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FWCA calls for transparency from anti-forestry campaign

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Who is paying for the campaign to shut down Australia's native forestry?

FWCA demands funding transparency over proposed \$10 billion nature fund.

FOREST & Wood Communities Australia (FWCA) is calling on The Australia Institute and more than 50 environmental organisations involved in a newly announced national campaign to end native forest harvesting to disclose who is funding the campaign, how much is being spent and whether any government, philanthropic or tax-advantaged funding is supporting it.

The organisations announced on 17 August that they were meeting in Canberra to coordinate a national campaign seeking an immediate end to native forest logging, clearing and conversion and permanent protection of native forests across Australia. The media release says the meeting is being hosted by The Australia Institute.

However, neither the media release nor the campaign's published Forest Protection Principles identifies who is specifically financing the meeting or the coordinated national campaign.

FWCA Chair Steve Dobbyns said



Transparency in focus: As a national campaign seeks to end Australia's native forestry and proposes a publicly funded Nature Fund of around \$10 billion a year, Forest & Wood Communities Australia is calling for full disclosure of who is financing the effort. Photo: Shutterstock

environmental organisations were entitled to advocate for policy change, but the same organisations regularly demanding transparency from governments and businesses should be prepared to disclose the financial backing behind a campaign of this scale.

"There is nothing improper about people donating to environmental organisations and nothing improper about those organisations participating in public debate. But transparency has to work both ways," Mr Dobbyns said.

"This is not simply a few local

residents meeting to discuss their neighbourhood forest. It is an organised national policy campaign involving more than 50 organisations, coordinated across six states and territories, seeking to eliminate an Australian renewable industry."

"Before Australians are told this is simply a 'people-powered movement', they are entitled to know who is actually paying for the campaign."

The scale of some of the organisations involved is substantial.

The Australia Institute's audited 2024-25 accounts report \$10.88 million in total revenue, including more than \$10.05 million in donations. Its annual report says it is independently funded by donations from philanthropic

Cont P 3

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trusts and individuals and by grants and commissioned research from businesses, unions and non-government organisations.

The Australian Conservation Foundation reported \$18.64 million in revenue and other income in 2024-25, including approximately \$12.74 million in donations, \$2.91 million in bequests and \$1.66 million in grants.

The Australia Institute, Australian Conservation Foundation, The Wilderness Society and Bob Brown Foundation are all registered charities with Deductible Gift Recipient status, allowing eligible donors to claim tax deductions for gifts.

Mr Dobbyns said charitable and DGR status did not invalidate their right to campaign, but it strengthened the case for transparency where organisations were seeking major changes to public policy and expenditure.

"These organisations benefit from tax concessions while campaigning to remove productive forests from timber supply, close regional industries and fundamentally restructure how

Australia's forests are managed."

"That makes transparency a legitimate public-interest issue. Who is funding this campaign? What are they funding? And what policy outcomes have funders specifically paid organisations to pursue?"

FWCA is asking the campaign organisers to disclose:

- Who funded the national meeting being hosted by The Australia Institute?
- Who paid, or is paying, participants' travel, accommodation and meeting expenses?
- Who funded the Protect Native Forests website, campaign development, communications, advertising and media coordination?
- What is the total budget for the national campaign?
- Have philanthropic foundations or

other institutional donors provided restricted or project-specific funding for campaigns to end native forest harvesting?

- Have any overseas philanthropic organisations or foundations contributed to the campaign or participating organisations specifically for Australian forest policy advocacy?
- Have any Commonwealth, state or local government grants, government-funded positions or publicly funded resources been used directly or indirectly in developing or promoting the campaign?
- What cash or in-kind contributions have participating organisations made to the campaign?
- Will The Australia Institute and the major organisations involved publish the institutional sources and amounts of funding specifically supporting the campaign?

FROM SHUTTING DOWN FORESTRY TO A \$10 BILLION-A-YEAR PUBLIC FUND

FWCA said the financial questions

"SUSTAINABLE NATIVE FORESTRY IS NOT SYNONYMOUS WITH PERMANENTLY CLEARING A FOREST"

Cont P 4

2026 residues²revenues\$

WOOD RESIDUES PRODUCT & PROCESSING OPPORTUNITIES

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.

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www.woodresidues.events

Please contact Gordon Thomson for any enquiries on:
 Email: gordon.thomson@fiea.org.nz Phone: (+64) 7 921 1384 Mob: (+64) 27 275 8022

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become even more important when the full Forest Protection Principles are examined.

Those principles go considerably further than the 17 August media release.

They call for governments to increase long-term public funding for forest conservation and restoration and establish an independent publicly funded statutory Nature Fund, nominating minimum recurring expenditure of around \$10 billion per year as an example.

"This deserves far more scrutiny than it has received," Mr Dobbyns said.

"The campaigners want governments to shut down a renewable timber-producing industry and permanently remove productive forests from timber supply, while proposing a new publicly funded conservation model involving expenditure on an extraordinary scale."

"They cannot simply discuss the claimed environmental benefits and pretend the economic side of the ledger does not exist."

Australia's own national forestry agency, ABARES, states that wood products from sustainably managed native forests are renewable because trees regenerate following harvesting. Australian forest reporting also distinguishes harvested forests that remain forest from permanent forest conversion.

