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Order of Australia for Dr Peter Stanton

COVER STORY P 3

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New MRFH website

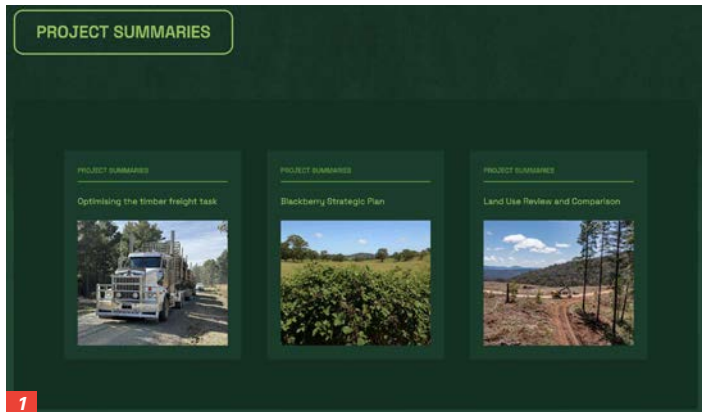
All the Murray Region Forestry Hub’s projects, stats and news are now easier to access.

THE work coming out of the Murray Region Forestry Hub (MRFH) has been pivotal for many silviculturists, from the Blackberry Impacts project to the recent Review of Regulatory Barriers to Effective Fire Management in the Murray Region Post 2019-2020 inquiry review.

Now the MRFH’s updated website makes it easier to find what you’re looking for as well as discover upcoming projects and learn about forestry in the Murray Region.

Local provider Beal Creative has delivered a much-needed face lift to the site and incorporated new features including project summaries.

MRFH said: “The Hub appreciates that not everyone is keen to digest large volume of text in the detailed reports completed each year. As such, and as part of the extension of the Hub’s role, we have developed a number of easy-to-digest project summaries, designed for printing and sharing.”



1

- 1/ The new website includes project summaries for time-poor industry members looking for an overview of some of the MRFH’s work.
 - 2/ Local forestry businesses are also highlighted on the site, including these plantation seedlings.
- All images: courtesy MRFH

The first three available are Optimising the timber freight task, Land Use Review and Comparison, and Implementing the Blackberry Strategic Plan. Each quickly describes the wider project, delivers central data points that were uncovered in the full reports and then delivers the key discoveries and action plans that are most essential for the end user to know.

There’s enough detail for the end user to gain the tools they need to understand and potentially act on the problem, without the need to get through long, complex reports.



2

The MRFH has also announced its shift to projects for FY 2027, saying it has “a focus on long lasting legacy projects that will add genuine value to the Hub members and provide critical advice to Government for the industry and region. It is expected the workplan for FY27 will be wrapped up by mid-July.

“We welcome input – if you have project ideas for consideration, please get in touch.”

You can contact the MRFH and see the new website by clicking here.

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Dr Peter Stanton receives AM

Renowned forester was pivotal in conserving Queensland's wet tropics.

DR Peter Stanton AM PSM, the forester and landscape ecologist whose field surveys helped secure the Wet Tropics World Heritage listing, was appointed as a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) in the King's Birthday 2026

Honours List, announced on Monday. Dr Stanton, known throughout his career as Peter, is among 949 Australians recognised this year by Governor-General Sam Mostyn.

Forestry Australia was among the very first to send warm congratulations, noting that the national honour comes just months after Forestry Australia awarded Stanton its highest accolade. In October 2025, at the organisation's conference in Adelaide, he received the N.W. Jolly Medal for a career spanning more than five decades advancing forest science, particularly in Queensland's tropical forests and the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area.

"Peter Stanton's career shows that foresters have led conservation in Australia for generations," said Forestry Australia CEO Jacquie Martin. "A respected member of Forestry Australia for 60 years, Peter has shown lifelong commitment to the nation's forests.

"When we presented Peter with the N.W. Jolly Medal last year, we recognised more than five decades of work that transformed the understanding and conservation of Queensland's forests and landscapes. Seeing that contribution recognised



1/ **Dr Stanton receiving the N.W. Jolly Medal from Forestry Australia's Dr Michelle Freeman last year.** Image: courtesy Forestry Australia

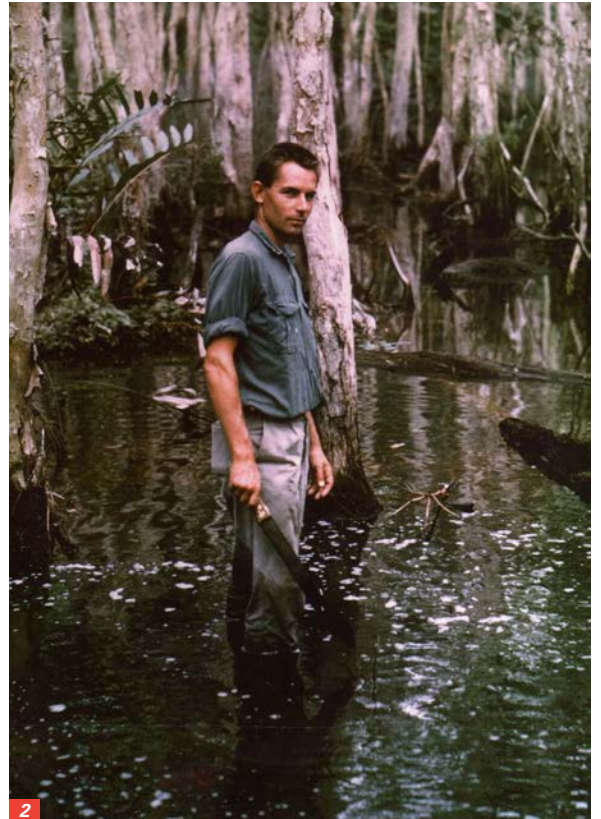
2/ **Peter Stanton conducting a vegetation survey in the Tully Swamp in 1974.** Image: CC/Mamieisblue

more broadly is a proud moment for the profession."

