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COVER STORY P 10



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Celebrating Earth Day

This 22 April, take a moment to embrace and improve the beauty of our planet.

THE recent Artemis II mission reminded us that we are all travellers on the same beautiful blue ball. Every 22 April since 1970 has been a day dedicated to our planet. This year's International Mother Earth Day (better known as Earth Day) has the theme of Our Power, Our Planet, which is remarkably timely, given how much power – in both senses of the word – is currently affecting us all.

Participants are encouraged to do something practical on the day: plant a tree, do an audit of your power use to find areas you can lower carbon use or as the first step in switching to solar, clean up a neglected natural site near you, organise a write-in for an achievable sustainability goal that could do with government help (plenty of suggestions for those in this issue!) or even something as simple as saying no to fast fashion when you next go shopping.

Landcare will be hosting tree planting events around the country this month in honour of Earth Day, as well as the Grounded Festival 2026 in Victoria, looking at practical options for better farming, food and ecological care. Click here to see which events will be near you.

Schools are major supporters of the day, with many structuring special educational events around the environment, from art shows to creating local habitat.

Making the virtual practical, HostPapa is planting a tree for every new domain



NASA astronaut and Artemis II Commander Reid Wiseman took this picture of Earth from the Orion spacecraft's window after completing the translunar injection burn. There are two auroras (top right and bottom left) and zodiacal light (bottom right) is visible as the Earth eclipses the Sun. Image: NASA/Reid Wiseman

registered between April 8 and 21 (click here).




And if you're lucky enough to be near Melbourne's Federation Square, there are free outdoor screenings of Earth, From Space from 7–8pm on 20–22 April, where an hour-long film showcasing images produced by NASA's DSCOVR weather satellite will help to shift your perspective on how connected we all are.

You can find many more events around the world as well as information

on current environmental actions and how you can drive change in your local communities at the official Earth Day website: www.earthday.org

While Earth Day actions like these may seem small, the cumulative effect is huge. Our sector knows better than most how vital a role nature plays in every part of our lives, so next Wednesday, take some time to get the message out to everyone else and really show how much power we have when it comes to protecting our planet.

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Calls for more direct relief

As WA stockpiles additional diesel and tax breaks flow through, industry looks for help.

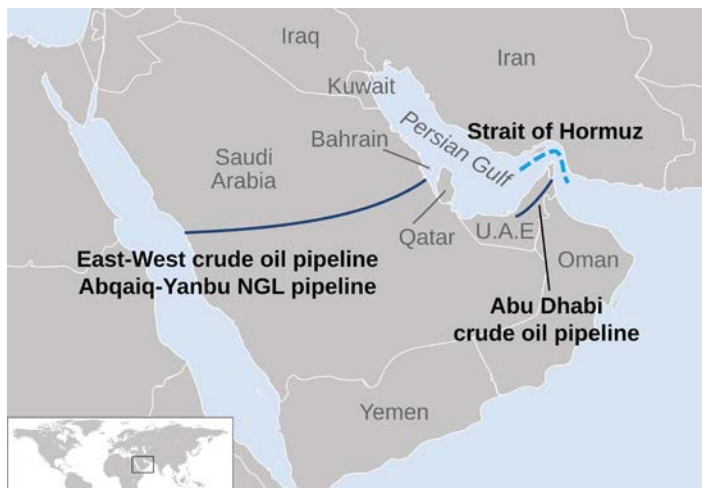
IF you're of a certain age, you'll remember Boy George singing that "War, war is stupid, and people are stupid..." and you really can't blame anyone who's taking this as a leitmotif for current world events.

At the time of writing, our Prime Minister is sensibly touring the Asia Pacific, shoring up energy agreements that should maintain reasonable supply, but the simple fact remains that until the Strait of Hormuz is back to the free transit situation we had in February, prices will continue to be unpredictable at best, unaffordable at worst, as the amount of oil available in the global market has dropped.

Unfairly, the impacts will continue to hit rural and regional areas hardest. While major oil chains have guaranteed supply, smaller retailers, which are common in regional towns, are much less protected when it comes to reliability of both supply and cost, and private fuel supplies to freight businesses have had the same problems.

State and Federal governments have both acknowledged the problem. WA's Labor Premier Roger Cook announced on Tuesday that he had secured at least 4 million litres of diesel to be stockpiled in the Kimberley. The deal was struck with local independent fuel supplier Cambridge Gulf and is additional to existing fuel orders, so will see more supply headed into Australia. The fuel is expected to arrive in the coming weeks and will be stored free-of-charge by Cambridge Gulf but 100% owned by Western Australia, meaning the fuel can be directed to where it is most needed.

"It's diesel that will be



The Strait of Hormuz is the world's most important oil chokepoint because of the large volumes of oil that flow through the strait. Image: CC/U.S. Energy Information Administration

100% State owned and reserved for those who need it most, such as remote communities and the agriculture sector, allowing us to act quickly when we need to," said Premier Cook.

Federal Energy Minister Chris Bowen backed the plan, telling a press conference on Monday that the decision was a positive and additional step towards solving the crisis, which he would be happy to see other states replicate.

