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NTHA celebrates amazing Queenslanders

COVER STORY P 2

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Queensland's timber and hardware industry crowns its best

QUEENSLAND'S timber and hardware industry came together in spectacular fashion on Saturday night as more than 300 industry professionals gathered at Rydges South Bank, Brisbane, for the 2026 NTHA Queensland Timber & Hardware Industry Awards.

The annual celebration showcased the very best of the industry, recognising outstanding retailers, suppliers, manufacturers, apprentices, trainees and business leaders whose commitment continues to strengthen Queensland's timber and hardware sector.

A defining moment of the evening was the graduation ceremony honouring NTHA's newest qualified apprentices and trainees. In front of industry leaders, employers, family and friends, the graduates celebrated the successful completion of their training, marking the beginning of the next chapter in their careers.

Opening the evening, NTHA Chief Executive Officer David Little acknowledged the graduates and the vital role they will play in the future of the industry.

"Today, we gather not only to honour our graduates' achievements but also to celebrate the strength, determination, and passion of the next generation of leaders in the timber and hardware industry," he said.

Following the graduation ceremony



1/ NTHA CEO David Little with Supplier Sales Representative of the Year (Timber) - Jai Deverell (SmartFrame by Tilling)



2/ NTHA Chairman Peter Hutchison with Industry Icon - John Schwabe, Managing Director of Megabeam. All images: NTHA

were the Queensland Timber & Hardware Industry Awards, which Mr Little said recognised the businesses and individuals setting the standard across Queensland.

"Every finalist and winner has earned their place through hard work, innovation and an unwavering commitment to their customers, their people and the communities they serve, voted by the people who work in this industry too," Mr Little said.

"Queensland has an incredible depth of talent and tonight showcases the businesses and people leading the way. All you have to do is have a look around this room to see that it is filled

with independent family owned, small business networks who are the heart and soul of our industry," Mr Little said.

WINNERS ANNOUNCED

During the award ceremony, popular MC Ben Dobbin brought energy and humour to the stage, announcing the winners and inviting each recipient to share their stories and achievements with the audience.

The winners are:

NTHA Trainee/Apprentice of the Year -
Zane Williams – GCD Architectural

Zane was thrilled to receive the award saying, "I want to thank GCD for taking

Cont P 3



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From P 2

me on and believing in me and also thank my family for always being there and supporting me."

NTHA Host Employer of the Year - Tri Tech Refrigeration QLD

As a valued host employer of NTHA for more than 12 years, Tri Tech is widely recognised for its commitment to creating a supportive workplace focused on growth and development.

Tri Tech Managing Director Ian Williams said, "we wouldn't have a business without apprentices. We have about 30 going through from engineering to fitting and turning and they are the reason why our company has grown."

NTHA Student of the Year - Kai Jefferson – Versace Timbers

Kai thanked everyone at Versace who he says, "have taken me under their wing and taught me so many things. I also want to thank NTHA for taking the time to teach me as much as they can in this industry."

Safety Champion - John Krog – Williams Group Australia



1/ **NTHA Student of the Year Kai Jefferson – Versace Timbers, presented by NTHA Chairman Peter Hutchison.**

2/ **NTHA CEO David Little with 30 + Years Industry Service recipients - Debbie Payne and Jenni Day.**



John recognised, "all of the staff and division managers who support me in making sure everyone goes home safe. I have worked with the Williams Group Australia for 30 odd years, and they really are a fantastic mob."

Outstanding Employee Award - Yvonne Bosworth – Canegrowers Mitre 10

Yvonne not only congratulated all award nominees but also thanked Mitre 10.

"They have been a huge part of my life

for 37 years and I loved working for them all that time."

Industry Icon - John Schwabe, Managing Director of Megabeam

Recognised for his impact on the industry that has extended far beyond the workplace, John Schwabe is leaving behind a legacy that will be remembered for years to come.

John was surprised by the recognition

Cont P 4

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From P 3

and thanked his wife Meg saying, "If it wasn't for her, I could not do what I do because she supports me, so she is as equally deserving."

30 + Years Industry Service - Jenni Day and Debbie Payne

Dedicating 38 years to building a distinguished career over a wide variety of roles, Jenni Day is well-known for her outstanding commitment to developing meaningful connections across the industry.

Jenni was thrilled to receive such recognition thanking, "Versace Timbers where I have spent the last 24 of my 38 years in the industry. I hope I have set some sort of examples to the younger generation, that would make my time in the industry a success.

With over 44 years in the industry, Debbie Payne is well-known for her expertise, resilience and exceptional customer service.

"I am so privileged to have worked in this industry, customers are my mates and I love what I do, which is why I am still here. To John, Meg the Megabeam team, thank you this means a lot to me."

Supplier Sales Representative of the Year (Timber) - Jai Deverell (SmartFrame by Tilling)

Jai thanked everyone who had shared the journey with him along the way including, "my beautiful wife Rebecca, as well as Tilling Timber and the team who give me the support to do what I do every day."

Supplier Sales Representative of the Year (Hardware) - Mark Daly (Advansa).

Mark said awards like this don't happen, "without the people behind us that do all the heavy lifting. While I am very grateful for this award, it doesn't happen without the amazing people who have carried me and coached me along the way."



Left to right: Apprentice Support Australia's Evan Matejka with Trainees/Apprentices of the Year nominees - Kobie Duell, Zane Williams (Trainee/Apprentice of the Year Winner) William Ranak, Rheegeen Arnido. Image: NTHA

Retail Store of the Year Under 2500sqm - Paddington Hardware

HBT's General Manager – Business Services, Mike Lo Ricco accepted the Retail Store of the Year Award Under 2500sqm on behalf of Paddington Hardware who were unable to attend due to illness.

"They are amazing members. If you have not been to their store, go out and have a look at it, it is a very unique business," Mike said.

Retail Store of the Year Over 2500sqm - Sunshine Mitre 10 (Gympie)

Mike from TTHG accepted the award on the store's behalf. "Well done to the Sunshine team, this really is a tough category with some incredible competition."

