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# timber & FORESTRY *e*news

## New INFM ACCU method slammed

COVER STORY P2



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# New ACCU slammed

Approval of the INFM method has received widespread condemnation.

LAST Thursday's Federal Government approval of the Improved Native Forest Management in Multiple-use Public Native Forests Method (INFM) in the Australian Carbon Credit Units (ACCU) Scheme has been met with an overwhelmingly negative response from the timber sector.

There are two key concerns. The first is that the method is inherently flawed and risks undermining the ACCU Scheme. The second is that it represents a stealth closure of Australian native timber harvesting.

The method allows state governments to earn Australian Carbon Credit Units (ACCUs) by voluntarily ceasing planned harvesting in defined areas of multiple-use public native forests that would otherwise be used for commercial forestry.

It says that it "doesn't ban forestry – INFM projects can create an alternative economic option and can operate alongside a sustainable forestry industry", however environmental groups have hailed it as a "funded pathway to end native forest logging."



Forestry Australia's CEO Jacquie Martin (left) and President, Dr Michelle Freeman, are two of the high-profile members of the timber and forestry sector who have raised serious concerns about the INFM. Image: courtesy Forestry Australia

In its press release last Friday, the Nature Conservation Council of NSW said that it "welcomed the valuation of carbon in our native forests, saying it strengthens the case for an end to native forest logging in NSW, and provides governments with the funding pathway

to make it happen."

Last year's announcement of the 176,000 hectare Great Koala National Park in NSW, which subsumed many State Forests across the North Coast and Mid-North Coast regions, was contingent on approval of this new ACCU (see GKNP story this issue from p13 for its impacts).

Enews has previously reported at length on the significant issues with the INFM (see #900 and #859 among others). This week, a plethora of industry figures have published (or republished with expansion) their criticisms of the method.

Below, we have a round-up of those responses. It's a long read, but it's worth your time to familiarise yourself with the key issues and prepare for the fights ahead. Additionally, see some of the political fallout on page 17.

You can read the details of the INFM by clicking here, including its design and the legislation surrounding it.

## FORESTRY AUSTRALIA

Forestry Australia warned that the method creates risks that could undermine confidence in Australia's carbon market.

Forestry Australia President Dr Michelle Freeman said the organisation is very supportive of high-integrity carbon crediting for native forests, but that the

Cont P 3

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From P 2

method as approved had significant problems. “Forestry Australia strongly supports the development of high-integrity carbon methods for native forests,” she said. “Our concern is that this method, as approved, falls short in a number of areas, including additionality, leakage and low ability to generate carbon outcomes.”

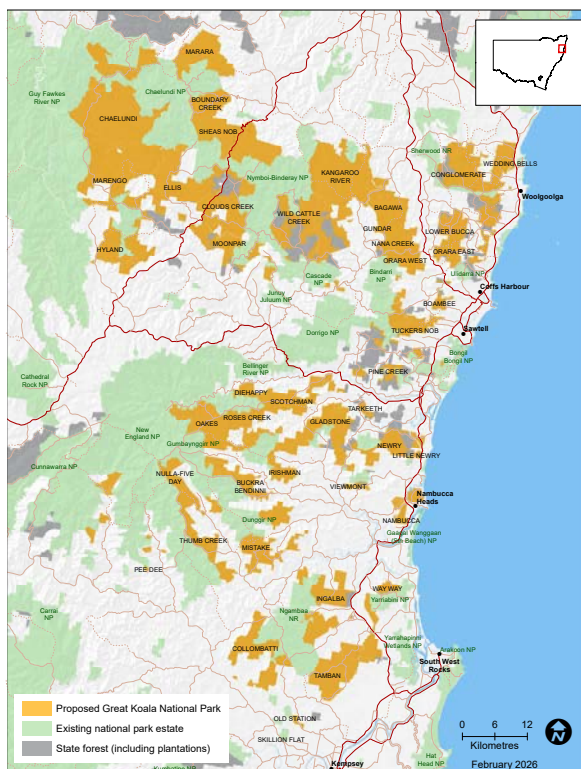
At a time when media reports are highlighting that native hardwood previously sourced from Victoria is now being supplied from Tasmania, it is deeply concerning that the method will substantially underestimate the real leakage that occurs when harvesting stops.

“If approved methods fail to fully account for leakage, or do not properly distinguish between genuine carbon abatement and policy-driven land-use change, such as in the case of the Great Koala National Park, then confidence in the ACCU Scheme is put at risk,” said Freeman. “Carbon markets must be grounded in science, transparency and integrity.”

Forestry Australia also has concerns regarding the future stewardship of these forests. “Although the method allows for broader management activities in principle, the relevant provisions are so restrictive that they would, in effect, largely prevent active forest management for fire risk mitigation, forest health and long-term resilience. Despite the name, the method does not represent genuinely improved native forest management.

“Healthy forests require active management,” added Freeman. “Improved outcomes can come from restoration, ecological thinning, cultural burning, fuel management, assisted regeneration, more selective silviculture and other evidence-based interventions. Australia needs a carbon method that supports active, adaptive and science-based forest management across all tenures, not a one-off mechanism focused on stopping one activity in a very small part of the native forest estate.”

**Refined boundary for the proposed Great Koala National Park**



**Timber NSW says the INFM is all about money, including paying for NSW's 176,000 ha Great Koala National Park.** Image: supplied

Forestry Australia strongly supports investment in native forest management and the development of credible carbon methods that recognise the climate value of healthy, resilient forests, and has called for the risks in the approved method to be transparently addressed so that the ACCU Scheme can maintain the confidence of the market and the community.

To read the full FA statement, click here.

**TIMBER NSW**

The representative organisation of the timber and forest products industry in NSW for the past 120 years said that the INFM all comes down to money. Not koalas, not timber, not communities – just money.

The NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water has been working with the Australian National University to create new requirements for generating carbon credits under the Australian Carbon Credit Unit Scheme based on getting paid for locking up forests previously accessed for forestry. The INFM is the result.

Timber NSW chief executive Maree

McCaskill said, “This is the big lie that the NSW Government has been hiding from the people of NSW” and laid out the timeline of events.

- Early 2024: The NSW government began investigating a carbon method that would generate Australian Carbon Credit Units (ACCUs) by stopping native forest harvesting in State forests.
- 2 July 2024: NSW lodged an Expression of Interest for an Improved Native Forest Management carbon credit scheme.
- 30 October 2024: Federal Minister Bowen, Minister for Climate Change and Energy, prioritised the proposal.
- 2024–2025: Technical development and consultation by NSW government.
- 7 September 2025: Great Koala National Park announced but, importantly, *not gazetted*, because they would risk missing out on the money.
- June 2026: Official Commonwealth approval by Minister Bowen on the Australian Carbon Credit Unit (ACCU) method for native forest management.
- Next before State Election in March 2027: Formal acceptance of taxpayers' money and gazetting of Great Koala National Park.

McCaskill said, “Incentivising State governments with as much as \$1 bn over 15 years to change State Forest to National Park and to exclude forestry activities not only in the gazetted park but also on privately owned land adjoining the park is obscene. Furthermore, the current State government is locking in decisions of future Governments for 100 years – more than a lifetime.