Mr Dobbyns said deliberately bundling native forest harvesting, land clearing and forest conversion into one political slogan blurred fundamentally different land-management activities.

"Sustainable native forestry is not synonymous

with permanently clearing a forest."

"A production forest is harvested and regenerated to forest. That is precisely why Australia's national greenhouse accounts classify harvested native forests within 'Forest remaining Forest'."

"Ending Australian timber production does not end Australia's demand for timber. It simply means that demand has to be met somewhere else - through plantations where suitable resource exists, imports, alternative materials or shortages and higher prices."

FWCA said any credible national discussion about closing native forestry must therefore examine the consequences for domestic timber supply, housing and construction, regional employment, sovereign manufacturing capacity, imports, carbon leakage and the environmental standards of timber-producing countries that may replace Australian supply.

Transparency should work both ways

FWCA also noted the irony that The Australia Institute itself published research in November 2025 arguing that charitable and philanthropic contributions by corporations should be

subject to clearer and more consistent disclosure so that the public can make informed decisions.

"We agree with the principle," Mr Dobbyns said.

"If transparency about who funds an activity and what that money supports is important when corporations give money to charities, surely it is equally relevant when a network of charities and advocacy organisations mounts a coordinated national campaign intended to influence governments and reshape a major Australian industry."

"FWCA is not asking for private individuals to be named. We are asking for transparency about institutional funding, restricted grants, campaign expenditure, government-funded resources and major in-kind support."

"If the case for ending native forestry is as compelling as these organisations claim, there should be no reason to hide who is paying to prosecute it."

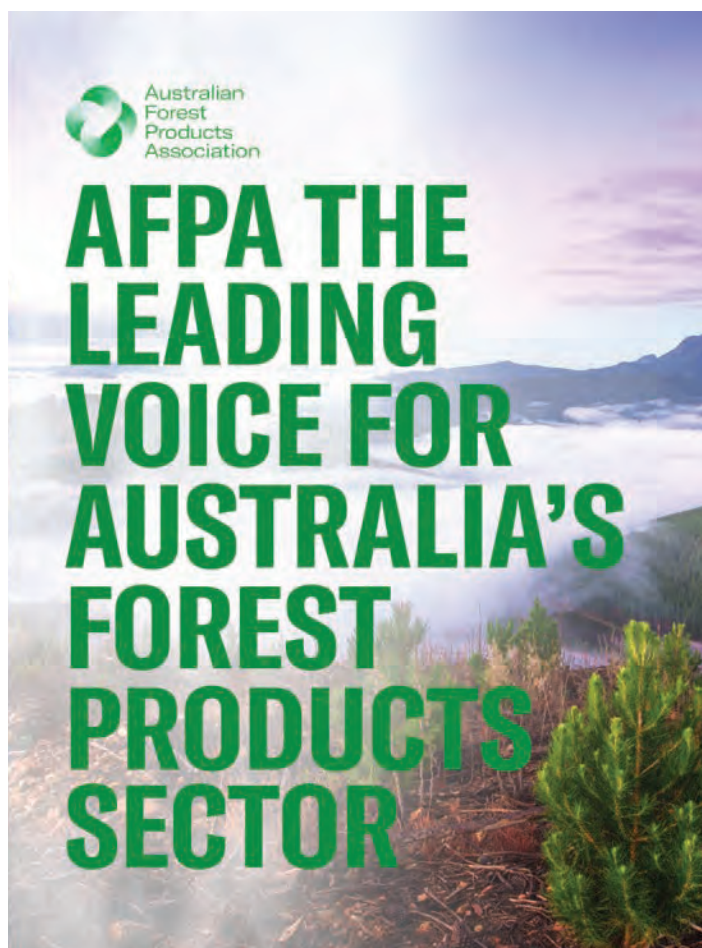
Mr Dobbyns said governments should also refuse to consider calls for a nationwide shutdown until the campaigners explain what would replace Australia's native hardwood production and who would pay the economic, environmental and social costs.

"Australian forest workers, timber processors, builders, regional communities and consumers are being asked to carry the consequences of this campaign."

"Meanwhile the organisations advocating the shutdown are proposing that taxpayers potentially fund a new conservation bureaucracy to the tune of billions of dollars every year."

"Before governments entertain that proposition, Australians deserve two very simple things: show us the evidence - and show us the money."

"A PRODUCTION FOREST IS HARVESTED AND REGENERATED TO FOREST"



On the cover: FWCA is not debating the right to campaign but calling for transparency around financing, government grants and budgets
Image: Jessica Hockridge

PEFC New Zealand: renewed and ready for the next chapter

PEFC is strengthening its presence in New Zealand, with a refreshed national governing body, a new board representing experience from across the forestry and timber supply chain, and a clear ambition to grow certification in step with the markets it serves.

Formerly the New Zealand Forest Certification Association, PEFC's national member has been renewed and revitalised as PEFC New Zealand.

The renewal was launched publicly at the New Zealand Timber Design Awards in Auckland in June, bringing the announcement to an audience of designers, engineers, manufacturers and forest owners.

It marked not just a change of name, but a signal of intent: to strengthen PEFC's presence in New Zealand, grow certification and continue adapting the PEFC approach to the country's needs.

