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Window for critical INFM checks reopens with Parliamentary delay

COVER STORY P 3

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Carbon method advocate must answer leakage and conflict-of-duties questions

FOREST & Wood Communities Australia says claims that the new Improved Native Forest Management carbon method provides a settled scientific and economic case for closing NSW native forestry ignore serious unresolved questions about carbon leakage, timber substitution and the governance of the process that produced the method.

FWCA Chair Steve Dobbyns said recent comments by former NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service Deputy Secretary Atticus Fleming, arguing that forestry scientists should simply "accept the umpire's decision", failed to address the substance of growing technical criticism of the INFM Method.

"Approval of a methodology does not make the science beyond question," Mr Dobbyns said.

"Forestry Australia's forest-carbon specialists have warned that the INFM Method could potentially over-credit claimed abatement by 40 to 100 per cent, even before the full consequences of leakage and carbon stored in harvested wood products are taken into account.

"Those are serious integrity questions that cannot simply be dismissed as an industry refusing to accept an umpire's decision."

Plantation pine does not simply replace native hardwood



Steve Dobbyns, Chair of Forest & Wood Communities Australia. Image: FWCA

Mr Dobbyns said Mr Fleming's claim that declining Australian native forest production had largely been replaced by plantation timber from Australia, New Zealand and Vietnam fundamentally misunderstood the timber market.

"Firstly, New Zealand and Vietnam are imports, so citing them as evidence against import leakage is an

extraordinary argument," Mr Dobbyns said.

"More importantly, plantation softwood does not simply substitute for native hardwood.

"Research led by forest economist Dr Tyron Venn shows plantation softwood is an imperfect substitute for native forest timber and, in many building applications, softwood and hardwood are complementary products rather than interchangeable ones.

"You do not replace hardwood flooring, decking, appearance-grade joinery, poles, piles and many structural or durability applications simply by producing more radiata pine.

"Venn's research found that when Australian native forest production falls, demand does not disappear. A substantial proportion of that lost production is displaced into imported timber.

"That is the leakage problem the INFM Method has failed to adequately address."

Mr Dobbyns said the climate question therefore could not stop at the State forest boundary.

"If NSW stops producing a renewable timber product and Australia then imports a large proportion of the replacement volume, the carbon

“DISMISSING LEGITIMATE SCIENTIFIC CRITICISM...IS NO SUBSTITUTE FOR ANSWERING THE EVIDENCE

Cont P 4

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Senate delay a chance to fix the Native Forest Carbon Method

FOREST scientists have welcomed the deferral of the Senate vote on the Improved Native Forest Management Method (INFM Method) to 15 September, saying the additional four weeks should be used to publish the modelling behind the method and correct its accounting.

The disallowance motion, lodged by NSW Nationals Senator Ross Cadell, had been listed for debate on Tuesday. It now sits on the Tuesday of the September sitting week.

Forestry Australia President Dr Michelle Freeman said the time should go into the technical work. "The deferral is welcome. Four weeks is enough to publish the modelling and correct the accounting, and that is what we are asking for," Dr Freeman said. "Senators should be voting on a method that has been tested in the open."

The INFM Method allows state governments to earn Australian Carbon Credit Units (ACCUs) by ending timber harvesting in state forests. New South Wales intends to register the area encompassing the Great Koala National Park on the mid North Coast, as the first project.

A briefing note published by Forestry Australia on 31 July tested the method's modelling and accounting framework and found it structurally biased towards over-crediting. That means the method may issue more carbon credits than the actual climate outcome can justify.

"The method uses inappropriate modelling approaches and accounting timeframes to characterise harvesting impacts and forest regrowth post-harvest," Dr Freeman said. "These choices mean the climate benefit claimed by the INFM method could be overstated by 40 to 100 per cent. For a method that might generate ACCUs worth hundreds of millions of dollars this is a material issue."

Meanwhile, a second briefing note,



Forestry Australia wants to see successful and integrous carbon credit schemes implemented where they represent actual 'genuine, additional and conservatively measured climate benefit'. Image: Forestry Australia

published last week, identified an additional problem.

Credits are calculated across the whole project area, while the obligation to keep that carbon standing for 100 years applies only inside mapped carbon protection areas.

Harvesting can therefore be reduced outside protection areas during the crediting years, earn credits, and return to earlier levels once the crediting stops.

Requests for the underlying modelling have gone unanswered since consultation opened more than a year ago.

"Forestry Australia raised our concerns more than a year ago and asked for the data and modelling that would allay them. We have asked to be proven wrong, yet still nothing has been released. Further, material changes were made after public consultation closed without the chance for independent scrutiny," Dr Freeman said.

"The lack of transparency around the development of this method is deeply concerning. It does not meet expectations for a high integrity ACCU scheme method".

Forestry Australia also shares the concerns widely communicated by other environmental and industry stakeholders

that the method does not sufficiently deal with additionality and leakage.

Forestry Australia has asked for corrections to the INFM Method before any project is registered or any credit issued. Some of these requests include:

- Lengthen the accounting window
- Align forest modelling with Australia's national greenhouse accounts, and
- Attach permanence obligations to every tonne credited.

A WORKING MODEL ALREADY EXISTS

The 2022 Plantation Forestry Method assesses carbon outcomes over the long term, modelling carbon stocks over 100 years, not the 15 years used by the INFM Method.

Importantly, financial assessments and forest management plans behind plantation method projects are reviewed and signed off by independent experts, such as Registered Forestry Professionals.

"The plantation method shows what a forest carbon method looks like when it is built properly," Dr Freeman said. "The accounting window matches the life of the forest, and a registered professional puts their name to the plan."

"Forestry Australia wants the ACCU Scheme to succeed. Its integrity depends on every credit representing a genuine, additional and conservatively measured climate benefit. That is what protects buyers and the landholders already delivering real carbon outcomes," Dr Freeman said.

Tuesday was National Forestry Day. A day to recognise the critically important role actively managed forests play in climate change mitigation, securing biodiversity, delivering timber to build our homes and cultural connection. We need ACCU scheme methods that support these roles, whilst delivering genuine carbon benefits.

On the cover: INFM carbon credits scheme has many critical issues. The new four-week delay on the disallowance vote has reopened the window for these critical issues to be addressed. Image: Shutterstock

From P 2

consequences of those imports have to be counted.

