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ISSUE 903 // 18 June 2026

timber & FORESTRY *e*news

Timber and flame star at Vivid

COVER STORY P 4



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Industry forum centres mass timber

Builders and engineers explain how their mass timber projects succeeded.

QUEENSLAND's development sector is facing a pivotal moment, with a \$127.5 billion pipeline of major projects expected over the next five years and growing pressure on project feasibility. As construction costs rise and labour availability tightens, developers are increasingly focused on buildability, program risk and delivery models that can shorten timelines without adding cost.

A Brisbane industry forum later this month will bring together tier-one contractors including Hutchinson Builders, Kane Constructions and engineering firm Aurecon to assess how prefabricated timber systems are performing across commercial and civic projects.

Hosted by WoodSolutions, Timber Queensland and the ARC Advance Timber Hub, the Queensland Timber Trajectory: Award-Winning Exemplars Showcasing the Way to Modern Construction forum will focus on the commercial realities of delivery, including procurement models, risk allocation and cost competitiveness.

The discussion comes as developers face ongoing challenges with cost escalation, labour shortages and program delays, placing increased emphasis on methods that can accelerate delivery without increasing project risk.

Recent Queensland projects are beginning to demonstrate how these efficiencies can be achieved.

At the Inala Infill Apartments social



The Paris 2024 Olympic Aquatic Centre is one of the structures discussed. In this construction shot you can see what was at the time the largest wooden hanging roof in the world. Image: CC/Chabe01

housing project, cross-laminated timber floor panels were installed in just two days compared with a six-day program using traditional construction methods, reducing crane time and improving build efficiency.

Research across Australian mid-rise developments indicates prefabricated timber systems can further streamline construction by compressing program timeframes and reducing on-site labour demands.

The forum will examine where these efficiencies translate into commercial advantage and the conditions required for broader adoption.

Key sessions include:

- Olympic infrastructure insights: Lessons from the Paris 2024 Aquatics Centre and implications for Brisbane 2032 delivery.
- Tier-one builder perspectives: When timber construction becomes cost competitive at scale.

- Project case studies: Queensland examples demonstrating improved delivery outcomes.

Timber Queensland General Manager Strategic Relations & Communications Clarissa Brandt said the industry was increasingly focused on performance outcomes.



"Developers are looking for greater certainty in delivery whether that is program, cost or risk," Brandt said.

"Modern timber systems are part of that conversation because they can improve buildability, reduce site complexity and support more predictable outcomes."

The Queensland Timber Trajectory forum will take place at the University of Queensland on Tuesday, 30 June 2026 from 12:00–5:00pm at the GHD Auditorium, University of Queensland, St Lucia.

To book, click here.

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Tasmanian forestry worries remain

The Federal Minister has been far from definite re the future of native timber harvesting under the National Environmental Standard.

Last week's *Enews* (#902) reported on the agreement between the Tasmanian and Federal governments to work together towards a bilateral agreement to support sustainable forestry in Tasmania under the updated National Environmental Standard. Tony Price also talked about worries around forestry contracts in that issue.

On the same day that issue was published, Tasmania Mornings presenter Leon Compton, of 936 ABC Hobart, spoke with Federal Environment Minister Murray Watt.

Compton has many rural listeners who have conveyed their concerns to him about the potential closure of native forestry in Tasmania under the new standards and he was unafraid to press the issue with the Minister.

Watt repeated the government's rationale for the environmental law reforms that will bring forestry operations covered by Regional Forest Agreements (RFAs) under their control from 1 July next year, saying they were the same regulations that need to be met by people wanting to open a mine or construct a wind farm or solar farm, saying: "What we've done through our reforms to the federal environmental law... is essentially bring the forestry industry in line with every other industry in Australia..."

Four times, Compton asked Watt if the changes to the law could lead to the end of native forestry in Tasmania.

The first time, Watt replied, "It's a little hard to predict that right now because



Forestry has been a significant economic driver for the Tasmanian economy for decades, subject to strict regulations, but there are fears new laws will make it untenable. Image: Shutterstock/Steve Lovegrove

we are literally in the middle of drafting those standards..."

The second, he responded: "We don't expect the standards to result in the total closure of native forestry in Tasmania."

The third: "...No one has yet been able to point to me anywhere in the legislation that says that is going to happen. It's a political claim being made by Greens and Liberals."

And finally, "No, we don't believe that the standards will result in the total closure of the native forestry industry. That is not the position of the Labor Party. I know it's the position of the Greens party, but that's not the position of the Labor Party."

Which is not the robust negative the industry has been hoping for.