"Certainly, where a state takes positive action, they'll have our full support," Bowen said.

"I think it's appropriate they have ensured that it's additional supply. So it's not taking off another state. They have sought and received assurances it's

additional supply to Australia, helping them manage.

"Four million litres is not a huge amount, but it's material and useful."

RELIEF MEASURES

Currently, the Federal Government has concessional capital support in place worth \$6.15 bn for businesses. This includes \$1 billion Economic Resilience Program, \$5 billion Net Zero Fund, and \$150 million in concessional finance under the Forestry Growth Fund.

On Sunday, Federal Infrastructure Minister Catherine King told the ABC's *Insiders* program that the government was looking at additional business and household support measures in the Budget, cognisant that even if hostilities are soon concluded, there will be a long tail to the after-effects.

Forest & Wood Communities Australia (FWCA) Chair Steve Dobbins has welcomed the decision to halve the fuel excise and scrap the Heavy Vehicle Road User Charge (RUC) for three months but says the relief measures are failing to deliver meaningful impact for regional industries, as underlying diesel costs continue to rise sharply across the supply chain. "Despite promised savings of 58.7c at the bowser, diesel users are seeing prices surge to highs of \$3.39/litre in regional areas," Dobbins said.

"Even with the removal of the RUC and halving the fuel excise, the Terminal Gate Prices are still almost a dollar more than before the US/Israel-Iran conflict began. Operators need to find that from somewhere and they need to find it now, not just claim it back at BAS time. By

AV. TERMINAL GATE PRICES



Average Terminal Gate prices since January 2020. Image supplied FWCA

From P 3

then, it will be too late for some.”

FWCA said wholesale diesel prices, reflected in terminal gate pricing, have surged dramatically since the onset of the conflict, with some markets jumping from around \$1.60/L to over \$3.00/L in a matter of weeks.

“Terminal Gate Prices set the baseline for everything that follows: freight rates, contractor pricing, machinery operation and ultimately the cost of getting timber, food and goods to market,” said Dobbyns.

“We’ve said from the outset this isn’t just about what you pay at the bowser. It’s about the full cost stack.”

FWCA is just one of the industry voices highlighting the impacts of rising fuel prices, with businesses absorbing rising freight and haulage costs as contractors factor in fuel volatility; increased machinery operating expenses for both harvesting and transport; higher parts, servicing and equipment costs linked to global supply pressures and escalating contractor rates as fuel risk is priced into every job.

“By the time relief filters through, it’s already been absorbed by higher wholesale pricing and flow-on costs across the supply chain,” Dobbyns said.

FWCA notes that the fuel cost impacts are hitting farmers just as hard. In fact, there’s a double whammy for agriculture: in addition to not being able to predict whether the cost of a crop they are planning to plant will be wiped out by the cost of the diesel it will take to harvest it, most of Australia’s urea supplies have also been stopped in the Strait of Hormuz, leading to a situation where many are scrambling for fertiliser options. Higher food prices are a given, but some crops simply may not be available at the levels we expect this year or next.

FWCA is calling on the Federal Government to expand its response beyond temporary tax relief and address the full economic impact of the diesel crisis.



Diesel prices in some regional towns are over \$3.35 per litre Image: supplied FWCA

“Forestry, farming and freight don’t have the ability to simply absorb these increases,” said Dobbyns. “These are essential industries – and they’re being squeezed from every direction. We need a response that reflects how these industries actually operate, where fuel is embedded across every part of the supply chain, not just the pump price.”

SYSTEMIC CHANGE

One long-term fallout of the current crisis

should be the end of people complaining about the renewable energy transition (alas, it won’t be).

Electric cars have proved a wise investment, particularly for anyone with solar recharging capacity but for heavy-weight vehicles such as logging trucks, the story isn’t as positive. The current lack of heavy-duty charging infrastructure and high costs for the installation of same has meant larger electric trucks aren’t always economical, even with the hike in diesel costs (see story page 14, including this week’s NSW announcements on charging stations.)

Environmental groups have used the crisis to call for phased removal of the fuel tax credit scheme, particularly for the mining industry, and a gas exports tax, saying funds raised from these measures could be used to support transitions to clean energy including funding charging infrastructure for heavy vehicles – a huge upfront cost that is stopping a lot of companies from buying electric trucks.

Some have called for the re-opening of Australia’s domestic crude oil industry. But while we are rich in natural gas, we don’t have a huge amount of oil,

and what we do have is expensive to extract, costing around US\$70-100 per barrel to extract, compared with US\$30 per barrel in the Gulf of Mexico. Similarly, refining imported crude here cannot be as economical as refining it in Singapore or South Korea and then importing the final product.

Prime Minister Albanese is playing a good hand in highlighting our LNG dominance to our regional oil-supplying nations: they need it as much as we need diesel and there is every reason to expect the existing, mutually beneficial relationship will continue.

For as long as we need oil, we will need international partners. If they were all rational countries like Singapore, we could relax in the knowledge that we would safely help each other.

Sadly, they are not.



