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ISSUE 892 // 2 April 2026

# timber & FORESTRY *e*news

## Government excise and RUC relief to help fuel crisis

COVER STORY P 2



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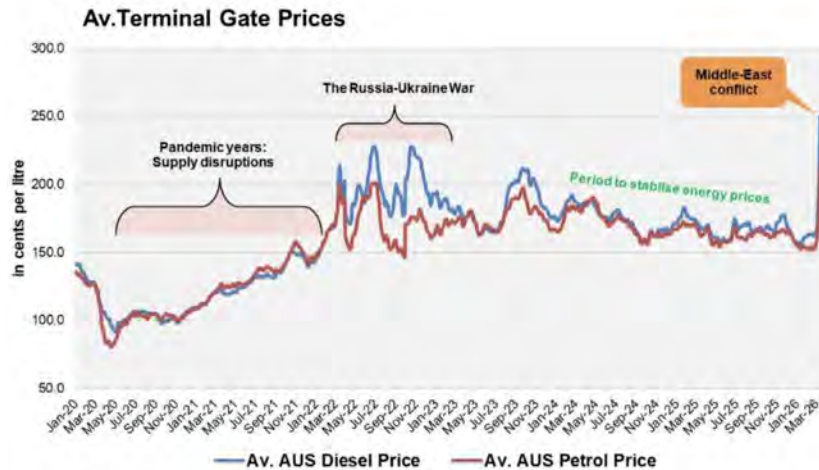
# Fuel crisis update: ongoing pressures on Australian forestry

## AFPA continues to monitor widespread supply chain risks

AS the fuel supply crisis triggered by the Middle East conflict enters its second month, Australia's forest products industry continues to face significant disruption. Wholesale diesel prices remain elevated by approximately 50% and petrol by around 35% since mid-March 2026, with flow-on effects rippling through freight, logistics and operating costs across the sector.

The conflict that erupted at the end of February 2026 has already disrupted roughly 20% of global oil supply. In Australia, Terminal Gate Prices for diesel, vital for transport and distribution, have been hit hardest. These sustained increases are feeding into business costs and are expected to pass through to consumers, adding further pressure to inflation at a time when many industries are still navigating broader economic headwinds.

Earlier analysis from Forest & Wood Products Australia (FWPA) showed how this external shock compounded pre-existing challenges. The NAB Monthly Business Survey for February



**Average wholesale energy price in Australia.** Image: Australian Institute of Petroleum (AIP), FWPA analysis

2026 had already recorded business confidence slipping into negative territory, alongside persistent inflation and capacity utilisation hovering near long-term averages. With GDP growth for December 2025 at 2.6% year-on-year largely supported by housing and public spending, the Reserve Bank of Australia had forecast a slowdown through

“WE WELCOME ANY INFORMATION FROM MEMBERS ABOUT THE QUANTUM OF IMPACTS”

thanked members who had shared their experiences and outlined the association's ongoing engagement with government.

“AFPA has been invited to participate in several briefings and forums in respect of the fuel crisis and has been contacted for advice by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF),” Ms Hallam wrote. “We have provided some advice to DAFF after speaking with Board Members.”

2026–2028. The prolonged fuel price surge now adds another layer of uncertainty.

In her recent letter to members, Australian Forest Products Association (AFPA) Chief Executive Officer Diana Hallam described the impact on the forest products value chain as “significant and widespread”. She

Cont P 3

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From P 2

AFFPA continues to work primarily through DAFF, the National Farmers' Federation and the National Coordination Mechanism, while also responding to inquiries from MPs and discussing housing and construction supply issues with the relevant minister. Ms Hallam noted the government's awareness of forestry's importance to food security through pallets and packaging, drawing on lessons from the COVID period. At the time of her letter, fuel rationing had been ruled out in the immediate term.

Since then, National Cabinet has met and released the National Fuel Security Plan, a four-level framework to guide the national response as the situation evolves. Australia is currently at Level Two: "Keeping Australia Moving", which focuses on securing additional supplies from trading partners, monitoring fuel stocks, encouraging voluntary reductions in fuel use, and considering regulatory adjustments such as allowing longer trailers for freight efficiency.

Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said after the meeting: "We need to be very clear with Australians that the longer this war goes on, the worse the impacts will be. We have a plan to get through this." He confirmed the country remains "substantially away" from more severe stages. Western Australia Premier Roger Cook added that Level Four, where consumption or distribution could be mandated, is "a long way from" current conditions.

To provide immediate cost relief, the Australian Government is slashing the fuel excise in half, from 52.6 cents to 26.3 cents per litre, from 1 April 2026 to 30 June 2026. This measure is expected to reduce the price of petrol and diesel by 26.3 cents per litre. In addition, the National Heavy Vehicle Road User Charge (RUC), currently 32.4 cents per litre and paid by heavy vehicle operators on diesel to cover road wear, will be reduced to zero for the same three-month period. The government has also deferred the next scheduled increase in the RUC for six months.



**Australia is currently in level two of the National Fuel Security Plan. While voluntary lessening of driving is encouraged, the priority for the government remains securing reliable fuel shipments.** Image: Shutterstock

These steps aim to ease cost pressures on businesses, including freight and logistics operators heavily reliant on diesel.

The plan escalates to Level Three (Taking Targeted Action), which could include voluntary demand-reduction measures such as working from home or slower driving, and Level Four (Protecting Critical Services), where fuel would be prioritised for emergency services, utilities and other essential functions, potentially including mandated rationing or distribution.

On the supply outlook, Ms Hallam had relayed advice from the National Coordination Mechanism that fuel arrivals were still on track but expected to become more uncertain from mid-April 2026. Contracted customers are now taking their full bulk allocations, squeezing spot-market supply, particularly in regional areas. The four major suppliers dominating 85% of the wholesale market are drawing down stocks, while Asian refineries continue operating from existing inventories. The Australian Institute of Petroleum remains cautiously confident in overall supply volumes, though prices are unlikely to ease soon and regional independents are already under strain.