"That includes harvesting overseas, processing, international transport and the risk that displaced production occurs in countries with weaker forest governance and poorer environmental standards.

"A carbon accounting method that counts the apparent gain in NSW while inadequately accounting for the emissions and forest impacts transferred elsewhere risks creating paper abatement rather than genuine global climate benefit."

Serious governance questions remain

FWCA said Mr Fleming's intervention also highlighted legitimate questions about the governance of the Great Koala National Park and INFM processes.

Mr Fleming was not simply an independent observer of those processes.

As a senior executive of the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS), he chaired key elements of the Great Koala National Park assessment process. NPWS also stood to become the manager of a greatly expanded national park estate if the proposal proceeded.

Evidence to NSW Budget Estimates has also established that Mr Fleming and the GKNP steering process were involved in progressing the proposal for Professor Andrew Macintosh and the Australian National University to develop a carbon methodology capable of generating ACCUs from stopping native forest harvesting.

The NSW Government subsequently confirmed that

development of the carbon method was specifically linked to the proposed Great Koala National Park.

"None of that, by itself, proves improper conduct," Mr Dobbyns said.

"But it creates an obvious governance question that deserves a transparent answer.

"Was it appropriate for the head of the government agency that stood to become one of the principal beneficiaries of a massive expansion of the national park estate to chair the assessment process, be involved in progressing the carbon-method proposal intended to help fund that outcome, and then publicly advocate ending the industry affected by it?

"This is not necessarily a question of personal financial conflict. It is a question of whether competing public duties and institutional interests were properly identified, separated and managed.

"Public confidence requires more than simply telling affected communities that the process has reached the desired outcome, and they should now accept it."

Fifteen years of credits, a century of consequences.

FWCA also questioned claims that carbon income would provide a sustainable replacement for the economic contribution of the native forest industry.

The INFM provides a 15-year crediting period, while forest management obligations and the economic consequences of removing productive forests continue for generations.

"Carbon credits may generate revenue for 15 years, but managing national parks, maintaining roads and fire access, controlling weeds and pests and protecting communities from wildfire does not stop in year 16," Mr Dobbyns said.

"Nor does Australia stop needing hardwood."

Mr Dobbyns said the integrity test for the INFM should be straightforward.

"Count the regrowth that occurs after sustainable harvesting.

"Count the carbon that remains stored in harvested wood products.

"Count the substitution benefits where timber replaces more emissions-intensive materials.

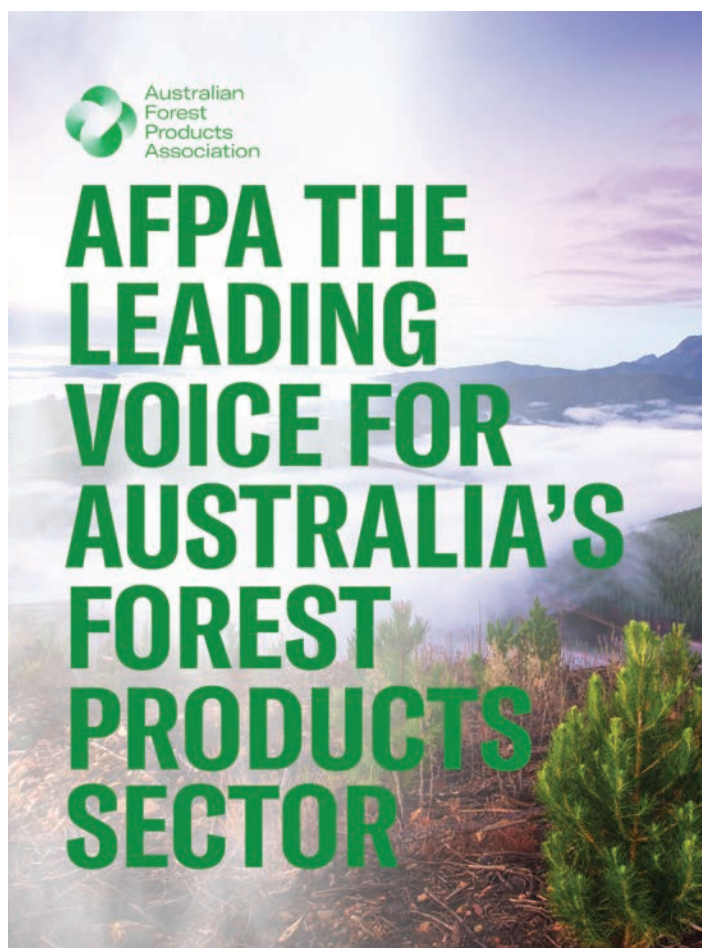
"Count the additional imports.

"Count the overseas forest impacts and transport emissions.

"And assess the carbon outcome over the life of the forest rather than selecting an accounting period that maximises the number of credits produced.

"If the INFM Method still delivers genuine additional abatement after all of those factors are properly accounted for, it should withstand that scrutiny.

"But dismissing legitimate scientific criticism and telling forest scientists, workers and regional communities to simply 'accept the umpire's decision' is no substitute for answering the evidence."



“APPROVAL OF A METHODOLOGY DOES NOT MAKE THE SCIENCE BEYOND QUESTION

AI, data and future leaders

Queensland scholarship recipients drive timber industry innovation.

ARTIFICIAL intelligence, predictive analytics and digital technologies are set to play an increasingly important role in Queensland's forest and timber industry, with two of the 2026–2027 Timber Queensland Growth Scholarship recipients undertaking projects that explore how emerging technologies can improve workplace safety, product quality and manufacturing efficiency.

Timber Queensland is pleased to announce the recipients of the 2026–2027 Growth Scholarship Awards Program. Timber Queensland General Manager Strategic Relations & Communications Manager said this year's recipients highlight an industry embracing innovation while continuing to invest in practical skills, leadership development and workforce capability.

"Queensland's forest and timber industry has always been built on innovation, and this year's scholarship recipients demonstrate how technology, research and workforce development will help shape our future," said Clarissa Brandt.

"From artificial intelligence and predictive analytics to training the next



Growth Scholarship Winners 2026–2027. Image: Timber QLD

generation of forestry workers and developing future operational leaders, these projects show an industry prepared to embrace new ways of working while remaining focused on people," she said.