“The *Sydney Morning Herald* reported that in the INFM ‘There are also leakage clauses, providing penalties if logging of public forest increased elsewhere in the state on private or public land, or if there is an increase in imports of unsustainable timber.’

“What is not reported is that only a maximum of 40% of the carbon leakage (both domestic and international) can be discounted by the Commonwealth

Cont P 4

**On the cover: Forestry Australia's President, Dr Michelle Freeman (left) and CEO Jacquie Martin concur that the INFM is inherently flawed and may damage confidence in the integrity of the ACCU Scheme as a whole.** Image: courtesy Forestry Australia

From P 3

despite that figure being widely debunked and calculated by Dr Tyron Venn et al from the University of Queensland at over 80% for timber harvest leakage, with most of the demand met by elevated-risk countries (click here to download the research). Again, follow the money.”

McCaskill concluded, “Communities across NSW are increasingly concerned that productive forests are being locked away without a clear understanding of the long-term adverse economic and social consequences. Now we know why.”

**FWCA**

Forest & Wood Communities Australia (FWCA) says the INFM contains serious carbon-integrity and economic flaws, and risks rewarding governments for shutting down sustainable regional industries.

It warns the new carbon methodology risks issuing ACCUs for abatement that may not exist in the atmosphere, while undermining one of regional NSW’s most important renewable manufacturing supply chains.

FWCA Chair and Director Steve Dobbyns said the methodology is being presented as a climate and economic opportunity, but in practice it could reward governments for closing sustainable public native forest industries while pushing timber production, jobs, emissions and biodiversity impacts somewhere else.

“This is not climate action if it simply shifts timber production offshore or into other supply chains with higher environmental risks,” Dobbyns said.

“The atmosphere does not care whether emissions are moved across a State border, into private forests, into imported timber, or into substitute materials like steel, concrete and plastics. If the wood is still needed, the carbon impact has to be counted honestly.”

The INFM method recognises leakage risk and includes deductions for



**Steve Dobbyns of FWCA says the INFM fails as an ACCU and fails again in economic terms, promising returns that are a fraction of the native forestry industry it will destroy.** Image: supplied

harvesting in excluded areas, increased harvesting in other public native forests, increased harvesting in private native forests, and broader indirect leakage. However, the most important category – indirect leakage, which is intended to account for emissions and removals outside the project area – is capped at 40%.

Dobbyns said that cap is the central problem.

“Recent work by Venn et al (see link above) found that reduced domestic native forest harvesting has been a structural driver of Australia’s growing import dependency, with a long-run timber harvest leakage rate of 81.3%,” he said.

“In plain English, for every 1000m<sup>3</sup> of native forest timber production removed from Australia, the modelling indicates Australia imports approximately 813m<sup>3</sup> of solid wood products from overseas in the long run.”

“That is not a minor leakage effect. That is most of the timber being replaced through imports.”

The Venn et al analysis also found that native forest hardwood and plantation softwood are complementary goods in the Australian market, not simple substitutes. That means closing native forest supply is not automatically offset by plantation pine. Instead, reduced native forest harvesting has materially increased Australia’s dependence on imported solid wood products.

FWCA said the finding directly challenges the credibility of the INFM methodology.

“The forest and emissions impacts have simply been pushed into other jurisdictions,” Dobbyns said. “And if those imports come from countries with weaker forest governance, higher illegality risk, longer transport chains or higher embodied emissions, the climate and biodiversity outcomes may be worse – not better.”

Using a simple carbon-crediting example, if a project claims 100 tonnes of gross abatement and actual leakage is 81.3%, the real net climate benefit may be only 18.7 tonnes. But if the methodology caps the indirect leakage deduction at 40%, the project may still be credited as if 60 tonnes of abatement remains.

“That is not conservative accounting,” Dobbyns said.



Cont P 5

From P 4

“That is capped accounting. It creates a built-in over-crediting risk.”

FWCA said there is another serious consequence that has received little public attention: the INFM method does not simply stop harvesting inside a proposed carbon protection area. Through its leakage rules, it creates a financial penalty if harvesting increases elsewhere.

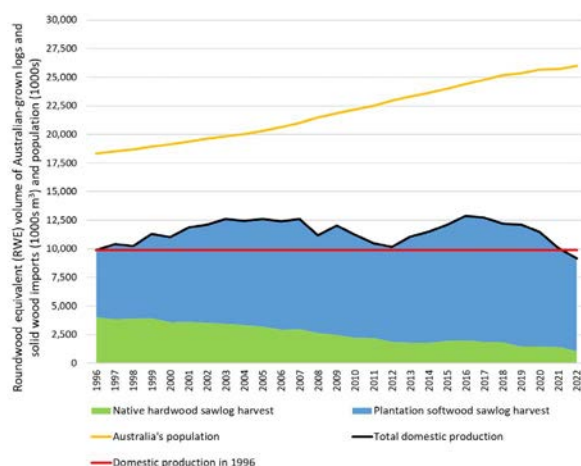
“The INFM method does not directly ban harvesting on neighbouring land, but it effectively puts a carbon-credit penalty on increased harvesting elsewhere in the State,” Dobbys said.

“That means governments chasing ACCUs have a financial incentive to constrain timber supply not only inside the proposed park, but across private native forests as well.

“This should concern every private native forest owner, contractor, sawmiller, processor and regional community that depends on hardwood timber supply.

“Once governments start relying on carbon credits from stopping harvesting, any increase in timber production elsewhere can become a threat to those credits. That creates pressure to suppress supply across the wider landscape, even where harvesting remains lawful, sustainable and properly regulated.”

FWCA said the economics of the proposal are just as troubling.



Research by Venn et al. shows the disconnect between Australia's growing population and demand for housing and domestic harvest from native and plantation sources. Image: courtesy UQ

Supporters of the Great Koala National Park carbon-credit proposal have claimed it could generate \$300 million over 15 years.

“That’s only about \$20 million per year,” Dobbys said. “By contrast, the North East NSW hardwood timber industry currently contributes around \$700 million in gross value add every year, generates around \$1.84 billion in gross revenue, and supports approximately 5700 full-time equivalent jobs.”

“Over the same 15-year period, that is about \$10.5 billion in gross value add from the existing hardwood industry in North East NSW alone.”

Dobbys said the 15-year comparison

**“THE ONLY APPARENT BENEFICIARY OF THIS METHOD IS THE NSW GOVERNMENT”**

understates the issue, because the INFM method creates a 100-year permanence obligation.

“If governments want to lock up productive forests for 100 years, then the economic comparison must also be made over 100 years,” he said.

“On current figures, the existing North East NSW hardwood industry represents around \$70 billion in gross value add, \$184 billion in gross revenue, and the equivalent of 570,000 full-time job-years over a century.

“That is the real economy at risk. So the public is being asked to accept the destruction of a real, renewable, regionally based industry worth hundreds of millions of dollars every year, in exchange for speculative carbon-credit income that is a fraction of the economic value already being generated.”

Dobbys said the comparison exposed a major flaw in the way the INFM debate is being presented.

“This is being sold as if carbon credits are new money and timber production is an environmental liability,” he said.

“That ignores the fact that the existing hardwood industry already supports jobs, manufacturing, transport, small family businesses, construction supply chains, and regional communities.