As the agricultural winter sowing season begins, domestic and international freight costs are continuing

to rise at a time when demand for fuel and fertiliser peaks. Labour shortages are also being reported in some rural areas as workers reduce travel. Victorian farmers have raised concerns about the lack of explicit prioritisation for agriculture in the current plan, warning that without clear recognition of food and fibre supply chains as essential, producers could face disadvantages if shortages worsen. This is particularly relevant for the forest products sector, given its close links to agricultural packaging and logistics.

The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission continues to monitor retail prices closely across capital cities and more than 190 regional sites, watching for anti-competitive behaviour. It remains ready to authorise collaborative actions where needed to support businesses through the crisis.

AFFPA is maintaining direct dialogue with politicians and has encouraged members to provide specific details on impacts.

"We continue to discuss these issues with politicians and their staff, and we welcome any information from members about the quantum of impacts and particular circumstances facing Member businesses," Ms Hallam wrote.

She assured members that further briefings would be provided as developments unfold.

With the National Cabinet plan and temporary tax relief measures now in place, the combined picture from FWPA's economic insights and AFFPA's advocacy highlights the need for ongoing vigilance. The forest products sector, spanning regional operations in Tasmania to national supply chains supporting housing, construction, agriculture and food security, faces sustained cost pressures and potential disruptions.

As the situation evolves, targeted and timely action will be critical to protecting industry resilience and preventing wider economic ripple effects.

“THE LONGER THIS WAR GOES ON, THE WORSE THE IMPACTS WILL BE”

# Daylight saving ends

## Time to check your smoke detectors.

THIS weekend marks the end of daylight-saving time in Australia. On Sunday 5 April, residents in NSW, the ACT, South Australia, Victoria, and Tasmania will turn their clocks back one hour at 3am. The change means lighter mornings and darker evenings ahead.

For those living outside daylight saving states, this is a timely reminder that time differences between states will shift once again as we go from five different time zones back to three, which can affect everything from work calls to travel plans.

The clock change also serves as a perfect prompt to check your smoke detectors at home and in the workplace. Working smoke alarms can be lifesavers, and proper maintenance is essential for keeping them reliable.

Fire and Rescue NSW recommends the following simple maintenance routine:



**Smoke detectors are an essential part of safety for your home and business. Don't skip on proper care and maintenance.** Image: Jessica Hockridge

- **Once a month:** Test your smoke alarm batteries by pressing and holding the test button for at least five seconds until you hear the beeps.

- **Every six months:** Vacuum dust from your smoke alarms. Removing particles helps prevent false alarms and ensures smoke can reach the sensor quickly.
- **Every year:** Replace lead or alkaline batteries every 12 months.
- **Every 10 years:** Replace all smoke alarms with new 10-year lithium-powered models. These sealed units only need replacing every decade (or earlier if the manufacturer specifies).

Taking a few minutes this weekend to test and maintain your smoke detectors could make all the difference in an emergency. Whether you're adjusting clocks this weekend or not, make safety a priority. A quick check now means greater peace of mind for the year ahead.

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**AFPA THE LEADING VOICE FOR AUSTRALIA'S FOREST PRODUCTS SECTOR**

# NSW to adopt new National Construction Code

NSW will adopt the new National Construction Code (NCC 2025) on 1 May 2027, providing the state's building industry with more time to adjust to the new requirements so it can continue to deliver the homes the state needs.

The NCC is Australia's primary set of building standards covering essential health, safety, amenity, and sustainability requirements, published by the Australian Building Codes Board (ABCB) in collaboration with the Australian and State and Territory Governments. NCC 2025 implements new provisions for the commercial construction sector and a small subset of essential quality and safety improvements for residential building.

The ABCB recently published a preview version of the NCC 2025 detailing the changes to the code, which will be available for adoption by State and Territory Governments from 1 May 2026.

NSW has decided to delay the full commencement of the NCC 2025 by 12 months after the full version becomes available May 2026. This transition period prior to commencing NCC 2025 will provide the construction industry with more time to adjust to the changes so they can continue to build homes while ensuring key amendments in the code can still be applied to new building work

**“ THIS TRANSITION PERIOD WILL ALSO MINIMISE FUTURE COMPLIANCE RISK**



**The new NCC 2025 will be available to governments for adoption on 1 May 2026. NSW is planning to implement it after a 12-month transition period to allow time for industry to adjust.**  
Image: Shutterstock

without significant delay. It will also minimise future compliance risk and disruption to projects set to commence early next year.

NSW also plans on making a number of variations to the NCC 2025, to ensure changes align with the NSW Government's policy settings and have minimal impact on the residential construction sector.

The variation process will also ensure that the new provisions do not conflict with requirements set out in state legislation and the technical building, plumbing and drainage requirements applicable in NSW.

The NSW variations to the NCC will include giving apartment building owners undertaking remedial building works the choice to utilise the waterproofing requirements set out in either the current

edition of the NCC or the new NCC 2025. This flexibility is expected to keep costs down for homeowners.

Additionally, under the package of variations, the new energy efficiency standards in the NCC 2025 will not apply to the common areas of apartment buildings.

Information on all NSW variations will be available when the full suite of the NCC 2025 is published on 1 May 2026.

Minister for Building, Anoulack Chanthivong said, “The Minns Labor Government is focused on building more homes to buy and rent for the people of NSW.

“We are working in lockstep with the construction industry to ensure these homes are high-quality, safe and sustainable. The NCC 2025 represents sensible and reasonable steps towards that goal.

“We want to make sure this does not cause disruption to the construction sector's ability to deliver homes and meet housing demand in NSW, which is why we have provided a 12-month transition period to the new NCC requirements.

“This transition period will also minimise future compliance risk by allowing industry to plan for the changes in the NCC 2025 and factor them into their new projects ahead of time.”

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# A note from the Publisher

## South African Forest Contractors Association

In this issue we are pleased to announce a strategic relationship with the South African Forestry Contractors Association (SAFCA). Roger Johnston is the Chief Executive Officer and a subscriber to *Timber and Forestry Enews*. Welcome aboard SAFCA and thank you for promoting *Enews* amongst your growing membership. [www.safca.co.za](http://www.safca.co.za)

## Crystal Ball Recruiting

Late last year, I purchased a copy of *Crystal Ball Recruiting* (CBR) by Jason Howes. Although I was keen to dive in straight away, I had already committed to finishing another book first, so it had to wait.