Supplier of the Year – Building Materials - James Hardie

Supplier of the Year – Retail Hardware - Dulux

Supplier of the Year – Timber - Hyne Timber

Hyne Timber's National Sales and Marketing Manager, Jeremy Mead thanked everyone, "who voted for us. This one is very sweet, but mostly it is the guys on the ground that make this happen."

Best Off-Site Manufacturing Award - CQ Building Supplies (Maryborough) – presented by NTHA Chairman Peter Hutchison.

CQ Building Supplies CEO Chris Curtis said that, "in recent times we have put on 20 trainees with NTHA and the collaboration has been amazing. To my staff at CQ Building Supplies, we are something to behold. We are very proud of this award."

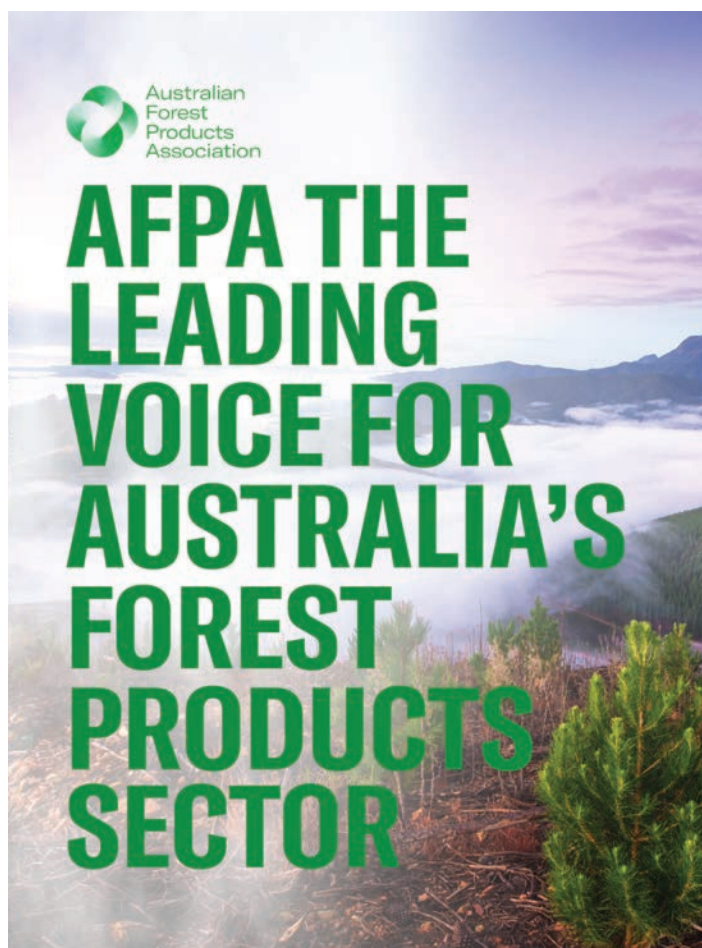
Trade Store of the Year - Bretts (Chermside)

Bretts General Manager for Trade, Dominic Kurtz said he would like to attribute the award onto the extensive Brett's team. "We could not have done this without you."

GRADUATES CELEBRATED

A Queensland graduation ceremony was also held on the night to celebrate the achievements of NTHA students who were presented with their certifications.

NTHA's General Manager GTO/RTO Melissa Clark said the ceremony was not only about celebrating the graduates' achievements, but also about celebrating the strength, determination and passion of the next generation of leaders in the industry.



Cont P 5

From P 4

"As you embark on your careers remember you are the future leaders of our industry, with proud traditions and a really exciting future. The experience, skills and the lessons you have gained in your time with NTHA will help guide you through every opportunity and challenge that lies ahead."

The following graduates were celebrated:

Rebecca Worster –
Certificate III in Timber
Systems Design

William Ramak –
Certificate III in Electrotechnology
Electrician

Zane Williams – Certificate III in Joinery

Rheegen Arnido – Certificate III in Air
Conditioning and Refrigeration

Bailey Hall – C3 Frame and Truss
Manufacture

Scott Hall – C3 Frame and Truss
Manufacture

James Purrer – C3 Frame and Truss
Manufacture

Deakin Roth – C3 Timber Systems
Design

Mason Jarvis – Certificate III in Retail

Jack Goopy – Certificate III in Air
Conditioning and Refrigeration

Alex Hillier – Certificate III Timber
Systems Design

Jacqueline Grundy – Certificate III
Leadership and Management



1/ The NTHA team: (L-R) National BDM, Darren Hooper; GM Membership, Alicia Langfield; QLD Field Officer, Jodie Crow; Finance Manager & Company Secretary, Alissa Mizon; RTO Operations Manager, Kim Jones; Membership Officer, Tahlia Bellotti; Marketing & Communications Manager, Christine Bannister; General Manager GTO & RTO, Melissa Clark; and NTHA CEO, David Little.

2/ NTHA Chairman Peter Hutchison presents Best Off-Site Manufacturing Award - CQ Building Supplies (Maryborough), to CQ Building Supplies CEO Chris Curtis. All images: NTHA



Declan Brennan – Certificate III in Supply
Chain

SPONSORS

NTHA also acknowledged the generous support of its QLD awards sponsors:

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Bronze Sponsors: HBT & ForestWorks

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Trainee/apprentice of the Year Award
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CONCLUSION

Concluding the awards was NTHA's
General Manager Membership Alicia
Langfield who said, "this is an industry
built on relationships. We have worked

together for a long time, watched
businesses grow, celebrated success
and supported one another through the
challenges."

"Thank you to every business here
tonight, for investing in your people,
supporting your local communities,
embracing innovation and helping us
ensure our industry remains strong for
generations to come."

NTHA will soon recognise the best-
of-the-best at the NSW & ACT Awards in
Sydney September 4, and the SA, NT &
WA Awards in Adelaide on October 30.
To nominate or purchase tickets go to
<https://www.ntha.com.au/events/2026-industry-awards/>

**On the cover: All the winners of the 2026
NTHA Queensland Timber & Hardware Industry
Awards. Image: NTHA**

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Entries close Friday August 14, 2026.