“It also ignores the fact that when domestic timber production is shut down, Australia still needs timber. We simply import more of it, lose sovereign capability, and push the environmental burden offshore.”

FWCA said the problem is particularly

Cont P 6

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From P 5

concerning where governments seek to use carbon credits to justify the closure of productive public native forests that currently supply Australian homes, infrastructure, manufacturing and regional jobs.

“This is how bad policy compounds,” Dobbyns said.

“First, governments shut down sustainable local timber supply. Then they claim carbon credits for doing it. Then Australia imports more timber or substitutes with more emissions-intensive products. Regional communities lose jobs, builders lose supply, consumers pay more, and the claimed climate benefit may be far smaller than advertised.

“Worse still, Australia risks taking timber from some of the most tightly regulated forests in the world and replacing it with products from countries where forest governance, labour standards and environmental controls are often weaker.”

FWCA is calling for the INFM methodology to be independently reviewed before any ACCUs are issued under it.

At a minimum, FWCA says the review must examine:

1. whether the 40% cap on indirect leakage is defensible in light of evidence that Australian native forest harvest leakage may be 81.3%;
2. whether the method properly accounts for imported timber, offshore forest impacts and substitute materials;
3. whether the method overstates additionality by assuming harvesting would otherwise continue at modelled baseline levels;
4. whether State governments should be allowed to generate ACCUs from policy decisions that reduce domestic timber supply;
5. whether the method creates incentives to suppress lawful timber harvesting in other public and private native forests;
6. whether claimed carbon-credit revenue is being compared honestly with the economic value of the industries being displaced;
7. whether the 100-year economic cost of locking up productive forests has been properly assessed; and



**AFPA Acting CEO Richard Hyett said the INFM also fails to adequately account for issues such as bushfire risk, carbon leakage to overseas markets and the long-term financial liabilities it could create for taxpayers.** Image: supplied

8. whether the claimed abatement remains credible once timber market displacement is fully accounted for.

“Carbon credits must represent real climate benefit, not accounting convenience,” Dobbyns said.

“If the evidence shows that for every 1000m<sup>3</sup> of native forest timber Australia stops producing, around 813m<sup>3</sup> is replaced by imports, then a 40% leakage cap is not an integrity safeguard. It is an over-crediting mechanism.

“And if a project promises \$300 million over 15 years while putting at risk an industry generating around \$700 million in gross value add every year in North East NSW alone, then the economics do not stack up either.

**“THE INFM ALL COMES DOWN TO MONEY, NOT KOALAS**

“Regional timber communities should not be sacrificed for carbon credits that may not stand up to scrutiny. Australia needs honest carbon accounting, sustainable domestic timber production, and policies that reduce global emissions rather than exporting them.”

**AFPA**

The Australian Forest Products Association (AFPA) warned the INFM undermines the integrity and credibility of Australia’s carbon market.

AFPA Acting CEO Richard Hyett said the decision prioritised politics over science and would damage the public confidence and transparency of the Australian Carbon Credit Unit (ACCU) scheme.

“For more than 18 months, the sustainable forest products industry has consistently raised serious concerns that this new method does not meet the ACCU scheme’s own requirements for integrity, transparency or additionality,” Hyett said.

“It’s fair to say, I am gutted by this controversial decision.”

Hyett said the method would generate carbon credits without delivering genuine additional emissions reductions or abatement and was based on science that has been challenged by independent experts and government scientists.

“There is a complete lack of transparency surrounding this proposal, as key modelling, technical analysis and supporting documentation had not been released for proper public scrutiny,” Hyett said.

“The method also fails to adequately account for issues such as bushfire risk, carbon leakage to overseas markets and the long-term financial liabilities it could create for taxpayers.”

Hyett warned the method could also flood the carbon market with low-integrity ACCUs, reducing confidence in legitimate carbon projects and weakening investment in genuine climate action.

“This short-sighted decision risks undermining Australia’s sustainable multiple-use public production forests, which already deliver environmental, economic and climate benefits through active forest management,” Hyett said.

“The only apparent beneficiary of this method is the NSW Government, which wants someone else to pay to fund their election commitment to develop the Great Koala National Park.

“Australia’s carbon credit scheme was designed to encourage real carbon abatement and high-integrity environmental outcomes, and it’s important the scheme remains focused on delivering genuine emissions reductions rather than being used to retrospectively fund policy decisions.”

**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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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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# Flawed reporting

## Responses to last week's 4 Corners continue, with deep disappointment at its errors.

RESPONSES to last week's 4 Corners episode continue. As well as anger from many at the inaccuracies contained within the report, there is a pervasive disappointment that the ABC's editorial standards and legal team saw fit to let such a one-sided report go to air.

This week, we are publishing responses from ASH, which was the subject of implications of having used 'compensation' that was meant to 'transition Victoria out of native timber harvesting' during the program, and from FWCA.

### DAMAGING CLAIMS

Australian Sustainable Hardwoods Pty Ltd (ASH) is aware of a recent program containing misleading, factually incorrect and damaging claims about ASH. We are deeply disappointed and are actively working through our legal options.

The conclusion of the story was determined before filming began. The program showed heavy bias and ignored facts that did not fit their narrative, including clear, documented evidence supplied to them that contradicted the claims they chose to air.

ASH's Managing Director, Vince Hurley, participated in a 2.5-hour interview in which he answered every question and allegation put to him. The editing of that interview was, to put it plainly, dubious. [Editorial note: the final program included approximately 6 minutes and 45 seconds of that interview.]

ASH provided access to multiple scientists who specialise in their respective fields. None of this was aired. Instead, the program chose to platform activists with a shared, predetermined view, and in some cases appears to have reworded terminology in ways designed to lead viewers to incorrect conclusions, replacing accurate contractual language with loaded terms like 'subsidy' and 'compensation'.

Timber in Australia is sustainably managed and is the ultimate renewable.



**Environmentalists have a choice: sustainable native timber harvesting, imports that may destroy habitat for animals including orangutans, or supporting the mining industry with steel and concrete. On 4 Corners, they attacked the most responsible option.** Image: shutterstock

Let us address the facts directly.

#### ■ On the money – the figures stated were wrong

ASH did not receive \$61 million in 2017.

ASH received \$3 million, which was applied entirely to union-negotiated, enhanced redundancy entitlements for workers. Our net position from that transaction: zero.

ASH received contractual failure to supply penalty payments from VicForests (two years of undersupply) and the Victorian Government (contract withdrawal). This is not compensation. It is not a subsidy. It is a penalty payment that VicForests and the Government was contractually required to make.

The total of penalty payments to ASH was \$49 million. That payment was taxed so the total amount received by ASH was \$34 million.

Every cent of that \$34 million, and more, was reinvested into replacement stock, additional employment, plant and equipment.

The penalty payment ASH received was one third of the revenue that would have

been generated if contracted VicForests supply continued. It was significantly less than what it cost ASH to retool operations, develop new products, open new markets and transition to plantation fibre. We have not gained from this. We have absorbed the loss and continued. Importantly, we have made significant gains in developing markets for plantation hardwood. Something few others have been able to do.