"The scholarships support individuals with ambitious ideas that have the potential to create broader benefits for businesses, workers and the wider forest and timber supply chain."

The recipients of the 2026–2027 Awards are:

\$10,000 Kennedy's Timber Award

Isaiah Denman

Learning Project: Beyond the Physical:

Leveraging Data and AI to Predict and Prevent Psychosocial Hazards in the Timber Industry

\$5,000 AKD Award

Zidi Yan

Learning Project: AI Driven Treatability Prediction for Queensland Softwood Processing

\$5,000 HQPlantations Award

Jackson Smith

Learning Project: Certificate III in Forest Operations plus Business and People Management Units

\$2,500 DTM Timber Award

Ian Goldie

Learning Project: Certificate IV Training and Assessment Upgrade

As the recipient of the Kennedy's Timber Award, Isaiah Denman, Health, Safety and Environment Coordinator at AKD Caboolture, will investigate how artificial intelligence, Power BI, predictive analytics and psychosocial health and safety frameworks can be used to identify workplace risks before incidents occur. His project aims to create more proactive approaches to managing fatigue, burnout and psychological health in industrial workplaces.

"Ultimately, my goal is to help create workplaces that identify risks early, protect people and support a healthier,

Cont P 6

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From P 5

more sustainable workforce," said Isaiah Denman.

AKD Award recipient Zidi Yan, a researcher specialising in timber structures and durability, will explore how artificial intelligence, computer vision and machine learning can improve timber treatment quality assurance. The project will include participation in either the International Research Group on Wood Protection (IRG) conference or the World Conference on Timber Engineering (WCTE) and visits to timber treatment and processing facilities to investigate how AI tools can support decision-making before timber enters the treatment process.

By analysing timber characteristics such as sapwood, heartwood, density and visible defects, the project aims to help processors better predict treatment outcomes, reduce waste and improve manufacturing efficiency.

"The timber industry has a significant opportunity to harness artificial intelligence and digital technologies" said Zidi Yan.

"My goal is to bring back knowledge, industry connections and practical ideas that can help Queensland timber processors make better and more informed decisions," he said.

HQPlantations Award recipient Jackson Smith will undertake a Certificate III in Forest Operations combined with specialist business operations and people management training. Having grown up in a family with deep connections to the forest and timber industry, Jackson is seeking to build the skills needed to progress into future supervisory and leadership roles.

His learning project will develop technical operational knowledge, business management capability and

leadership skills to support both his personal career development and the mentoring of younger workers entering the industry.

"The forestry industry is something I have always been passionate about and I want to build a long-term career within it," said Jackson Smith.



"This opportunity will help me develop the skills to become a stronger leader and contribute to attracting and supporting the next generation of forestry workers."

DTM Timber Award recipient Ian Goldie, a trainer and assessor with more than three decades of forestry experience, will upgrade his Certificate IV in Training and Assessment to ensure his skills remain aligned with current national vocational education standards.

Ian's project will strengthen his ability to deliver industry training and support Sunchip Group's innovative simulator-based training program, which is used to engage school students and future workers

with careers in forestry.

"One of the most important challenges facing our industry is developing the workforce needed for the future," said Ian Goldie.

"Maintaining contemporary training qualifications will help me continue

supporting new entrants to the industry and build the skills our sector needs to remain strong and sustainable."

Clarissa Brandt said the breadth of this year's projects demonstrates the industry's commitment to future-focused thinking.

"Whether it's applying AI to improve safety and manufacturing performance, developing future leaders, or strengthening workforce training, these projects will deliver benefits well beyond the individual recipients," she said.

"The ongoing support of our Foundation Partner Kennedy's Timber, Diamond Partners AKD and HQPlantations, and Ruby Partner DTM Timber ensures the Growth Scholarship Program continues to help develop the talented people who will drive Queensland's forest and timber industry into the future."



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

10: Forestry Australia Webinar 1 – ONLINE EVENT, 9.30am - 10.30am

AEST. Session One - Forest Fire Science: An Australian and US perspective. Registrations close 9 Sep at 10am. To book, visit <https://forestry.memnet.com.au/MemberSelfService/EventBooking.aspx>

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>

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RSVP: Monday 31 August 2026.

22: Forestry Australia Webinar 2 – ONLINE EVENT, 11.30am - 12.30pm

AEST. Session Two - Prescribed Burning in Practice: Lessons from California and Western Australia. Registrations close 9 Sep at 10am. To book, visit <https://forestry.memnet.com.au/MemberSelfService/EventBooking.aspx>

23-24: residues2revenues Conference, North Quay, Brisbane.

We have the potential to transform the forestry sector into a provider of biofuels, bioenergy and a range of renewable bioproducts. This event highlights the real value of wood residues. To register or see the speaker program visit <https://innovatek.co.nz/event/residues2revenues-2026/#Registration>

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://www.gottsteintrust.org/>

web.cvent.com/event/7fd17c6e-d403-4eb4-a6cd-ab69df757864/summary

21: SAVE THE DATE: Timber Design Awards – Museum of Contemporary Art, The Rocks, Sydney.

More details and ticket booking information to follow.

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: 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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Innovatek's Residues to Revenues Conference

IN September 2026, Innovatek's Residues to Revenues (R2R) conference will bring together industry-leading speakers to share practical case studies, innovative solutions and new opportunities for the sector.

Following the successful 2025 Wood Residues and Bioeconomy Innovations combined event in Rotorua we are pleased to announce more innovative speakers for our return to Australia with our 'Residues-to-Revenues Conference at VOCO Hotel in Brisbane on 23-24 September.

This popular forest and wood technology event brings industry leaders together for networking and learning about new developments that are now valuing wood byproducts more than ever before.

With increasing financial pressures facing our forest and wood products sector its essential for forestry and energy professionals seek new ways to convert wood byproducts from logging and sawmilling into profitable and climate positive bioenergy applications.

This event provides new insights into emerging biomass markets, connects suppliers with industrial energy users, and showcases innovative technologies for efficient residue recovery and processing in Australasia. With new processes being commercialised now, wood residues are being sought for liquid fuels and carbon-positive products that bring credits and new product markets never before available.