Asked if the changes could result in a significant reduction of areas available for native forest logging, Watt replied: "I've had many people from the Tasmanian forestry industry tell me how fantastic their environmental standards are. If that is the case, then they have nothing to fear from national standards being brought in. But we are doing that work right now to determine and settle exactly what those standards are."

He went on to say that concerns

around the ability to fulfil contracts predate the new standard and that they are a State, not Federal issue, as are possible compensation claims.

Watt recommended that "Anyone who's involved in those negotiations should remember that we are developing these standards, that they will apply after the first of July 2027 and that's something that should be taken into account when negotiating those [contracts]."

In related news, John Bradley has been appointed as the inaugural CEO of Australia's National Environmental Protection Agency. He will start in the role on 1 July.

Bradley previously held the position of Secretary at Victoria's Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action and the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning before that. At DEECA, he was responsible for facilitating Victoria's transition out of native timber harvesting, but overseeing this transition as a bureaucrat does not imply an active role in ending Victorian native forestry.

Bradley said, "I look forward to ensuring the National EPA is a trusted, effective regulator, which applies stronger environmental standards consistently and in a timely way, using streamlined processes."

Two of the components of the revised National Environmental Standards are still open for public consultation. You can have your say on the National Environmental Standard for Community engagement by clicking here and for the National Environmental Standard for Data and Information by clicking here. Both consultation periods close on 7 July, 2026.

You can listen to the entire ABC interview by clicking here.

Vivid by firelight

***Enews* was invited back to Vivid's festival of fire and timber on its final night.**

By **CHRIS PARKER**

FOLLOWING on from our exclusive in issue #899 covering the design, build and construction onsite, last Saturday's final night of Vivid Fire and Timber was alive and drawing large crowds.

Against the backdrop of Sydney's winter nights, Vivid continues to transform the city into a glowing celebration of creativity, culture and connection. Among the countless attractions that draw crowds each year, the Vivid Fire Kitchen precinct stands out – captivating and clearly popular with roaring flames, glowing embers, timber structures, live music and live-fire cooking combining to create a dramatic sensory spectacle.

The atmosphere is immediate and unforgettable. Towering fire pits radiate warmth into the cool evening air while sparks dance skyward beneath strings of themed glowing lights. The smell of timber smoke drifts through the crowds, blending with the aroma of meats roasting slowly over open flames. Everywhere visitors look, there is movement, colour and energy. It is both primal and theatrical, an experience that draws people together around one of humanity's oldest and most powerful elements.

The fire and timber section of Vivid is more than simply an attraction. It is an immersive environment that showcases craftsmanship, cooking, performance and design, all united by the hypnotic beauty of fire.

FIRE PITS BECOME CENTREPIECES OF THE NIGHT

At the heart of the precinct are the enormous fire pits and custom-built flame installations that instantly command attention. Crafted



Red was the colour of the Fire Kitchen region, signalling the warmth of food, fire and community.
All images: Chris Parker

from timber, these structures become living sculptures once ignited, glowing orange and red as flames flicker and then surge into the night sky. The flames and glow can be seen from the water outside of Darling Harbour.

One of the most impressive sights is the giant circular fire pit, suspended with racks of roasting meats and vegetables slowly cooking over firewood. The installation combines industrial design with rustic charm, creating a dramatic centrepiece that captures the essence of communal gathering and outdoor cooking traditions.

Master Chefs in control of the firepit on Saturday night were Mark La Brooy, Stephen Santucci and Racha Abou Alchamat.

The firelight reflects across the steel framework and timber surrounds, producing an almost cinematic atmosphere. Hanging cuts of meat roast slowly while vegetables char gently beside them, illuminated by the pulsing glow beneath. Flames leap through decorative cut-outs in the steel base, adding another layer of movement and visual intrigue.

The crackling sound of burning timber adds to the experience, grounding visitors in the raw authenticity of live fire. Unlike modern kitchens hidden behind walls, everything here is open, visible and theatrical. Cooking becomes performance art, and the crowd responds with fascination.

TIMBER CREATES WARMTH AND TEXTURE

Timber plays a vital role



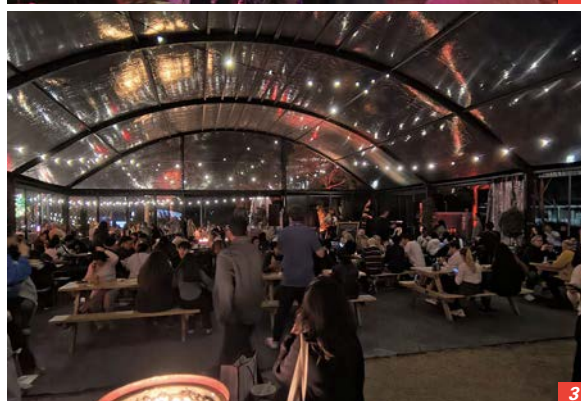
From P 4

throughout the precinct, not only as fuel for the fire but also as a defining visual and structural material. Timber-clad walls, rustic surfaces and natural finishes create warmth and contrast against the industrial steel fire pits and the darkness of the evening sky.