ASH ceasing operations following the closure of Victoria's native timber supply would have cost the Victorian taxpayer an additional \$30 million instead of maintaining employment for over 200 employees in regional communities and strengthening economic activity. ASH has produced over \$500 million in economic activity since 2017 including paying over \$100 million in Government taxes and charges. A good result for the Victorian taxpayer.

Western Junction Sawmill (WJS) was purchased in 2021 and is not owned by ASH nor the Victorian Government. WJS is now investing in value-added manufacturing on the site.

#### ■ On wood fibre

ASH do not receive logs from Tasmania. One hundred per cent of timber purchased by ASH from Tasmania is sawn timber from WJS.

WJS purchases plantation hardwood and low-grade regrowth sawlogs produced as a byproduct of forest operations. These sawlogs were destined for export and the wood chip market. Instead, they are upgraded into high-value timber products for Australian consumers. A good result for forestry, conservation and the Tasmanian taxpayer. There is no increase in harvesting and there is no basis to the claim of a rapid loss of old trees.

ASH has three main fibre sources, and our operations do not survive mainly on feedstock from Tasmanian native forests as implied by the program. The report failed to emphasise the significance of plantation oak, nor mention ASH's Glacial

“THE CONCLUSION OF THE STORY WAS DETERMINED BEFORE FILMING BEGAN”

## FEEDBACK FROM 4 CORNERS PROGRAM

Thank you to all our readers who responded to our call for feedback last issue. There were a significant number of responses, and we will need another week to publish all the valuable content.

We would also like to acknowledge the number of encouraging emails we received from individuals prompted by our special report (*Enews 904*, pages 2-8), these were very moving to read, so thank you.

To select just one early example on the day of publication, we received the following from Stephen Midgley who said, "I have little to suggest other than encourage you to do whatever you can to refute this dishonest edition of *4 Corners*. It is seriously disappointing that such a one-sided view is provided about a complex issue – and funded by my taxpayer dollar!

"Did the ABC attempt to interview scientists (arguably far more credible and experienced than Prof Lindenmayer) who were the authors of the scientific paper in *Australian Forestry* showing that Australia's native forests can be sustainably managed for wood production together with other important forest values? It is disappointing to see that this thoughtful paper was not even mentioned (nor Dr Law's alternative work on koalas).

"Please do not let this issue go."

Like the not-so-great GKNP, we will continue to chase this issue. Letters have been sent to the head of the ABC. The reporter was desperately trying to make a big story out of disconnected points, but failed on so many professional levels. We further question the true motives behind the presentation.

Chris Parker, Publisher  
editors@timberandforestrynews.com

From P 8

Oak feedstock entirely. This is not an oversight. It is selective journalism.

### ■ On terminology and framing

The episode framed this story as 'logging versus environmentalists.' That framing is both misleading and telling. There is no logging in isolation. Logging is one activity within forestry.

Forestry is the science of managing forests for all their values, ecological, social and economic, for the long-term benefit of all Australians. These are not the same thing and conflating them is not journalism. It is a narrative device.

### ■ On certification and standards

Every aspect of ASH's operations is independently, third-party certified as sustainable and fully compliant with Australian Standards.

The opinions of unsustainable practices made by activists in this program carry no such certification and have not been independently verified as factual. They should not have been given equal weight in responsible journalism, let alone greater weight.

Regrowth native forestry and/or plantation forestry do not need protecting from logging. The values that exist in the forest are a result of careful forest management. Not in spite of it. Forestry (not logging) manages the long-term sustainability of forest products.

### ■ On the future of the timber industry

Timber is not a "zombie industry" as described in the program. ASH is a business that is unique in Australia. Manufacturing products for which the only alternative is imported timber, often inferior in quality and of dubious environmental origin. Closing domestic forestry does not help the environment. It exports the problem to countries with lower standards and less oversight.

ASH has navigated an extraordinarily difficult transition: new fibre, new products, new markets, new manufacturing and new production, all in a short period of time, during a cost-of-living crisis, in a depressed



Vince Hurley with Darren Chester MP. Image: Darren Chester

market. We have come through it.

ASH is working hard.

We are still here.

And we are staying.

## FWCA CALLS OUT FAILURES

Forest & Wood Communities Australia says the ABC's *4 Corners* program 'Timber Turmoil' was a deeply disappointing and one-sided piece of journalism that failed timber workers, regional communities and the Australian public.

The program was framed from the outset as an anti-native forestry story. It did not genuinely investigate the complex trade-offs involved in Australian forest policy. It did not properly examine the consequences of closing well-regulated local timber supply. It did not properly test activist claims. It did not give adequate weight to timber workers, forestry families, regional towns, manufacturers, builders, forest scientists, economists or Australian consumers.

Instead, *4 Corners* gave Australians a pre-determined narrative: activists were presented as guardians of the forest, while timber workers and manufacturers were framed as remnants of an industry that should disappear.

That is not balanced journalism. It is advocacy dressed up as investigation.

One of the clearest examples was the way *4 Corners* presented the financial position of Australian Sustainable Hardwoods.

The ABC led viewers to believe Victorian taxpayers had put "more than \$110 million into ASH", bundling together a claimed \$61 million government buy-in, \$49 million described as compensation and transition funding, and a further \$9 million in equipment and grants.

“4 CORNERS ALSO FAILED REGIONAL WORKERS”

From P 9

ASH has now directly refuted that framing (see above), telling a very different story from the one *4 Corners* presented.

What makes this even more concerning is that *4 Corners* brought in a forensic accounting expert to examine ASH's books, yet the program still arrived at an assumption that ASH was being propped up by taxpayer money, rather than properly distinguishing between shareholder arrangements, redundancy entitlements, grants, tax treatment, contractual penalties and reinvestment into productive manufacturing assets.

This was not a minor accounting nuance. It was central to the program's narrative.

The ABC effectively bundled unlike figures together to produce the largest and most damaging number possible, then used that number to support a pre-determined story about native forestry, taxpayer funding and industry decline.

On ASH's correction, the relevant failure-to-supply payment was not "more than \$110 million". It was \$34 million after tax, paid because government policy destroyed ASH's contracted supply base, and reinvested by ASH to keep a major regional manufacturer and employer operating.

That distinction should have been obvious to any serious financial investigation. The fact it was missed, even after *4 Corners* sought accounting commentary, reinforces FWCA's concern that the program was not a balanced investigation. It was a selective prosecution of the timber industry.

The ABC also failed to properly explain that ASH is developing high-value Australian timber products, including engineered timber, from plantation and regrowth resources that might otherwise have become lower-value products or exports. That should have been a central part of any honest examination of the future of timber manufacturing in Australia.

*4 Corners* also failed regional workers. It spoke about towns that depend on timber, but barely allowed timber workers to speak for themselves. It spoke about



**ASH's Glacial Oak timber used in a feature staircase by Clarendon Homes.** Image: courtesy Clarendon Homes



**Steve Dobbys penned FWCA's response, noting that the program failed to live up to the ABC's editorial standards.** Image: supplied

regional communities but did not properly show what happens when mills close, jobs disappear, contractors leave, local supply chains collapse and bushfire capability is weakened.

The same failure occurred in New South Wales.