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The Richard Stanton Memorial Leadership Award applications for 2026 close soon

ESTABLISHED in 2015, the Richard Stanton Memorial Leadership Award is a perpetual tribute to the enduring legacy of the late Richard Stanton, renowned for his pioneering contributions to Sustainable Forest Management in Australia and internationally. This esteemed award recognises individuals who have made significant strides in Forest Management or Chain of Custody Certification within the Responsible Wood Certification Scheme.

CELEBRATING SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT AND CHAIN OF CUSTODY LEADERSHIP

In 2024, with the support of the late Richard Stanton's widow, Sonya Stanton, the award now extends its eligibility to early-career professionals.

The award recognises the multifaceted approach to sustainable forest management, emphasising environmental, social, cultural, and economic aspects, along with innovation in the use of forest products.

ELIGIBILITY FOR THE AWARD

Open to all individuals contributing to Sustainable Forest Management under AS/NZS 4708 or Chain of Custody under AS 4707 or PEFC ST 2002, the award welcomes participants from diverse backgrounds, including but not limited to:

- Certified Forest Owners and Managers
- Chain of Custody Certificate Holders
- Certification Bodies
- Forest Scientists and Researchers
- Builders and Designers advocating for sustainable timber utilisation.

As of 2024, the award extends its eligibility to early-career professionals in forestry, environmental science, wood technologies, and design and university students pursuing relevant studies, including those completing post-graduate degrees (i.e., Masters, PhDs).

We encourage Indigenous Australian nominations for this award as we strive to recognise and celebrate Australia's diverse talents and contributions to forestry and land management.

NOMINATION PROCESS

Candidates must be nominated, with nominations accepted from Responsible Wood members, certificate holders, stakeholders, lecturers, or senior leaders within academic institutions.

Nominating someone takes only minutes using the online form [here](#).

Alternatively, email info@responsiblewood.org.au with your responses to the following three questions, along with the nominee's name, email address, phone number and organisation:

1. How has the nominee demonstrated a commitment to Sustainable Forest Management and/or Chain of Custody Certification in their work?

Tip: Consider actions taken, leadership shown, or outcomes achieved.

2. In what ways has the nominee gone above and beyond what's expected in their role?

Tip: This could include innovation, long-term dedication, community engagement, or overcoming challenges.

3. What impact has their work had, and why do you believe they deserve to be recognised with this award?

Tip: Think about the difference they've made to people, the environment, or the industry

AWARD KEY DATES

Nominations close at 5:00 pm on Friday 14 August 2026

AREAS OF EXCELLENCE

Candidates should be nominated based on their exemplary achievements in the following areas:

- Significant and valuable contributions to sustainability.
- Innovation, improvement, or excellence in sustainable forest management or the fabrication, supply, or utilisation of certified forest products.
- Strong commitment to the principles of sustainable forest management.
- Innovation and improvement in promoting Responsible Wood and/or PEFC-certified products.



Simon Dorries, Responsible Wood CEO (left) and Dr Tony Bartlett, Responsible Wood Chair (Right) with 2025 Richard Stanton Memorial Leadership Award recipient, Shona Heading. Image: Responsible Wood

SELECTION CRITERIA & JUDGING

A Judging Panel will evaluate nominations, and their decision will be final. Each nomination will be ranked from 1 to 5 based on the following criteria:

- Contributions to the Principles of Sustainable Forest Management
- Promotion of Responsible Wood and/or PEFC-certified Forests and Forest Products
- Focus on Innovation and Leadership in the candidate's sector
- Impact on the Development of the Responsible Wood Scheme
- Social contributions to promoting forest products, forest health and productivity, biodiversity, and/or indigenous forest values.

AWARD BURSARY

The Richard Stanton Memorial Leadership Award includes a bursary of \$2,000 to support the recipient's continued professional development. This fund can be utilised for conference fees, related travel expenses, training courses, or any other activities aimed at skill enhancement or professional experience enrichment.

To claim the bursary, the award winner must contact Responsible Wood, outlining the intended use of the funds, upon which Responsible Wood will cover costs up to \$2,000 on the winner's behalf.

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>

11: SAVE THE DATE: WoodSolutions Seminar – Perth, WA, 2.00pm - 6.00pm.

Designed for engineers, architects, building designers, certifiers and builders, this seminar, hosted by Timber Insight, is bringing together the brightest minds in residential construction for an afternoon of practical technical presentations exploring the latest developments in timber framing, engineered wood products, prefabrication and building performance. Full details and ticket sales details coming soon.

SEPTEMBER

2: AFPA member dinner – Wrest Point Hotel, Hobart, 6.00pm - 9.30pm.

The event will involve key industry leaders, Members of Parliament, including from the Federal and Tasmanian parliaments. It will also feature a CEO breakfast, Annual General Meeting (AGM) and Members Forum as well as the Softwood Supply Chain and Hardwood Supply Chain meetings. For more information and booking, visit <https://www.trybooking.com/events/landing/1613848>

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/events/2026-industry-awards/> or contact tahlia@ntha.com.au

12: 2026 WFTN Cocktails for Charity – Cloudland, Brisbane, 1.30pm - 6.00pm.

Join us for an afternoon of networking, drinks and canapés as we come together to raise much-needed funds for a remarkable Queensland charity making a real difference in the lives of children affected by domestic and family violence. In support of Zephyr Education Limited. Further information, and ticket sale visit <https://events.ntha.com.au/events/nationaltimberhardwareassociationntha/2273829>

RSVP: Monday 31 August 2026.

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/events/2026-industry-awards/> or contact tahlia@ntha.com.au

NOVEMBER

8-13: The Gottstein Trust's Understanding Forest Science Course – The Country Club, Launceston, Tasmania.