The use of timber gives the space a distinctly Australian outdoor character. It evokes memories of campfires, backyard gatherings and bushland settings while simultaneously feeling contemporary and refined. The natural grain and colour of the wood soften the harder industrial elements, creating an inviting environment where people want to linger.

As visitors move through the area, the timber structures frame the attractions and help guide the flow of the large crowds. The warm hues of the wood are amplified by the firelight, creating rich amber tones that enhance the visual atmosphere of the entire precinct. Individual kitchens were also offering woodfired pizza, Mexican BBQ, fresh pasta, organic fire bowls, Italian, meals from Palestine, freshly cooked fish, Koi dessert bar, Bon Brulé and gelato – just some of the stall highlights.

As you moved down the themed pathway, two separate undercover eating areas with soft music were available and the pathway finished at a purpose-built bar with an outdoor deck overlooking Sydney Harbour



- 1/ Dishes from the firepit were announced on the main board and available to buy.
- 2/ A range of food vendors offered a wide option of dishes, suitable for everyone including vegans.
- 3/ Protected sitting areas made it comfortable for visitors to eat while listening to live music.

with views of the Bridge and the next experience area, down beside the water's edge.

FLAMES, SMOKE AND LIGHT CREATE A SENSORY EXPERIENCE

Perhaps the most striking feature of the fire and timber section is its ability to engage every sense simultaneously. The glow of the flames, the heat radiating from warming pits running on LPG through coals, the aroma of smoke and grilled food, and the constant movement of people all combine to create an immersive environment unlike any other area of the festival.

Flames become performers, as they flare suddenly, settle into glowing embers and then rise again with renewed intensity as timber shifts and crackles beneath the grills. Smoke curls dramatically through the air, illuminated by overhead lighting and decorative festoon strings stretching across the venue.

The lighting design adds another layer of spectacle. Warm amber and red tones dominate the space, enhancing the fiery atmosphere while complementing the timber surroundings. Reflections dance across metal surfaces, creating ever-changing textures and patterns.

Visitors naturally pause to watch the movement of the fire. There is something universally compelling about open flames, a timeless fascination that transcends age and

Cont P 6

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From P 5

background. Children stare in amazement, photographers capture the glowing scenes and groups gather to share the experience.

In a festival renowned for light installations and digital projections, the elemental simplicity of real fire offers a refreshing contrast. It reminds visitors that some of the most powerful visual experiences are also the most ancient.

LIVE-FIRE COOKING TAKES CENTRE STAGE

Food is a major part of the fire and timber experience, and live-fire cooking demonstrations quickly become one of the precinct's biggest drawcards.

The visual impact alone is extraordinary. Flames illuminate the hanging meats while chefs expertly manage the heat, smoke and timing required to cook over open fire. It is a style of cooking that feels both ancient and highly skilled, showcasing techniques that rely on instinct, patience and craftsmanship.

The spectacle attracts constant attention from festivalgoers eager to witness the process up close. The open-fire cooking style also aligns perfectly with the rustic timber surroundings and industrial aesthetic of the precinct, reinforcing the connection between food, fire and community.

For many visitors, the combination of visual theatre and smoky aromas



1/ A series of large and small gas burners kept visitors warm throughout the area and provided focal points.

2/ Fireballs (safely targeted) added to the nights' excitement.

All images: Chris Parker

elemental materials – timber, steel, fire and smoke – and transforms them into an unforgettable experience.

Despite the cool winter temperatures, the fire creates warmth both physically and socially. Visitors cluster around the pits, talking, laughing and watching the live cooking displays unfold before them.

The communal nature of the space is impossible to ignore. Unlike attractions that people simply pass through, the fire and timber section encourages visitors

to stop, stay and engage. The warmth invites people closer, while the theatrical cooking demonstrations keep them entertained. Visitors are surrounded by movement and sound, yet the fire itself has a strangely calming effect. People naturally slow down, watch and absorb the atmosphere.

In a festival filled with extraordinary visual attractions, the fire and timber section succeeds because it taps into something timeless. Fire has always brought people

together, and at Vivid, it continues to do exactly that – creating moments of wonder, conversation and community beneath the dancing flames.

With special thanks to Blake Smith from Motti and Smith and the security guard who assisted with access to special areas.

On the cover: At the heart of the precinct was the firepit stage, with meats roasting over several types of fire. Image: Chris Parker

becomes one of the most memorable parts of the night.