Applications now open for 2026–27 Timber Queensland Growth Scholarships

TIMBER Queensland's 2026–27 Growth Scholarship Program has opened. People working across Queensland's forest and timber industry are invited to apply for funding to support career and workforce development.

The Growth Scholarships provide financial support of up to \$10,000 for development projects that help individuals strengthen skills and knowledge while delivering benefits for Queensland's forest and timber industry.

"Growth Scholarships have supported everything from deep technical research and international study tours through to qualifications, safety training, equipment operation, workforce training and leadership development," said Clarissa Brandt, Timber Queensland general manager strategic relations and communications.

"Previous recipients have undertaken projects focused on sustainable forest management, timber durability, mechanised harvesting and planting systems, drone and spatial technologies, training and assessor qualifications, work health and safety credentials and practical on-the-job skills.

"These examples demonstrate that the program is deliberately flexible, supporting



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DTM TIMBER AWARD

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Timber Queensland's Growth Scholarships have helped many of the state's foresters develop their careers. Image: supplied

both academically focused development and hands on, operational capability building."

For the 2026–27 program, age limits have been removed, with Growth Scholarships now open to all industry participants, reflecting the diversity of career stages and pathways across Queensland's forest and timber workforce. The program has also evolved to better reflect the operational focus of many applicants, with the HQPlantations Award now becoming the HQPlantations Operational Award.

"This award recognises people

working in practical, on-the-ground roles in forestry and processing, and supports development that improves day-to-day operations, including safety, productivity, logistics, training and workforce capability," Brandt said.

"Applicants for the HQP Operational Award can choose to apply using either a written response or a short video, allowing them to present their development plans in the format that best suits their role and experience. The questions, assessment criteria and standards remain unchanged, and video submissions are assessed as equivalent to written applications."

The Growth Scholarship Awards available in the 2026–27 program include:

- Kennedy's Timber Award – \$10,000
- HQPlantations Operational Award – \$5000
- AKD Award – \$5000
- DTM Timber Award – \$2500

Applications are open to people working across all parts of the forest and timber supply chain, including forest management, harvesting, haulage, processing, manufacturing, construction, research, sales, marketing, administration and operational support roles.

Applications for the 2026–27 Growth Scholarships are open now and close on 30 June 2026.

For full eligibility criteria and to apply, visit www.timberqueensland.com.au/growthscholarships.

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appointment directly on a day and time that suits you based on their listed availability. The initial appointment is free for a confidential chat. Go online to book: <https://calendly.com/profshell/introductory-session>

Volunteer Emergency Services Equipment Program (VESEP)

PROVIDES funding to Victorian emergency services volunteer groups to purchase essential operational equipment, vehicles and appliances and minor facility improvements.

Equipment purchased with the grant funding can include, but is not limited to, vehicles, trucks, tankers, watercraft, trailers and can also include minor facility improvements.

The types of equipment funded under the program include:

Operational equipment such as:

- Chainsaws
- Quick-fill pumps
- Generators
- Inflatable rescue boats and engines
- Rescue and safety equipment.

Vehicles and appliances such as:

- Cars/4WDs
- Lighting and storm trailers
- Light/medium tankers
- Big fill trucks
- Watercraft
- Rescue trucks.

Minor facility improvements such as:

- Refurbishments
- Amenities, such as kitchens or changerooms
- Temporary and transition facilities.



The VESEP grants can be put towards vehicles such as this CFA engine from Bostocks Creek. Photo: courtesy US National Interagency Fire Center.

The VESEP is open to the following organisations:

- Country Fire Authority
- Life Saving Victoria
- Victoria State Emergency Service
- Volunteer Marine Search and Rescue units
- Other eligible volunteer emergency services groups as defined in the State Emergency Management Plan.

The Victorian Government matches every \$1 paid by volunteer groups with a \$2 co-contribution to a maximum contribution of \$250,000 (up from \$150,000).

GRANT DETAILS

Provider: Emergency Management Victoria

Amount: Up to \$250,000

Round 4 Opens: 16 Apr 2026 and

Closes: 11 Jun 2026

Location: VIC

Who Can Apply:

Non-Government
Community Groups
Other
Health

Co-Contribution Required: Yes

<https://www.emv.vic.gov.au/how-we-help/grants-and-awards/volunteer-emergency-services-equipment-program-vesep>

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

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.

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

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

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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Pine gin celebrates 25 years of Hyne in Tumbarumba

HOW do you celebrate a quarter-century productive relationship between a timber company and a mill town? With Hyne pine gin, obviously!

The cheeky tippie is a local creation in partnership with Tumbarumba-founded, Ladbroken Distillery using pine needles from the region's forests. To quote the distillery notes: "This gin captures the scent of the forest, fresh resin, citrus notes and the quiet confidence of something well made."

Recently, the gin was officially launched at a taste testing by Hyne's local customers and suppliers. Tom Bruce-Jones, Hyne Group chair thanked attendees for their support, especially in light of recent bushfires and ongoing challenges.

"It was great to meet some of our local customers, suppliers and builders, and share some current market insights as well as the journey over the years," said Bruce-Jones.