For those working in, or with an interest or association with the timber and forestry products sector, this unique course will provide an update on core aspects of forest science and aspects of management of the nation's public and private estates. Participants will also gain a better understanding of the national and international forces impacting upon forests. Bookings are now open. For more information, visit <https://gottsteintrust.org/> or phone Helen Murray on 0419 991 424

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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WFH laws risk driving jobs and investment out of Victoria

VICTORIAN businesses are warning the State Government its proposed work-from-home legislation will increase costs, damage hiring and push jobs and investment interstate. New research reveals business concerns have escalated sharply since the policy was first announced.

New Victorian Chamber of Commerce and Industry results show that while 77 per cent of businesses already allow employees to work from home, an overwhelming 80 per cent expect the proposed legislation to negatively impact their operations.

The findings reinforce a message that Victorian businesses have delivered consistently since the policy was announced: flexibility is already widespread but legislating a one-size-fits-all right risks creating significant cost, complexity and unintended consequences.

The results represent a significant deterioration in business sentiment since the Victorian Chamber and Committee for Melbourne first surveyed employers following the Government's September 2025 announcement.

In October 2025, 56 per cent of businesses said Victoria was harder to operate in than other states. That figure has now risen to 72 per cent.

The earlier survey found more than one third of businesses would look to expand operations and hire staff outside Victoria if WFH legislation was introduced. The latest results show 47 per cent are now more likely to start, expand or invest outside Victoria, while 42 per cent are more likely to hire staff interstate.

Additional survey results also found:

- 92 per cent anticipate additional costs from the legislation, including legal advice, policy development, technology, equipment, insurance, cyber security and compliance.
- Of businesses estimating additional



While working from home offers valuable flexibility, there are concerns that making it a mandated right could create unnecessary complexity and discourage employment and investment in Victoria. Image: Shutterstock

annual costs, 25 per cent expect costs of \$50,000 or more.

- 44 per cent say the new right would make them less likely to hire new staff based in Victoria.
- 47 per cent say it would reduce their willingness to employ younger or less experienced workers who may require greater training, supervision or mentoring.
- 72 per cent expect they will be required to provide additional work-from-home arrangements under the proposed laws.

The Victorian Chamber has opposed the legislation from the outset, arguing it is a solution looking for a problem when the overwhelming majority of businesses already provide workplace flexibility.

However, with the Bill now before Parliament, the Chamber is urging the Government to make significant amendments to reduce uncertainty, costs and unnecessary disputes.

The Victorian Chamber has developed a ten-point plan to fix the Bill, including a maximum two-day entitlement without stacking with existing arrangements, broader reasonable business grounds, clearer employer obligations and cost

responsibilities, stronger workplace health and safety provisions, better protections for small business, delayed commencement for smaller employers and measures to reduce unnecessary litigation.

Victorian Chamber of Commerce and Industry Chief Executive Sally Curtain said, "These results should be a wake-up call for the Government. Businesses are not rejecting flexibility, 77 per cent already allow their employees to work from home. They are rejecting legislation that adds cost, complexity and uncertainty without solving a genuine problem.

"Last year, we warned these laws risked driving jobs and investment out of Victoria. The latest data shows those warnings are becoming more serious, not less.

"Almost half of businesses surveyed are now more likely to invest outside Victoria, 42 per cent are more likely to hire outside the state and 44 per cent are less likely to hire Victorians. Those are consequences no Government should dismiss.

"The impact on young Victorians should be particularly alarming. Almost half of businesses say the proposed laws would reduce their willingness to employ younger or less experienced workers who need training, supervision and mentoring.

"The devil is in the detail, and unfortunately that is where this Bill falls apart. Instead of providing certainty, it creates legal grey areas and asks businesses to comply with obligations that are not clearly defined.

"If everyone is left arguing over what 'reasonable' means, the legislation has not done its job. The winners will not be employees or employers, they will be employment lawyers.

"We are asking for sensible amendments that recognise different industries, protect small businesses, clarify employer obligations and reduce unnecessary disputes.

"Victoria does not need another workplace experiment. We need practical laws that support both jobs and flexibility."



**VICTORIA DOES NOT
NEED ANOTHER WORK-
PLACE EXPERIMENT**

Clarence Valley faces koala park's heavy toll

Despite fierce opposition, Clarence Valley Council is confronting the likely creation of the Great Koala National Park.

CLARENCE Valley Council has strongly highlighted the severe economic and social impacts the Great Koala National Park will have on the region.

In November 2025, the Council opposed the NSW Government's plan to transition 176,000 hectares of state forest into national park. Cr Allison Bryant's motion warned that the decision potentially impacts up to 5,500 jobs in the region and neighbouring areas, with 40 percent of the state's hardwood supply affected. The timber industry, described as "one of the most sustainable and highly regulated industry in the world," faces shutdown. This will create damaging flow-on effects across other sectors, including housing, bridges, power poles, and everyday products in all industries.

Councillors noted immense community concerns over job and



business losses, the removal of recreational activities, and increased bushfire risk. The resolution called the proposal an immense negative impact on the region and its communities. Council wrote to the Premier, Minister Penny Sharpe, local MPs, and neighbouring councils seeking joint opposition. It also urged the development of a North Coast timber industry manufacturing revival plan. The motion passed with seven votes for and two against.

“THE [GKNP] DECISION POTENTIALLY IMPACTS UP TO 5,500 JOBS

By the April 2026 Ordinary Council Meeting, the Council acknowledged that the park is proceeding despite its opposition. The Council noted progress made through a working group involving Mid North Coast Joint Organisation member councils. This group is collaborating with the state government to shape economic opportunities for the region. A further report on these outcomes is due at the December 2026 Council meeting.

The state government has committed \$80 million for park establishment, \$60 million for creation and management, and \$6 million for tourism business development. While the Council is engaging on potential benefits to assist their region as the park plans continue to move ahead, its position continues to emphasise the significant local costs to jobs, industry, and community wellbeing.

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Victoria's \$1.5 billion warning

Victoria's \$1.5 billion forestry transition warns NSW: closing industries is easier than rebuilding communities left behind.

FOREST and Wood Communities Australia (FWCA) is warning that the closure of Victoria's forestry transition program should sound an alarm for timber communities in New South Wales, after the scheme wound up without delivering the replacement economy regional towns were promised.