Having now completed CBR, I can say it was well worth the time. I thoroughly enjoyed both the content and the practical insights Jason shares. It struck a chord with me, particularly when reflecting on moments in my own career where I was brought in to assess whether organisations could be saved from the brink of administration. In two large cases, the starting point was the same: a clear-eyed review of financial systems, cash flow and most importantly, sales. It's surprisingly easy for business owners, directors and senior managers to lose focus on what truly drives performance. Too often, organisations fall into the trap



***Crystal Ball Recruiting is a practical book full of insights and strategies to help your business.***

Image: Jason Howes

of dedicating 80% of their time to areas that generate less than 20% of revenue. Strip everything back, and the engine of any business is its sales team and sales process. Sharpen that focus, and the results can be transformative. This is a key point reinforced by Jason.

One simple but powerful exercise is to step into your customer's shoes. Have you ever used a 'mystery shopper' approach to experience your business firsthand? Try calling your own office - how is the phone really answered? How smoothly are calls transferred? What does your after-hours message sound like? Then take it online and navigate your website, attempt to place an order, or submit an enquiry through the contact us page. These small checks can reveal easy opportunities for improvement, particularly if actioned by a 3rd party

unknown to the business.

I strongly encourage business owners and senior leaders to pick up a copy of Jason's book. It's packed with practical ideas, grounded in common sense, and offers clear ways to evaluate and enhance performance. No matter how well you think your business is running, there's always room to improve.

One of the standout messages is the untapped potential within your own team. Often, future star performers are already there just waiting for the right investment in training and support. I've seen this firsthand: when one person lifts, the entire team follows.

Simplify your processes, streamline back-office functions, and suddenly your sales team has more time to do what they do best – build relationships, connect and sell.

Jason also provides access to a range of free tools that complement the book, making it even easier to put ideas into action. Because when sales are firing, the bottom line follows. Challenges will always arise, and while cash is king, it's sales that fuel growth.

*Crystal Ball Recruiting* is a small investment that could set your business on the path to significant returns. I highly recommend ordering your copy today via Jason's website: [jasonhowes.com.au](http://jasonhowes.com.au)

**Chris Parker**

## Introducing the South African Forestry Contractors Association

SAFCA was inaugurated on 13 October 1989 as a national organisation to represent and assist forestry contractors. The association was formed to further the common purpose of forestry contractors, without infringing on contractor competitive position or serving individual interests.

With an initial 9 members, SAFCA now has a membership of 360 contractors spread throughout all the forestry areas of South Africa. The majority of forestry activities are



***Timber and Forestry Enews is excited to introduce a new partner, SAFCA.*** Image: SAFCA

outsourced by grower companies to professional SAFCA contractor members.

SAFCA facilitates a tailor-made spread of fire insurance cover, provides up to date costing models, represents

members on various forums such as Forestry South Africa, Forest Sector Charter Council, University advisory boards, and acts as a voice for the forestry contracting community.

Continued engagement with members, industry supporting businesses, educational institutions, and grower company management through regional as well as one-on-one meetings help support and maintain the professional services that SAFCA members provide to the industry.

**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](mailto: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](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.

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

**JULY**

**18: Queensland Timber & Hardware Industry Awards – Rydges South Bank, Brisbane 6.30pm - 11.30pm.**

Join us in celebrating the Queensland Timber and Hardware Industry. For

more information, visit <https://www.ntha.com.au/eventdetails/37606/2026-queensland-timber-hardware-industry-awards> or contact Tahlia at [events@ntha.com.au](mailto:events@ntha.com.au)

**SEPTEMBER**

**4: New South Wales & ACT Timber & Hardware Industry Awards – Doltone House, Sydney 6.30pm - 11.30pm.**

Join us in celebrating the NSW Timber and Hardware Industry. For more information, visit <https://www.ntha.com.au/eventdetails/38006/2026-new-south-wales-act-timber-hardware-industry-awards> or contact Tahlia at [events@ntha.com.au](mailto:events@ntha.com.au)

**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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# Total Harvesting expands Komatsu fleet

## Latest technology delivers fuel savings, making the ROI a clear choice.

THE Komatsu excavator platform provides a strong and versatile base for forestry applications, supported by an advanced compensated load-sensing hydraulic system that delivers precise control, efficiency, and consistent performance in demanding forest conditions.

Recognising this capability, Komatsu Forest Australia collaborated with the Komatsu Osaka Factory to develop the Xtreme Series forestry carriers: the Komatsu PC270HW, Komatsu PC300HW, and Komatsu PC400HW. These factory-engineered machines are designed for the harsh conditions of Australian plantation and native forest operations. The Osaka factory now supplies integrated forestry components including certified Forest Safety Cabs, Hide/Wide undercarriages, forest booms, heavy-duty bump rails, reinforced track guards, and HD guarding packages.

The Xtreme carriers support a wide range of attachments such as feller bunchers, grapples, processors, and harvester heads, and form the basis for specialised variants including the PC270LL, PC300FX, PC300TL, PC300LL, and PC400HL.

Recently, Komatsu Forest delivered three PC270HW harvesters to Total Harvesting Pty Ltd, complementing its existing large Komatsu fleet including Peterson chippers. The machines replace equipment acquired through Total Harvesting's takeover of



1

cab, high-wide undercarriage with 600 mm double-bar grousers, heavy-duty track guards, bump rails, and a forest boom with internal hose routing.

According to Managing Director Matt Leov, it's a very stable, versatile unit with a great cooling package, fuel efficient, and the cab provides good visibility, operator comfort and is very quiet. The most significant feature influencing their purchasing decision was the PC270HW's certified forestry cabin. Fully compliant ROPS/FOPS/OPS protection remains relatively uncommon in hydraulic excavator-based forestry

carriers, and he considers it an essential safety requirement within their operations.