The program briefly acknowledged that the Great Koala National Park decision has removed 40% of wood supply in northern NSW, but failed to properly examine what that means for mills, builders, housing affordability, regional employment or imports. It did not properly ask the obvious question: if Australians still want and need hardwood, where will it come from?

That omission is extraordinary.

FWCA has repeatedly warned that closing Australian native timber industries does not end timber demand. It simply shifts demand offshore.

Recent import analysis highlighted by FWCA shows that 46% of timber traded in Australia is already imported, with a significant proportion of those imports coming from countries with high deforestation risk. For every 1000m<sup>3</sup> of

reduced Australian native forest sawlog production, around 813 m<sup>3</sup> of solid wood products are imported to replace it.

That is not an environmental win. That is environmental leakage.

Australia has some of the most regulated forestry operations in the world. Our native forestry operates under strict rules, codes, prescriptions, regeneration requirements, threatened species protections, audits and public scrutiny. When that supply is shut down, the demand does not disappear. It is increasingly met by timber from countries where illegal logging, deforestation, weaker worker protections and weaker environmental governance are far greater risks.

A serious *4 Corners* investigation would have asked whether locking up Australian forests while importing more timber from high-risk jurisdictions actually helps the global environment. It would have asked whether Australian consumers are being misled into thinking forest policy has no offshore consequences. It would have asked whether regional communities are being sacrificed for a political slogan.

It did not.

The ABC's own editorial principles require accuracy, impartiality, fairness and a diversity of significant perspectives. This program fell well short. It elevated activist claims, used emotive framing, underplayed corrections and context, and failed to properly represent the people most affected by the policies being discussed.

FWCA is calling on the ABC to correct the record, publish ASH's corrections prominently, provide a proper right of reply to the timber industry, and commission a follow-up report that genuinely examines the full consequences of shutting down Australian native forestry.

That follow-up must include timber workers, regional communities, sawmillers, contractors, builders, forest scientists, economists and Australian consumers. It must examine import leakage, carbon leakage, sovereign timber supply, housing affordability, regional jobs and the environmental consequences of shifting timber production offshore.

Australians deserve better than selective storytelling.

They deserve facts, context and balance.

**“FWCA IS CALLING ON THE ABC TO CORRECT THE RECORD”**

# TAFE a winner in NSW Budget

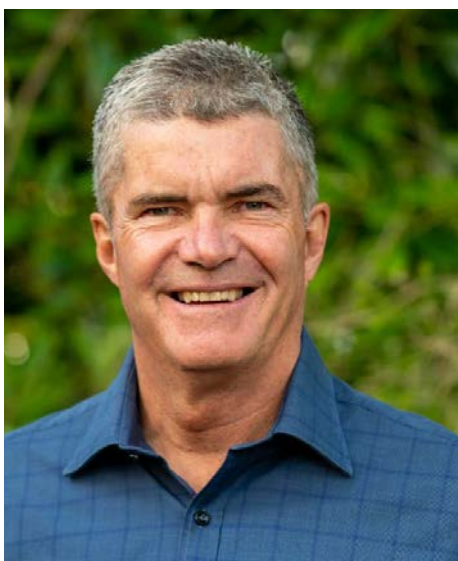
A TAFE NSW investment of \$2.7bn in training will help deliver housing and jobs.

LAST week's NSW 2026-27 Budget saw the Minns Labor Government invest in \$3.46 billion in skills, training and TAFE NSW.

The major part of this is \$2.7 bn in TAFE NSW, an investment that Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education Steve Whan said would strengthen the state's skilled workforce, lowering the cost of training, and accelerating delivery of housing, infrastructure and essential services.

The 2026-27 Budget also continues:

- \$28.8 million for fee-free apprenticeships and traineeships, helping more people gain job-ready skills without the burden of course fees.
- \$816 million for subsidised vocational education and training places, supporting affordable training opportunities across priority industries.
- Payroll tax rebates for employers who hire apprentices and trainees, helping businesses invest in the next generation of skilled workers.
- Workers compensation premium incentives for small businesses employing apprentices, reducing the cost of taking on and training new workers.



**Steve Whan, NSW Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education, is happy to be supporting TAFE.** Image: supplied

- \$80.2 million to continue the conversion of TAFE NSW teachers into permanent roles, building a stable teaching workforce and improving outcomes for students.
- The \$13.8 million Housing Workforce Construction Package, helping train the workforce needed to deliver more homes across NSW.
- \$15 million for the AgSkilled program,

providing certainty for regional training and supporting workforce needs across agriculture.

Major investments designed to rebuild TAFE NSW through investment in modern facilities, technology and equipment across metropolitan and regional campuses include:

- \$233.2 million to upgrade campus networks, modernise classroom technology and deliver new devices for students and staff in regional areas.
- \$18.8 million to upgrade TAFE NSW Wyong, Gosford and Ourimbah supporting training in high demand fields including health, ageing, disability, hair and beauty, and heavy trades.
- \$24.1 million to modernise TAFE NSW Orange, including expanded trades capacity.
- \$5.3 million for a new and upgraded facilities at TAFE NSW Muswellbrook including a multipurpose building, carpentry storage shed and covered outdoor learning area.
- \$31.9 million to continue delivering future-focused education for in-demand capabilities in manufacturing through three Manufacturing Centres of Excellence.

- \$14.6 million energy efficiency upgrades through solar and LED improvements across the TAFE NSW network.

Minister Whan said, "This Budget is delivering the skills that work for NSW. It backs people into jobs and ensures we have the workforce to build homes, deliver infrastructure and grow the economy.

"We're making training more affordable through fee-free and subsidised pathways, supporting employers to take on apprentices, and rebuilding TAFE NSW as the backbone of vocational education and the heart of our communities."

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Image: Shutterstock

# Turning climate ambition into industry action

EACH year, World Environment Day reminds us that tackling climate change requires more than good intentions. It requires practical action, shared commitment and collaboration at every level.

This year's focus on climate solutions is a timely reminder that while the challenge is global, progress is often driven by industries coming together around common goals. For Australia's forest and wood products sector, that conversation is already underway.

FWPA's recent decarbonisation study explored three potential pathways for reducing emissions across the industry's value chain. While each pathway presents different opportunities and challenges, the message is clear: there is no single solution that will deliver net zero.

Instead, success will depend on aligning around the actions that can create the greatest impact.

The urgency is evident. According to the United Nations Environment Programme's latest Global Status Report for Buildings and Construction, the built environment remains one of the world's largest sources of emissions, accounting for around 37% of global CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and nearly half of all material extraction.

For Australia's forest and wood products industry, this presents both a responsibility and an opportunity.

The decarbonisation study highlights a range of levers available to industry,

**“THE STUDY DEMONSTRATES THAT MEANINGFUL EMISSIONS REDUCTION IS ACHIEVABLE**

**If we are serious about reaching net zero, we cannot keep building the future with the same high-emissions materials of the past.**

**Sustainably sourced timber gives Australia a practical way to store carbon, reduce construction emissions and build the homes and infrastructure communities need.**

from improving manufacturing efficiency and increasing renewable energy adoption through to expanding the role of timber in the built environment and strengthening carbon storage outcomes across the value chain. Achieving meaningful progress will require coordinated effort across growers, processors, manufacturers, researchers, policymakers and customers.