AN ATMOSPHERE UNLIKE ANY OTHER

What ultimately makes the fire and timber section so compelling is its atmosphere. It combines spectacle with authenticity in a way that feels deeply human and emotionally engaging. The attraction does not rely solely on technology or elaborate staging. Instead, it draws power from

AI fire detection helps STT

SUSTAINABLE Timber Tasmania has officially wrapped up a late fire season, with expanded AI-powered camera and satellite-based detection technology supporting bushfire detection across the state.

In the 2025-2026 season, Sustainable Timber Tasmania increased its AI-powered smoke detection camera network to 11 sites with new cameras installed at the Dazzler and Platts fire towers in the northeast.

Satellite-based detection was merged with the camera network, adding a new layer to the existing technology network. This introduces efficiencies

with verification and improves overall coverage, particularly in remote areas, and provides an additional independent detection source.

Between November 2025 and the end of May 2026, the network detected 1112 potential ignition or smoke incidents and escalated 91 fires to Tasmania's three fire management



This AI fire camera at Mt Horror captured a fire near Scottsdale in January. Image: supplied

agencies, including 73 to Sustainable Timber Tasmania.

The busiest detection sites for the season were Doodys, Mt Horror and Mt Arthur.

An escalation refers to a detected fire that is not a registered or permit burn and requires further assessment or response.

Sustainable Timber Tasmania remains committed to enhancing Tasmania's ability to detect bushfires early and respond quickly, helping safeguard forests and communities.

JUNE**22: Forestry Australia webinar – ONLINE, 1.00pm - 2.00pm AEST.**

Hosted by Forestry Australia and the Australian Forest and Wood Innovations Centre for Climate-Smart Forestry (AFWI CCSF), this webinar will provide an overview of the reforms and explore what they may mean for forestry operations, particularly in the private forest and plantation sectors. It will help participants understand the key changes on the horizon. For more information visit <https://www.forestry.org.au/webinar-understanding-australias-epbc-act-changes-implications-for-forest-managers/>

For webinar registration link visit <https://forestry.memnet.com.au/MemberSelfService/EventBooking.aspx?selectedEventId=189>
Registrations close 10am Sunday 21 June

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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Understanding Australia's EPBC Act changes

An important webinar outlines the implications for forest managers.

FORESTRY Australia and the Australian Forest and Wood Innovations Centre for Climate-Smart Forestry (AFWI CCSF) are running a timely webinar next Monday to provide an overview of the reforms to the EPBC Act and explore what they may mean for forestry operations, particularly in the private forest and plantation sectors.

These reforms are reshaping the regulatory landscape for forest management and forestry operations across the country. Forestry operations across the board will need to navigate new national environmental Standards (see page 3 for more), statutory prohibitions on unacceptable impacts, and new obligations around net gain.

All 10 of the Regional Forestry Agreements (RFAs) currently in place will fold into the EPBC Act from 1 July, 2027, yet much remains uncertain. Key standards and legislative definitions are still being developed, and questions remain about the role of certification, how forestry pathway agreements between governments may operate, and how forestry stakeholders can meaningfully engage with reform processes.

Enews is just one of the publications that has been discussing these worries since last year's announcement of the cessation of RFAs. Many of the national industry associations have been actively seeking clarity from the Federal government and explaining their concerns about the changes as they currently stand.

In February, Stuart Coppock, legal adviser to Timber NSW, appeared before the Environment and Communications Legislation Committee by video link,



From left, A/Prof Philippa McCormack, David Bennett and Tom Schraenkler will be the three main speakers at the webinar. Images: supplied



Stuart Coppock answering Senator Susan McDonald's questions at the Environment and Communications Legislation. Image: supplied

outlining some of the concerns held by Timber NSW and the wider industry. He flagged several unknowns within the new legislation, including will the Commonwealth override the States? Currently the States control land while the Commonwealth controls protective species. As written, the legislation does not currently refer to businesses, but uses the word 'economic', which Coppock said "is not commercial or business".

Coppock contrasted the confusion around the new changes with the status quo, saying: "There is in place a very good system under the RFAs. They weren't invented yesterday. They've been around for a long time. The full Federal Court has got a very solid judgement which sets out the procedure and why they work. They deal with the

constitutional federalism of Australia, and they do work."

Click here to read the full committee proceedings.

In a bid to edge closer to clarity, Forestry Australia is bringing together three experts for next week's webinar. A/Prof Philippa McCormack is Policy, Economics and Society Theme Lead at AFWI CCSF; David Bennett is Risk and Compliance Manager at PF Olsen and Tom Schraenkler is Carbon and Forestry Manager at Sumitomo Forestry. All three will share their expertise in navigating environmental law and compliance.