To strengthen regional service, Komatsu Forest appointed Pratico Mechanical Services as authorised service and parts agent for Bunbury and Manjimup, while Al Curnow Hydraulics continues providing support in Albany and Esperance.



2

1/ Komatsu PC270HW is making the hard work easy.

2/ Three PC270HW harvesters were recently delivered to Total Harvesting Pty Ltd. All images: Komatsu

Wilson Forestry Services in late 2023, consolidating a plantation hardwood contract volume of about 350,000 m<sup>3</sup> annually under WAPRES.

Delivered in December, the machines began stump harvesting in January and will later transition to roadside processing, demonstrating operational versatility. Although the most compact Xtreme carrier, the PC270HW-8 retains full forestry structural strength and includes a certified ROPS/FOPS/OPS

Today, Total Harvesting operates major softwood and hardwood logging, chipping and trucking operations throughout southern Western Australia. In such large-scale, production-focused environments, machine reliability, safety compliance, and responsive product support are critical determinants in capital equipment procurement. The integration of factory-engineered forestry carriers such as the PC270HW, backed by established regional service networks, aligns closely with Total Harvesting's operational requirements and long-term business strategy.

“THE PC270HW DELIVERS PRECISE CONTROL, EFFICIENCY AND CONSISTENT PERFORMANCE”

# Certification and illegal logging compliance

Responsible Wood and the National Timber and Hardware Association (NTHA) held a joint webinar on Tuesday 31 March 2026 to provide businesses with information on certification and illegal logging compliance.

The webinar was hosted by Vicki Stableford from NTHA. The two sessions were presented by Simon Dorries, Responsible Wood CEO, and Matt de Jongh, Responsible Wood Sustainability Manager.

## RESPONSIBLE WOOD AND PEFC

Matt opened the first session explaining that Responsible Wood is one of around 50 international governing bodies for the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC) and is the PEFC body for Australia and New Zealand. PEFC is the world's largest forest certification scheme, covering approximately 300 million hectares.

Certification began around 30 years ago to help combat deforestation. Currently, 451 million hectares of forest worldwide are certified under either PEFC or FSC, with PEFC accounting for 65% of this area globally. Despite this progress, only 11.4% of the world's forests are currently certified.

Responsible Wood is also accredited by Standards Australia and Standards New Zealand to develop and accredit standards for both countries. There are two core standards:

- Sustainable Forest Management (AS/ NZS 4708)
- Chain of Custody (AS 4707)

These two core standards are fully reviewed every five years and are supported by four additional sub-standards.

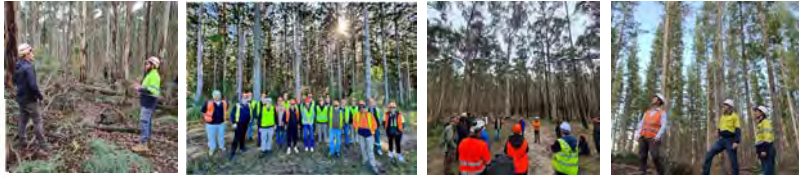
The Sustainable Forest Management standard is very strict and includes many legal requirements. The standard encompasses not only healthy forests but healthy workers, communities and economies. This standard works in with PEFC certification as PEFC also forms



## How does it work? Sustainable forest management and chain of custody certification



### Responsible and Sustainable Forest Management - Healthy forests, workers, communities and economy



### Chain of Custody - Traceability, legality, independent auditing, ethical and responsible supply chain



**Responsible Wood is accredited to develop and implement two key standards for forestry.** Image: Responsible Wood

part of the Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) reporting. A joint research project between FWPA and the University of Melbourne is currently underway and is expected to deliver an independent analysis and validation of the impacts.

The Chain of Custody standard provides full traceability from the forest through processing, manufacturing, and on to retail. At the retail level, products carry the PEFC logo. Matt showed two examples: a Woolworths paper grocery bag and timber purchased from a hardware store. This standard supports sustainable forest management and traceability across construction, pulp and paper, packaging, textiles, furniture, and natural rubber.

Both standards are subject to audits conducted by independent third-party certification bodies. These auditors operate completely independently of Responsible Wood. The goal is to ensure that members have ethical and responsible supply chains.

## TIMBER BENEFITS AND SUSTAINABILITY

“CURRENTLY, 451 MILLION HECTARES OF FOREST WORLDWIDE ARE CERTIFIED”

Sustainable forests act as carbon capture and storage systems through a continuous grow-and-regrow cycle. Growing trees absorb and store carbon while releasing oxygen. When harvested at maturity, the wood products continue to store that carbon throughout their useful life. Wood is the only significant renewable building material – in contrast to steel and concrete, which require large amounts of energy to produce and do not store carbon.

Matt highlighted the additional benefits of timber, such as helping to reduce stress through our natural connection to nature and improving indoor air quality by moderating humidity. Many buildings, including hospitals, schools, universities, and public spaces, now use and specify wood for these natural benefits.

Matt also noted that sustainably managed forests deliver far greater climate mitigation benefits than unmanaged forests. Responsible Wood regularly organises field trips so people can see these benefits and sustainable forestry practices in action.

## ILLEGAL LOGGING LAWS

In the second session, Simon discussed who has obligations under the illegal logging laws:

- Timber importers

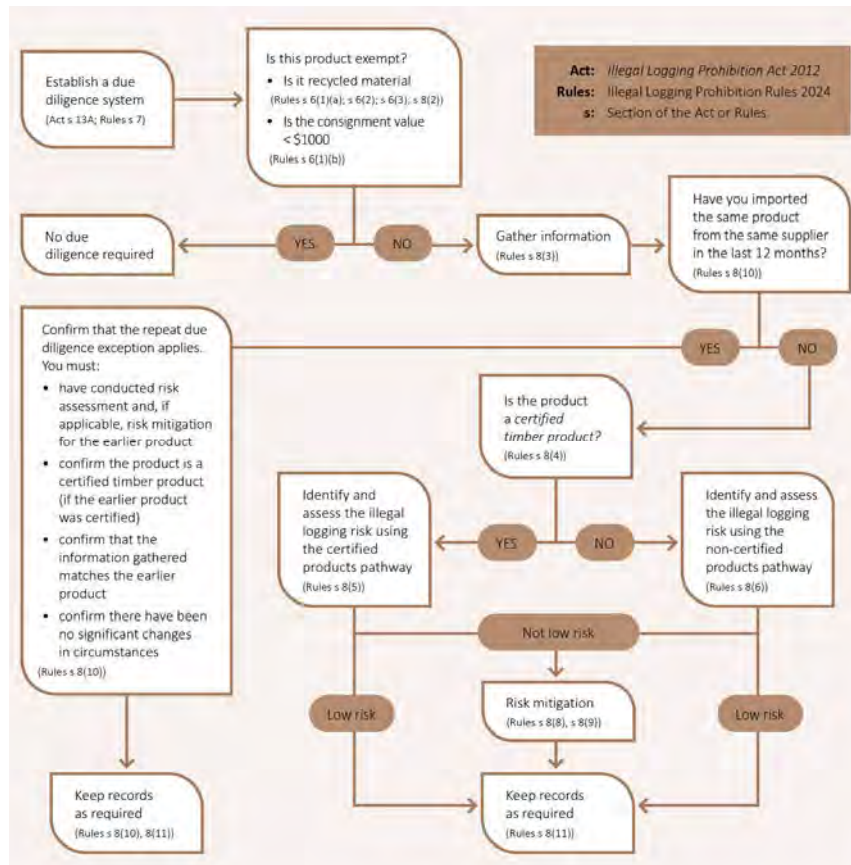
From P 9

- Domestic processors receiving logs directly from the forest

If you are a customer of a timber importer or processor (as described above), you do not have any direct obligations under the Act. Simon also noted that some products are not covered, for example, businesses reselling recycled timber. The Australian Government maintains a comprehensive list of products that are covered.

They also provide a detailed guide and explanation of the full Due Diligence system, including checklists and assessments, which must be read, understood, and followed. Country-specific guidelines are also available to assist with risk assessment obligations.

For businesses covered by the Illegal Logging Act, the key actions required are



**Due diligence flow chart. Importers and domestic processors are both obliged to conduct due diligence.** Image: Responsible Wood

to establish and maintain a Due Diligence system that includes:

guide to illegal logging and the supporting materials here.

- Contact details
- Information gathering process
- Risk assessment process
- Risk mitigation process
- Record keeping process (including retaining information for five years from the date the timber was imported)

Having PEFC or FSC certified product significantly assists with meeting the timber legality framework.

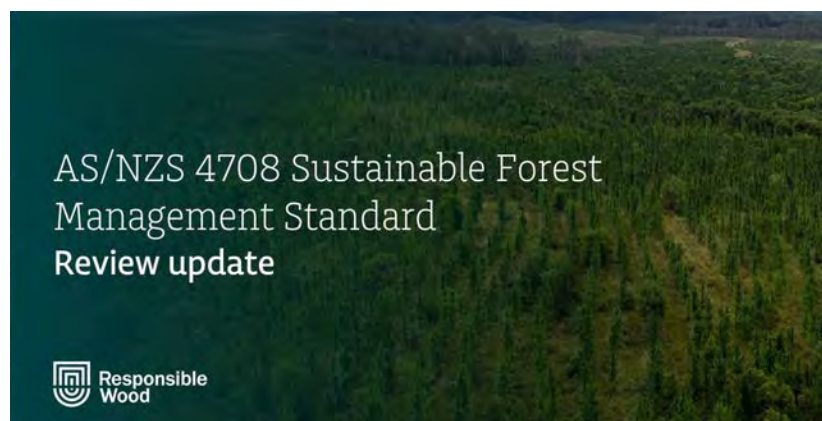
This session provided a brief high-level overview. Businesses are encouraged to download the comprehensive

# AS/NZS 4708 Sustainable Forest Management Standard review update

THE review of the AS/NZS 4708 Sustainable Forest Management Standard is progressing well, with the Significant Biodiversity and Indigenous Working Groups recently meeting to map key information and next steps.

The Significant Biodiversity Working Group confirmed key definitions and ensured the Standard's performance requirements remain aligned with the purpose of the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act and consistent with community expectations.

The Indigenous Working Group focused on ensuring the Standard



**The AS/NZS 4708 Sustainable Forest Management Standard is reviewed every five years to ensure it stays up to date with law and policy, relevant and in line with community expectations.** Image: Responsible Wood

appropriately recognises the contributions of Indigenous peoples within sustainable forest management, and that it aligns with the expectations of

First Nations forest stakeholders as well as the broader community.

Conducted every five years, the review considers both domestic matters and global issues affecting Australian growers, importers and exporters, including the EU Deforestation Regulation (EUDR), conflict timber, and updates to illegal logging regulations.

# Visy launches Paper Bubble

**Australian-made sustainable solution helps phase out single-use plastics and supports net zero goals.**

Visy has unveiled its latest innovation in protective packaging with the launch of Paper Bubble, a fully recyclable, Australian-made alternative to traditional plastic bubble wrap. This new product delivers reliable shock-proof cushioning for fragile items while advancing the shift away from single-use plastics.

As Australians increasingly seek practical ways to reduce environmental impact, every sustainable choice contributes to the broader journey towards net zero carbon emissions by 2050. Small steps, such as opting for responsibly sourced paper-based packaging, accumulate into meaningful progress. Forestry and wood products play a vital role here, acting as a renewable resource that sequesters carbon during growth and stores it long-term in products, while substituting for higher-emission materials like plastics derived from fossil fuels.

## STRONG ENVIRONMENTAL GAINS CONFIRMED BY INDEPENDENT ANALYSIS

A third-party reviewed life cycle assessment (LCA) comparing one square metre of Visy Paper Bubble to equivalent plastic bubble wrap highlights clear advantages when the paper version is recycled through Australian kerbside bins.

Paper Bubble generates 34 per cent lower carbon emissions, uses 73 per cent less energy over its lifetime, and consumes 39 per cent less water.