Stanton began his career with the Queensland Forestry Department before transferring to the National Parks branch in 1967. He later spent two decades as a senior scientist with the Queensland National Parks and Wildlife Service, moved to Cairns in 1979, and remained in Far North Queensland for the rest of his working life.

In the 1960s and 1970s, his systematic surveys mapped ecosystems from the rainforests of Cape York Peninsula to the Wet Tropics between Townsville and Cooktown. His vegetation mapping of the Wet Tropics bioregion classified some 90,000 polygons across 4000 aerial photographs into 250 distinct ecosystem types, each one verified on the ground. Published in 2005, the study has been described by the Wet Tropics Management Authority as the most comprehensive vegetation mapping ever undertaken in the region.

Stanton was the first Australian to receive the IUCN Fred M. Packard International Parks Merit Award in 1982. He later received the Public Service Medal in 1996, the Centenary Medal



in 2001, and an honorary Doctor of Science from James Cook University in 2023, before receiving the N.W. Jolly Medal in 2025 and being appointed a Member of the Order of Australia this year.

The 2026 Honours List recognised 949 Australians, including Adrian John Kloeden, former Chair of HVP Plantations and Sustainable Timber Tasmania.

Announcing the recipients, Mostyn said the honours system recognised people who had given greatly to the nation. "Recipients have made an exceptional contribution to Australia," Mostyn said.

Peter's citation reads: "For significant service to conservation, to wildlife ecology, and to wet tropics management."

"PETER'S CAREER SHOWS FORESTERS HAVE LED CONSERVATION IN AUSTRALIA FOR GENERATIONS"

On the cover: Dr Peter Stanton's decades of work include most comprehensive vegetation mapping ever undertaken of Queensland's wet tropics, as well as service to conservation and wildlife ecology. Image: courtesy Forestry Australia

AFPA making headlines

The association's campaign against Russian timber trade has gained national interest.

LAST week, AFPA used its power as a leading industry organisation to speak out against Russian timber products entering Australia through third countries.

AFPA Acting CEO Richard Hyett said stronger action must be taken to protect Australian timber manufacturers and the integrity of Australia's forestry and wood products market.

"The latest evidence suggests significant volumes of Russian timber continue to find their way into the Australian market, despite existing sanctions," he said.

"We estimate up to 100,000 cubic metres of timber imported into Australia each year could contain Russian material, which means up to 15,000 new homes built each year may include Russian timber."

AFPA's research shows that this timber may be avoiding existing tariffs,

The Sydney Morning Herald

Thursday, June 3, 2026 6:58 AM INDEPENDENT. ALWAYS. Free published 90c No. 91,800

Call to act on Russian wood fears

EXCLUSIVE
Business News
 Significant amounts of Russian timber are entering Australia through third countries, AFPA says. The association is calling for stronger action to protect the integrity of Australia's forestry and wood products market.

Russian 'blood timber' is being used to build Australian homes

EXCLUSIVE
Business News
 Significant amounts of Russian timber are entering Australia through third countries, AFPA says. The association is calling for stronger action to protect the integrity of Australia's forestry and wood products market.

The AFPA-sourced story on the front page of the Sydney Morning Herald. Image: AFPA

on top of damaging the market for local manufacturers and removing choice from ethical consumers. The campaign has met with notable success, with

stories running on the front pages of the Sydney Morning Herald and The Age, as well as in multiple industry publications.

The media campaign comes hot on the heels of AFPA's recent submission to the Australian Senate (click here to download) on the effectiveness of sanctions against the Russian Federation, which outlined the use of 'go-between' nations including China to whitewash Russian timber products.

In the submission, AFPA recommends that the Australian Government:

1. Extend the 35% tariff on Russian products to all products containing Russian materials irrespective of where they are imported from;
2. Undertake anti-dumping actions against products containing Russian materials; and
3. Undertake proactive compliance activity to stop and reduce the risk of Russian timber products being rerouted through other countries and imported into Australia.

It outlines the differences in approach taken by Australia and other nations including the EU, highlighting that the latter has imposed anti-dumping duties on Chinese Timber Products to counter the rerouting of Conflict Timber.

"From November 2025 all Chinese hardwood plywood entering the EU has faced an 86.8% duty, except for one cooperating exporter subject to a 43.2% rate," the submission notes.

"Countries have also had to be vigilant as Chinese manufacturers sought ways to circumvent imposed tariffs. For example, there was a deliberate and early shift by Chinese exporters to reclassify hardwood plywood as 'softwood plywood'. Extremely thin, superficial face layers were applied—often so thin they could be peeled off—designed solely to secure a different customs classification and avoid anti-dumping duties. The European Commission (EC) identified this further circumvention tactic during the provisional phase and initiated specific monitoring of such imports, opening the door to faster enforcement actions."

AFPA's acting CEO Richard Hyett also discussed the issue on five separate radio broadcasts, including live on Radio 2CC (click here to download) and ABC Statewide and local radio. AFPA's strong national advocacy has been welcomed and supported by members and industry stakeholders.



New fastener testing standard

FWPA's latest work will strengthen confidence across the timber industry.

FWPA Standard T01 Mechanical Fasteners and Connectors has now been published, a new industry standard for testing mechanical fasteners and connectors used in timber construction.

The Standard is the outcome of an FWPA-funded research project managed by the Engineered Wood Products Association of Australasia and undertaken by the ARC Advance Timber Hub at the University of Queensland, ensuring it is grounded in both industry need and leading research capability.

Drawing on a comprehensive review of international research reports and testing standards, FWPA Standard T01 creates new opportunities to support more efficient, reliable and innovative timber connection design in modern construction.