From left: Hyne Group chairman, Tom Bruce-Jones; Snowy Valleys Council Mayor, Julia Ham; kiln manager, Peter Kelly; Tumbarumba mill site lead, Kristina Kaminski; general manager, Peter Hyne; and Hyne Group CEO, Jim Bindon

Image: courtesy Hyne

"Pine infused gin certainly presented some light-hearted fun while acknowledging the importance of supporting locally grown and manufactured timber for our housing construction.

"I would also like to thank Robbie and Neil Ladbrook, founders of the Ladbroken Distillery, for taking our idea and creating something special to mark this commemorative year."

Hyne has been a major partner to the Tumbarumba community, investing an initial \$180 million to transform the mill site into a world-class sawmill with continued improvements since.

Snowy Valleys Mayor, Councillor Julia Ham, said, "Twenty-five years is a significant milestone and the economic value of the mill to this region cannot be overestimated. From both direct and indirect employment, manufacture of sustainable, quality products and the support for the community over the years, the contribution is tremendous, not only for Tumbarumba, but the whole of Snowy Valleys Council area and beyond.

"The Hyne Community Trust alone has contributed almost \$1 million into the community and that doesn't include all the other donations [like] timber for various community initiatives."

The gin can be purchased directly from the Ladbroken Distillery in Tumbarumba, or click here to order online.

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New emergency service precinct for NSW South Coast

IT looks like a significant El Niño is on its way, so last Friday's opening of a new \$5.9 million Surf Beach Emergency Services Precinct at Batemans Bay is timely. The facility delivers a modern, shared base for Batemans Bay SES Unit and Surf Beach RFS Brigade volunteers, improving coordination and capability across emergencies including bushfires, storms and floods.

The purpose-built precinct includes vehicle bays, training and operations areas, modern communications and improved volunteer amenities like changerooms and laundry.

The NSW SES facility includes garages to house rescue vehicles and boats, rescue equipment storage, offices, a training room and kitchen.

The RFS facility provides a modern base for the Surf Beach Brigade, with three truck bays, equipment storage, training and meeting areas, supporting frontline firefighting capability and volunteer readiness.

The project is an upgrade to the



Dignitaries and locals including Mike Wassing (far left) at the opening of the facility. Image: courtesy NSW SES

previous RFS station and replaces the Batemans Bay SES headquarters, which was destroyed during the 2019–20 Black Summer bushfires. Since then, SES volunteers have operated from a temporary location while continuing to support the community during major events.

The precinct was delivered through a partnership between the Australian Government, NSW Government, the SES, RFS and Eurobodalla Shire Council. The shared site will support stronger

collaboration through training, planning and coordinated operational response across the region.

NSW SES Commissioner, Mike Wassing AFSM, noted the difference the new precinct will make. "This is a major milestone for our local volunteers who have served their community during flood and storms over the past six years, despite losing their previous headquarters in the

Black Summer fires," he said.

"This new facility gives our volunteers a modern, fit-for-purpose base and ensures our crews have the resources, space and capability they need to respond quickly to floods, storms and rescues across the Eurobodalla.

"Not only that, but they have room to run training exercises, plan out operational activities and response, and an area to rest, reset and restock."

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The ecotourism that John built

JOHN Berry found his calling while on a work for the dole program with Forestry Corporation of NSW. After a career change post a decade in security and moving his family back to the coast for a better life, he had struggled to find meaningful employment for over 18 months.

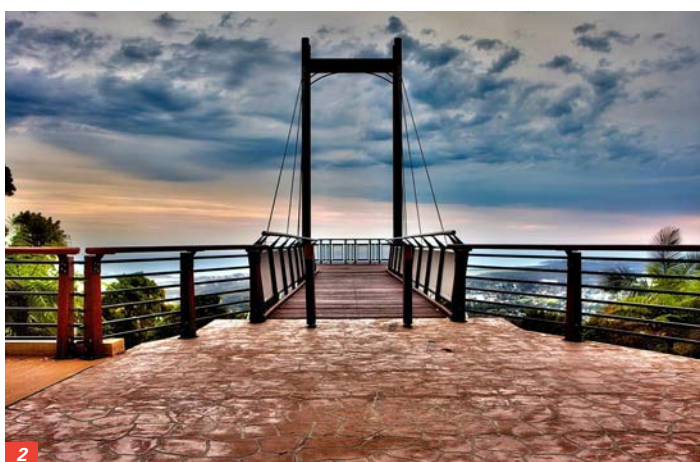
The program with Forestry Corp could not have been better suited to him – John was raised on a mixed farm and studied horticulture with an eye on environmental work, which sadly proved elusive. The work for the dole program involved repairs and maintenance within the forest under the guidance of a forest ranger, and that ranger quickly noticed Berry's building talent, practical vision for projects, and his ability to lead, unite, and mentor others.

Within six months, John moved into a leadership employment role within the program, which he held for five years, achieving Prime Minister's awards in the caring for the Environment Category and as a supervisor.

When the program ended, John joined Forestry Corporation as a ranger and now, some two decades later, is the recreation facilities coordinator for the native hardwood forests, based out of the Mandalong Depot through to Tumbarumba, Styx River (Armidale), and the Coffs Harbour area.