The webinar will also invite contributions to a follow-up survey and workshop to help shape and inform the forestry sectors' ongoing engagement with the reform process.

EVENT DETAILS

Date: Monday 22 June 2026

Time: 1:00–2:00 pm AEST

Everyone who registers:

- Receives a link and joining instructions 24 hours before the webinar commences
- Receives a recording of the webinar – so if you can't listen live, you can listen later

Registration is essential to receive the webinar link, joining instructions and post-event recording.

To register, click here.

Billion-dollar global forest strategy

SYDNEY-BASED global investment manager New Forests is targeting a US\$750m (AU\$1.06bn) capital raise to fund the Global Landscape Opportunities (GLO) strategy.

Currently, most of New Forest's \$10.2 billion in assets under management are in Australia and New Zealand. The new fund, to be established in Luxembourg, will pool investments across North America, Europe, Latin America, Africa, South-East Asia, Australia and New Zealand into a single fund, investing across forestry, agriculture, and complementary markets such as carbon and biodiversity.

Mark Rogers, CEO of New Forests, said, "The launch of our Global Landscape Opportunities strategy marks a significant step in the evolution of New Forests as a global natural capital investment manager. We are seeing strong investor demand for scalable, institutional strategies that provide diversified exposure to natural capital.

"This strategy responds directly to that need – bringing together our global



New Forests already has significant forest asset holdings in the US as well as its majority of assets in Australia and New Zealand. Image: CC/Forest and Kim Starr

platform, investment expertise, and track record into a single, offering. Natural capital is increasingly recognised as a core component of resilient portfolios, offering the potential for long-term returns while supporting critical

outcomes such as climate stability, biodiversity and sustainable land use."

GLO will be open for institutional investment only, serving those not in themselves large enough to diversify holdings across such a wide region, which lessens local climate and natural disaster risks. It is expected that the majority of the fund will be in forestry, with the remainder in agriculture and associated infrastructure.

David Shelton, global head of investments at New Forests, told *The Australian Financial Review*: "It's a shift for us as a business, having our first truly global product, but we have proven capability in the areas that we were operating, so we're building on that track record.

"... This is genuinely a global fund. There have been other supposedly global funds in the market at times, but they've always missed some key geographies, whereas this fund has all of the core forest and agricultural zones covered with its allocations."

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From young recruits to industry leaders: investing in people

EVERY business is looking for good people. The best businesses don't just find them, they invest in them.

Across the timber, hardware and building products industries, employers are taking a chance on young trainees and cadets through NTHA Trainees & Apprentices and watching them grow into skilled employees, trusted team members and, in some cases, future leaders.

The success stories of Sam Robinson and Max Butler demonstrate what can happen when businesses commit to developing talent and provide young people with the opportunity to learn, grow and build a career.

For employers, it is an investment in the future. For trainees, it is often the beginning of a life-changing journey.

Melissa Clark, NTHA general manager – GTO & RTO, believes businesses that invest in young people are investing in their own long-term success.

"We often hear employers say they can't find the right people. Our response is simple – sometimes the right people aren't found, they're developed. When businesses invest in trainees and cadets, they're building capability, loyalty and future leaders from within."

FROM CADET TO SUPERVISOR

Sam Robinson's story is a perfect example of how quickly potential can become leadership.

After joining the innovative NTHA/ITI Cadetship Program earlier this year, Sam immersed himself in every aspect of the business, gaining experience across logistics, manufacturing, sales, and customer operations while completing a Certificate III in Supply Chain Operations through NTHA.

The results speak for themselves.

Sam officially completed his 18-month cadetship on 10 April, 2026, an incredible four months ahead of schedule, and immediately stepped into a new role as trainee PM shift supervisor with ITI Australia.

One of just seven young Australians



1

1/ Sam Robinson, pictured with NTHA's BDE Darren Hooper, completed his 18-month NTHA/ITI cadetship four months ahead of schedule.



2

2/ Rouse Hill Landscape Supplies Manager Russell Ferrell (left) with Max Butler, who caught two buses per trip to and from work through his traineeship. All images: courtesy NTHA

selected for the program, Sam embraced every opportunity to learn and develop. Reflecting on the experience, he said it was "great to see the process behind our timber" while building valuable industry and leadership skills.

His promotion is exactly the kind of outcome the cadetship was designed to achieve developing the next generation of industry leaders from within.

DEDICATION MEETS OPPORTUNITY

While Sam's journey highlights leadership development, Max Butler's story demonstrates the power of determination and persistence.

On 7 May, 2026, Max completed his Certificate III in Building Products Supply while undertaking his traineeship with

Rouse Hill Landscape Supplies in Box Hill, NSW.

On 8 May, 2026, he commenced as a full-time qualified employee with Rouse Hill Landscape Supplies.