The new Standard:

- Establishes consistent methods to determine strength, stiffness, ductility and slip characteristics of timber joints across sawn timber and engineered wood products (e.g. GLT, LVL, CLT, plywood);
- Covers both lateral and axial loading scenarios, including identification of governing failure modes;
- Provides standardised procedures for testing individual fasteners and full connection assemblies used in timber construction; and

- Enables the generation of characteristic design values suitable for structural design under AS 1720.1

By improving the way connection performance is characterised, the Standard will help manufacturers, testing laboratories, universities, certifiers and engineers generate clearer, more robust design data and support greater confidence in the performance of timber connection systems.

The Standard is intended to be used by the timber industry, testing laboratories and universities, as an alternative to AS 1649 (2025) for determining characteristic capacities of commonly used connection types until that standard undergoes further comprehensive revision. It supports the design of joints in timber structures in accordance with AS 1720.1 and is designed to complement, not replace, existing Australian Standards by providing an alternative method for determining characteristic capacities of commonly used timber connection types until AS 1649 (2025) undergoes further comprehensive revision.



The new FWPA Standard. Image: supplied

Industry benefits of FWPA Standard T01 include:

- Quality assurance: provides consistent and repeatable methods for testing timber connections, improving confidence in reported performance data.
- Improved design reliability: supports the generation of robust characteristic values for use in structural design under AS 1720.1, strengthening engineering outcomes.
- Greater consistency: establishes a unified approach to assessing connection behaviour across both sawn and engineered wood products.
- Support for innovation: enables clearer performance data for modern timber systems, including mass timber and prefabricated construction.
- Enhanced industry confidence: improves transparency and comparability of test results across laboratories, researchers and manufacturers.
- Practical industry application: provides a usable framework for engineers, certifiers and product developers working with real-world connection systems.
- Research-backed development: built on collaborative research between FWPA, industry and leading academic institutions, ensuring strong technical credibility.

[Click here to access the standard.](#)

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Bilateral Tassie talks planned

The Albanese and Rockliff Governments have begun negotiations for sustainable Tasmanian forestry.

ON Tuesday, the Federal and Tasmanian governments finally stepped up to the plate and committed to work together towards a bilateral agreement to support sustainable forestry in Tasmania into the future.

From July 1, 2027, the Albanese Government's environmental law reforms will bring forestry operations covered by Regional Forest Agreements (RFA) under Federal environmental regulation.

This has caused concern in Tasmania in particular, as forestry operations in RFA regions will be shifted over to national environmental standards – as the Government puts it: 'bringing the sector into line with all other industries, while supporting a sustainable and well-regulated future.'

The Albanese government has previously pledged to support forest industries. Accordingly, on Tuesday, Federal Minister for the Environment and Water, Murray Watt issued a Notice of Intention to develop a draft bilateral agreement that would accredit Tasmania's forest management framework alongside new national environmental standards.

The announcement notes that "The Albanese Government is working closely with all RFA states – Tasmania, New South Wales and Western Australia – to develop landscape-scale approvals for forestry under the reforms.

"To support this transition, the Australian Government announced \$28 million over two years in the 2026-27 Budget to help states with RFAs align their forest management systems with new requirements under the national environment law.

"Up to \$8.5 million is available to Tasmania to support this work, recognising the scale and importance of its public native forestry sector, alongside its plantation and private forestry industries."



Both governments have committed to the future of native timber harvesting in Tasmania. Image: CC/Rexness

Federal Minister for the Environment and Water, Murray Watt, said: "Formally commencing the bilateral negotiations marks a significant step forward in aligning Regional Forest Agreement forestry operations with the Australian Government's landmark reformed national environment law, delivering stronger environmental protections alongside greater certainty for industry.

"We believe in a strong and environmentally sustainable future for Tasmania's forestry industry, and these reforms will see the sector meet the same environmental standards we apply to every other industry across Australia.

"We will be working with the Tasmanian Government over the coming months to develop and then formalise the bilateral agreement which will support the industry to operate in line with national environmental laws," he concluded.

Tasmanian Minister for Business, Industry and Resources, Felix Ellis, welcomed the commitment on behalf of the Tasmanian Government, calling it "an important step toward securing the long-term future of Tasmania's sustainable forestry industry".

He said, "For decades, the Regional Forest Agreement has provided the foundation for a strong and sustainable forestry industry in Tasmania, supporting regional jobs, investment and responsible forest management.

"It is important that accreditation of Tasmania's Forest Practices System continues, providing strong environmental protections while avoiding unnecessary duplication and red tape.

"We will continue working closely with the Australian Government to secure a practical and durable accreditation pathway that gives industry certainty, protects investment and ensures a sustainable source of timber products critical to our economy and future housing needs."

The discussion comes at a pivotal time for both Tasmanian and Australian forestry. On the one hand, the Albanese Government has recognised the central importance of forestry for both the economy and meeting our housing targets.

Federal Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Julie Collins, said, "Our Government will continue working closely with industry, unions and the Tasmanian Government to support Tasmania's forestry industry and the jobs it supports.

"We have already delivered a \$300 million record investment to back Australia's forestry industry, because we know the critical contribution forestry makes in Tasmania and across the country. We are continuing to back the future of the industry with a new \$300 million Forestry Growth Fund which will bring our total investment to \$600 million."

On the other hand, these discussions are taking place against the backdrop of a concerted effort to end Tasmanian native forestry by stealth (see story this issue pages 8 and 9) and delegitimise native forestry using populist arguments based on misinterpreted 'science' (see pages 14 and 15). Clear heads and good faith will be essential to maintain this significant Tasmanian industry.

JUNE

18: Vehicle technology safety workshop – Mt Gambier, 8.00am - 12.30pm. Forestry leaders are invited to attend a workshop in Mount Gambier in June to explore safety implications of having multiple technologies in vehicles used in Australian forestry. Email a.naweed@cqu.edu.au with expressions of interest to attend. Participants will receive a \$100 gift voucher for attending.