OPEN AND FREE

The forest is open and free to the public to enjoy camping, walking, lookouts and an increasing number of adventure activities, which can't always be enjoyed in other locations. They include mountain biking, horse riding, four-wheel driving, treetop adventure rope courses, archery and recreational hunting. Offering this range of activities – including campsites where visitors can learn about dreaming stories and Indigenous culture – takes some managing.



1/ Alex Capararo (left) working with John Berry on meeting visitor needs.
2/ The Forest Sky Pier at Niigi Niigi (Sealy Lookout). All images: courtesy FCNSW

John is tasked with keeping the forest visitor areas in pristine shape for the public. He is also a big part of the team that creates innovative and practical experiences for groups to enjoy within the forest.

These experiences include Niigi Niigi (Sealy Lookout) within the Bruxner Park Flora Reserve in Orara East State Forest. Forestry Corporation has built the spectacular Forest Sky Pier, which is cantilevered off the edge of Sealy Lookout, Korora Lookout, Gumgali Track, an all-access picnic shelter, improved parking facilities toilets, picnic tables and new walking tracks, including the Garraan.gurr walking track.

Guulabaa (Place of Koala) tourism precinct in the Cowarra State Forest, is another, built in partnership with local organisations committed to showcasing forest ecology, koala conservation, forest timber products and Aboriginal heritage and cultural practices, in addition to art

and design for the public. (See *Enews* #854.)

"The public are our guests here, and we try and explain the multi-use forest message as often as we can," John says. "Forestry Corporation is employing people, we're growing trees for biodiversity and conservation, we are supplying timber to build houses through ethically grown timber – and we manage fire as an obligation."

In the Bago State Forest in southern NSW. John and his team have customised an area to cater for horse riders. Much of that inspiration came from John's keen observations.

"We have put in quite a few yards so the riders can camp overnight and know their horses are safe and comfortable," he said.

"We further customised that area because the horse-riding community likes big fireplaces and open flat areas. And, more often than not, they have their own facilities within their vehicles."

In another project, John was part of the team that created 'frog hotels' in the Olney State Forest. In a quiet section of the forest that had been degraded by vehicles, the soil had already been disturbed, so the team created artificial ponds that became additional breeding habitat for threatened frogs including Littlejohn's tree frog and the giant burrowing frog. A scenic walkway has turned the area into an educational wildlife experience for visitors.

"It's a flourishing species in here now, and it's exactly how we envisioned it working," John said. "The frog dam builds connectivity for genetic diversity and threatened species. The walkway to it is only 300m, but now there is a university research program studying it, and school groups come through routinely."

Cont P 11

From P 10

BALANCING USE

Elsewhere in the area under John’s management is a popular wedding venue, as well as camping areas and trail bike routes. Keeping the needs of various users separate is its own challenge.

Alex Capararo, Forestry Corporation’s partnership leader for the Central Coast and Hunter issues the wedding permits. “The weddings are becoming more common in the big picnic area, because it’s a cost-effective alternative, it’s stunning here, and it’s always cooler under the tree canopy,” he said.

Obviously, venue bookers are hoping for the quiet of nature.

“We do have a lot of trial bike activity,” John said. “We’ve catered for it in an area separate from the main public areas to keep everyone happy, so they can each enjoy their space.”

The two men and their teams approach park updates from this user-led perspective, “We walk through with Alex as our partnership leader, assess the changes that we think are needed, and see what budgeting we’ve got,” said John. “Then we get a landscape architect on-site with us and run through the job with him and he puts it down on paper so we can work to it.

“We can then cost those jobs and work out exactly how we want to cater for people in this particular area.”

Alex adds, “It’s a really cool process and amazing that so many different user groups can be accommodated in one forest setting.”

The passage of time hasn’t dulled the joy of having a forest for an office for



1/ John helped to build the ‘frog hotels’ in the Olney State Forest. These small ponds are now vital for endangered frog breeding.
 2/ Phillip and Ann Samild have been visiting the State Forests for decades and appreciate they are both places of recreation and timber supply.
 3/ The area John manages includes protected regions of great natural beauty. All photos: courtesy FCNSW

John: “I like the varied forest, the people you get to talk to, and that generally 98% of the people who come here come to enjoy the area. That’s where we get our satisfaction from.

“We get a lot of repeat visitors. People who say they used to come up here as a kid, or their parents came up to camp. They often go back to the same camping areas.”

Two former childhood visitors are Phillip and Ann Samild. Now, the couple regularly walk and picnic there.

Ann says the forest is important for everyone, and she appreciates the bigger picture for the Corporation when it comes to land management.

“Trees are very important for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, and for the animals. But we know they do need to cut some trees for wood,” she said.

“I understand there is a need for forest harvesting, that Forestry Corporation replaces the trees they take, and if you go back to those areas, and there will always be small trees growing. At that point you see all the different stages of their growth. It’s very interesting.

“We’ve been to areas affected by the fires, and you can see where the bush fires have gone through and even though it was devastating, you can see how the native forest regrows. It has regenerated within five years,” Ann added.

“It brings it home to me when you see that sort of thing. That’s what forestry is all about. Regeneration.”