A BOARD TO GUIDE THE NEXT CHAPTER

Chaired by Mark Ross, the new board brings together experience from across New Zealand's forestry and timber supply chain. Its early priorities are already clear.

“PEFC NEW ZEALAND IS WORKING CLOSELY WITH RESPONSIBLE WOOD



L to R: Simon Dorries (CEO of Responsible Wood) and Matt de Jongh (Sustainability Manager of Responsible Wood) are working with PEFC New Zealand to assist with their transition and support the New Zealand forestry industry. Images: Responsible Wood

“One of PEFC New Zealand's first priorities is supporting the current revision of the Australian/New Zealand Sustainable Forest Management Standard,” said Mark Ross.

LAUNCHED WHERE THE MARKET IS MOVING: THE TIMBER DESIGN AWARDS

The choice of stage was deliberate. The New Zealand Timber Design Awards celebrate the best of the country's timber design and construction and highlighted the growing role of certified timber in the built environment.

The evening's top honour, the Resene Supreme Award, went to Air New

Zealand's Hangar 4 by Studio Pacific Architecture. Hangar 4 is a 98-metre clear-span timber arch hangar built from a hybrid engineered-timber system of LVL and CLT.

A structure of this scale and ambition demonstrates how engineered timber is moving into large-scale, operationally critical infrastructure.

As timber use grows in the built environment, independently verified sourcing can also give specifiers and clients greater confidence about the origin of the forest and tree-based materials they choose.

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Nominate today

2026 Richard Stanton Memorial Leadership Award nominations extended.

Click to learn more and nominate online.



Recognise a leader and celebrate excellence in responsible forest management and sustainable timber utilisation practices

Entries close Friday August 28, 2026.

Responsible Wood
RW/1-10-1



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For the awards' host, the evening also reflected a shared set of values.

"Having the support of sponsors like PEFC made the event viable, and the tremendous industry support reflects just how valued the Timber Design Awards are," said Daniel Scheibmair, Chair of Timber Unlimited.

"We tried something new for the Gala Dinner by using seedlings as table decorations, and guests were able to take these home at the end of the night. The take-home seedlings were a resounding success, and feedback on the event has been overwhelmingly positive."

A BOTTOM-UP MODEL, MADE FOR LOCAL CONTEXT

PEFC New Zealand's renewal is a living example of the PEFC approach: national systems, built and governed locally, endorsed against shared PEFC's international Sustainability Benchmarks rather than imposed from the top down.

It is a model designed to fit each country's own forests, ownership structures and communities, and to evolve as those needs evolve.

CENTRAL TO NEW ZEALAND'S NEXT CHAPTER IS ITS TRANS-TASMAN PARTNERSHIP

"As part of the global PEFC alliance, PEFC New Zealand is working closely with Responsible Wood, the PEFC member for Australia, which continues to provide technical and administrative support as the New Zealand scheme grows," said PEFC South Pacific Programme Manager, Richard Laity.

"By drawing on shared experience across the Tasman, we are helping ensure the scheme remains credible, cost-effective and fit for purpose, while

“ENGINEERED TIMBER IS MOVING INTO LARGE-SCALE, OPERATIONALLY CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE



Air New Zealand Hangar 4, winner of the Resene Supreme Award at the New Zealand Timber Design Awards is an excellent showcase of timber's capabilities. Photo: Air New Zealand

meeting the needs of both New Zealand businesses and their customers."

GROWING DEMAND FOR VERIFIED RESPONSIBLE SOURCING

New Zealand's renewal comes as businesses and specifiers face growing expectations for transparency about the sourcing of forest and tree-based

materials. Architects, specifiers and buyers are increasingly looking for credible information and independent assurance to support responsible sourcing decisions.

PEFC certification can help respond to this demand by providing independently verified assurance of responsible forest management and traceability of forest and tree-based

materials through the supply chain.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR THE ALLIANCE

PEFC New Zealand's renewal offers a useful reference point for other national members navigating change. It shows how renewed governance, stronger market focus and collaboration across the PEFC Alliance can help a national member prepare for its next stage of development, while remaining firmly rooted in local context.



www.timberdesignawards.com.au

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>

[com.au/events/nationaltimberhardwareassociationntha/2273829](https://events.ntha.com.au/events/nationaltimberhardwareassociationntha/2273829)
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](https://www.gottsteintrust.org/)

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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STT appoints two new directors

By ROB DE FÉGELY, BOARD CHAIR OF SUSTAINABLE TIMBER TASMANIA

SUSTAINABLE Timber Tasmania (STT) is pleased to announce the appointment of Craig Taylor and Calton Frame as non-executive Directors of the STT Board, following approval by the Cabinet and Governor-in-Council.

Craig Taylor is a highly regarded forestry and governance professional with more than 40 years' experience across forest management, wood products manufacturing, commercial strategy and industry leadership. He commenced his career with the Forestry Commission of NSW before joining Boral Wood Products and then Wesfi working in timber and wood product sales. He subsequently worked in forestry consulting at Jaakko Pöyry before joining The Fifth Estate Consultancy where he is currently a Director. He has significant Board experience as Chair of Forest and Wood Products Australia and Director of PF Olsen Limited. Craig brings extensive



1/ **Craig Taylor brings over 40 years of extensive industry experience.**

2/ **Calton Frame brings significant expertise in key areas with both practical experience and deep understanding.** Images: STT



expertise in forestry operations, corporate governance, investment and divestment of forestry assets and strategy.