23: AFPA members dinner – QT Hotel, Canberra, 6.30pm - 9.30pm. Guest speaker - Shadow Agriculture and Forestry Minister, the Honorable Darren Chester. Tickets can be booked via <https://www.trybooking.com/events/landing/1538235>

30: Timber Queensland Presentation – University of Queensland, Brisbane, 12noon - 5.00pm. WoodSolutions presents Queensland Timber Trajectory: award-winning exemplars showing the way to modern construction. For more information and to register, visit <https://www.timberqueensland.com.au/event-details/woodsolutions-presents-queensland-timber-trajectory-award-winning-exemplars-showcasing-the-way-to-modern-construction>

JULY

9: National Centre for Timber Durability and Design Life-Annual Showcase 2026 – UniSC, Moreton Bay, 8.30am - 4.00pm. The event will highlight the latest research, innovation and industry engagement across the Centre's work in timber durability, design life, circularity and sustainable

construction. For more information and to register, visit <https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/national-centre-for-timber-durability-and-design-life-annual-showcase-2026-tickets-1987465010347>

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@ntha.com.au

AUGUST

7: WCTE 2027 – Call for Abstracts. Call for abstracts for WCTE 2027 is now open. Submission deadline is 7 August. Visit <https://event.fourwaves.com/wcte27/submission>

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@ntha.com.au

12: SAVE THE DATE: 2026 WFTN Cocktails for Charity – Cloudland, Brisbane, 1.30pm - 6.00pm. In support of Zephyr Education Limited. Further information, and ticket sale details coming soon.

OCTOBER

7-9: Forestry Australia 2026

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

19-20: International Woodchip and Biomass Trade Conference – Singapore. The conference will serve as a key meeting point for the global biomass community. For more information and to register, visit: <https://web.cvent.com/event/7fd17c6e-d403-4eb4-a6cd-ab69df757864/summary>

30: SA, NT & WA Timber & Hardware Industry Awards – National Wine Centre, Adelaide, 6.30pm - 11.30pm. Join us in celebrating the SA, NT & WA 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@ntha.com.au

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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Dangers of halting long-term forest contracts

Politicians and activists are putting thousands of Tasmanian jobs at risk.

By **TONY PRICE**

IT is a peculiar kind of politics that pretends to be cautious and frugal while doing something deeply mischievous.

The latest call from environmental campaigners, backed by the Greens and independents Peter George, Helen Burnet and Kristie Johnston, for Tasmania to halt long-term native forest timber contracts is exactly that. It is being dressed up as fiscal responsibility.

It is not. It is a blatant attempt to close regional sawmills by stealth.

The argument sounds simple enough – do not sign contracts until there is “certainty”. But anyone who has ever run, financed or worked in a real business knows that certainty is precisely what contracts are designed to provide. Without them, businesses cannot borrow, invest, employ, maintain equipment, train apprentices or plan production.

Forestry is no different to any other capital-intensive industry. Dairy processors, farmers, freight companies and manufacturers all rely on long-term contracts to have the confidence to invest, employ and expand, often while policy and regulation shift around them.

Our sawmills should be applauded for continuing to invest and adapt in uncertain conditions, not undermined by political slogans and activist pressure.

A sawmill is not a pop-up operation. It is a specialised, high-cost regional business carrying expensive machinery, kilns, drying sheds, log yards, maintenance crews, safety systems, power costs, transport arrangements, finance costs and skilled workers who cannot simply be switched on and off at the convenience of an activist media release or political opportunity.



A call to halt long-term native forest timber contracts is really a call to halt native timber harvesting by stealth. Image: Shutterstock/Neale Cousland

A sawmiller needs to know that logs will arrive next year, and the year after that, just as builders and the community need to know that the timber they rely on will be there, year after year. Without that confidence, banks will not lend. Owners will not invest. Workers will leave. Apprenticeships will not be offered. Customers will look elsewhere. Equipment will not be replaced.

And eventually, a business that took generations to build will quietly close.

CAMPAIGN BUILT ON MYTHS

This campaign is focused on making it impossible for the industry to function. Starve processors of supply certainty. Frighten government away from contracts. Create enough sovereign risk that investment disappears. Then, when sawmills shut, claim it was the market.

Tasmanians should see through that

and through the politicians who stand by activists whose whole fundraising model appears to be built on closing down local Tasmanian industries.

Of course, governments should manage risk. Of course, contracts should be responsible, lawful and based on sustainable supply. But the idea that the responsible course is to freeze

the industry until every political and regulatory question is settled is naive in the extreme.

In the real world, uncertainty is not solved by paralysis. It is managed through clear rules, proper planning and durable agreements that give both taxpayers and businesses confidence.

In any case, should any government shut an industry down, the lesson from Victoria is that transition costs extend far beyond sawmill supply contracts. Compensation there included forestry transition programs, community support packages, business support, worker support, plant and equipment compensation, redundancy top-ups and loss-of-income payments.