Importantly, the study demonstrates that meaningful emissions reduction is achievable. The modelling found that with coordinated actions across the value chain, Australia's forest and wood products industry could reach zero emissions by 2029 and become net carbon negative by 2029. The study also reinforces that decarbonisation is not simply an environmental challenge. It is an economic and strategic one. The decisions made today will help shape the competitiveness and resilience of the industry for decades to come.

That is why true collaboration matters.

World Environment Day's climate

solutions framework highlights the importance of collective action, noting that global greenhouse gas emissions must fall by around 43% by 2030 to keep the goal of limiting warming to 1.5% within reach. The same principle of action applies within our industry. Progress will be strongest when stakeholders work from a shared evidence base, align around common priorities and invest in solutions that deliver benefits across the value chain.

Whether it is accelerating renewable energy adoption, improving manufacturing processes, investing in new technologies or increasing the use of sustainable building materials, progress will depend on industries working together rather than in isolation.

The pathway to net zero will not be linear. There will be challenges, trade-offs and difficult decisions along the way. But there is also significant opportunity to build on the industry's existing strengths and position Australian forest and wood products as part of the solution to a lower-carbon future.

As World Environment Day reminds us, climate action is not about waiting for the perfect answer. It is about taking the next step together.

The FWPA decarbonisation study provides an important foundation for that journey, helping identify where emissions occur, where opportunities exist and where collective effort can deliver the greatest impact.

The next challenge is ensuring the industry continues to work collectively, align around shared priorities and turn ambition into action.

**To find out more, click here.**

# Councils support forestry industries

## *Enews* spoke with Kempsey Shire Mayor Kinne Ring about support for GKNP-affected timber workers.

MULTIPLE councils across the NSW Mid-north Coast have come out in support of their local timber industries in the wake of the Great Koala National Park (GKNP) declaration and native timber harvesting moratorium. No other branch of government is as tuned into community sentiment as our local councils – it's hard to disconnect from the people you serve when they're the same people who are on your local footy team or in the café or pub every time you pop in.

These councils are on the front line of the real-world problems already emerging thanks to the Minns Government opting for a maximalist Great Koala National Park and locking the sustainable timber industry out of large swathes of State Forest.

In Kempsey Shire, Mayor Kinne Ring moved a Mayoral Minute – 'Supporting a Sustainable Timber Industry and Regional Employment' – at the 16 June 2026 meeting. It read as follows...

"That Council:

1. recognises the important contribution of the timber industry to the Kempsey Shire and regional NSW, including local jobs, small business and economic activity;
2. supports a balanced approach to forestry policy that considers environmental sustainability and biodiversity protection alongside the needs of regional communities and workers;
3. recognises the importance of Australian-grown timber products in supporting housing, manufacturing and regional supply chains; and
4. directs the CEO to write to the NSW Premier and relevant Ministers expressing Council's support for regional timber communities, sustainable forestry practices and meaningful consultation with regional areas regarding future forestry policy decisions and alternative timber supply."



**Kempsey Shire Mayor Kinne Ring.** Image: supplied

The minute was passed 7-2.

Mayor Ring's voice was clearly emotional as she spoke at the meeting. Later, on Facebook, she wrote: "Not many things bring me to tears, but the thought of so many people in my community asking me to advocate for their jobs and livelihoods did yesterday.

"Over the past few months, I've spoken with mill workers, contractors, business owners and families who are worried about what the future holds. They weren't asking for politics. They were asking to be heard."

We spoke with Mayor Ring this week about the impacts of the GKNP changes on the Kempsey Shire.

### UNCERTAIN FUTURES

Kinne Ring grew up in the Macleay Valley and has deep roots in the area. She's a young mayor, it's only 14 years since she was school captain at Kempsey High, but in her nearly two years on the job, she's shown a solid commitment to working for her constituents.

Mayor Ring accepts that the GKNP is

“ONE CONTRACTOR SAID HE MAY AS WELL GO TO PAPUA NEW GUINEA

an important story for the Minns State Government. "But there's also the story of the industry and the workers and the people that live in my shire who have been affected by that announcement," she said. "I have had so many people contact me since the park was announced: contractors, mill workers, owners of mills, and I just couldn't not do anything for them, and couldn't not offer them my support."

Hurford Hardwoods is a significant employer in the region with a mill operating on the outskirts of West Kempsey for generations (under a few names). "They only have certainty until 2028," said Ring. "Which means all of the workers there don't have certainty either. A lot of those people feel like they couldn't work anywhere else. There are a lot of young people who work at that mill, and they are feeling really disheartened about what they are going to do.

"I've also had contact with contractors who aren't offered the same package as a big mill is, so they're feeling really uncertain about their future. It's not just where they're going to work, but what can they do with all the equipment they have? It's already an uncertain industry for them without the park, now it's even more uncertain."

Ring notes that promises of retraining and other roles becoming available in tourism or National Parks jobs don't meet the needs of many of the locals: "For a lot of the workers that I've talked to up at Hurford's, it's a physical job, it's a practical job. It's one where they can show up, they can do the work, they know how to do it, and they enjoy doing it. And to have that taken away, I can't see many jobs around the Shire that compete with that kind of work.

"In terms of manufacturing, there's Akubra and Nestlé, but there are no opportunities that transfer those skills and jobs from the mill."

Agriculture and forestry account for about 5% of jobs in the local government

Cont P 14

From P 13

area, a figure Ring describes as “substantial, especially given our low socioeconomic demographics and the struggles that we face here. A lot of those workers are people with families who are paying off their mortgage, who contribute at the local sports club, or car club, or the RFS.

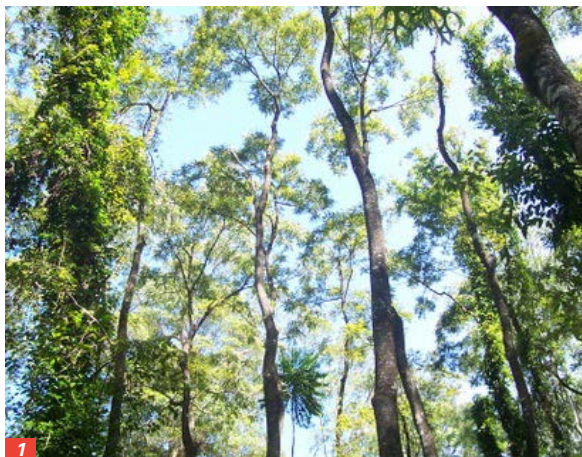
“For me, as a young person, I don't want Kempsey to be a place that lacks opportunity, because we're just going to keep losing our young people. I'm lucky enough to have a university degree, but there are people who want to be practical, to work with their hands, and these are people that have worked in the bush for generations. They love the bush, they care about the bush, and they have an interest in making forestry sustainable for their future, for their children's future. So, it's a bit of a scary time for a town like Kempsey, when hundreds of jobs are at risk.”

## ROCKY TRANSITIONS

One of the promises made by the Minns government was that there would be a boom in National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) jobs that would compensate for losses in native timber harvesting. But Ring says there are locals who have no desire to be redeployed to NPWS.