These benefits align with the advantages of sustainably managed



**1/ Even delicate items get reliable protection with Visy's new Paper Bubble. Fully recyclable Australian-made alternative to plastic bubble wrap.**

**2/ Precision rollers stretch and expand the paper fibres to create air-trapping cells – all without any plastic or glue.** All images: Visy

forestry, which supports carbon sequestration and circular outcomes. Trees absorb carbon dioxide as they grow, and when harvested responsibly, the resulting products continue to store carbon while enabling regrowth that captures more.

Christian Elbert, Visy Retail Services Head of Innovation, emphasised the product's practical and environmental appeal.

"Aussies want to do the right thing by the environment, and they want products to work – Paper Bubble does both," he said.

"By using Australian paper and

manufacturing the Paper Bubble locally, we're supporting local jobs in Australia and reducing our reliance on single use plastic."

"Once you're done with it, just pop it in the recycling bin at home and we'll turn it into new products."

## INNOVATIVE MANUFACTURING ROOTED IN AUSTRALIAN FORESTRY

Paper Bubble is produced at Visy's manufacturing facility in Reservoir, in Melbourne's north, using high-quality paper from the company's mill in Tumut, New South Wales. This closed-loop approach leverages locally sourced, Forest Stewardship Council® (FSC®) certified materials (FSC-C008345), ensuring responsible forest management.

During production, the paper passes through precision rollers that stretch, score and expand the fibres. This mechanical embossing creates raised interlocking cells that trap air and provide excellent cushioning, all

without laminates or adhesives – just cleverly transformed pure paper.

The result is a lightweight, reusable and strong wrap ideal for e-commerce, retail and delicate goods. It offers the familiar shock-proof protection users expect from bubble wrap, yet with a far better end-of-life outcome: simple kerbside recycling that feeds back into new products rather than landfill.

In a video from the Reservoir site, Elbert described the process and purpose: "Australian made paper bubble

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wrap is Visy's latest product to help phase out more single-use plastics. We're all familiar with traditional plastic bubble wrap. This new wrap gives you shock-proof cushioning you can rely on for storing, moving, or shipping items. But now, instead of it going to landfill, put it in your recycling bin to be made back into new products."

He added that the product supports Australian manufacturing jobs and delivers dual benefits: "Using paper bubble wrap instead of plastics means you can protect your precious goods and our environment at the same time."

"They've even carried the Forest Stewardship Council certification, giving you confidence that it's made from responsibly sourced material."

### FORESTRY AS A PRACTICAL PATHWAY TO NET ZERO

Australia's sustainable forestry sector offers a powerful contribution to national net zero ambitions. Well-managed forests and plantations sequester carbon from the atmosphere, with roughly half the dry weight of wood consisting of stored carbon. When turned into long-life products, this carbon remains locked away for decades, while regrowth in sustainably harvested forests continues the cycle of capture.

Studies show that expanding wood product use can deliver substitution benefits by displacing emissions-intensive alternatives such as fossil-



**Visy Paper Bubble rolls – made from 110gsm kraft paper at Visy's Reservoir facility using FSC-certified paper from Tumut, NSW.** Image: Visy

based plastics. CSIRO research highlights that nature-based solutions including plantation and farm forestry currently provide significant potential for carbon sequestration to help Australia reach net zero.

The Net Zero Australia modelling indicates that achieving net zero by 2050 will require significant reforestation and plantation growth, with Australia needing to establish new forest plantations at a scale of approximately 200,000 hectares per year – roughly the size of the Australian Capital Territory annually.

In packaging, paper-based solutions like Paper Bubble support a circular economy where materials are reused and recycled, reducing overall reliance on virgin fossil resources. Each switch from single-use plastic to recyclable paper-based alternatives represents one of those incremental steps that, when scaled, move Australia closer to its climate targets.

Paper Bubble joins Visy's existing

range of locally made sustainable options, including paper retail bags and Visy Tread temporary surface protection. It demonstrates how innovation in packaging can align performance with planetary benefits.

### FEATURES, BENEFITS AND AVAILABILITY

Made from quality 110gsm kraft paper, Paper Bubble is:

- An effective alternative to plastic bubble wrap
- Fully recyclable in kerbside bins
- Suitable for cushioning fragile items during moving, storage, or shipping
- Australian made, lightweight and reusable
- FSC® certified from responsibly managed forests

It comes in minimum 25-metre rolls in widths of 375mm, 500mm or 750mm, in natural kraft brown.

The product is available now online at [visyspecialties.com.au](http://visyspecialties.com.au) or by contacting Visy specialists on 1800 622 626. It is also stocked in selected Bunnings stores across Australia and New Zealand.

By choosing Paper Bubble, businesses and households can protect items effectively while supporting Australian jobs, responsible forestry and a lower-carbon future. As Elbert noted, this is another step that makes it easier for Australians to ditch single-use plastic and contribute to meaningful environmental progress, one sustainable choice at a time.

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# Significant step forward for Macquarie Point

HOBART'S Macquarie Point Precinct has moved closer to reality following the Australian Government's formal acceptance of both the Macquarie Point Precinct Master Plan and the accompanying Housing Plan. This milestone marks important progress in transforming a long-underutilised waterfront site into a vibrant, mixed-use destination for the Tasmanian capital.

The Master Plan establishes a clear vision for an accessible precinct designed to serve as a place where people can gather, celebrate and reflect. It emphasises arts, culture, sport, events and entertainment as central elements that will breathe new life into the area. Over the longer term, the strategy focuses on integrating a major stadium with public plazas, mixed-use developments and hospitality offerings to create a cohesive and inviting environment.

Importantly, the plans ensure that existing transport connectivity and port operations remain intact. These activities continue to underpin Hobart's freight, logistics and Antarctic research capabilities, balancing new development with the site's traditional economic functions.

The Australian Government has reaffirmed its commitment to delivering housing at Macquarie Point, with a dedicated portion allocated for affordable, essential worker or social housing at Regatta Point. This component will feature a revitalised public waterfront that encourages greater community access to the foreshore while introducing new commercial spaces to support local activity.