Tasmania's priority should be maintaining certainty, backing regional jobs and avoiding unnecessary costs to taxpayers. Which is why it is disappointing seeing elected representatives lend their names to this campaign as though there are no consequences to their communities

“ THIS CAMPAIGN IS FOCUSED ON MAKING IT IMPOSSIBLE FOR THE INDUSTRY TO FUNCTION ”

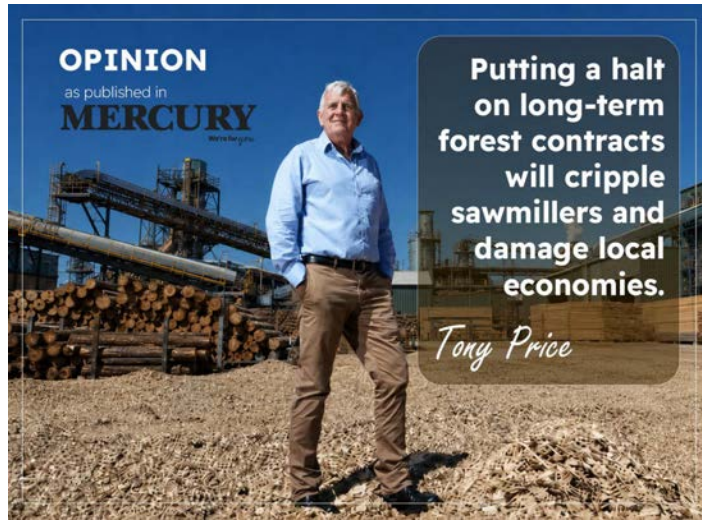
Cont P 9

From P 8

beyond sawmill contracts.
**REAL
 CONSEQUENCES**

These are not abstract debates. They affect workers in regional towns, contractors with mortgages, family-owned businesses, truck drivers, mechanics, mill hands, foresters, fabricators and the communities built around them.

Politicians who stand shoulder-to-shoulder with activist organisations, while pretending they are merely protecting the budget, are disingenuous and should be honest about what they are really doing. They are putting thousands of Tasmanian jobs at risk. They are undermining confidence in local businesses. They are jeopardising timber supply. And they are sending a message that any industry disliked by a well-organised pressure group can have its commercial foundations pulled away by political ambush.



Tony Price shared his four-decades-plus experience with Mercury readers on Monday, reproduced here with his permission. Image: supplied

**Putting a halt
 on long-term
 forest contracts
 will cripple
 sawmillers and
 damage local
 economies.**

Tony Price

The irony is that this is happening at the very moment Australia is desperate for timber. We have a housing shortage. Builders need reliable supplies. Families need homes.

Governments talk endlessly about housing targets, affordability and supply chain resilience, yet some of the same political voices are willing to weaken a local industry that produces renewable building materials, and support the

importing of timbers from highly questionable sources, such as Indonesia, Russia and East Africa.

That is hypocritical and makes no sense. If Tasmania wants regional employment, domestic manufacturing, lower reliance on imports and enough timber to help build the homes we need, then it cannot treat sawmills as disposable. It cannot ask businesses to invest without contracts. It cannot demand jobs without giving employers the confidence to employ.

Long-term supply contracts are not a favour to sawmillers.

They are the basic commercial foundation that allows them to operate. Pull that foundation away and the result will be devastatingly obvious and entirely avoidable.

This piece was first published in The Mercury Newspaper, 8 June 2026. Reprinted by permission of Tony Price. Tony Price is a professional forester with more than 40 years of experience in forestry across Australia.

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Updates to NSW Safe Work for sawmills

SAFework NSW published its new Code of Practice for the Sawmilling industry last month. The new document replaces the 1997 Code of Practice and is designed to assist anyone who has a duty of care in the circumstances described in the code of practice.

Updates include more clarity on the risk management process, additional sections dealing with new wood products and machinery (including scanning machinery) and a more comprehensive section on psychosocial hazards.

Codes of practice don't replace WHS laws, but can be issued to help make understanding what you have to do a little easier.

An inspector can refer to a code of practice when issuing an improvement or prohibition notice. Under the Work



The new Code of Practice for the Sawmilling industry from SafeWork NSW has come into effect. Image: Shutterstock/Dmitry Kalinovsky

Health and Safety Act 2011, codes of practice are admissible in court proceedings. Courts may regard a code of practice as evidence of what is known about a hazard, risk or control, and rely on it to determine what is 'reasonably practicable' in the circumstances to which the code relates.

Changes are being introduced from 1 July 2026 to make it a duty for NSW employers and PCBUs to comply with a code of practice, or alternatively provide a standard of health and safety equivalent or higher than the code. This means the codes are legally enforceable and businesses should be up to date with their understanding of requirements.

As well as codes of practice, Safe Work Australia has guidance material that can also help you achieve the standards under WHS laws, which can be found through their library links here. Use the sidebar to narrow your selections.

Thanks to NTHA for alerting us to this update. You can download the whole code of practice for the sawmilling industry by clicking here.

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Image: Shutterstock

Advancing timber durability research

Decades-long field trials are shaping the future of construction in Australia.

AS a key partner in the National Centre for Timber Durability and Design Life (NCTDDL), Queensland DPI's Forest Product Innovation Team at the Salisbury Research Facility is delivering research to improve the long-term performance and reliability of timber products.

Research project leader Stuart Meldrum explained the durability research includes long-term field trials conducted in accordance with international standard methods.

"This research is providing timber durability performance data that is being used to inform service life predictions, Australian standards and product development for Queensland and national markets," he said.

"One of our key initiatives is a long-term exposure field trial, involving 41 commercially relevant species, with test samples dating back over 36 years."

Meldrum said that the trials had evolved with the industry: "Initially, more



1/ **The exposure trial at South Johnstone Research Facility.**



2/ **Samples being assessed at Queensland's South Johnstone Research Facility.** All images: Queensland Government Department of Primary Industries

than 5000 samples were exposed at 11 sites throughout Queensland and at three interstate sites, with inspections conducted through the trial's duration.

"More recently, we've expanded the scope to include a range of engineered wood products, treated timbers and modified wood systems, addressing key gaps in current knowledge.

"Approximately 4000 samples have been exposed in tropical and sub-tropical Queensland, and these are routinely assessed to monitor performance."

Further work is underway with national and international collaborators to gather data on the impact of climate on timber durability performance."

These projects are helping to build the data and tools needed to support the uptake of domestically produced timber for housing across Australia.

This not only contributes to the decarbonisation of the building sector, but also supports modern construction methods, ensuring timber remains a reliable material for the future.