On the cover: John Berry has spent much of his working life helping NSW State Forests become ecotourism locations as well as working forests. Image: courtesy FCNSW



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PEFC Sustainable Forest Management Working Group

PEFC is inviting stakeholders from around the world to nominate candidates for its Sustainable Forest Management Working Group (SFM WG).

A limited number of positions are currently open across the following stakeholder categories:

- **PEFC certified scheme users (2 seats):** forest owners and managers; forest-based industry (processing and trade)
- **PEFC uncertified scheme users (2 seats):** PEFC scheme assessors; certification bodies; accreditation bodies; consultants
- **Civil society (1 seat):** including representatives of Indigenous Peoples, workers and trade unions, the scientific and technological community, and environmental, social or other interest groups

The deadline for nominations is 22 April 2026.

The SFM Working Group plays a key role in the ongoing development of PEFC standards. Its current mandate includes identifying and validating gaps between the PEFC Sustainable Forest Management standard (PEFC ST 1003) and the requirements of the EU Deforestation Regulation (EUDR), as well as developing technical proposals to address these gaps. The group also coordinates the work of task forces operating under its remit.

Established in early 2024, the working group is currently focused on finalising an additional appendix to PEFC ST 1003:2024. This appendix will address safeguards and requirements related to forest conversion between 2010 (the

original PEFC cut-off date) and 2020 (the EUDR cut-off date).

Nominations must fall within one of the stakeholder categories listed and should be submitted via the online nomination form.

In addition to ensuring balanced stakeholder representation, PEFC strives for diversity in terms of gender and geographic representation within the working group.

Meetings are held virtually, in the CEST time zone, which translates to mid-late evening in AEST. Members are expected to participate actively and attend meetings on a regular basis. There is generally no covering of expenses for attendance.

Questions can be sent to chaido.kagiali@pefc.org, or click here for more information and a link to the SFM WG terms of reference.

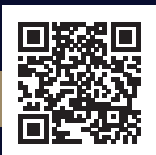
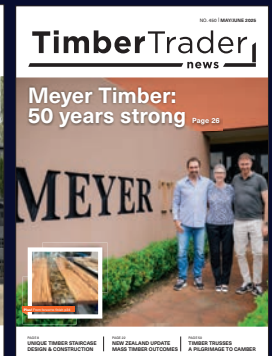
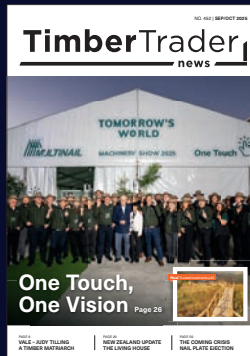


The PEFC SFM WG plays a notable role in forest sustainability in Europe, and worldwide. Image: CC/Wikimedia Commons/GilPe

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Electric trucks parked

Charging infrastructure costs defeat logging truck trial.

BACK in 2023, well-known South Australian firm Fennell Forestry launched just the second electric logging truck in the world.

Using a rigorously tested converted diesel Kenworth prime mover, and with a new charging station installed at Fennell Forestry's Mount Gambier depot, the vehicle was launched with high hopes. In its first nine months it delivered 54,000km-worth of on-road testing, saving 100 tonnes of carbon from entering the atmosphere.

Fennell Forestry Managing Director Wendy Fennell said at the time: "The truck has proven its operational capability by consistently hauling 68.5 tonne loads and driver feedback has been positive, thanks to its ease of driving and on-road performance.

"The real challenge now is to crunch the numbers and ensure everything stacks up from an economic perspective.

"We also need to determine what type of policy and framework will be established to support electric heavy vehicles and ensure adequate incentive is provided to encourage their rollout across the industry."

Sadly, the ABC has reported that the trial has been shuttered. Fennell said the vehicle was able to perform the job with enough torque and capacity to tow the large loads. However, she said there were some issues, particularly with the cost proposition.

"The reason why the truck is no longer in operation is it wasn't financially viable to continue it when you compare it with a like-for-like diesel truck," Fennell told the ABC (click here for the full story).

"The costs that impaired that truck [were] the charging infrastructure costs.

"You don't have to pay for service stations, you only pay for the diesel. The network charges the energy companies would charge because we're a big user of electricity just impaired the cost



Fennell Forestry's converted electric log hauler. Wendy Fennell says the company will be looking for other emission reductions in the short term. Photo: courtesy Fennell Forestry

comparison. That was back when diesel was at a far cheaper rate than it is today. But even based on that, the diesel price would need to get north of \$4 per litre at the bowser before it becomes comparable with diesel."

The actual range of the vehicle was also lower than expected, about 200km per full charge, which was about half what had been forecast.

Fennell told the ABC the vast distances covered by Australia's logging haulers meant this use wasn't currently viable, but hastened to add that the problems were specific to the heavy use Fennell Forestry had sought.

"If you're using electric vehicles in a smaller rigid truck carrying 4.5 tonnes it's a different scenario to a B-double that's carting 70.5 tonnes," she said.