Throughout his traineeship, Max travelled to work each day on two buses while building the driving hours needed to gain his provisional licence. His commitment to both his work and his training was unwavering.

Supported by the team at Rouse Hill Landscape Supplies and NTHA trainer Doug, Max developed strong customer service skills and became a valued member of the business.

His qualification and transition into permanent employment are proof that hard work, combined with the right support, can create outstanding career outcomes.

BUILDING THE INDUSTRY'S FUTURE WORKFORCE

"SOMETIMES THE RIGHT PEOPLE AREN'T FOUND, THEY'RE DEVELOPED"

From P 10

Sam and Max followed different paths, but their success stems from the same foundation: employers willing to invest in young people and structured training programs that help them succeed.

Through traineeships & cadetships, and nationally recognised qualifications, NTHA Trainees & Apprentices is helping businesses build skilled, capable workforces within the hardware and timber industry, while creating genuine career pathways for the next generation.

Max and Sam not only gained a qualification but also developed the skills, confidence, industry knowledge and foundations for long-term careers.

For some, like Max, that means securing ongoing employment. For others, like Sam, it can mean stepping



Now qualified, Sam Robinson has started a new role as trainee PM shift supervisor with ITI Australia.

into leadership roles far earlier than they ever imagined.

Together, their stories highlight what is possible when businesses back emerging talent – and why investing in people remains one of the smartest decisions any employer can make.

“The stories of Sam and Max show that when young people are given an opportunity, supported by committed host employers and quality training, the results can be extraordinary,” said Clark.

“Their success is a reminder that investing in people doesn't just change individual lives—it strengthens businesses and helps secure the future of our industry.”

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Business Grants

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Enews has partnered with Business Grant Advisors – a professional grant writing business with a high success rate. Watch this space as not all grants are made public. *Enews* will publish Federal or State/Territory-based grants

for our industry here.

Business Grant Advisors can assist you with eligibility criteria, grant writing, application process and lodgement. They offer hourly through to full end-to-end service. You can schedule an

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>

Transforming Queensland Manufacturing Grants Program

ROUND 2 is now open for the Transforming Queensland Manufacturing Grants Program (TQMGP), which invests in innovation, advanced technology and job creation to strengthen the state's economy and position Queensland as a leader in modern manufacturing.

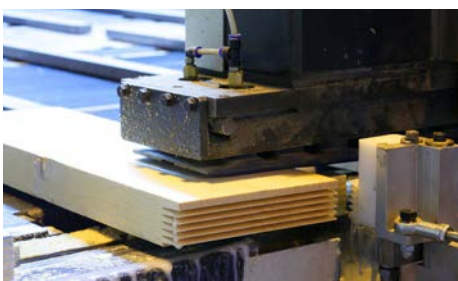
Administered by the Department of Natural Resources and Mines, Manufacturing and Regional and Rural Development, the TQMGP offers \$79.1 million in grant funding over three years, delivered through six competitive rounds, with a new round opening every six months.

Eligible Queensland-based manufacturers can apply for matched funding grants of \$100,000 to \$1.5 million for projects that are:

- Facilitating pathways for export opportunities
- Reshoring or onshoring manufacturing activity currently undertaken interstate or overseas
- Improving manufacturing productivity and competitiveness
- Stimulating private sector investment and generating jobs.

Grants are available for:

- Advanced manufacturing equipment that meets program objectives (up to 50% of eligible costs)
- Software purchasing to support system integration and manufacturing process improvement, e.g. enterprise resource planning (ERP), material requirements planning (MRP), manufacturing execution system (MES).



Manufacturing technology and machines to update this splicing and finger-jointing line for glulam would be eligible for this grant. Image CC/Svetlana Glazkina

To be eligible for an offer of funding, an applicant must meet each of the following eligibility requirements:

- Have a majority manufacturing turnover or be part of a structure that has majority of manufacturing turnover. Manufacturing as defined under Division C of Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification (ANZSIC) 2006 (Revision 2.0)
- Have between 5 and 200 full-time equivalent (FTE) employees or be part of a structure that has 5-200 FTE employees
- Have a project site in Queensland
- Have an existing manufacturing presence in Queensland at the time of application. A minimum of five FTE employees must be located in Queensland
- Have operated within Queensland for a minimum of three consecutive years prior to submitting their application
- Must be purchasing advanced manufacturing equipment with Industry 4.0/5.0 features or software purchasing to support system integration e.g. ERP, MRP, MES

- Be the manufacturing entity that will own any equipment to be purchased under the proposed eligible project
- Be registered for GST and have an active Australian Business Number (ABN)
- Not be part of a group structure that has been awarded more than \$1.5 million in funding from the TQMGP across any number of rounds (the maximum funding to one applicant and its associated group structure across all rounds of the program is \$1.5 million.)