Calton Frame is an experienced finance, risk and governance professional with a strong background in Tasmania's forestry sector. His career includes both natural and planted forest management initially with North Forest Products and then Gunns where he gained major

project development and financing experience; ultimately managing Gunns on behalf of the liquidators as the CEO. More recently he was Business Development Manager and Company Secretary at Scotch Oakburn school in Launceston. Calton brings significant expertise in governance, strategy and risk management, and financial stewardship in forestry and education. He has both practical experience and deep understanding of the opportunities and challenges facing the forestry industry.

These appointments further strengthen the Board's collective capability and provide valuable additional expertise in governance, finance and stakeholder engagement in a forestry context. The Board looks forward to the contribution Craig and Calton will make as STT continues to responsibly manage Tasmania's public production forests for the benefit of all Tasmanians.

Grown for Australian homes

AUSTRALIA'S sustainable forest and forest products industries were celebrated as part of National Forestry Day to highlight the sector's vital contribution to the nation's economy and increasing housing supply.

National Forestry Day is an exciting, once-a-year opportunity to embrace and showcase an industry generating more than \$24 billion in economic value and supporting 180,000 jobs.

"From regional areas to capital cities, National Forestry Day is all about raising awareness among policymakers, elected representatives and the wider community about the many essential benefits of Australia's innovative forest industries," AFPA acting Chief Executive Officer Richard Hyett said.

"Our sector is truly a growing success story!"

This year's theme, 'Grown for Australian homes', highlighted the fundamental role of sustainably produced local timber and



National Forestry Day 2026's theme was Grown for Australian homes, highlighting that timber is an essential resource for Australians. Image: Shutterstock

wood in meeting Australia's housing and construction needs. From timber house frames, flooring and furniture to paper, tissues and packaging, forest products are an essential part of Australian life.

"Unlike other everyday items, timber and wood-fibre products are renewable and can help tackle climate change by storing carbon and providing alternatives to more emissions-intensive materials," Mr Hyett said.

"As Australia's sixth-largest manufacturing sector, the forest products industry also proudly supports around 80,000 direct and 100,000 indirect jobs mainly in regional areas, while the national plantation estate stores an estimated 258 million tonnes of CO₂-e.

"We encourage everyone to celebrate this important day through workplace events, tree planting, community activities, visits from elected representatives or by sharing National Forestry Day content online.

"Australian-made forestry products are critical to our daily lives, and [the National Forestry Day] is about celebrating what our industry provides every day, including flooring, decking, furniture, pallets, packaging, and power poles."

National Forestry Day was first launched in 2022 and continues to provide a positive opportunity to recognise the people, innovation and sustainable products that keep Australia growing.

Green Triangle names traineeship finalists in 2026 SA Training Awards

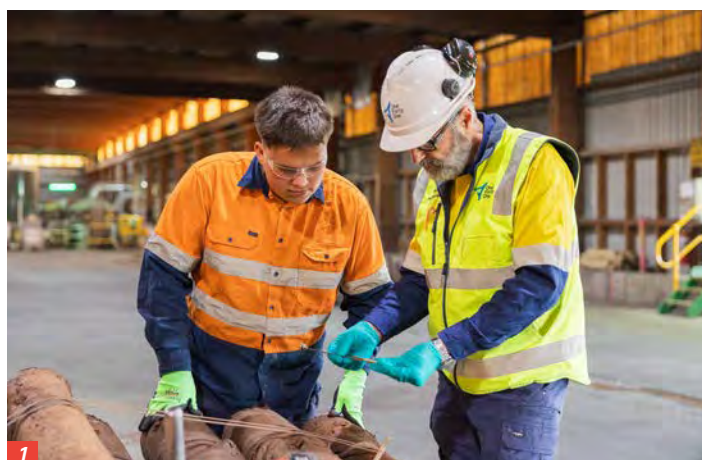
A SCHOOL-BASED traineeship creating a pathway for young people into timber manufacturing careers has been named a finalist in the Industry Collaboration category of the 2026 South Australian Training Awards.

The Timber and Wood Products Operations Traineeship brings together the Green Triangle Forest Industries Hub (GTFIH), Group Training Employment (GTE), LITA Training and host employers Porta Products, OneFortyOne, AAM Timber and Timberlink.

Trainees remain at school while completing paid employment, nationally recognised training and workplace experience across the four host businesses. Developed in response to a shared need for skilled, work-ready production operators, the program provides an entry point into timber manufacturing, with opportunities to progress into further training, employment and technical roles.

The program grew from the Green Triangle Forestry Skills Centre Pilot, which established local delivery of the Certificate II and Certificate III in Timber and Wood Products Operations. All five trainees in the inaugural 2025 cohort successfully completed the traineeship and Certificate II, with a second cohort now underway.

The Green Triangle is one of Australia's most significant forestry and timber processing regions. Continued investment in manufacturing capability, new timber products, automation and process technology is also changing the skills required within modern production environments.