"Victoria is the case study every government should be forced to read before making another decision about native forestry," said Steve Dobbyns BSc (Forestry), Chairman of FWCA.

"Politicians told timber workers and regional towns they would be looked after. They promised transition, new industries, new jobs and a stronger future. What many communities got instead was uncertainty, hollowed-out businesses and managed decline.

"That is not a transition. That is an industry shutdown dressed up in softer language."

The program closed on 30 June, the final day of the financial year, more than two and a half years after Victoria shut its native forests to harvesting. Of the \$1.5 billion the state committed, only \$320 million was allocated through the Forestry Transition Program itself to support affected workers, businesses and communities.

The results are stark. A Victorian Auditor-General's report found the department running the program could not demonstrate that displaced workers were better off. The share of displaced workers in full-time employment fell from around 80 per cent before the closure to around 60 per cent after it, while part-time, casual and contract work increased.

Headline job figures of 137 roles created and 436 retained were not supported by reliable evidence, and the Auditor-General found the department could not adequately show whether the program was delivering sustainable

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Steve Dobbyns BSc (Forestry), Chairman of FWCA.
Image: FWCA

employment or business viability beyond 2026.

Across Gippsland, employment in agriculture, forestry and fishing has reportedly fallen to 5 per cent, down from 12 per cent five years ago.

On the ground, the promised replacement economy has not arrived. Mills at Swifts Creek and Yarram have closed in the past eight months, downstream businesses across Noojee, Powelltown and Orbost are thinning, and towns once built on timber are now being told to stake their future on tourism.

"The lesson from Victoria is brutally simple: once the timber industry is gone, the jobs, skills, contractors, mills and supply chains do not magically reappear," Mr Dobbyns said.

“THE VICTORIAN EXPERIENCE IS NOT A ONE-OFF. IT IS A DOCUMENTED WARNING

"You cannot replace a working production economy with glossy transition brochures, grant rounds and vague promises about tourism. Timber towns are not museum exhibits. They are working communities built around real industries, real skills and real families.

"NSW needs to look very carefully at what happened in Victoria, because this is exactly what is coming for them if governments keep making forestry policy to appease activists rather than protect regional communities."

The program's closing months were also dogged by allegations that transition money followed the logs interstate, with Tasmanian native timber shipped across Bass Strait for processing in Victorian mills. The Victorian Greens have since proposed laws to make it illegal for Victorian mills to process native forest timber sourced from anywhere in Australia.

FWCA says that episode proves a basic truth governments continue to ignore: ending an industry in one state does not end the demand for timber. It simply moves the harvest, the jobs, the scrutiny and the environmental responsibility somewhere else.

"Victoria banned its own public native forestry and then still needed timber," Mr Dobbyns said.

"That should surprise no one. Homes still need to be built. Floors, stairs, furniture, appearance-grade hardwoods and durable timber products still need to come from somewhere.

"If governments shut down responsible Australian supply, they do not save a single plank of demand. They either shift that demand to Tasmania, New South Wales, private land or imports from countries with weaker standards. That is not environmental leadership. It is political outsourcing."

How should our forests be managed?

Just a few weeks left to have your say on the Sustainable Forest Management Standard (AS/NZS 4708) revision.

WITH just under a month remaining, stakeholders are encouraged to review and provide feedback on proposed amendments to the Australian/New Zealand Standard for Sustainable Forest Management (AS/NZS 4708:2021) before public consultation closes on 7 August 2026.

Developed by Responsible Wood, AS/NZS 4708 sets out requirements for sustainable forest management in Australia and New Zealand. It forms part of the Responsible Wood Certification Scheme and supports PEFC-endorsed certification in Australia. In New Zealand, it underpins the PEFC-recognised sustainable forest management scheme.

The Standard plays an important role in stewarding responsible forest management practices that support healthy forests, biodiversity, renewable timber supply, regional jobs, cultural values and community expectations.

Responsible Wood CEO Simon Dorries said the public consultation process provides an important opportunity for stakeholders to contribute to the ongoing development of the Standard.

"Sustainable forest management impacts a wide range of people and sectors both directly and indirectly, from forest managers through to processors, builders, designers, retailers, environmental groups, communities and consumers," Mr Dorries said.

"The draft Standard has been developed through a multi-stakeholder process, but public consultation is an important part of standards



Simon Dorries, CEO of Responsible Wood. Image: Responsible Wood

development. Feedback helps ensure the Standard reflects a broad range of perspectives before it's finalised."

"Whether you work in the sector or have an interest in how our forests are managed, we encourage you to review the proposed amendments and provide feedback before consultation closes on 7 August."

With the revision process initiated every five years, the latest updates reflect changes to the PEFC International Standard for Sustainable Forest Management PEFC ST 1003:2024 introduced to align PEFC with the European Deforestation Regulation and stakeholder feedback received since AS/

"PUBLIC CONSULTATION IS AN IMPORTANT PART OF STANDARDS DEVELOPMENT"

NZS 4708 was last updated in 2021. The revised draft has been developed by the Standards Reference Committee, which includes representatives from forest management, forest research, auditing, government, community organisations, environmental groups, Indigenous stakeholders, industry and labour unions across Australia and New Zealand.

The review process is being undertaken in accordance with Standards Australia procedures. Responsible Wood is accredited as a Standards Development Organisation (SDO) and is accredited to develop Australian and New Zealand Standards in line with recognised standards development processes.

The Responsible Wood Certification Scheme, of which AS/NZS 4708:2021 is a key component, is endorsed by the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC) – the world's largest forest certification system.

Stakeholders are invited to review the draft Standard and provide feedback by 7 August 2026.

Draft Standard:

<https://www.responsiblewood.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2026/05/AS-NZS-4708-2021-Amendment-One-Public-Comment-Draft-May-2026.docx>

Submission form:

<https://www.responsiblewood.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2026/05/AS-NZS-4708-2021-Amendment-1-Public-Comment-Submission-Sheet-May-26.docx>

From P 10

FWCA say the Victorian experience is not a one-off. It is a documented warning.