These approvals represent the final non-financial milestones under the Federation Funding Agreement between the Australian and Tasmanian Governments. With those requirements now satisfied, discussions have shifted



**The vision for Macquarie Point, Hobart will see it become a well-utilised space for all Tasmanians.** Image: Shutterstock

toward the financial delivery milestones needed to bring the project to fruition.

Federal Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government Minister Catherine King welcomed the development, highlighting its broader benefits. "Macquarie Point will become a world-class, year-round destination for Tasmanians and bring a significant boost to the state's tourism sector," she said. "The Precinct will be more than a well-deserved home for the Devils, it will create new housing, improve transport links adjacent to the Hobart CBD and upgrade the wharves. I look forward to continuing to work with the Tasmanian Government to deliver this significant project for Hobart."

Tasmanian Macquarie Point Urban Renewal Minister Eric Abetz described the acceptance as a strong endorsement of the state's ambitions. "Our vision for Macquarie Point will turn this industrial wasteland into a thriving precinct, and we're pleased the Federal Government has endorsed our way forward," he said. "This entire project will be distinctly Tasmanian bringing together sports, entertainment, hospitality, accommodation and more into what will be a brand new cultural and community precinct for the whole state. With this next step complete it signals to the business community, to hoteliers, to builders, to tourism operators and more that now is the time to get ready."

Senator Carol Brown focused on

the housing opportunities, particularly for the health sector. "I am delighted that the precinct will include housing for allied health professionals and other health related workers, in an ideal location nearby the Royal Hobart Hospital and the University of Tasmania's School of Medicine," she said. "This is a site that has been underused for years, and this plan is about finally unlocking it for the people of Hobart, with housing, public space and a waterfront that actually gets used."

The precinct is expected to deliver multiple layers of value. Beyond providing a modern home for the Tasmania Devils AFL team, it aims to stimulate tourism, support essential worker accommodation and enhance public access to Hobart's waterfront. The inclusion of diverse uses from cultural venues to commercial spaces positions Macquarie Point as a year-round attractor rather than a single purpose development.

For years, the site has remained largely dormant despite its prime location near the central business district. The endorsed plans signal a comprehensive approach that respects the area's industrial and port heritage while opening it up for community enjoyment and economic growth.

As both governments move into the next phase of negotiations, attention will turn to securing the necessary funding and timelines. Stakeholders across construction, tourism, hospitality and retail sectors will now have greater certainty to begin preparing for the opportunities ahead.

This step represents more than bureaucratic progress. It brings Hobart closer to realising a precinct that can unite sport, culture and daily life in a distinctly Tasmanian setting, delivering lasting benefits for residents and visitors alike.

**Source: The Hon. Catherine King MP**

# FIMMA + Maderalia 2026

## Feria Valencia launches the new “Industrialized Construction Fair”.

FERIA Valencia and FIMMA + Maderalia take another step in the strategic positioning of the biennial fair with the launch of the first edition of the “Industrialized Construction Fair,” a new and distinct exhibition area that has its own identity while being fully integrated into the overall offering of FIMMA + Maderalia, which will hold its next edition from November 10 to 13, 2026.

The new area will showcase the latest advances in technology, finishes, and materials for industrialised construction within an innovative exhibition space that will combine stands with demonstration and training areas.

This is a space that responds to the transformation currently taking place in the building sector, where concepts such



**There will be a three-storey building erected as part of a display at the FIMMA + Maderalia Fair.** Image: FIMMA + Maderalia

as sustainability, productive efficiency, waste reduction, and the industrialisation of processes are shaping the future of construction.

The objective is clear: to expand the scope of FIMMA + Maderalia to meet these new demands, integrating solutions that directly connect with its DNA: technological innovation applied

to materials, advanced production processes, and the valorisation of wood as a key element in the construction of the future.

### **An exhibition ecosystem with machinery, technology, and wood**

The new fair will feature a selection of exhibitors showcasing their latest innovations in machinery, process technology, structural wood, and industrialised construction components. This

will create a unique environment where industrialised construction is directly connected to the sector’s production capacity, from the transformation of structural wood to component manufacturing, including process automation and industry digitalisation.

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# Fuel crisis threatens Tasmanian forestry

## Industry welcomes government relief but warns of immediate hurdles.

IN an update following the National Cabinet announcements, TFPA Chief Executive Officer Nick Steel says the government's fuel relief package offers welcome short-term support for Tasmanian forestry, but immediate challenges still lie ahead.

National Cabinet has released its four-stage National Fuel Security Plan, with Australia currently in Stage 2 – "Keeping Australia moving". The Federal Government will halve fuel excise on petrol and diesel and reduce the Heavy Vehicle Road User Charge (RUC) to zero, both taking effect on 1 April 2026 and will last for three months.

Mr Steel welcomed the government's measures as a helpful short-term response that brings much-needed certainty to the sector.

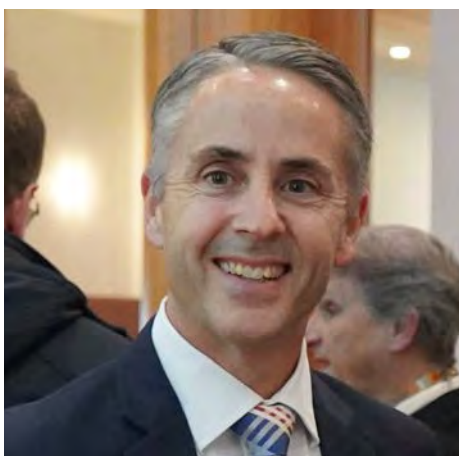
"These are positive steps that provide greater certainty for our industry and support our supply chains at this time of instability," Mr Steel said. "It's great to get that relief for the next three months."

However, he noted that forestry businesses will still face the full March fuel bill at current high rates before the relief begins.

"That's the hard thing. We need to get over this hurdle, and that's a big one, and then get into these reliefs which the government has provided," he said.

Mr Steel also welcomed the expansion of fuel tax credits for off-road heavy vehicles but said the TFPA is seeking urgent clarification on whether the credits can apply to private forestry roads used by contractors to access coupes.