1/ Jackson Grant, a member of the inaugural 2025 Timber and Wood Products Operations Traineeship cohort, carrying out testing on treated timber with Chris Tzioutziouklaris, WPP Manager at OneFortyOne's Jubilee Sawmill.

2/ Representatives from the Timber and Wood Product Operations Traineeship collaboration with the South Australian Training Awards judging panel during the Mount Gambier interview visit. From left: Andrew Norman (GTE), Shae Lester (current trainee, St Martins Lutheran College), Courtney Thompson (AAM Timber), Josh Praolini (Grant High School), Greg Megaw (GTE), Candice Fennell (OneFortyOne), Sandy Kanahs (LITA Training), Karen van Gorp (judging panel), Lara Kroeger (GTFIH), Tony Wright (GTFIH), Ian Horne (judging panel), Ruth Schubert (GTFIH) and David Kirner (judging panel).

3/ South Australian Training Awards judging panel members Ian Horne, David Kirner and Karen van Gorp visiting Porta Products' new manufacturing facility under development in Mount Gambier with Markus Frevert and Pam Breese (Porta Products) and Lara Kroeger (GTFIH). The project reflects continued regional investment in timber manufacturing and the future need for a skilled production workforce. All images: Green Triangle Forest Industries Hub

GTFIH Chair Dr Ruth Schubert said the finalist recognition highlighted the importance of developing local skills alongside industry investment.

"The Green Triangle is home to a nationally significant timber industry, and we are continuing to see major investment in processing, manufacturing and technology across the region," Dr Schubert said.

"That creates exciting opportunities for young people, but also means we need to develop the skilled workforce required to support the industry into the future. To have this collaboration recognised at a state level is a fantastic achievement for everyone involved."

GTFIH Workforce Development Manager Lara Kroeger said the traineeship allowed young people to experience an industry they may otherwise know little about.

"Across the four host businesses, trainees experience different products, technologies and production systems, while seeing the core skills that connect the industry and the range of careers that can grow from an entry-level production role," Ms Kroeger said.

GTFIH is also working with employers to explore a similar school-based traineeship linked to the Certificate II in Forest Operations, extending the approach into other parts of the forestry value chain.

The winner of the Industry Collaboration Award will be announced at the South Australian Training Awards Gala Presentation Dinner in Adelaide on Friday 11 September 2026.

Building the future of education

Big River helps deliver NSW's first Passivhaus-certified school.

When architects talk about creating buildings for the future, they're increasingly talking about buildings that use less energy, store more carbon and create healthier places for people to learn and work.

That's exactly the vision behind The Illawarra Grammar School's new Hoskins Building in Wollongong. A landmark education project that has become the first school building in New South Wales designed to achieve the internationally recognised Passivhaus Standard.

For Big River Group, the project presented an opportunity to contribute to a building that is redefining what's possible in sustainable education design.

Developed in collaboration with architects betti und knut architecture, builder Rohrig and an experienced team of consultants and specialist contractors, the two-storey learning hub combines mass timber construction with advanced building science to create a learning environment that is comfortable, healthy and exceptionally energy efficient. The 2,500-square-metre building features flexible learning spaces, a junior library, STEM facilities, senior classrooms and a 150-seat auditorium, all designed to support future generations of students.

MORE THAN JUST A SUSTAINABLE BUILDING

Passivhaus is one of the world's most rigorous building performance standards.

Designed to dramatically reduce the amount of energy required for heating and cooling, Passivhaus buildings rely on exceptional levels of insulation, airtight construction, carefully managed ventilation and meticulous attention to detail throughout the entire building envelope.

For every company involved in the project, precision was essential.



1/ Warm timber finishes and sculptural pendant lighting define the welcoming multi-level interior of the Hoskins Building at The Illawarra Grammar School.

2/ The completed Hoskins Building showcases natural timber cladding, extensive glazing and a compact, high-performance form designed to Passivhaus standards.

3/ Warm timber shelves, reading nooks and abundant natural light create an inviting, healthy learning environment within the Passivhaus-certified Hoskins Building. All images: betti und knut architecture



Big River supplied an extensive range of timber and building products as part of the collaborative delivery team, including architectural cladding and decking alongside structural flooring and framing materials. From the natural finish of Abodo Vulcan cladding and Blackbutt decking through to Hardie™ Secura™ flooring, tongue-and-groove plywood flooring and treated pine, every product contributed to delivering a building where material quality, dimensional accuracy and long-term performance were critical to the building's overall success.

"Projects like the Hoskins Building demonstrate how far the Australian construction industry has evolved," says Rob Harkin, NSW Commercial Business Development Manager, Big River.

"Buildings today aren't judged solely on how they look. They're measured on how they perform over decades, and that means every material, every connection and every installation needs to contribute

to the overall outcome. We're proud to have supported a project that's setting a new benchmark for sustainable education facilities."

A NEW BENCHMARK FOR TIMBER CONSTRUCTION

The Hoskins Building showcases the growing role of timber in commercial construction.