SPEAKER HIGHLIGHTS

- Biomass for Energy: The Redbank Power Station Transformation by Mike Haywood, General Manager, Verdant Earth Technologies
- Residues to Liquid Fuels: Bridging the Gap by Miriam Blaine, Process Engineer, HAMR Energy
- Turning Waste Into Wealth: Pyrolysis Technology for Biochar, Energy and Carbon Removal Revenue by Melissa



Many technologies are close to commercial production of high value chemicals from wood. Image: Foresta (NZ) Ltd

Rebbeck, Business Development, Metamorf Engineering

- Biocarbon, The GreenChar Roadmap: Utilising Waste Biomass for Industrial Metals Production by John Mellows, Co-Founder & Chief Engineer
- Regional Biomass Manufacturing Platform, by Curtis Gibson, Managing Director, A&E Gibson
- Utilisation of Biomass for Renewable Fuel and Low Emissions Fertiliser Manufacturing by Gareth Forde, Principal Engineer, All Energy
- Jacob Kohn, CEO & Co-founder, Futurity Bio Ventures

Miriam Blaine

Miriam's presentation for HAMR Energy, an emerging low-carbon liquid fuels industry, including shipping and aviation, presents a compelling new market for underutilised forestry biomass. A market that needs feedstock at scale and on long-term contracts. Forest managers across Australasian forest plantation sectors are well-placed to supply this need. One obstacle has been a lack of validated data on residue chemistry, collection logistics and carbon intensity needed to underpin commercial supply agreements. Drawing on HAMR Energy's Fibre to Fuels research program, conducted with CSIRO, university partners and forestry partners across three Australian forestry hubs, her presentation outlines what we are learning and what it means for those across the forestry sector looking to

access this opportunity.

Gareth Forde

Gareth Forde, from All Energy's presentation will include several case study projects including blending boiler feedstocks of woodchips combined with other organic waste streams for a major meat processing company for thermal energy production.

A pilot program to develop and test the potential for biomass boilers to provide sustainable fuel options for Australia's meat processing facilities has successfully

produced heat at a supply cost of below \$3 per gigajoule (GJ), at JBS Riverina's Yanco facility in New South Wales.

Instigated by the Australian Meat Processor Corporation (AMPC), the trial demonstrated how different types of biomass, such as the partially digested grain and grass found in an animal's paunch, woodchip, nut shells and sawdust, could be blended and processed in a boiler to supply thermal energy.

Bioenergy is currently the third most common source of energy used by meat processing facilities behind grid electricity and grid gas, with coal in fourth place. Multi-fuel biomass can compare favourably with traditional forms of thermal energy such as on-site coal at \$10/GJ and grid gas at \$25/GJ.

The Australian Beef Sustainability Framework highlights the high cost of energy as one of the factors that puts pressure on processors to be price competitive in global markets. Profitability across the value chain is a key pillar of the Framework, as is a commitment to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030 (CN30).

Conversion of waste into bioenergy is one option for processors to reduce production, processing and consumption waste, and research is continuing into the use of renewables within the energy mix to achieve CN30.

From P 8

Jacob Kohn

Jacob Kohn from Futurity Bio Ventures will explain how lignin is being converted into low-emission alternatives for road bitumen.

Futurity Bio-Ventures has developed LIMA™, a proprietary lignin-based additive designed to enhance bitumen binders in asphalt, improving properties like durability and moisture resistance. The LIMA™ additive is part of a growing focus on sustainable materials in road construction, including fibre-based innovations.

Melissa Rebbeck

Melissa Rebbeck from Metamorf Engineering and Chair of the Australia & NZ Biochar Industry Group examines how pyrolysis is converting waste biomass into biochar while creating new opportunities through carbon removal. Her team received very favourable feedback from wood producers throughout Australasia earlier this year following their involvement at WoodTECH conferences in June in New Zealand and Queensland.

Curtis Gibson

A&E Gibson has completed the design and



Jacob Kohn, Futurity Bio-Ventures is a conference speaker on 'Commercialising Lignin-based Bitumen Alternatives'. Image: Innovatek

build of an innovative conveyor system for Seata Group, providing an integrated material handling solution suited to the demands of Seata's pyrolysis and gasification process. It forms an important part of Seata's pilot plant in Glenn Innes, NSW. This plant promises to play a critical future role in renewable gas, biofuels and biochar areas.

Seata's core innovation is combining two well-established industrial principles, thermal looping and chemical looping, into a single unified process. Instead of burning biomass (which releases CO₂), the

system uses a recirculating heat carrier to break down organic material without combustion. This produces two valuable outputs at once: clean syngas for energy, and biochar for carbon storage.

Curtis' presentation will demonstrate how we can solve for the growing biosolids and organic waste streams across Australia and provide a case study on how this was achieved.

The R2R Conference is focused on transforming wood waste into profitable biofuels, bioenergy, and renewable bioproducts.

It is designed with practical insights for those in the forestry, wood processing, and bioenergy industries to move from simply disposing of waste to creating sustainable revenue streams.

We have the potential to transform the forestry sector into a provider of biofuels, bioenergy and a range of renewable bioproducts. This event helps forest owners and managers, harvesting contractors, sawmills and wood manufacturing companies better understand the real value of wood residues and the opportunities in supplying this growing market.

For more information click here.

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Forestry and farming: we need both

By **DREW FREEMAN, CEO, TASMANIAN FOREST PRODUCTS ASSOCIATION**

THE recent sale of Rushy Lagoon has sparked plenty of debate. Unfortunately, some of it is turning into an argument about forestry versus farming, which doesn't help anyone.

Tasmania does not need to choose between forestry and farming. We need both, and we need them working together.

Our farmers produce some of the best food and fibre in the world. They employ Tasmanians, support local businesses and keep our regional communities strong. The right to farm is important and it should be protected. The forestry industry agrees with that.

But forestry is also a productive use of land. And across Tasmania, farming and forestry have been working side by side for generations.

Drive through rural Tasmania and you see it everywhere. Sheep and cattle in one paddock, trees in another. Crops on the flats, plantations on the hills. Shelter belts protecting livestock as well as Native Forest areas being managed alongside productive farmland. It isn't particularly complicated, and until recently it wasn't particularly controversial.

Farmers understand better than most that not every hectare is the same. Different soils, slopes, rainfall and locations suit different uses. What works on one part of a property may make no sense on another.

That's why decisions about land use should be based on the land itself, the science and what makes sense for the people who own and manage it.