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Have your say on Australia's revised FSC Forest Management Standard

THE Forest Stewardship Council® Australia and New Zealand (FSC ANZ) has opened the second and final public consultation on the revised Forest Stewardship Standard for Australia (the Standard).

The consultation is open from 29 April to 29 June 2026. FSC ANZ invites all stakeholders to review the draft Standard and provide feedback via the FSC Public Consultation Platform. Constructive feedback is welcomed, especially suggestions that clearly explain how specific changes can be improved.

James Felton-Taylor, Chair of FSC ANZ and founder of Australian Sustainable Timbers, said, "This is the last chance to shape the Standard in its entirety for at least the next five years. The FSC ANZ Board urges everyone passionate about responsible forestry to participate and help set the new benchmark for responsible forest management in Australia."

KEY CHANGES IN THE SECOND DRAFT

The Standards Development Group (SDG), the technical working group responsible for revising the Standard, considered all stakeholder feedback

“EVERYONE PASSIONATE ABOUT RESPONSIBLE FORESTRY TO PARTICIPATE



Oak logs cut from an FSC-certified forest in Germany. The Standards are designed to give confidence that certified timber is equally sustainable no matter the nation of origin. Image: FSC® Germany / Stefan Lechner

received in the initial consultation which closed in August 2025. Based on this feedback, the draft Standard has been updated to reflect stakeholder input.

Key proposed changes include:

- Significant changes to the requirements for the use of highly hazardous pesticides, including a streamlining of Indicators;
- Clarified requirements for Cultural Empathy Training;
- Expanded scope to cover all non-timber forest products (NTFPs), with additional NTFP-specific Indicators to ensure responsible extraction.

FOREST TESTING

The draft Standard was field-tested from

19–21 May in a Victorian native forest and a Tasmanian plantation. This trial will help verify that the revised Standard requirements are practical to implement and can be effectively audited. The learnings from the forest testing, together with the feedback from the consultation, will underpin the development of the final draft of the Standard.

FINALISING THE REVISION PROCESS

The final draft Standard will be submitted to the FSC ANZ Board for review and approval. It will then be assessed by FSC International to ensure all required normative processes have been met and that the Standard itself includes all required elements. Hereafter, it is considered for final approval by the Policy and Standards Committee, which

has delegated authority from the FSC International's Board of Directors for decisions on FSC Forest Stewardship Standards. Any conditions for approval identified by the Committee must be addressed by the SDG before the Standard is fully approved.

Please contact Stefan Jensen, Senior Policy Manager at FSC ANZ and SDG Facilitator at s.jensen@au.fsc.org for questions or comments.

For more information about the revision process, click [here](#).

Take part in the consultation by clicking [here](#). The consultation is open until 29 June.



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The 895 ready to fight fires or back to work in under two hours

Native forestry bans based on misinformation

Four eminent scientists say the bans on native forestry in Victoria and Western Australia were based on a flawed interpretation of science.

WE'VE become used to the word 'contested' being thrown around when it comes to the social licence for forestry in Australia. But, as an article in this month's *Australian Forestry* journal outlines, a better word might be 'misinformed'.

The four authors, who include three former CSIRO specialists, have looked at the arguments used against native timber forestry in Australia and concluded the published evidence does not support many of the claims.

In the abstract of the article, 'Australia's native forests can be sustainably managed for wood production together with other important forest values', the authors write: "We reviewed the criticisms and assertions commonly made against native forestry using relevant science, the long-term practical experience of forest managers and field outcomes.

"These assertions converge to promote the view that all timber harvesting causes severe and irreversible damage to forests. We conclude that these adverse criticisms are based on poor evidence and lack a scientific basis. Evidence shows the contrary. Sustainable timber harvesting does not lead to deforestation or forest degradation and that small spatially dispersed harvested areas are, in general, consistently regenerated to healthy forests with a low threat to biodiversity, including to iconic species such as the koala."

The authors, R.J. Rasona, E.K.S. Nambiara, G.A. Kilea and L.J. Brenb, focus their work on the 6.3 million ha of public forests managed for multiple values including wood production. These, they write, have been the target of "well-organised anti-forestry activism by a range of groups, which advocates that all native forests should be left untouched."

Noting that forest industries are core parts of many rural communities, the authors flag the serious consequences of misinformed protest, even when well intentioned, saying: "These allegations have influenced and sometimes shaped views of the public and politicians, leading to pressures which have affected policies.



1 & 2/ NSW mid-north coast timber workers lined up their empty boots to signify job losses last year after the shock moratorium of harvesting in the proposed GKNP area. The new paper makes it clear that the 'science' behind this decision is at best misinterpreted. Images: courtesy TFTU NSW

Consequently, the management of native forests now is at a crossroads."

Regular readers of *Enews* will be familiar with the pattern: an environmental group grabs headlines in the mainstream papers, TV and social media with a dramatic story of forest destruction, only for the actual experts to come along weeks or months later with the detailed analysis of why the headline-grabbing alarm fails to match up with the facts.

Last week's issue (*Enews* #901), for example, included findings from the Contested Evidence About Timber Harvesting and Bushfire Risk in Australian Landscapes report showing that one single type of forest and management

system was erroneously generalised across the continent in public claims of fire risk in managed forest.

The problem is, of course, that errors or intentional lies hit faster and therefore harder than fact checks.

Opening with a review of multiple papers in which expert forest scientists and managers have interrogated what they considered to be questionable science and biased use of information to advocate anti-forestry positions, the authors then review the major criticisms and claims made against native forestry and weigh the evidence for each.

For the assertion that "Harvesting results in deforestation or forest degradation", the authors detail the careful planning of harvesting operations including Australia's minuscule proportion of clearfelling to selective harvesting, and that legislated codes of practice mandate regeneration of harvested coupes.