With native forestry under sustained political, legal and regulatory pressure in New South Wales and Tasmania, FWCA says governments must now answer a simple question: do they have

a credible plan to protect timber workers and regional economies, or are they prepared to repeat a transition that left communities worse off?

"Before any government even thinks about shutting down more native forestry, it must explain what happens to the workers, the contractors, the mills, the towns and the timber supply," Mr Dobbyns said.

"Victoria could not prove it had delivered secure, sustainable futures for displaced workers. That should stop decision-makers in their tracks.

"NSW should not be next in line for the same failed experiment."

Shaping regional conversations

Local voices at FSC's Asia-Pacific members meeting.

LOCAL knowledge plays an important role in shaping global conversations. That was evident at this year's Forest Stewardship Council® (FSC®) Asia-Pacific Regional Members Meeting in Kuala Lumpur, where a strong delegation from Australia and New Zealand joined members, FSC ANZ Board representatives, and FSC staff from across the region to share experiences, strengthen connections and help shape the future of FSC in the region.

Representing FSC Australia and New Zealand were CEO Melanie Robertson and Chair James Felton-Taylor, International Board Director (Social North) Linda Feinberg, FSC ANZ Board Director (Social Chamber) Patrick Anderson, and members Colin Maunder of Kaingaroa Tipu and Rachel Millar of the New Zealand Forest Growers Association.

Members discussed a range of priorities for the region, including strengthening collaboration across Asia-Pacific, supporting smallholders, increasing youth participation, recognising the unique

role of the Pacific, and continuing to improve outcomes for workers and communities. The meeting also gave members the opportunity to discuss the ongoing review of FSC's Principles, Criteria and Indicators (PCI), the foundation of FSC Forest Management certification. A key message from members was the importance of maintaining an outcome-oriented approach to ensure the FSC system continues to deliver meaningful

environmental, social and economic impacts. By sharing regional perspectives and practical experience, members helped ensure the review reflects the realities of responsible forest management and the needs of those implementing the FSC system across the region.

"Having members from

across Australia and New Zealand at the meeting ensured our region's experiences and perspectives were part of important conversations shaping the future of FSC," said Melanie Robertson. "These regional meetings are invaluable for learning from one another, building relationships and working together on the issues that matter most."

The discussions and connections made in Kuala Lumpur will continue to inform FSC's work and strengthen collaboration across the Asia-Pacific region.



1/ Left to right: James Felton-Taylor, Melanie Robertson, Malaysian Delegate, Patrick Anderson, Linda Fienberg, Rachel Millar, and Colin Maunder.



2/ James Felton-Taylor (left) and Patrick Anderson (centre) with a local FSC member. All images: FSC

“MEMBERS HELPED ENSURE THE REVIEW REFLECTS THE REALITIES OF RESPONSIBLE FOREST MANAGEMENT”



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Peterson 4310B ignites microchip revolution

Plantation Logging deploys Australia's first Peterson 4310B drum chipper, creating new premium microchip revenue opportunities.



The powerful Peterson 4310B drum chipper in full flight, blasting out a steady stream of microchips and delivering game-changing performance for Plantation Logging. Image: Komatsu Forest

FOUNDED more than 30 years ago, Plantation Logging has grown into one of southern Western Australia's leading forestry contractors. Today, the business employs more than 100 staff and subcontractors, managing harvesting, haulage and resource management operations across the region's plantation estate. Processing more than one million tonnes of material each year, the company has also diversified into road construction, farming and pastoral enterprises.

Wood chipping has long been a major part of Plantation Logging's operations, supplying biomass and export markets with high-volume production. As market demand has evolved, the company has continued investing in equipment and

technology that improves both efficiency and operational flexibility.

That commitment to innovation led to the latest addition to its fleet, a Peterson 4310B drum chipper supplied by Komatsu Forest Pty Ltd. The investment has made Plantation Logging the first company in Australia to deploy the machine for commercial microchip production, opening the door to a new market in potting mix manufacturing.

The opportunity arose after a customer

approached Managing Director Dave Hughan seeking a woodchip product suitable for potting mix. While Plantation Logging had extensive chipping experience, its existing equipment was unable to consistently produce the fine uniform five-millimetre chip required for the application.

Traditional chippers are designed primarily to produce larger chips for export, biomass and other bulk markets. Producing microchips commercially required a different solution.

After evaluating the available technology, Plantation Logging selected the Peterson 4310B. Its 12-pocket drum provide significantly more cutting points

“THE OPERATION IS CONSISTENTLY PRODUCING AROUND 45 TONNES PER HOUR

Cont P 15

From P 14

drum provide significantly more cutting points than conventional chippers, enabling it to produce a much finer and more consistent woodchip from whole logs.

The machine quickly exceeded expectations.

Although there were initial questions about whether it could achieve both the required chip specification and commercial production rates, the Peterson 4310B soon demonstrated its capabilities. Whole logs are now processed into chips small enough to pass through a five-millimetre screen while maintaining strong production volumes.

Rather than the 30 tonnes per hour originally forecast, the operation is consistently producing around 45 tonnes per hour, making the process both practical and commercially viable.

The new capability has expanded Plantation Logging's product offering while complementing its existing operations. The Peterson 4310B can also be configured with a six-pocket drum for larger export and biomass chips, allowing the business to switch between products as market demand changes.

That flexibility has already proven valuable. While the company's existing chipper has been undergoing maintenance, the Peterson 4310B has continued processing export material without interruption.

In export applications, the machine has processed reject power poles at rates exceeding 100 tonnes per hour, demonstrating its ability



A handful of premium, ultra-fine five-millimetre microchips; the high-quality product that has opened an exciting new potting mix market for Plantation Logging. Image: Komatsu Forest

to efficiently handle both specialised products and high-volume workloads.

As biomass demand continues to grow, the ability to move between multiple product streams provides Plantation Logging with greater operational flexibility. The company can now service the emerging potting mix market while maintaining its established export and biomass production.