The right tree, in the right place, at the right scale.

And ultimately, provided people meet the rules that apply to them, landowners should be able to decide what they grow on their own land. That principle matters to farming and it matters to forestry too.

One part of the current debate that is concerning, is the increasingly negative way pine plantations are being talked about.

There is nothing inherently bad about growing pine trees. Pine is a crop. It is



1/ A hectare of Tasmanian softwood timber can produce so much and with the current housing crisis that ability is essential. Image: AFPA

2/ Drew Freeman is CEO of the Tasmanian Forest Products Association. Image: TFPA



People who make their living from the land have a pretty strong incentive to look after it. Their businesses depend on it, and often they hope their children and grandchildren will still be earning a living from that same land decades from now.

planted. It grows. It is harvested. And it is replanted.

Tasmanian businesses have been successfully growing plantation pine for decades. Those plantations employ people in our regional communities and support contractors, truck drivers, mechanics, sawmills, manufacturers and plenty of other local businesses. And we actually use what they grow.

A single hectare of softwood plantation can produce enough timber to build around four houses, manufacture about 700 shipping pallets and supply more than 100 metres of fencing timber. Think about that for a moment.

We have a housing shortage. We want to build more homes. We want those homes to be affordable. And we want as much of the money spent building them as possible to stay here, supporting Tasmanian jobs and Tasmanian businesses. For that, we need timber.

Plantation forestry also gives landowners another options. On the right land, trees can provide shelter for livestock, help with erosion and soil stability and provide a long-term income stream alongside other farming activities. That's already happening on farms around Tasmania.

None of this means every farm should become a plantation. Of course it shouldn't.

Good agricultural land is valuable. Tasmania needs productive farms and successful farmers. Equally, land that is well suited to growing trees should not suddenly be regarded as less productive simply because the crop being grown takes 25 or 30 years rather than a season.

That long-term view matters in forestry as much as it does in farming.

Tasmania's forestry system is built around planning, regulation and regeneration. Our plantations are a renewable resource. Trees are grown, harvested and replanted. The timber they produce becomes houses, furniture, fencing, pallets and countless other products we use every day.

And behind all of that are people.

The truck driver carrying timber today might carry agricultural produce tomorrow. The local mechanic fixes machinery from both industries. Both industries use local contractors, shops and services. Their kids go to the same schools, and their families belong to the same footy clubs.

Tasmania's future won't be strengthened by picking winners between two industries that have successfully coexisted for generations.

It will be strengthened by experienced landowners making good decisions about their land, backed by good science and sensible rules.

There will be places best suited to farming. There will be places best suited to forestry. And there will be plenty of places where the two continue to work side by side.

That's simply how regional Tasmania works.

Farming and forestry. Protection and production. Strong industries and strong communities.

Forestry in Tasmania is built on balance.

RW extends deadline for 2026 Richard Stanton Memorial Leadership Award

RESPONSIBLE Wood has extended nominations for the 2026 Richard Stanton Memorial Leadership Award to Friday, 28 August.

The annual award recognises an individual who has demonstrated leadership, innovation and commitment to sustainable forest management or Chain of Custody certification under the Responsible Wood Certification Scheme. The online nomination form takes just minutes to complete, but the recognition lasts a lifetime.

In 2025, the Award was presented to Shona Heading for her outstanding leadership and contribution to sustainable forest management and the promotion of certified Australian timber through the Australian Araucaria™ campaign.

Established in 2015, the Richard Stanton Memorial Leadership Award honours the late Richard Stanton, a



2025 Award recipient Shona Heading with Responsible Wood CEO Simon Dorries and Chair Dr Tony Bartlett. Image: Responsible Wood

pioneer in sustainable forestry both in Australia and internationally.

Responsible Wood CEO Simon Dorries encouraged the forestry and forest products sector to nominate individuals whose work deserves greater recognition.

"Many across our industry are making an important contribution to responsible forestry and certified supply chains," Mr Dorries said.

"This award is an opportunity to recognise those who lead by example, bring people together and support the integrity of sustainable forest management and sustainably sourced materials."

The recipient will receive a \$2,000 bursary to support their professional development, such as conference attendance or a course of their choice.

Nominations now close Friday, 28 August 2026.

Learn more: <https://www.responsiblewood.org.au/what-we-do/our-collective-impact/richard-stanton-memorial-leadership-award/> or nominate online: <https://form.typeform.com/to/O2RpQD6B>

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From the frontline to firewood: Old Bar's recovery from the Hillville Fire

ALMOST seven years ago, the Hillville Fire ravaged the NSW Mid North Coast with the November 2019 catastrophic fire, becoming one of the most destructive of the Black Summer crisis.

The blaze threatened communities including Old Bar and Wallabi Point, destroyed homes, blackened vast areas of forest and pushed emergency services to their limits as firefighters worked around the clock to defend lives and property.

Forestry Corporation firefighters were among the crews fighting the fire, working alongside NSW Rural Fire Service volunteers and other agencies as the fast-moving fire front advanced towards the coastal community of Old Bar.

Kiwarra State Forest was heavily impacted, as containment lines were cut into the plantation and native forest to safeguard the Old Bar township and nearby homes.

The effects of the fire remained visible long after the flames were extinguished. Today the blackened trunks of standing trees in the plantation estate outside of town provide a stark reminder of that natural disaster.

Thousands of fire-damaged eucalypts stood across parts of the Kiwarra State Forest plantation in the years following the bushfire.

Some died immediately, while others slowly declined from the intense heat and damage caused by the blaze.

To improve forest health, Forestry Corporation recently undertook a plantation thinning operation to remove these trees.

Production Manager Andrew Goodman said the work was a continuation of the recovery effort that began during the Black Summer fires.

"As the residents of Old Bar know the



The fire damaged and dead trees have been cleared from the Kiwarra State Forest as part of good forest management.

Image: FCNSW

plantation was heavily impacted by the 2019-20 bushfires and many of the trees suffered extensive fire damage or died in the years that followed," Mr Goodman said.

"By removing dead and damaged trees and reducing fuel loads, we're helping create a safer forest environment while improving access for the community and reducing forest fuel loads ahead of the upcoming fire season."

After the forest thinning, the felled fire damaged timber was found to be unsuitable for local sawmills, so it found a new purpose.