Where regeneration has failed to occur, the authors find natural causes (generally bushfire, drought and climate change) and note forest management intervention for repair.

"In Australia," they note, "forest loss occurs because of clearing for farming or development of infrastructure, and recurring wildfires, but not from timber harvests (ABARES 2023c)."

They also note that almost all old growth forests around the nation are in conservation stands, save for a tiny percentage devoted to specialist timbers for arts and crafts and boat building, and that effectively everything that is currently harvested is regrowth from previously harvested forests.

The claim that "Harvesting native forests threatens biodiversity, especially endangered fauna" is similarly debunked. The authors quote the State of the Environment Australia 2021 report's findings that primary threats being come land clearing for farming, urban

From P 14

development, feral pests and high-intensity wildfires.

This was the area where some of the most extraordinary claims have been made by activists. As the authors write: "Ward et al. (2024) assumed that if forests are harvested there will be negative impacts on threatened fauna. However, that analysis for northern NSW did not provide any map showing actual forest degradation after harvesting; they simply inferred major threats to fauna wherever there was an overlap between modelled species distributions and harvested areas. Further, no account was taken of the facts that only small areas of forest are harvested annually, that forests regrow, habitat is continually changing over time, and that harvesting practices are modified specifically to avoid or minimise any such impacts."

The authors note claims that forestry is pushing koalas towards extinction in NSW and in rebuttal quote Dr Brad Law's work monitoring koala populations at 224

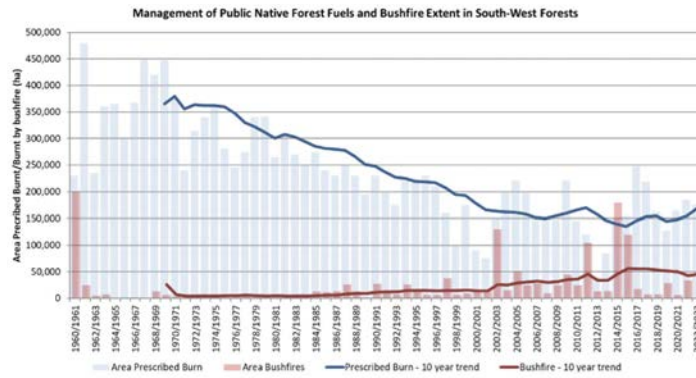


Figure 1. Temporal pattern of areas prescribed burnt and burnt by wildfire in the SW of Western Australia (update of original analysis of Sneeuwjagt (2011) by Brad Barr, pers. com. 2025).

Figure 1 from the paper shows that, contrary to allegations by anti-forestry activists, bushfires have increased as controlled burns have decreased, suggesting other mechanisms such as climate change are the driver, not forestry management. Image: supplied

sites over seven years, which "concluded that well-regulated timber harvesting or low-severity fire did not reduce koala occupancy rates, and harvesting prescriptions 'provided sufficient habitat for koalas to maintain their density, both immediately after selective harvesting and within 5–10 years after heavy harvesting'."

While we lack the space to review every section of the paper in detail, other myths tackled include Both harvesting and fuel reduction burning increase forest flammability and risk of wildfire;

Harvesting causes large emissions of carbon, so forests are better managed without harvesting as carbon stores and for creation of carbon credits; Harvesting is a threat to water yields and quality; Expanding plantations can quickly and easily replace the wood sourced from native forests; and Planning, regulation, monitoring and enforcement processes are ineffective.

As the authors say, "Environmental and political activism based on misinformation is hampering development of rational policies for sustainable management of native forests for providing multiple benefits to the nation and future generations."

They conclude there is a strong evidence-based case for reconsidering native forestry bans currently in place in Victoria and Western Australia and proposed in other states.

To read the full paper, click here (paywalled) or you can download a copy via ResearchGate.



Strategic Forest and Renewable Materials Partnership - Expressions of Interest

The Australian Government is seeking expressions of interest from experienced professionals across the forest and wood products industry to serve as members of the Strategic Forest and Renewable Materials Partnership. This is the Government's principal advisory body on the future strategic direction of Australia's forest and wood product industry.

Skills and experience

- The Government is seeking a diverse and balanced membership with expertise across areas such as:
- Native and/or plantation forestry, timber fibre processing and/or advanced wood product manufacturing including engineered wood products, supply chain, trade and innovation
 - Harvest, haulage and enabling services
 - Environmental sustainability within a native and/or plantation forestry context including forest carbon
 - First Nations community representation or engagement
 - Trade union or industry association representation
 - Experience in an advisory, governance or representational capacity
 - Strong stakeholder engagement across government, industry and community

Members may be based anywhere in Australia. Individuals representing First Nations interests, emerging leaders and next generation voices are strongly encouraged to apply.

Appointment details

- Unremunerated advisory roles (approved travel costs reimbursed)
- Estimated commitment of around 5 days per year
- Appointments of up to three years, with the possibility of reappointment

How to apply

To submit your expression of interest, visit:



<https://directorsaustralia.com.au/jobs/the-forest-and-wood-products-council-strategic-forest-and-renewable-materials-partnership/>

Applications close 10.00 am Tuesday 30 June 2026

Wood for the Trees

This Copenhagen exhibition combines bespoke furniture making, American hardwoods and the story of forestry.

If you're reading this issue freshly delivered in Copenhagen, you're in luck! The 3daysofdesign exhibition is on there until 12 June and the American Hardwood Export Council's (AHEC) 'Wood for the Trees' display is a beautiful, immersive storytelling exhibition highlighting the environmental, structural and aesthetic potential of American hardwoods.

Created by London-based Mitre & Mondays, Wood for the Trees takes visitors on a spatial journey into the world of hardwood forestry.