The successful rollout has also been supported by Komatsu Forest with local

service agent Matt Pratico, whose responsive technical support and reliable parts availability have helped minimise downtime and keep the machine operating efficiently.

For Plantation Logging, the Peterson 4310B represents more than a new piece of equipment. It is an investment that has transformed a customer enquiry into a profitable new business opportunity, strengthening the company's position today while

creating new opportunities for the future.

Finally, the Peterson comes in both track format 4310B, or wheel format 4300B options.

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NSW peak bodies welcome extension of independent fire-testing capacity

THE Royal Australian Institute of Architects (RAIA) NSW Chapter and the Association of Consulting Architects (ACA) NSW Branch welcome the recent announcement that the lease on the CSISO North Ryde facility will be extended until June 2027.

This extension allows for the continuation of essential testing capabilities across NSW and Australia. Given the importance of independent fire-testing infrastructure to architects, engineers, regulators, and industry, the RAIA NSW Chapter and ACA NSW Branch strongly support the retention of independent fire-testing capability within NSW and across Australia.

However, the proposed closure without reassurances about an equivalent replacement presents significant risk to the ongoing national need for independent, national fire testing capacity.

Given the importance of independent fire-testing infrastructure to architects, engineers, regulators, and industry, we



Previous testing in progress at CSIRO testing facilities North Ryde. Image: supplied by TDA via TTN

are still seeking to understand how this will impact Australia's fire testing capability into the future.

Elizabeth Carpenter, NSW President, Australian Institute of Architects said, "The North Ryde facility plays a critical role in supporting building safety, product certification, National Construction Code compliance and innovation across the built environment sector.

"Since learning of the proposed closure, the Institute has advocated strongly for this nationally significant facility through engagement with

ministers, parliamentarians, industry stakeholders and the media.

"While important questions remain about the long-term future of fire-testing capacity in Australia, we are grateful for this extension and the opportunity it provides to develop a sustainable, long-term solution."

Stephen Pearse, Association of Consulting Architects NSW/ACT Advocacy spokesperson said, "Great work from RAIA, ACA, and ACIF to have this closure decision reconsidered.

"We at the ACA continue to work with our industry partners to advocate for outcomes in the interest of the consumer.

"Materials testing by nonaligned bodies, such as the CSIRO, is essential in the delivery of safe buildings especially with the current need for quantity and speed in our housing sector. CSIRO testing is vitally important to allow innovation in the delivery systems required to meet this rapidly evolving market.

2026 Victorian state election: Local wood. Local homes. Local jobs.

THIS 2026 state election, Victorian Forest Products Association (VFPA) states that Victorian wood fibre must be a priority.

- Victoria is Australia's number 1 plantation state.
- Home to over 380,000 hectares of plantation forestry.
- Directly supporting 17,000 jobs.
- Contributing \$9 billion annually in sales and service.

Why it matters

- Wood fibre is essential to delivering the homes Victoria needs.
- The timber industry is at a critical juncture with threats from imports and a depressed housing market.
- The Victorian wood fibre industry lacks a coordinated long-term strategy and clear ministerial accountability.

- Maintaining strong domestic timber manufacturing capacity reduces reliance on cheap imported building materials and strengthens local supply chain resilience against future shocks.

VFPA's election priorities

1. Bushfire detection cameras: Match industry investment with \$1.89m over 3 years (\$3.78m total) to expand the AI-powered bushfire camera network to 18 sites, to better identify bushfires before they get out of control and enhance protection for plantations and regional communities.
2. Wood fibre action plan: Develop a new time-bound 10-year Victorian Government-backed Strategy & 'Action Plan' for wood fibre and manufacturing, to unlock regional projects, build sovereign timber supply, and drive advanced manufacturing and bio-based innovation.

3. Minister for Plantation Industries and Wood Fibre: Appoint a designated 'Minister for Plantation Industries and Wood Fibre' within the Victorian Government with clear responsibility for plantations, wood fibre manufacturing and delivery of the 10-year 'Action Plan'.

"Timber powers Victoria's net-zero, jobs-ready future. Our wood fibre industries contribute more than \$9 billion to the economy, support around 17,000 direct jobs and up to 50,000 across the supply chain, underpin sovereign housing supply, and deliver renewable, carbon-storing materials that secure our state's future," stated VFPA CEO, Andrew White.

To view VFPA's election priorities, click [here](#).

To view VFPA's policy platform, click [here](#).

Getting the balance right

Protecting old growth while securing Tasmania's forestry future.

TASMANIA'S forestry industry has expertly balanced responsible environmental stewardship with the reliable supply of high-quality, renewable timber products that support regional economies for a long time. A new Shared Vision Statement, developed through three years of constructive dialogue, marks a mature and welcome step forward. It delivers permanent protection for old growth forests while safeguarding sustainable harvesting of regrowth and native forests, regional jobs, and vital timber processing capacity.

Kirsha Kaechele, MONA co-curator, led the process and brought together timber industry leaders, environmental groups, Palawa representatives, scientists, artists, and economists. Her Forest Economics Congress successfully moved the conversation beyond decades of conflict toward practical, workable solutions. The resulting agreement is notable as the first proposal that key stakeholders from both sides could realistically endorse, a genuine compromise that prioritises outcomes over ideology.

CORE ELEMENTS OF THE AGREEMENT

The Shared Vision Statement commits to ending commercial old growth harvesting, recognising these forests as vital cultural and ecological assets deserving permanent protection. Importantly, it explicitly supports the ongoing sustainable harvesting of regrowth and other native forests, the backbone of Tasmania's modern timber supply. It reinforces the critical role of regional jobs and downstream timber processing, while promoting greater Palawa leadership in forest management, including cultural burning practices.

Industry data underscores how targeted and measured these changes are. Sustainable Timber Tasmania harvested just 0.05% of old growth forest in 2023–24 for premium, high-value products. Less than 4% of virgin forest in production areas remains available, and old growth now represents only a very small proportion of current hardwood supply. This demonstrates that the sector has already transitioned effectively toward



A towering old-growth giant in Tasmania's Styx Valley, where large sections are already protected. The Shared Vision Statement aims to build on this by ending commercial old-growth harvesting across the state, while ensuring sustainable harvesting of regrowth forests continues to support regional jobs and Tasmania's timber industry.