Local residents gathered in Kiwarra State Forest for a community firewood and chainsaw safety event, collecting free firewood sourced from trees removed during the plantation recovery operation.

For many Forestry staff who helped battle the Black Summer fires, it was a powerful reminder of how forests and communities recover after disaster.

"This event allows our staff to complete important chainsaw refresher training while providing something meaningful back to the community by offering chainsaw operating advice and making firewood available to those who need it," Mr Goodman said.

Over two days, visitors were invited to collect a Ute or trailer load of firewood free of charge while learning about chainsaw maintenance, sharpening techniques, personal protective equipment and safe operating practices. Forestry staff were also on hand to help pensioners load firewood.

Mr Goodman said the event delivered a practical benefit to local residents with 80 loads of firewood provided to the community.

"We know many pensioners and families rely on firewood to keep warm through winter and rising living costs can make that increasingly challenging. Much of the timber available was dry and ready to burn and we're particularly happy to have assisted pensioners in the local community who cannot collect firewood on their own from State forests."

The event also demonstrated how active forest management can continue to deliver benefits well beyond bushfire recovery.

"State forests are managed to provide a range of benefits for local communities, from renewable timber and recreation opportunities through to affordable firewood and bushfire risk reduction," Mr Goodman said.

Where firefighters once stood defending Old Bar from an advancing fire front, residents were now collecting firewood from trees damaged in that same blaze.

It was a fitting example of how the legacy of the Hillville Fire had evolved from emergency response to recovery, community support and safer forests for the future heading into the bushfire season.



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NSW/ACT Timber and Hardware Awards Night finalists

NATIONAL Hardware and Timber Association (NTHA) has announced the finalists for the NSW/ACT Timber and Hardware Awards Night for 2026.

NTHA Trainee/Apprentice of the Year Finalists

Issac Formosa (LCR Shopfitters)
Elise Savannah (Ryder Shop & Office Fitting)
Reece McGuire (Crown Furniture)
Maxwell Butler (Rouse Hill Landscaping)
Joshua Curtis (ITI Australia)

Student of the Year Finalists

Tonia Wisby (North Coast Frames & Trusses)
Sam Robinson (ITI Australia)
Ruben MacPherson (Premium Trusses)
Jarred Boggett (Wesbeam)

Safety Champion

Ambra Caruso (NICCO Timber Windows & Doors)
Aaron Laurent (Windoer Joinery)
Shaun Johnson (Woolgoolga, Maclean/Townsend Mitre 10)

Best Off-site Manufacturing Award

Programmed Timber
NICCO Timber Windows & Doors
Masswood
Ryder Shop & Office Fitting

Best Frame & Truss Operation

North Coast Frames & Trusses
Oxley Frame & Truss
Dahlsens (Wyong)
Williams Group Australia
MCM Frame & Truss

Retail Store of the Year Over 2500sqm

Johnson Bros Mitre 10 (Mona Vale)
Kents H Hardware

Dippers Home Timber & Hardware

Petries Mitre 10 (Dubbo)
Kincumber Mitre 10

Retail Store of the Year Under 2500sqm

Yamba Mitre 10
Mitre 10 Cooma
Hoadleys Hardware
C&N Mitre 10
Hardware & General (Hornsby)

Trade Store

Kings Mitre 10 (Ebenezer)
GRT Building Supplies
MBS Building Supplies
NSW Timber Supplies
Hardware & General (Brookvale)
Royal Formwork Solutions

Outstanding Employee Award

Andrew Bosward – Yamba Mitre 10
Angela Brown – Lavis Mitre 10
Steve Harwood – Hudson Mitre 10

Supplier Sales Representative of the Year

Clinton Lucock – James Hardie
Josh Bacon – Yates
Depaak Lingam – James Hardie
Ersin Teke – Boral Australia
Cal Wilkins – Meyer Timber

Hardware Supplier of the Year

Yates Dulux
Makita Cutek
Fix-a-tap

Timber Supplier of the Year

ITI Australia
Hume Doors & Timber
Tasman KB
Meyer Timber
Hyne Timber
Allied Forest Products

Building Materials Supplier

Cement Australia
James Hardie Wilmaplex
Paslode Boral

The awards night will be held on September 4.

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Four Corners and the decline of an icon of Australian media

A television program that once forged Australian media culture has now surrendered autonomy and found a worked-out doctrine.

By DAVE HUTCHENS

TUNING in to Four Corners 'Timber Turmoil' a few weeks ago, I wasn't expecting a pro-forestry view to emerge – still, the opening statement was insightful – and left no one in any doubt as to where we were headed.

Across Australia native forest logging has long been unpopular...

That's a stretch. As a presumption, it informs us of the degree the new knowledge class wants us re-directed towards their better, systemic and global ways of thinking. In truth, we don't know what the average Australian believes because native forest logging territory is dominated by heavy hitters – activists, politicians, department heads, and media. To the rest of us, just thinking out loud, disputation kept in simmer mode is surely not the same thing as grassroots popularity.

Current activist strategy against native forestry relies upon unrelenting repetition of talking points. Activists start them. Friends in the mainstream media repeat them.

1. LET PEOPLE KNOW FORESTRY IS UNPROFITABLE FOR STATES. EMBARRASS GOVERNMENTS REGULARLY WITH QUESTIONS AND REVEALS.

In this modern era, governments set budgets for their entities, and the entities always spend them entirely. In adversity, they exceed them. Some have little notion of a business balance sheet. Smaller agencies set up to do a defined task – like VicForests – might fare better, as they are able to bring in constant income flow if enabled. Problems start when that enabling ceases to be given.

The next layer of the activist message is to the loyal troops out there and it cuts deeper into government resolve.



Dave Hutchens is passionate about fair representation of the timber industry in the media. Image: Dave Hutchens.

Make forestry bodies increasingly unprofitable by continuous legal action in the environmental court, by challenging faunal surveys, watercourse protections and insisting on more paperwork. And maybe some machinery and infrastructure might get sabotaged – but it wasn't us.

2. USE THE WORD 'ILLEGAL' AS MUCH AS YOU CAN – EVEN IF NO REAL LAWS ARE BROKEN.

For decades now there has been a dittoed moment for people like Paul and Alison, close friends of mine. Strolling down Smith St, Collingwood on a Sunday afternoon recalling days of share houses, shared ideas, and the righting of old wrongs – and somewhere on that familiar pavement they found themselves in conversation with a Friend of the Earth on the plight of koalas. After a marsala chai together, they signed up for \$80/month to protect the cuddly critters.

