Because of the new methods, some data may look different from past years. As the modelling improves, some results may also change over time. MPI will explain what has changed and how it fits with older data.

The current NEFD survey will be phased out after 2026. This means less time for forest managers spent filling out forms. A smaller survey will replace it. This new survey will only ask for things that spatial data cannot show, such as:

- planting plans
- harvest plans
- decisions about planting or deforesting.

MPI will keep forest owners informed as the new system is rolled out and explain what information is still needed. Questions can be emailed to teururakau@mpi.govt.nz

“WE ARE BUILDING A NEXT-GENERATION FOREST INFORMATION SYSTEM”

Forests as microplastics indicators

WE'VE been worried about the prevalence of microplastics in our waterways for decades. Now, new research in *Nature Communications Earth & Environment* from Collin J. Weber and Moritz Bigalke at the Institute of Applied Geosciences in Germany's Technical University Darmstadt shows that our forests are just as severely affected.

The two geoscientists were familiar with work looking at microplastics (MPs) in urban and agricultural soils, which are affected by plastics directly. But little research had been done on MPs in forests. Several studies had shown a worrying rate of MP pollution in forests ranging from China to Serbia and Mexico, so they decided to look for the existence of MPs in local forests and track back the likely sources.

For their paper, Forest soils accumulate microplastics through atmospheric deposition, the research team collected samples from four forest sites east of Darmstadt in Germany. They analysed soil, fallen leaves, and atmospheric deposition (the transport of substances from the Earth's atmosphere to the Earth's surface) using a newly developed method combined with spectroscopic techniques.

In addition, the scientists created a model to estimate how much microplastic has entered forests from the atmosphere since the 1950s. This helped them assess how much of the total pollution stored in forest soils can be traced back to airborne sources.

The results were great for their research paper, not so good for the forests.

Fig. 3: Estimated cumulative throughfall deposition of microplastics (p m^{-2}) under different scenarios ranging from minimal to extreme combined with European Union (EU) plastic production (Mt^{-1}) according Plastic Europe (2014, 2023)^{66,67} and fit to total microplastic stocks (p m^{-2}) in forest soils.

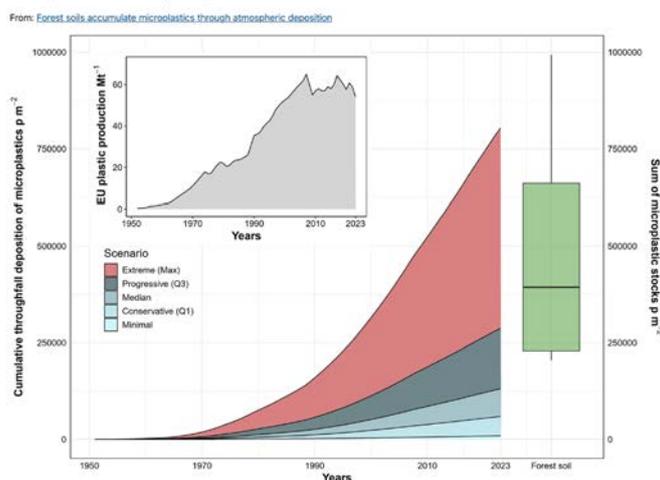


Figure 3 from the paper shows the risk of forest microplastic pollution if we don't lower the quantities entering the atmosphere. Image: courtesy Weber, C.J., Bigalke, M. Forest soils accumulate microplastics through atmospheric deposition. *Commun Earth Environ* 6, 702 (2025). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s43247-025-02712-4>

The authors said: "Our results indicate that direct atmospheric MP deposition and canopy-trapped MPs reaching the soil by throughfall and litter fall are the major sources of MPs to forest soil. Ground-based MP sources, such as littering or outdoor activities, are a possible additional minor source. MPs enter the soil from the surface and are finally accumulated in lower mineral soil by litter turnover processes. The total MP stocks and concentrations in the soils are high, indicating diffuse MP pollution."

Additional possible sources such as tree shelters were also noted, but Weber and Bigalke expressed confidence in atmospheric MPs being the major source.

Unfortunately, the discovery is of far more than academic interest. As they write: "Once introduced to soil systems, MPs can influence physicochemical soil properties,

biogeochemical processes, soil microorganisms and, as a consequence, plant performance and key chemical transformation processes (e.g., carbon and nitrogen cycling)."

While EU plastic production has roughly plateaued since the turn of the century, the levels of atmospheric MPs have steadily increased in recent decades thanks to the cumulative effect of existing plastics disintegrating and being joined by new sources.

The research suggests that forests are good indicators of airborne plastic pollution, which may represent a threat to humans: breathing in plastics is unlikely to be good for us. The methodology also establishes a foundation for calculating MP pollution in forests and helping to address the additional stresses it will put onto those ecosystems.

To read the full paper, click here (open access).



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