Eligible project costs are listed below and include:

- Advanced robotics, automation and/or Industry 4.0 and 5.0 equipment
- Sector-relevant technology, system or process to support system integration and manufacturing process improvement
- Artificial intelligence (AI) systems to support manufacturing processes
- Associated project costs critical to the success of the proposed project
- Freight and/or electrical upgrades specific for the new manufacturing equipment (not more than 10% of equipment funding).

GRANT DETAILS

Provider: Business Queensland
Amount: \$100,000 – \$1,500,000
Round 2 Closes: Mid Oct 2026
Location: Queensland
Who Can Apply: Businesses
Co-Contribution Required: Yes
<https://www.business.qld.gov.au/industries/manufacturing-retail/manufacturing/grant-programs/transforming>



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SA's koala boom risks bust

A TEAM from the University of Technology Sydney (UTS), Flinders University and the University of Wollongong has concluded that the boom in South Australia's koala population risks a future environmental disaster.

The study estimates that the koala population in South Australia's Mount Lofty Ranges now accounts for about 10% of all koalas in Australia, a level that could threaten its long-term survival. According to the team's projections, the population could increase by another 17% to 25% over the next 25 years if no action is taken. Continued growth could place increasing pressure on food resources, native vegetation, and the broader ecosystem.

"Many areas now have koala densities far beyond what the ecosystem can sustain, creating a growing risk of severe over browsing that could rapidly damage



Mt Lofty koalas have recovered too well and now threaten the trees they require for survival. Image: CC/Charles J Sharp of Sharp Photography, sharpphotography.co.uk

the very forests koalas rely on for food. In the next few decades, following this trajectory, there will almost certainly be a terrible situation of mass koala starvation and death," said Dr Frédéric Saltré, research scientist at the Australian Museum and a senior lecturer in ecology and biogeography at UTS.

The researchers do not suggest culling or relocating the marsupials. Instead,

they evaluated several population management options using computer simulations. Their results suggest that a targeted fertility control program could effectively stabilise koala numbers.

Sterilising about 22% of adult female koalas each year in areas with the highest population densities was the most effective model, rather than applying the approach across the entire region. The team estimates the program would cost approximately \$34 million over a 25-year period.

"Instead of spending money on a conservation plan without knowing whether it will succeed, we use computer simulations to identify in advance which strategies are most likely to work – optimising both costs and taxpayer investment," said Dr Saltré.

Source: Science Daily. Click here for the full story.

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The 2026 Timber and Hardware Industry Awards celebrate the people and businesses shaping the future of New South Wales & ACT's timber and hardware industry.



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- NTHA Student of the Year
- Outstanding Employee Award
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- Safety Champion Award
- Industry Icon
- Workplace Equity Award
- Trade Store of the Year
- Retail Store of the Year Under 2500sqm
- Retail Store of the Year Over 2500sqm
- Best Off-Site Manufacturing Award
- Building Materials Supplier of the Year
- Hardware Retail Supplier of the Year
- Timber Supplier of the Year
- Supplier Sales Representative of the Year



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- Celebrate the outstanding businesses and individuals helping shape the future of the timber and hardware industry across New South Wales and the ACT.
- With strong interest expected again this year, early ticket purchases are encouraged to secure your place at this premier industry celebration.



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Endangered frogs hopping back

The Northern Corroboree frog is benefitting from a multi-pronged strategy.

NORTHERN Corroboree Frog surveys across Bondo State Forest have recorded the highest number of detections in recent years, signalling encouraging signs for the critically endangered species.

Surveys undertaken by Forestry Corporation, Saving our Species officers and the Tumut/Brungle Local Aboriginal Land Council in March recorded around 1000 Northern Corroboree Frogs across both the hardwood and softwood estates of Bondo State Forest.

Importantly, several key sites, where the frogs had been presumed to be extinct due to a lack of detections in previous years, were found to have revived this year.

Weighing just 2–3g and only 25–30mm long, the brightly striped Northern Corroboree Frog is native to the alpine regions of NSW and the ACT and is listed as critically endangered, with only around 2000 adults thought to be in the wild.

Field ecologist Craig Dunne said, “This year’s survey results represent a major improvement compared with a decline we saw in 2023, when frog numbers dropped to their lowest levels and we thought we might see the species declining into extinction.

“In the hardwood estate three years ago just 60 frogs were recorded at 12 sites, compared with 390 frogs, which were detected this year.

“The increase we’re now seeing indicates the species has recovered from that low point with overall detections returning to levels comparable with earlier years. While some populations have remained small or stable, others that declined sharply in recent years have rebounded strongly,” he concluded.