The exhibition draws on the ideas and themes explored in AHEC's recent feature documentary *Forested Future*, which examines our relationship with forests through the lens of the people and communities whose livelihoods depend on them. Supported by the craft expertise of Benchmark Furniture, Mitre & Monday's vision for the exhibition has translated the story on screen into a design-led spatial experience.

The design and make teams have created an abstract arboreal setting, examining every stage in the journey of hardwood timber from tree to finished product, through five key stages that unfold into the world of responsible forest management, and making the case for the long-term stewardship of nature.

The timber has been donated by family-owned sawmills Bingaman & Son Lumber, MacDonald & Owen, Northland Forest Products and Rossi Lumber. It comprises American red oak, yellow birch, hard maple and cherry. Exhibition materials are presented on rotating trunks; seating and furniture evoke fallen



1/ The model for the exhibition shows the virtual forest created by the timber. Image: courtesy Mitre & Mondays

2/ Josef Shanley-Jackson, Finn Thomson and Freya Bolton from Wood for the Trees with Martin Penrose and Mark Carey from Benchmark Furniture and many of the completed elements for the exhibition. Image: courtesy AHEC/by Petr Krejčí

logs; and graphics are suspended from above, evoking the boughs of the forest canopy.

As well as designed objects and material applications, the exhibition includes educational storytelling and environmental data, expressed through

“THE DESIGN AND MAKE TEAMS HAVE CREATED AN ABSTRACT ARBOREAL SETTING”

audio-visual elements, graphic and narrative displays.

The exhibition takes the visitor through five stages in the story of timber:

Growth looks at how trees, among the largest and longest-living organisms on earth – reproduce, regenerate and even clone themselves, allowing them to persist across generations, adapting to change over time.

Stewardship explores both the day-to-day realities and century-spanning timescales of forest management, examining the life cycles of trees and the systems and strategies employed to sustain them.

Selection unpacks the meticulous process of identifying trees for harvest and for preservation, and the factors that influence it – including age, health, longevity, and the tree's contribution to the vitality of the wider forest ecosystem.

Resilience considers the ability of a forest to withstand change – adapting to shifts in climate, resisting pests and disease, and recovering from disturbance – the role foresters play in strengthening that ability, and the impact that our material choices can

have in shaping it.

Timber looks at the point where the forest meets the human world, and reveals the history carried in the grain of every piece of wood.

Wood for the Trees is free to visit and takes place in the ground-floor exhibition space at Gammel Dok, Strandgade 27B, Copenhagen during 3daysofdesign, 10–12 June 2026.

For more on Wood for the Trees, click here. For more on *Forested Future*, click here.

Forklift safety

DID you take a moment on Tuesday (9 June) to celebrate National Forklift Safety Day? While it may sound like the most difficult cupcake decoration of the year, the day has a serious purpose: focusing businesses' minds on one of the most dangerous vehicles in their fleet.

Nearly 1000 forklift-related injuries are reported annually across Australia, with crush injuries and deaths the most serious. It's not just that some of these result in fatalities; compensation costs, fines and lost productivity have serious impacts on workplaces in which these accidents occur, quite aside from the mental health impacts of this type of accident.

Forklift companies have long worked to educate the market the risks around using their machinery. Many of those manufacturers have put safety at the heart of their designs and processes, too.

Combilift in particular is famous for working closely with its customer base to deliver machines that work with their people and processes to minimise risk. The Ireland-based firm has sold machines into some 85 countries in its 28 years of operations and this week shared the story of one of the first machines they ever sold to highlight the central importance of safety in their work.

J.G. Kelly Supplies in Monaghan, Ireland, bought



Tony McManus (left) and Paul Kelly with the original Combilift C-Series forklift, which has been delivering safe performance at their business for 28 years. Image: supplied

the first-ever Combilift C-Series 28 years ago. Since then, this original multi-directional forklift has helped transform the company's handling of long loads, improving safety, increasing efficiency, and proving that purpose-built equipment can deliver returns for decades.

Previously, the company ran conventional counterbalance forklifts that struggled with moving their 6m loads through their 4m doorway.

Operator Tony McManus said, "Before, we just used to use counterbalance trucks. We had to reverse a lorry in here and were on a main busy road in the town. But now, it just pulls up in the loading bay. We can offload it safely, both sides if needed, with minimal obstruction to traffic."

The multi-directional capability of the C-Series gave operators the ability to move long loads sideways with greater control and stability, while navigating tight spaces and narrow doorways safely and efficiently. As well as removing the traffic disruption, it has shortened unloading times and significantly improved safety for operators, pedestrians,

and passing vehicles, with only one operator required for a safe offloading.

An additional safety feature is the forklift's integrated platform, which has further enhanced load stability when handling such long products.

Operators can safely support lengthy stillages during transport, reducing the risks associated with moving oversized loads and making the entire process more controlled and efficient.

"We know that it's a lot safer, once you get the load on the platform, you can sort of relax almost. You've got that stability of it being on the rest beds," McManus said.

After nearly three decades, the original Combilift C-series has been in almost constant use with routine checks and servicing keeping it running smoothly, outliving four counterbalance forklifts owned by the company through those years.

"I never expected we'd still be using the same forklift nearly three decades later," said managing director Paul Kelly. "But it's a testament to the build quality of the machine as it's still running after 28 years."

McManus added: "It doesn't really take much maintenance. We have changed filters or timing belts over the years, but it's still got the original engine from when it arrived here."

To watch the whole story of the J.G. Kelly machine, [click here](#).



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HEAD OFFICE

Timber Media Australasia Pty Ltd
PO Box 3001
Maraylya NSW 2765

PUBLISHER

Timber Media Australasia Pty Ltd

EDITORS

Donyale Harrison
Jess Hockridge
Nicky Ainley
editors@timberandforestryenews.com

ADVERTISING

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

ACCOUNTS

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

SUBSCRIBE

www.timberandforestryenews.com



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