Built using a mass timber structural system supplied by KLH Massivholz that forms the structural skeleton, complemented by natural timber cladding, triple glazing, a green roof and rooftop solar, the building has been designed to consume around 90 per cent less energy for heating and cooling than conventional school buildings while storing significant amounts of carbon within its timber structure.

The extensive use of timber was never

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simply about aesthetics. It helps create warm, inviting spaces while supporting the project's broader sustainability goals, reducing embodied carbon and contributing to healthier indoor environments for students and staff.

"Timber has become one of the defining materials of modern sustainable construction," says Harkin. "Projects like this show that timber can deliver outstanding architectural outcomes while also supporting the environmental performance modern buildings increasingly demand."

COLLABORATION AT EVERY STAGE

Delivering a Passivhaus building requires close coordination between architects, engineers, builders, specialist contractors and suppliers.

Every junction, every penetration and every interface between materials must be carefully considered to maintain the building's airtight envelope and thermal performance.

That collaborative approach was central to the success of the Hoskins Building, with Big River working alongside Rohrig,



The 150-seat timber-lined auditorium provides a flexible, acoustically considered space for presentations and school gatherings.

betti und knut architecture, 3EM structure (timber engineering), Northrop Consulting Engineers, Savcon and the broader project team to help realise the school's ambitious sustainability vision.

Supporting projects at scale

While much of the attention is naturally drawn to the building's architectural finishes, projects of this scale rely equally on the quality and availability of the structural materials behind them. The Hoskins Building demonstrates Big River's capability to supply both premium architectural building products and the high-volume structural materials required for complex commercial construction, supporting builders with a complete building materials solution from structure through to finish.

LOOKING BEYOND THE BUILD

For The Illawarra Grammar School, the Hoskins Building represents far more than additional classrooms.

It provides a healthier learning environment, lower operating costs and a building designed to serve students for generations while reducing its environmental impact.

For Big River, it reflects a broader shift occurring across Australia's construction industry.

As architects and builders increasingly pursue higher-performing, lower-carbon buildings, suppliers are becoming more than product providers; they're trusted project partners helping deliver complex construction outcomes.

"The future of construction isn't about one material or one technology. It's about bringing together the right products, the right expertise and the right project team. That's exactly what happened at TIGS, and we're proud to have played a role in delivering a building that will influence education design for years to come," says Harkin.

For more information, visit www.bigrivergroup.com.au

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A stronger voice for timber framing

EVERY day, thousands of conversations shape how Australians think about building.

They're happening on construction sites, in timber yards, across sales counters, in design meetings and around lunchroom tables. Most are small, informal conversations. But together, they influence decisions about the homes and buildings we create.

That's why having a clear, consistent story matters.

Australia's timber framing industry has a strong story to tell. Structural timber is lightweight, renewable, efficient and proven. It's backed by decades of research, trusted technical guidance and generations of practical experience. Yet the impact of those strengths grows when the industry communicates them together.

That's the thinking behind Let's Put Timber Back in the Conversation; a coordinated national campaign delivered through WoodSolutions in collaboration with the Frame and Truss Manufacturers

Association (FTMA) and campaign funding partners.

The campaign provides practical, ready-to-use resources that make it easy to share trusted, evidence-based information about timber framing.

Over 14 weeks, a new campaign pack will be released every Monday, each centred on a different benefit of timber. Flyers can be included with any business communications, including quotes and invoices. Posters can be displayed in offices and lunchrooms. Social media graphics and newsletter content are ready to publish, while simple discussion notes help spark conversations with customers, colleagues and suppliers.

Every resource has been designed with one goal in mind: making it easier for the industry to communicate with confidence.

The campaign also reflects the breadth of timber's story. Across the 14 weeks, it explores topics including:

- timber's high strength-to-weight ratio
- renewable origins
- thermal efficiency
- durability
- carbon storage
- modern construction methods

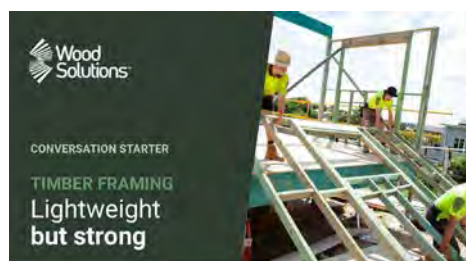
Together, they paint a picture of a material that continues to play an important role in Australia's built environment.

No single business can shape the conversation on its own. But together, the industry has an opportunity to create something much bigger.

One flyer shared with a customer might seem small. So might one LinkedIn post, one toolbox talk or one conversation over the counter. But multiplied across hundreds of businesses around the country, those moments become a powerful, coordinated voice with impact.

Because that's how confidence is built. Not through one campaign, but through an industry that consistently tells its story.

Campaign materials are available to **download from the WoodSolutions website here.**



Lightweight yet strong, timber framing is **easier to handle, transport and install** than many alternative building materials

WHY IT MATTERS

Timber delivers proven structural performance while being easier to handle, transport and install.

TALKING POINTS

- Timber has a high strength-to-weight ratio.
- Timber delivers strong structural performance without the weight of many alternative materials.
- Softwood timber delivers proven structural performance comparable to steel while weighing substantially less.
- Lighter materials can simplify transport and on-site handling.
- Less weight can mean easier installation and construction logistics.