“THEY SAW A CHEAP SHOT. THEY THOUGHT IT WOULD BE 'POPULAR'”

It's also a zombie moment for Paul and Alison because their money doesn't help koalas. In woodlands near Gunnedah, NSW whole colonies of koalas are dying of chlamydia, and research is needed to determine whether transmission is via feral animal scat or contact with grazing sheep and cattle. Or something else. While Alison still believes research gets some of their money, it doesn't. All their money goes to environmental lawyers to pay legal fees to bring court cases against state forestry coupes in East Gippsland.

Hundreds of these cases are brought. Most are unsuccessful – but thanks to a stream of zombie income from Paul, Alison and their ilk, the volumes of litigation have started to tell.

In Victoria, this deluge of cases brought a state premier to his decision to cease native forest logging in Victoria becausein his words – “It was a lawyers' picnic” and costing the state too much money. Thus spoke Dan Andrews in his final months as a half-hearted political xxx-magnet. Cancelling the Commonwealth Games, cancelling the timber industry in Victoria, and wondering whether he can retire before his political backers in the CMFEU self-destruct. Hard rain. Realpolitik. Not grassroots insistence. Not unpopularity. Nothing resembling the naivety of reporter Jessica Longbottom's opening claim on *Timber Turmoil*.

There was no electoral mandate for the cessation of forestry in Victoria. In an ideal world a government would provide a legal basis for VicForest operations

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as a prelude to its formation. This would include necessary environmental protections. The same protections will be needed in the coming Plantation Era because plantations and regrowth forests attract abundant native fauna and are part of the existing riparian landscape.

None of this happened. Was the Andrews government caught in a bind of someone else's making? Or did left-faction ministers and department heads undermine VicForests over several years, sabotaging its legal standing while staging a performative waffle of apostasy for media that included Forestry Plans and Code of Practice legislative changes? Yeah – I'm not sure either – but let's not get sidetracked.

In *Timber Turmoil*, Jessica Longbottom reruns a ploy that tries to insinuate 'illegal' dealings in the timber industry – echoing the theme of genuinely corrupt contract behaviors on Victoria's Big Build. Somehow the government is ignoring 'illegal' practices by timber companies in both Victoria and Tasmania – and the taxpayer is footing the bill.

The timber guys who were interviewed on camera couldn't see what was coming in the final edit. It was padded out with resolute Forensic Accountants and spectral folk with torches counting gliders. Timber miller Vince Hurley from ASH did his level best for a bloke who just can't act. Maaate – try to look guilty on the count of three... you've taken the compensation money for breach of contract by Dan Andrews and gone and invested it back in the town. You've got some serious explaining to do.

Here reporter Jessica Longbottom steps neatly over real forestry news like it was a dog turd. Hurley's company, Australian Sustainable Timbers in Heyfield, Victoria has developed a seasoned appearance-grade timber



Native forestry has faced sustained criticism from activists and sections of the media, often without the rigorous research, balanced investigation and scrutiny such a complex issue deserves.

Image: Shutterstock

product they call Plantation Oak sourced from Shining Gum plantation logs from Tasmania. Not your regular sawlog harvest of log diameters exceeding 400mm. Instead, they mill a timber resource that didn't have sawlog capability a decade ago – small diameter logs which used to go to woodchip.

The logs from Tasmania, milled, then kiln-seasoned and profiled for use as Masslam 38 beams, were sent back to Tasmania for use in an important building: The Shed – a UTAS project in Launceston by Wardle Architects which won Sustainable Architecture of the Year Award 2025. Investing in Tasmanian woodchip resources then sending them back again in the form of high-value Glulam beams. **Click here to view the project.**

This is good news for innovation and sustainable hardwood – but not what reporter Jessica Longbottom really wants. For Longbottom, issues that divide people in Australia are the ones she prizes, and the aftermath of the Andrews government provides scope for this sort of journalism.

Four Corners should report on compensation payments for the cancelled Commonwealth Games hosting promises, however I can't see them unfairly besmirching the athletes or smearing the Glasgow committee on

how they spent wasted Victorian taxpayer money just because we're all miffed. But the timber industry – yeah. Smear they did. The ABC and the producers of *Four Corners* misread the tea leaves. They saw a cheap shot. They thought it would be 'popular'. They trusted a recent activist bulletin – applying none of their own scrutiny. That's not what the

ABC should do by anyone's standards.

The 'gotcha' moment for the Tasmanian minister for timber who didn't know Tasmanian logs were headed to Victoria for primary milling might earn a Mercury reporter a drink at the pub with colleagues. But there's not enough gravitas in the moment to hold *Timber Turmoil* together. The program didn't get a grip on Jacinta Allen. She stuck to the script. Jobs for Victorians.

On screen Longbottom hails a passing activist taxi. Quick, driver – follow that timber jinker. But there's nothing dodgy about the log traffic. The Tassie government moved with great haste to make intra-state primary milling a contractual requirement for log supply – and before they did, Tasmanian timber mills were operating in a legal manner.

Jessica – here's some context for you. Research you might have done before the story. The Tasmanian timber industry mainlines on the mainland. Tasmanian hardwoods are, and always have been, tapped directly into the Sydney and Melbourne consumer markets. All Tasmanian hardwood products, except a few packs here and there, are sold to mainland consumers. Primary milling, kiln-drying and profiling are routinely done to completion in Tasmanian mills because that's the most cost-efficient way of doing things. Sometimes resizing or profiling from sawn is done interstate because it's unforeseen or of the moment – but no one would seriously suggest it is illegal. No one except activists. At the

“IT IS A THIN GRUEL AND ITS PROTEIN IS MISCHIEF.”

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WFTN Queensland fundraiser to support victims of domestic violence

WOMEN in Forests & Timber Network (WFTN) Queensland will host its 2026 Charity Cocktail Fundraiser on Saturday, 12 September, raising funds for Queensland-based charity Zephyr Education.

The event will support Zephyr Education's work providing essential school items to children whose lives have been disrupted by domestic and family violence.