Dunne said the findings highlighted the importance of long-term monitoring and the need to address a multitude of threats to the species.



The Northern Corroboree Frog is making a comeback thanks to the efforts of multiple conservation groups. Image: courtesy Alex Pike/NSW Department of Planning and Environment (2023)

“The Northern Corroboree Frog has historically declined due to the chytrid disease, but it also faces threats from climate change, blackberry encroachment and habitat degradation by feral horses, pigs, cattle and deer,” he said.

“As we have seen in previous years, disruption to the breeding season can set a population back for many years to come and can cause local extinction if the species can’t hold on until conditions improve. Although we have seen the species disappear from much of its former range, it is encouraging to see them remain stable in some places and to even come back from the brink in other places.”

Surveys conducted in softwood pine plantation areas of Bondo State Forest also delivered encouraging results, with 84 frogs detected, the highest number recorded in those areas since 2011.

“Detections were made at three new locations near pine plantations, which will be included in future surveys,” said

forest information officer Madilyn Gavin.

“Finding frogs in areas where they had not been detected for some time highlights why it’s important to continue reviewing and expanding our monitoring network,” she added.

The enhanced count comes amid several programs designed to promote both Northern and Southern Corroboree frogs across the wider region. In Tumut and the Snowy Mountains, the Bugang Bila (previously Buugang Wambal) project, led by Walgalu and

Wiradjuri people, has been working with various conservation groups and agencies to monitor and protect the frogs (including carefully mapping and excluding their areas from cultural burn trials).

Last month, a team comprised of Taronga Zoo Sydney, the NSW Government’s Saving Our Species program and the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service released 700 Northern Corroboree Frogs into Brindabella National Park.

“This is the largest Taronga-bred Northern Corroboree Frog release ever undertaken for this critically endangered species,” said Michael McFadden, wildlife conservation officer at Taronga Conservation Society Australia. “We’ve learnt over the years of breeding and releasing and from scientific literature that releasing larger cohorts helps boost population success because more frogs survive early life challenges such as variable weather and disease.”

In addition to frog monitoring, Forestry Corporation surveys also recorded the endangered plant *Pimelea bracteata*, commonly known as the Scaly flowered Pimelea, with 74 individual plants observed.

“THE INCREASE WE’RE NOW SEEING INDICATES THE SPECIES HAS RECOVERED FROM ITS LOW POINT

AFPA advocacy secures Senate hearing

Last week (*Enews* #902), we reported on AFPA advocacy regarding the creeping ingress of Russian conflict timber into the Australian market. In a win for all (except illegal Russian timber exporters), AFPA's strong advocacy and media engagement on the issue have helped to secure a Senate hearing later this month.

The Senate announced a public hearing on 25 June in Canberra about the effectiveness of sanctions against the Russian Federation.

This is an important opportunity for Australia's forestry sector and industry leaders to voice concerns about the need for stronger sanctions on Russian timber imports, including through third countries.



Kateryna Argyrou of the Australian Federation of Ukrainian Organisations has called for timber loopholes to close immediately. Image: courtesy AFUO

Last week, AFPA's acting CEO Richard Hyett did several media interviews highlighting the need to impose tougher sanctions on Russian timber products. The association also received public support

from the Australian Federation of Ukrainian Organisations (AFUO) Chair Kateryna Argyrou, who said: "The Australian Government is allowing Russian blood money to fund the murder of Ukrainian civilians, and it must stop now. We are calling on the Albanese government to close these sanctions loopholes immediately."

Congratulations to all at AFPA who have worked so hard on this issue, which is every bit as ethical as economic.

Happy 70th Birthday, Simpson Strong-Tie!

IT'S good to see a well-known company mark a milestone and this year, Simpson Strong-Tie is 70. The trusted connector firm has evolved with the market over the decades from its early days in roof joists to anchors, connectors, fasteners and more for everything from your suburban deck to a CLT multi-storey build.

In 1956, company founder Barclay 'Barc' Simpson was asked: "Can you make a connector for a roof?" The answer was a resounding yes and soon he had retooled his whole shop and sold 25,000 units at 10c a piece.

Now, the business has international outlets and is



Company founder, the late Barclay 'Barc' Simpson. Image: courtesy Simpson Strong-Tie

recognised as one of the major connector brands in the world. Barc died in 2014 at the age of 93, but his core values remain central tenets in the

company, ensuring it remains a trusted partner and good corporate citizen. The original spirit of Barc's little shop lives on in the focus on customer service and safety – if you haven't heard a Strong-Tie sales rep talk on why corrosion risk should be a major part of your choice it is a learning experience as well as great advice!

Happy 70th, Simpson Strong-Tie, here's to many more.



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