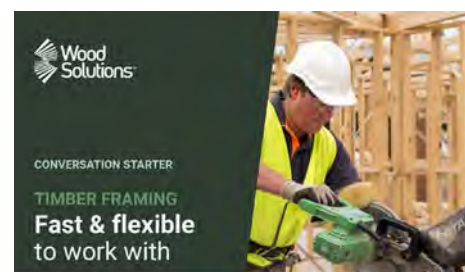
Building with timber in termite-prone areas is common practice, with **proven treatments available to manage termite risk**

WHY IT MATTERS

Timber framing is successfully used throughout Australia's termite-prone regions.

TALKING POINTS

- Building with timber in termite-prone areas is common practice.
- Proven termite management systems are widely used across Australia.
- Treated timber products are available for termite-prone areas.
- Building standards include termite management requirements, meaning it is safe to use timber in termite-prone areas.



Timber's versatility allows it to be cut, shaped and adapted with precision, helping **builders respond quickly to onsite changes and challenges**

WHY IT MATTERS

Timber helps builders adapt quickly when conditions change onsite.

TALKING POINTS

- Timber can be cut, shaped and modified using familiar tools.
- Design changes can often be accommodated quickly.
- Adjustments are easier to make during construction.
- Timber offers flexibility across a wide range of building types.



'The Let's Put Timber Back in the Conversation campaign will provide resources to make positive, strong, timber positive conversations easier.'



FWPA.com.au

Driving industry advancement through strategic research & market development initiatives



The Komatsu 895 Firefighter, the game changer for fire management

Komatsu 895 Forwarder fitted with the demountable RL21 firefighting unit integrated into the log bunk including;

- 20,000 Litre custom designed water tank
- 3,000 Litre emergency reserve tank
- Two water cannons delivering 450 L/min up to 40m range

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

Latest developments for the 895 Fire Fighting beast

Can the forestry industry build a stronger frontline against bushfire?

THIS year, the outlook for eastern and southern Australian forest regions demands attention. Forecasts indicate a hotter and drier than average season, with a strengthening El Niño pattern bringing above-average temperatures, below-average rainfall, and increasingly dry soils across many forest-growing regions. The highest-risk areas include central/southern New South Wales, southern Queensland and eastern Victoria.

These conditions create the perfect environment for fast-moving bushfires, placing forests, timber resources, businesses, communities and livelihoods under greater pressure than ever. For forest owners, every hectare represents years, often decades of investment, stewardship and care. For mill owners, a reliable timber supply underpins production, employment and customer commitments. For forest contractors, access, equipment and the ability to respond quickly are essential to maintaining safe and productive operations.

None of these businesses operate in isolation, and when a major fire occurs, the impacts ripple across the entire supply chain. Timber resources can be lost in hours. Harvest schedules are disrupted. Mills face supply shortages. Contractors lose access to work sites or are diverted to emergency operations. Roads close, infrastructure is damaged and recovery can take years.

But preparation is something the



The rear of a Komatsu forwarder fitted with the RL21 Firefighting Kit, showing the robust mounting system, winch and high-visibility safety markings. Image: Komatsu Forest

industry can control by working together before the fire season starts, to create stronger, more resilient forests and businesses. By sharing information, coordinating resources, reviewing access roads and firebreaks, identifying priority assets and developing joint response plans, the forestry sector can significantly improve its ability to protect people, forests and businesses when conditions deteriorate.

By working together before the smoke appears on the horizon, Australia's forestry industry can ensure that story is one of resilience, innovation and shared responsibility.

A NEW ERA OF MECHANISED FIREFIGHTING

Across southern New South Wales and eastern Victoria, the collaboration is already taking shape.

Mechanised firefighting capability has taken a significant step forward with five Komatsu forwarders now operating RL21

Firefighting Kits across Orbost, Bega, Bombala, Canberra, Tumut and the Albury-Wodonga region. Operated by Rodwell Logging, Retreev Pty Ltd, West Terrain Pty Ltd and Forestry Corporation NSW, these machines form a growing frontline response network across some of Australia's most fire-prone forests.

Developed by Peter and Mark Rodwell of Rodwell Logging, with support from the Federal Government's Disaster Resilience Program, the RL21 transforms a Komatsu forwarder into a highly mobile firefighting unit carrying 21,000 litres of water, including a

dedicated emergency reserve. Designed specifically for forestry operations, the unit can be fitted or removed in less than two hours, allowing the machine to return quickly to harvesting duties outside fire emergencies.

"The ability to respond quickly to early-stage fire starts in remote areas significantly reduces the likelihood of major disasters," said Peter Rodwell.

That capability has already been proven. Following a lightning strike in Bondi State Forest near the Victorian border, an RL21-equipped forwarder and bulldozer were rapidly deployed, containing the fire before it could escalate into a major incident.

PROVEN IN THE FIELD

For Victorian contractor Retreev Pty Ltd, investing in an RL21 followed firsthand experience during the devastating 2020 bushfires. Soon after taking delivery of the unit, owner Dean Venturoni deployed it during the Walwa River Road fires, which burned around 130,000 hectares, including extensive pine plantations. Over three weeks of continuous operation, the machine supported back-burning,

“MANY PEOPLE ARE YET TO FULLY APPRECIATE THE FIREFIGHTER'S CAPABILITY

Cont P 15

From P 14

the machine supported back-burning, blacking-out operations and control line establishment, helping protect thousands of hectares of forest.