Established in 2013, Zephyr Education helps children transition into new schools by providing items including school uniforms, shoes, school bags, laptops, stationery and other resources. Many children arrive at shelters with little more than the clothes they are wearing.



The volunteer-run organisation provided more than \$1.1 million worth of support during the 2024/2025 financial year, assisting hundreds of children.

The WFTN Queensland fundraiser will be held from 1.30pm to 6.30pm at Cloudland's Alice Room, Level 2, 641 Ann Street, Fortitude Valley.

Tickets are \$85 per person and include a welcome drink, canapés and a raffle ticket for the lucky door prize. Raffles and auctions will also be held during the afternoon to raise additional funds for Zephyr Education. **Click here for tickets.**

Women, men, friends and family are invited to attend and support the fundraiser.

“MANY CHILDREN ARRIVE AT SHELTERS WITH LITTLE MORE THAN THE CLOTHES THEY ARE WEARING”

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federation of Australian states in 1901, lots of freedoms to trade across state borders were insisted upon, written into law, and businesses given those same freedoms they hold to this day. I wouldn't call them loopholes. Nor would anyone else.

I'm told that in our present age many ABC journalists, researchers and producers have membership of the Wilderness Society, Friends of the Earth, Australian Conservation Foundation or Greenpeace. Maybe it's untrue. Maybe it's not. I have friends like Paul and Alison, and, like ABC staff, they do not feel obliged to disclose their membership to their workplace. Most ENGO constitutions, by item, are based upon universal principles of care for the environment. It should not represent a professional conflict – until it does.

Membership of ENGOs which have as their core mission the cessation of native forestry in Australia represents a palpable conflict in forestry journalism. If you agree to protect 'wilderness' as defined by extremists, it can be hard to reconcile with any iteration of a 'managed' forest simply because mankind is involved. Pruning, thinning, planting. To a hardline Gaian ecologist – interfering with the mother planet.

I approach this issue with little understanding of how ABC staff reconcile personal values with the ABC code of reporting. Does a journalist or researcher declare a personal interest and disengage from an investigation they cannot be fair-minded about? I don't really know – but it must unsettle the crew at odd moments in a shoot.

Eerily, Longbottom pulls her every punch in *Timber Turmoil* – and I have a feeling it's not just the ABC legal team holding her back. She knows she has nothing kosher against the timber guys. Nothing illegal.

Behind NSW mill owner Andrew Hurford, you can see the ABC plastic tape stretched on a gum tree if you squint. It's a crime scene. They're keeping it undisturbed till the Forensic Accountants arrive. Hurford has been Miranda-ed. You do not have to say anything to camera – but if you do, please say something that can be edited and used against you – otherwise I'll have to use footage of the harvester stripping a log and finish with a clumsy visual metaphor about native timber across Australia being squeezed

and a self-satisfied comment about a fight for survival in timber towns – as if I cared.

When you watch it all again and dismiss the weak whodunnit as a spectacular irrelevance, you are left with just a zombie walk through activist talking points with the WWF researchers – old uni mates, I'm guessing .. I'm making all this up – yeah – but it's an intuitive response that gets stronger with every viewing. I just know Longbottom was never ever going to the cops, ICAC, anyone - with this dossier after the program aired. It is a thin gruel and its protein is mischief. Longbottom and crew will be too ashamed to walk the main street of Heyfield again.

Four Corners is a program that once forged Australian media culture. In *Timber Turmoil* it has surrendered autonomy and found a worked-out doctrine. Somehow it has lost its unique voice and, in this airing, failed as an independent media unit. All of this is seen incongruously against a backdrop of recent public agony about what free speech, free thinking means. In particular, the need for the ABC to resist their voice being modulated by an outside lobby – Israel, Greenpeace – or whoever.

“[ABC] FAILED AS AN INDEPENDENT MEDIA UNIT”

\$100 million timber fibre innovation backs Australia

JUST over two years after its launch, Australian Forest and Wood Innovations (AFWI) has backed 39 research and innovation projects worth more than \$67 million across Australia's forest and wood products sector.

The national institute, supported by a \$100 million Australian Government investment, has brought together more than 100 industry and research partners and over 300 people across Australia, including growers, processors, manufacturers, Indigenous enterprises, government agencies and researchers.

Its progress is detailed in the **AFWI Highlights Report 2024–2026**, launched by the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, the Hon Julie Collins MP, at the Australian Forest Products Association's National Forestry Day event at Parliament House.

Since its official launch in March 2024, AFWI has invested about \$29 million in research and innovation projects, supported by a further \$38 million in partner contributions.

"AFWI has made strong progress in just over two years, with its investments already translating into practical outcomes across Australia's forest and wood products sector," Minister Collins said.

"I congratulate everyone involved and look forward to hearing more about the impacts being delivered and the further opportunities this national capability can unlock for industry, regions and communities."



Ongoing research project under the AFWI innovation pillar of housing innovation: Kylan Low (left) and Jesse Ross (right) with one of the modernised timber window designs undergoing testing. Image: Australian Glass and Window Association

AFWI CEO and Executive Director Dr Joseph Lawrence said the report showed how quickly AFWI had grown.

"In just over two years, AFWI has grown from a new national initiative into a substantial industry-led innovation network operating across Australia," Dr Lawrence said.

"We are bringing together industry, research and government to tackle key challenges: healthier and more productive forests, getting more value from Australian fibre, developing new bioeconomy opportunities and helping unlock manufactured timber housing at scale."

AFWI's work is structured around four pillars: Healthier Forests, Maximising Fibre, Climate Solutions and Housing Innovation.

Projects span forest productivity and resilience, biosecurity and climate adaptation, low-carbon fuels and bioproducts, engineered timber products, advanced manufacturing and new

approaches to timber construction.

AFWI is also rebuilding Australia's long-term forest and wood products research capability through three Research Centres, hosted by the University of Melbourne, the University of the Sunshine Coast and the University of Tasmania.

Across the portfolio, more than 90 early-career researchers are developing expertise while working directly with industry on practical challenges and pathways to adoption.

MOVING RESEARCH INTO INDUSTRY

A major focus for AFWI's next phase will be helping research move into industry, including through advanced timber manufacturing, manufactured housing and new bioeconomy opportunities.

The *AFWI Highlights Report 2024–2026* is available at <https://www.afwi.au/afwi-highlights-report-2024-2026/>



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