Last year's *Electrifying Road Freight: Pathways to Transition* report commissioned by ARENA (the Australian Renewable Energy Agency) outlined the energy, infrastructure, and policy shifts needed to transition heavy vehicles to battery-electric power (click here to download the report). The report flagged that a future electrified freight network

would need up to 165 freight charging hubs co-located with existing port, road, and intermodal infrastructure, as well as local infrastructure.

Unlike light vehicles, long-haul heavy freight requires megawatt-scale charging. Overseas, systems up to 3.75 MW

are already being tested. The report also noted that power transmission and distribution infrastructure costs were going to be the biggest hurdles outside urban areas.

Currently, some major trucking firms have made shared investments with ARENA in this sort of infrastructure. Linfox has partially completed delivery of 26 Volvo electric prime movers and installation of 25 chargers across three states, while Centurion is deploying 30 electric trucks including four prime movers and 15 dual-plug chargers at its Hazelmere depot in WA.

Last month, ARENA announced up to \$25.3 million in funding for NewVolt to build a shared fast-charging network for electric trucks in Victoria. This will see NewVolt deliver three open-access, fast-charging hubs for heavy and medium electric trucks along major freight corridors in Melbourne's west, south-east and northern suburbs. The charging hubs will provide fast charging to both foundation fleet customers and the broader industry. ARENA's investment includes support for between 50 and 100 electric trucks operating heavy freight across greater Melbourne.

ARENA CEO Darren Miller said projects like this are critical to cutting emissions from one of Australia's hardest-to-abate sectors.

"Heavy freight is one of the toughest

“THE NETWORK CHARGES FROM THE ENERGY COMPANIES JUST IMPAIRED THE COST COMPARISON”

From P 14

forms of transport to electrify. It relies on high-powered, reliable charging and today the upfront cost of new trucks and infrastructure is a real barrier," he said.

"By backing shared charging infrastructure projects like NewVolt, ARENA is lowering the barrier to entry for a broader spectrum of operators and building the foundations of a national electric freight network."

The first site is targeted to open in late 2026, with the remaining hubs to be delivered through 2027.

Fennell Forestry's trial was partly funded by the South Australian government, but much of the risk was borne by the company, which plans to continue looking for emission reductions.

Heavy electric trucks have boomed in China, with fully and partially electrified models accounting for 54% of total heavy-duty truck sales there last



CATL's battery-swap system relies on standardised battery packs in the heavy vehicles. Image: courtesy CATL

December and 29% across all of 2025. The December figure was inflated by the end of an incentive program, but government-supported infrastructure such as CATL heavy truck battery-swapping stations and charging stations

“ ARENA IS LOWERING THE BARRIER TO ENTRY FOR A BROADER SPECTRUM OF OPERATORS

is an important part of the business confidence behind the transition.

On Tuesday, the NSW Minns Government announced \$100 million for the 2026 NSW Electric Vehicle Strategy, but this spending is targeted almost entirely at domestic vehicles and small to medium trucks. It does contain an exemption to road weight limits for electrical heavy vehicles, which is some help, but this exemption is not standard across Australia.

For now, inconsistent regulations between states and a lack of charging infrastructure means our transition to heavy electric vehicles will not be quick. Volvo is still on track to begin manufacture of some heavy electric trucks here mid-year, but some of its longest-range vehicles do not meet current Australian regulations. Here's hoping the Federal Government decides to follow the Chinese Government in easing this change.



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OneFortyOne celebrates Glenn Brooks

Consistency and care have marked Glenn Brooks's years in forestry and the Green Triangle.

THE OneFortyOne team are celebrating colleague Glenn Brooks's 35 years in forestry. A Q&A about his career offered a great way to both commemorate his highlights and show what a career in forestry looks like.

They describe Glenn as "the kind of colleague that you know you can rely on when you're looking for an obscure piece of forest history. He is always happy to help, and, through his diligence and attentiveness, you can be sure that he'll quickly find the information you need (and it'll be correct!)."

"It's hard to imagine the team without Glenn – his calm demeanour and consistent attention to detail make him the go-to expert in the Planning & Resources team."

How did your career path begin?

I studied forestry at university after admittedly not knowing much about it, other than it sounded like a good field to get into and was easier to get into than veterinary science. During first year about half of the students dropped out. I'm glad I stuck with it.

What's your current role and what else have you done over these 35 years?

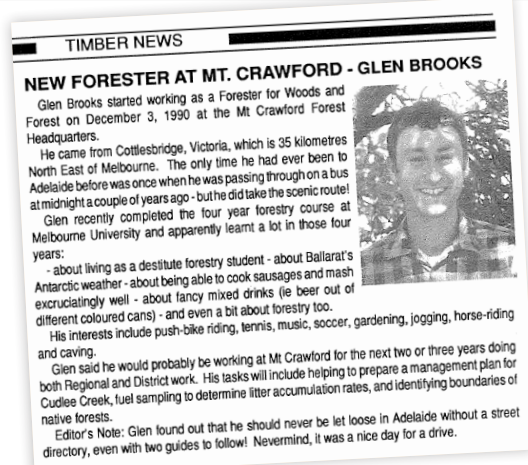
I started working for Woods & Forests straight out of uni and was given the option of either starting in Resources in Mount Gambier or as an operations forester in the Adelaide Hills.