“I was talking to one contractor who said he may as well go to Papua New Guinea. He doesn't want to work in national parks, he doesn't want to be redeployed,” said Ring. “I think there was an offer of \$9000 or so to be retrained, but he's got a bulldozer loan, he's got equipment loans, he's got business loans. But he's not offered a package for all of that by the state government, so what is he meant to do? Some of that equipment is so specialised there is no option of just selling it on.”

At the same time, the impacts on the regional timber sector are coming well ahead of the promised tourism boom that was meant to economically



**1/ Tamban state forest, just north of Kempsey, will become part of the GKNP.** Image CC/Peter Woodard

**2/ State Forests around Kempsey are key parts of the local recreational and tourism scene as well as home to the native timber sector. The Kalateenee Mountain Bike Park was funded with NSW grants and fundraising from local bikers.** Image: courtesy Kempsey Shire Council

compensate for the loss of access to State Forest timbers. Ring says that Kempsey needs to see the sort of investment in tourism infrastructure that will make those promises feasible.

While organisations like Destination New South Wales have been engaging with the area, the log supply cut-off may be 2028 and, halfway through 2026, there has been little movement. “If this region is going to be a great tourism attraction, then we need to make sure that every Shire is going to be able to benefit, and that we have a good plan going forward to make it a destination for people,” Ring says.

The alternative, if nothing changes from the current situation, is the end of one industry without the start of another, and with that will come job and population losses.

One positive for Kempsey Shire compared to some other regions has been that the close-knit towns haven't

suffered the personal fallings out seen elsewhere over the future of native timber harvesting. “For the most part we have a community that wants to support people to be able to stay in their jobs,” says Ring. “This industry has contributed to our community for generations. There has been some opposition to forestry, but when you have conversations with people in that industry, they want a sustainable industry as much as everybody else. When you actually talk to people, which is easy to do here, these are people that really do care about the bush and about the land.”

## BROADER IMPACTS

Beyond the economic impacts, Ring says the memories of Black Summer are still raw in the region: “This community is still wearing a little bit of trauma from the 2019–2020 bushfires and I think they have a real fear of that happening again.”

Forestry operations were pivotal in the firefighting efforts through those long months, from well-maintained fire roads, to staffing fire crews to managed fuel loads that had been reduced as much as possible in the lead up to the fire season.

“I've lived upriver my entire life, and I've seen bush fires, but not anything like 2019–2020. People have really woken up in this community after that,” Ring says. “One thing that we're crying out for with the announcement of this park is please make sure that the land is managed!”

The NSW Department of Primary Industries reported on forest burned in those fires and found that 54.5% of total forest area burnt was in National Parks, with 24.6% in private forest and only 18.6% in State Forests and 2.2% other. National Parks also had the highest percentage of extreme fire severity (click here to download the report).

Of the 763,000 hectares of State forests burnt, 210,000 ha (27.6%) had some form of harvesting activity in the last 35 years, according to Forestry Corporation NSW records. This allowed for a more fragmented forest landscape, which slowed or stopped the spread of fire.

Ring also noted that weeds and feral pigs are more heavily controlled in managed State Forests and represent significant worries for her local area. Additionally, there is real concern about

Cont P 15

From P 14

where the timbers needed to build NSW homes will come from if not from areas like Kempsey, with many expressing bafflement that the highly regulated local industry appeared to be moving offshore to countries with less control over the environmental impacts of their forestry sector.

While the full impacts of the GKNP are still filtering through, with current contracts supporting local mills, Ring said the Mayoral Minute was an important action for her to take, despite some suggestions it might be seen as too political.

"I kind of felt like I maybe sat on my hands for a little bit too long, because it's a really challenging issue," she said. "But I'm glad that I've spoken up, because there are literally hundreds of people in our community who felt like they were just left out on their own to rot."



**Greg Egan (L), Weeds Officer at Kempsey Shire Council, receiving the 2023 LGNSW Excellence in the Environment Award for Invasive Species Management. It's feared that a loss of managed State Forest will worsen weed issues like Tropical Soda Apple.**  
Image: courtesy Kempsey Shire Council.

### OTHER COUNCILS ON BOARD

Coffs Harbour Mayor Nikki Williams also moved a motion for her council in its 18 June meeting that recognised the importance of the sustainable timber industry in the local area. As well as calling for meaningful consultation and support for workers, the motion noted that timber harvesting and environmental concerns need not be considered warring points of view, saying "These objectives should not be viewed

as mutually exclusive." (Click here to access the minutes.)

Similarly, Shoalhaven Council's Cllr Brett Steele moved a Notice of Motion in the council's 26 May meeting (click here for minutes), recommending "That Council write a supporting letter asking for the permanent protection of community access to The Brooman State Forest (North as well as South) as well as committing to the continuity of the current management practice and loggers' employment stability by..." with a list of actions that acknowledge the environmentally responsible logging practices currently in play, opening with: "Acknowledging the great job that has already been done in protection management for not only Big Spotty, but the whole of The Brooman State Forest both North as well as South."

With several other councils having similar motions underway or in planning, it's good to see that local members understand the importance of local jobs and local industries. Here's hoping that Chris Minns is listening ahead of the 2026 NSW Labor State Conference this Saturday.

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# Timber transition ends in Victoria

IF you're a fan of *The Voice*, you might remember Mick Harrington from 2021. He didn't look that flash when he came out for the audition round, dressed in a checked shirt, but when he started to sing, every judge turned their chair around in seconds.

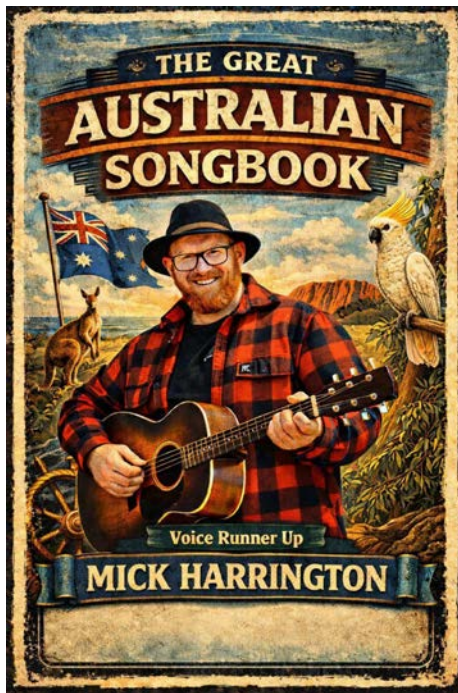
There was a reason Harrington looked like a timber worker at that audition: his family has worked in the sector for three generations. At the end of the series, he placed second, wowing the critics.

This week, you might have seen him talking with ABC Gippsland's Madeleine Stuchbery about the insufficiencies of Victoria's \$1.5 bn transition out of native timber harvesting program, which ended on Tuesday.

Harrington told Stuchbery: "It's basically decimated local communities."

He said there had been a failure to create a like-for-like economy to replace the sector that rural economies across Gippsland relied on.

"All those downstream businesses that relied on the timber sector are really struggling in those towns, like Swifts Creek and Powelltown, Noojee and Orbost alike," he said.



**Former timber worker Mick Harrington now relies on singing and work in minerals after the loss of Victoria's native timber industry.** Image: courtesy Mick Harrington/Facebook

Harrington no longer works in timber, splitting his time between a job at Gippsland Critical Minerals and his music career.