Image: Shutterstock

regrowth resources, highlighting the industry's adaptability and commitment to sustainability.

BROAD CONSENSUS AND INDUSTRY LEADERSHIP

The agreement affirms several key principles valued by the forestry sector: permanent protection for old growth, responsible continuation of native forestry operations, the enduring importance of regional timber employment, and balanced management that integrates ecological, cultural, social, and economic outcomes. A standout achievement is a major hardwood processor's voluntary commitment to end old growth intake, demonstrating the industry's leadership

and proactive approach to addressing reputational concerns while separating old growth issues from the sustainable future of native forestry.

This development is potentially one of the most constructive in Tasmania's forestry sector in recent years. It provides a credible framework that could guide future government policy and investment, offering greater certainty for operators, processors, and timber-dependent communities.

CHALLENGES AHEAD

While some environmental organisations continue to advocate more extreme positions, including an end to all native forest logging on public land, the Shared Vision Statement reflects the pragmatic views of those directly involved in forestry operations and management. Groups such as the Wilderness Society, Bob Brown Foundation, and Australian Conservation Foundation have expressed reservations, but the broad stakeholder dialogue behind the agreement represents meaningful progress.

A POSITIVE PATH FORWARD

For Tasmania's timber industry, this Shared Vision offers stability and opportunity. By protecting old growth while affirming sustainable native forestry, it helps secure long-term access to regrowth resources that will underpin local jobs, innovation in timber processing, and the continued production of high-value, renewable Tasmanian timber products. With this framework, the industry is well-positioned to invest confidently in modern harvesting practices, value-adding, and community partnerships.

Tasmania's forests and the forestry sector are central to the state's prosperity and identity. This agreement demonstrates that thoughtful collaboration can protect special values while ensuring a strong, sustainable, and economically vital future for Tasmania's world-class forestry sector. Its success will depend on wider support, but it already provides a solid foundation for a confident, forward-looking industry.

To view the full Shared Vision Statement and list of signatories, click [here](#).

“IT REINFORCES THE CRITICAL ROLE OF REGIONAL JOBS AND DOWNSTREAM TIMBER PROCESSING

Neville Smith Group backs shared vision for Tasmania's forests

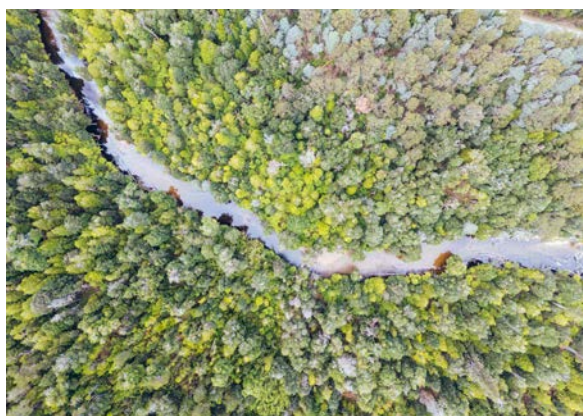
NEVILLE Smith Group confirmed its full support for the Forest Congress Shared Vision Statement, joining Palawa Elders, scientists, environmentalists, industry and community leaders in a common position on the future of Tasmania's forests.

The statement calls for an immediate end to old growth logging, responding to a Palawa-led call to protect these forests as enduring cultural treasures, alongside the ongoing, responsible management of Tasmania's native forest resources.

Andrew Walker, CEO of Neville Smith Group, said: "After three years of collaborative Forest Congress stakeholder engagement, the Neville Smith Group (NSG) has formalised its commitment to the shared future vision for Tasmanian forestry.

"We support a Palawa-led, whole-of-landscape, pragmatic, science-backed, long-term proposition for native forestry in Tasmania, not an ideological one. Indigenous voices were absent from previous agreements, including the Tasmanian Forest Agreement, and Palawa leadership belongs at the centre of forest management going forward, alongside forest scientists, growers, landowners, processors, and local communities.

"This finds the right balance between protecting old growth forests as cultural and ecological treasures, whilst



NSG has formally notified STT that they will no longer be taking old growth logs. This shows they are putting action behind their endorsement of the Forest Congress Shared Vision Statement.
Image: Shutterstock

securing the long-term future for native forestry, meeting national timber demand and supporting regional Tasmanian communities.

"NSG is a majority plantation and ongoing regrowth native business, established 25 years ago, on the basis of processing smaller, younger certified logs. The Plantation Nitens logs were previously destined only for wood chip export, now elevated up the value chain via cutting edge technology.

"After a deliberate 4-year transition period to majority plantation supply, our native regrowth log supply has now been re-balanced to align with our Tasmanian sawmilling capacity.

"We have recently advised our former Victorian customer, that the previous short-term surplus of native regrowth logs will not be available from 31st July 2026 onwards.

"By ending old growth supply (currently less than 3% of total supply to NSG), it removes a remaining point of contention, paves the way for innovation, investment and additional on-island processing in Tasmania.

"We have formally notified

Sustainable Timber Tasmania (STT) of our decision to not receive old growth logs, with immediate effect.

"Australia is a nett annual importer of timber products, and we must ensure that native forests in lower regulatory global jurisdictions are not deforested, to meet our insatiable national timber demand.

Tasmania manages its forests as well as anywhere in the world, and the regeneration of our native forests after harvest is testament to our sustainable practices.

"The continuation of renewable native regrowth and plantation resource bases underpins the perpetual supply of wood-based products for housing, commercial projects, manufacturing sector and strengthens our national resilience. As the largest plantation hardwood sawn timber processor in Australia, future investment and further industry transition is only possible with log supply security.

"Wood is the ultimate renewable, healthy forests mean healthy communities.

"We call on the Tasmanian and Australian Governments to join communities and industry in supporting a lasting transition, one that backs Palawa-led cultural practice, restores landscapes, supports regional communities and secures the future of the best-managed native forests in the world."



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