I felt at the time that operations forester would be the best choice since I didn't know much about Resources (I wasn't then to know that I was going to end up working for the majority of my career in Resources!).

Working in the Adelaide Hills gave me perspective of how difficult everything was there compared to the GT. Our planting season was typically 200ha per year spread across 10 or so different sites, all with various degrees of difficulty



Resources Analyst Glenn Brooks (left) with Resources and Planning Manager Jan Rombouts. Image: courtesy OneFortyOne



Glenn had only passed through Adelaide once on a bus at midnight before starting his 35-year career nearby. Photo: courtesy OneFortyOne

like being on the edge of reservoirs and extremely steep, and having difficult access and many weeds.

When I was transferred to Mount Gambier, our annual programs were about 10 times bigger but getting things done was so much easier.

My current role is Resources Analyst, GT Forests, where I process lots of data

“ DURING FIRST YEAR ABOUT HALF OF THE STUDENTS DROPPED OUT. I'M GLAD I STUCK WITH IT. ”

to generate estimates of log volume, amongst other things. I have been doing this since 1999. There have been so many changes it would be hard to list them, but I always try my best to learn from previous years to do things better each year.

What have been some of the highlights or memorable moments from your career?

Pretty much every model or cutting plan I have completed, since I know how much work has gone into them and how valuable this information is for the business.

I have worked with many outstanding people here who have help guide me in the right direction.

The history of the forests is amazing. So much industry ground-breaking work has been done here to set things up for what we have today, and we get to leave our legacy for future generations to inherit.

What's changed in the industry and how has it affected your work?

When I started, there were no Windows computers. At that stage we used the VAX computer system which was command-line only. You had to know a lot of computer syntax to get anything done. I spent a lot of time digitising stocking and site quality maps on digitiser boards. We would have to make a special trip to Adelaide office to print out any maps on their plotter. We thought we were very advanced when we graduated from black and white to a colour plotter (which had 3 coloured pens!)

What advice would you give someone just starting in forestry and timber?

There are plenty of opportunities in forestry, and there are also a wide range of different jobs available. It's a great industry and one where the long-term outlook is often the one that matters most.

Victorian forestry transition audit finds workers worse off

IN 2023, the whole sector was shocked by the news native timber harvesting would cease in Victoria on 1 January 2024. The industry had been given an end date of 2030 and expectations had been built around a phased transition. Suddenly, that was out the window.

In lieu of those six years, the Victorian Government committed \$1.5 bn to support the transition, including \$320 million allocated to the Forestry Transition Program, which provides services and financial support for workers, businesses and communities affected by the end of native timber harvesting.

Earlier this month, the Victorian Auditor-General tabled its report on that program. It found the program was well designed, but the results have been a mixed bag, and there were questions around the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action's administration of the program and assessment of its outcomes.

The key findings included: "Of the workers made redundant after the decision to end native timber harvesting, 87% are in new employment or have retired. But full-time roles have decreased from around 80% to around 60% and part-time, contract and casual roles have increased. It is not clear if workers' new jobs meet their needs or are sustainable. All the businesses we looked at are still in operation.

"The department acted quickly after the government brought forward its decision. This included establishing well designed program guidelines to administer grants and support packages.



Nationals MP Melina Bath says the shutdown has harmed regional communities. Image: courtesy Melina Bath/Facebook

"But it is not clear if the department has applied these guidelines consistently. We found gaps in the department's records about its decisions, including payment approvals without records of how it verified eligibility. This reduces transparency over how it has allocated support and increases the risk of ineligible payments.

"The department is also not adequately monitoring the program's effectiveness. It cannot reliably show outcomes, such as job security or business viability, or know if businesses and workers will need more support after the program's scheduled end in 2026."

While the report noted that ForestWorks, a partner engaged by the government to deliver the program, had gone as far as to engage a third-party provider to help determine eligibility and payment amounts, it added that "the department does not verify the eligibility assessments made by this third-party provider. This reduces confidence that the department is effectively overseeing how ForestWorks and its partners administer worker support payments."

Melina Bath MP, member for Eastern Victoria Region, has long protested the closure of native timber harvesting in the state. The report has confirmed her position.

"The Auditor General found that despite budgeting \$1.5 billion to shut the industry, the Allan Government cannot demonstrate whether displaced timber workers are better off," she said.

"Job quality has declined and employment is less secure, with Labor failing to track income or job security outcomes.

"These are not the markers of a successful industry transition. Instead of transitioning and supporting displaced workers, Labor's plan has driven economic instability that continues to harm regional communities."

Bath, who was scathing about the lack of consultation before the original changed timeline, pulled no punches.

"The Allan Government has no credible plan beyond 2026 to manage the ongoing impacts on workers and affected communities," Bath said.

"The report confirms Labor shut a sustainable industry first and considered the consequences second. Our regional communities deserved fairness, consultation, secure jobs and accountability, but instead they received disingenuous government spin.

"The Allan Government must urgently review remaining transition funding to ensure it directly supports workers, families and communities and not further bureaucracy."

Click here to read the full report.



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