Stuchbery reported that 80% of

displaced timber workers were in full-time employment before the end of the industry, a figure that fell to 60% after the end of the sector, and that the number of Gippsland residents employed in agriculture, forestry and fishing has dropped from 12 to 5 per cent over the past five years.

She interviewed East Gippsland's Deputy Mayor Tom Crook, who said residents struggled to engage with services attempting to provide job opportunities: "Those processes really struggled to engage meaningfully with the town and its people about what their economic future was going to be and the opportunities."

One flaw in an otherwise well-balanced story was the acceptance of some of the misinformation regarding Australian Sustainable Hardwoods from last week's *4 Corners*, but overall the story offers the engaged regional balance Australians expect from the ABC.

Click here to read the full story or click here to listen to Madeleine Stuchbery's report on former timber town Noojee's move into truffle harvesting.

## In depth with the FCoE leaders

THE Forestry Centre of Excellence is committed to transparency and engaging with the industry and wider sector as freely as possible. As part of that philosophy, it has released a video shot late last year with the Centre's director Prof Jeff Morrell and general manager Dr Jim O'Hehir, featuring a range of thoughtful questions and reflections on the Centre's direction and activities.

The discussion provides valuable insights into the Centre's work and future outlook, as well as insights into the two men.

"Over my career, I've really enjoyed problem solving," said Prof Morrell, who



**FCoE general manager Dr Jim O'Hehir (left) and director Prof Jeff Morrell.** Image: courtesy FCoE

confided that he's a bit of a lab rat. "I enjoy working with issues that arise and helping people come to common solutions. That's been the most fun part of my job."

Asked for the biggest myth about plantation forestry he'd like to bust, O'Hehir said: "That the plantations destroy the soil. That's not necessarily true. Any crop that's not managed properly can have that potential, but the plantations in Australia generally have been managed very well and the foresters have been very careful with the natural capital and soil in particular."

Click here for the whole video.

# Nats say no to INFM

## The Nationals are calling for the new ACCU to be dumped.

THE Federal Nationals have announced they will lodge a Notice of Motion in the Senate and House of Representatives to stop Labor's new carbon credit approval (see story from p2), which will lock up land and destroy regional jobs.

"Labor's new carbon credit approval will cause irreversible damage to Australia's sustainable native forestry industry, sovereign timber supply capability, agricultural land and regional communities – locking up productive forest land for 100 years," said Nationals Leader Senator Matt Canavan.

"This will mean less timber to build Australian homes, which, in turn, means fewer Australian jobs. It will shut down another regional industry and end regional forestry jobs, hurting our economy and making our country weaker. The Australian forest industry directly employs about 80,000 people with a further 100,000 indirect jobs, concentrated in regional communities. This is a crucial industry that we must protect."

Shadow Minister for Agriculture Darren Chester said closing native forestry across an entire RFA region for 100 years accelerates import dependence and pushes construction toward steel and concrete, which has already been seen following the closure of native forestry in states such as Victoria.

"I represent the communities that lived through the shutdown of native forestry in Victoria, and I know this leads to mills closed, skilled workers gone, and proud towns left to pick up the pieces," Chester said.

"When it comes to timber, you either use your own in an environmentally sustainable way, or you source timber from countries with worse environmental standards than ours."

Federal Member for Lyne, the National's Alison Penfold MP had



**The Nat's MP for Lyne Alison Penfold had tabled a private member's bill aimed at safeguarding the ACCU Scheme days before the INFM was approved.** Image: courtesy Alison Penfold

introduced her Carbon Credits (Carbon Farming Initiative) Amendment Bill 2026 last Tuesday in a bid to stop exactly these problems with the ACCU Scheme.

"I introduced my private member's bill because I could see exactly where this was heading," she said. "My bill would have protected the integrity of the ACCU scheme by preventing governments from using Commonwealth carbon credits to fund political land-use decisions instead of genuine carbon abatement.

"Unfortunately, Chris Bowen has chosen to ignore those concerns."

Penfold condemned Minister for Climate Change and Energy Bowen's approval of the INFM methodology, saying it will accelerate job losses across the NSW North Coast while fundamentally undermining the integrity of Australia's carbon credit scheme.

Penfold said the Minister's decision clears the way for the NSW Labor Government to generate millions of dollars in Australian Carbon Credit Units (ACCU) by locking up State Forests as part of the proposed Great Koala National Park.

"Workers have already lost their jobs because of the NSW Government's harvesting moratorium, and this decision will only encourage further permanent

job losses across the North Coast," said Penfold.

"The people paying the price are not politicians in Sydney or Canberra. They are timber workers, contractors, truck drivers, sawmill employees, mechanics, small businesses and regional families who have built their lives around a sustainable forestry industry.

"The Minister was required under the legislation to consider the likely economic and social impacts before approving this methodology. He concluded those impacts could be appropriately mitigated. I simply cannot fathom how he reached that conclusion."

Penfold said the decision represented far more than another environmental policy.

"It fundamentally changes the purpose of Australia's carbon credit scheme," she said.

"The ACCU Scheme was established to encourage genuine new emissions reductions and carbon sequestration projects. It was never intended to reward governments for shutting down existing industries."

Australia's newest union, the Timber, Furnishings and Textiles Union (TFTU) joined in the calls for the INFM to be dumped.

TFTU National Secretary Michael O'Connor said the method was dead on arrival because it mistakes passive lock-up for credible carbon policy.

"This method is not just flawed – it is close to unimplementable," O'Connor said.

"A carbon method that locks up forests, lets fuel loads build and calls it climate action is a dud.

"You do not protect carbon in Australian native forests by reducing harvesting and hoping for the best. You protect it through active and adaptive forest management.

"Without that, projects under the method simply become under-managed and under-funded carbon bombs in fire-prone native forests."

Click here to read the full TFTU statement.

“THIS METHOD IS NOT JUST FLAWED – IT IS CLOSE TO UNIMPLEMENTABLE”

# PEFC certification and compliance

## Responsible Wood's new Technical Note clarifies pathways to compliance.

RESPONSIBLE Wood has released a new Technical Note explaining how PEFC certification can support compliance with the Illegal Logging Prohibition Act 2012 and Illegal Logging Prohibition Rules 2024.

Australia has some of the world's strictest illegal logging laws, with due diligence requirements applying to both domestic processors and importers before timber products can be placed on the market. The note will help businesses navigate these requirements.

Developed by Responsible Wood, the national governing body for the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC) in Australia, to assist Australian domestic processors, and importers to comply with the



**Responsible Wood's new Technical Note.** Image: supplied

Illegal Logging Prohibition Act 2012 and the Illegal Logging Prohibition Rules 2024, the document explains how PEFC certification streamlines and simplifies the compliance and

evidence collection process prior to placing of wood in the Australian market.

It says: "A number of Australia's major wood trading partners are able to harness Country Specific Guidelines published by the Commonwealth Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) summarising compliance information for forest products. For countries where such guidelines do not exist, certification may assist by providing a simpler pathway to meet illegal logging laws."

The Note then outlines the certified and non-certified products pathways to establish that products are of legal origin, ending with a handy list of additional resources. To download it, click here.



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