The original media release from the TFPA threw its full support behind urgent



**Nick Steel is actively advocating for the forestry industry and is highlighting just how devastating a forestry shutdown or even pause could be for the Tasmanian economy.** Image: TFPA

calls from the Tasmanian Chamber of Commerce and Industry for immediate fuel excise relief. The association had warned that soaring fuel costs were threatening the continuity of forestry operations across the state.

Mr Steel reiterated that the industry is operating under acute pressure, with the fuel crisis hitting every stage of the supply chain, from harvesting and haulage through to processing.

"Forestry underpins supply chains that Tasmanians rely on every day, from housing and construction to food production and freight," Mr Steel said. "Keeping this sector moving efficiently is critical to keeping Tasmania moving."

He emphasised that forestry must be recognised as an essential or critical service, particularly if the situation escalates to later stages of the National Fuel Security Plan.

"We've got the runs on the board to demonstrate we are a critical service," Mr Steel said, pointing to timber's role in building construction and pallets for food production. He noted the sector was recognised as essential during COVID and expects similar treatment if needed, while continuing discussions with ministers.

Mr Steel warned that pressures could still reach a breaking point for many operators if relief falls short or global prices rise further.

"If forestry slows materially, or even pauses, the impacts will be immediate and cascading," he said. "Housing construction will be delayed and become more expensive, agriculture will face constraints on pallets, packaging and animal bedding, and freight networks will be disrupted, ultimately impacting businesses and consumers right across the State."

The ripple effects could be felt far beyond the forests, he added.

Mr Steel said the TFPA is actively working with industry and government on solutions and will monitor the impact of the new measures in April before providing further feedback to politicians. The association continues to stress that targeted support is essential to stabilise the sector, ensure confidence and protect jobs across regional Tasmania.

Regional communities, which rely heavily on forestry for employment and economic activity, stand to suffer the most if the sector is forced to contract. The TFPA continues to call for full clarity on fuel tax credits and any additional measures needed to prevent long-term damage to Tasmania's vital forest products supply chains.

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Wood is thus emerging as a strategic material, aligned with decarbonisation and sustainability goals, and increasingly present in industrialised construction systems.

### An experiential space within the major sector showcase

The "Industrialized Construction Fair" will also bring a strong experiential component to the overall event. Among the planned



**The new exhibition area layout allows for a common seating area in the centre with a surrounding selection of exhibitors.** Image: FIMMA + Maderalia

initiatives are the live construction of an industrialised structure and the erection

of a three-story building, integrating real solutions and applied technology from exhibiting companies at the event.

This will be complemented by a comprehensive program of technical sessions, presentations, and live demonstrations, reinforcing the value of FIMMA + Maderalia as a platform for knowledge, training, and business generation.

# Deferral of export cost recovery welcomed by forestry sector

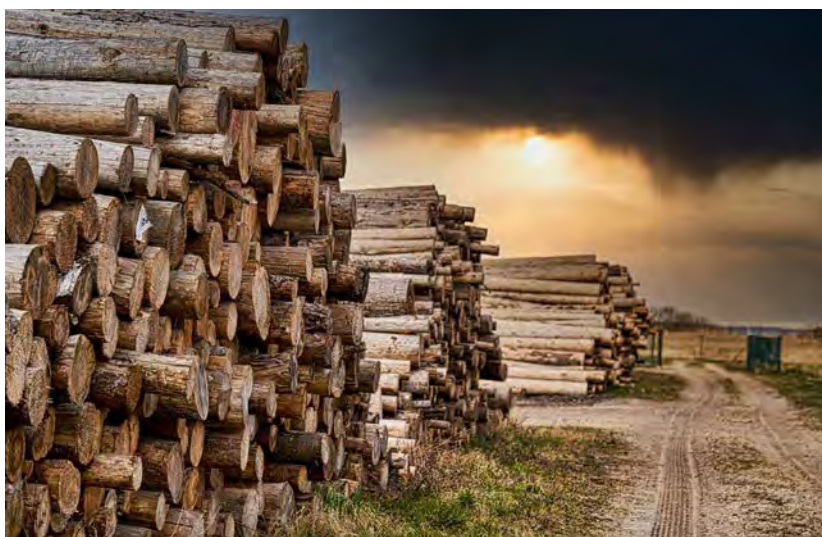
AFPA has welcomed the Federal Government's decision to defer the phased transition to full cost recovery for export regulatory services for one year until 1 July 2027.

The Government has delayed the phased transition, which was due to begin from 1 July 2026, in the wake of global uncertainty and rising costs, including soaring fuel prices.

AFPA Chief Executive Officer Diana Hallam said: "In these challenging and uncertain times, we sincerely thank the Government for delaying the export regulatory functions, which will help to ease growing pressures on Australia's forest products sector.

"We acknowledge this will provide some relief over the next year to an industry faced with significant ongoing challenges, including rising input costs, surging timber imports, a cut in tariffs from our major competitors in the European Union, a stagnant housing market and the impact of the Commonwealth's recent EPBC Act reforms.

"This industry operates



**Timber logs awaiting export. AFPA welcomes the Federal Government's decision to defer full cost recovery for export services until July 2027.** Image: Shutterstock

in globally competitive commodity and value-added markets, so any form of short-term relief is appreciated and will provide immediate benefits for our sector.

"This will also mean in 12 months' time, industry will face a faster two-year implementation period, instead of three, which will still see more than a doubling of export costs for many companies, and potentially impact their future viability.

"There are significant and ongoing increases in costs that the government is seeking to recover, and it will be critical that the government develops a lean, efficient, transparent and stable regulatory system for exporters, including the timber industry, to remain competitive.

"In our submission to the Government on draft export Cost Recovery Implementation Statements (CRIS), we highlighted that cost recovery is an established policy framework, and industry is required to contribute. However, we believe these changes could significantly impact our export market, along with other agricultural commodities, and affect Australia's balance of trade and the national economy.

"The complexity and scale of the proposed changes mean that industry should have the opportunity to co-design the implementation of a model to report true costs transparently."

Read AFPA's submission on the draft export CRIS 2026–27 here.



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