"Many people are yet to fully appreciate the Firefighter's capability, i.e. its water volume, delivery rate, terrain mobility and speed in blacked-out areas," Dean said. "Just as important is having an experienced forwarder operator who understands how to use the machine effectively."

His experience reinforces the value of strategically positioning multiple units throughout forest regions to improve rapid response during severe fire seasons.

GROWING CAPABILITY, SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

The concept continues to gain momentum when West Terrain Pty Ltd commissioned a RL21-equipped Komatsu 890 for Victoria's Snowy River region. Forestry Corporation NSW has introduced a Komatsu 895 Firefighter to strengthen plantation protection around Tumut and Tumbarumba through the NSW Government's Plantation Fire Protection Package.

According to Forestry Corporation NSW Regional Manager Roger Davies, the machine has already prevented a local fire from escalating into a major plantation event while enhancing both hazard reduction capability and operator safety.

With Komatsu Forest Pty Ltd now distributing the RL21 system with additional kits available for installation, the technology is becoming more accessible across the industry. More importantly, it provides a blueprint for regional cooperation where forest owners, contractors and processors work together, sharing equipment, knowledge and resources to respond quickly before small ignitions become major disasters.

The RL21 has been designed for installation on the larger Komatsu forwarder range, like the 895. However,

with only minor modifications, these tanks can also be fitted to earlier Komatsu models such as the 890. Komatsu Forest has committed to holding RL21 units in stock and currently has a new unit available for immediate delivery.

The RL21 is more than a firefighting machine, it is a practical example of what the forestry industry can achieve when innovation, investment and collaboration come together.

FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS FROM RODWELL LOGGING

Peter Rodwell believes the next step is to further develop cooperative firefighting groups within each forest region, enabling contractors to rapidly deploy mechanised firefighting resources wherever they are needed.

During the last fire season, Rodwell Logging operated two Komatsu 895 Forwarders in its Bombala logging operations and made them readily available to be equipped with RL21 firefighting kits in response to potential fire outbreaks. In addition, Peter established a cooperative arrangement with Retreiv Pty Ltd of Victoria to work

together during emergency fire situations.

In early 2026, Peter & Mark took the initiative to further develop a cooperative firefighting group for the local forest region by taking delivery of a third RL21 firefighting kit. For this new

unit, they designed specially engineered hydraulic legs that allow the tank to stand independently. This enables a float or forwarder to simply reverse underneath the tank for loading and transport.

The system allows the RL21 to be quickly transported to a fire outbreak and fitted to a local Komatsu 895 Forwarder, providing a rapid and flexible firefighting response. The unit can also be operated directly from the float for roadside firefighting operations using the remote controls, if required.

While Rodwell Logging does not have a third Komatsu 895 Forwarder, local contractors such as Prolog Pty Ltd and PG Harvesting Pty Ltd are on standby to provide a Komatsu 895 Forwarder and deploy the third Komatsu 895 Firefighter when required. To further support local fire emergencies, Rodwell Logging also has access to a dedicated 41,000-litre water tanker to support the firefighters when local water supplies, such as dams or streams, are unavailable.

These developments further strengthen the cooperative firefighting capability within the local forest region, allowing available machinery, equipment and contractors to be mobilised quickly and effectively when and where they are needed.

CONTACT TODAY

Call your local Komatsu Forest team, we are here to help

Phone: 02 9647-3600

Email: info.au@komatsuforest.com

Website: www.komatsuforest.com.au



1/ RL21 2 x Firefighting kits on float being delivered and ready for sale.

2/ The latest RL21 Firefighting kit standing independently on specially engineered hydraulic legs for quick loading onto a float or forwarder.

All images: Komatsu Forest

Gippsland case studies to test whether medium-scale hardwood pays

TWO research projects worth \$1.43 million are building the first commercial case for native hardwood forestry at the scale between small farm woodlots and large industrial plantations.

The AFWI Centre for Climate-Smart Forestry at the University of Melbourne leads both, using existing commercial plantations in Gippsland, Victoria, as case studies. Australian Forest and Wood Innovations is investing \$333,251 in the first project and \$380,880 in the second, across total values of \$669,635 and \$762,578, with Radial Timbers and Heartwood Unlimited co-investing and supplying the working sites.

The economics, ecology and social licence of medium-sized native hardwood plantations, which sit between small farm forests and large industrial estates, are not well understood. The projects measure the financial performance of current plantation management and local wood product manufacturing, quantify the natural capital the estates hold, and apply life-cycle analysis to the carbon footprint of production and processing.

Victoria ended harvesting in its public native forests on 1 January 2024, and both case studies are built on plantation estates already trading in the region.

The findings will inform investment decisions about medium-scale native hardwood forestry and processing



1/ Radially sawn hardwood sections on the line at Radial Timbers' mill at Yarram in South Gippsland, the commercial operation serving as a working case-study site for two AFWI projects on medium-scale native hardwood worth \$1.43 million together.

2/ A 2025 tour of a Radial Timbers hardwood plantation in Gippsland, the ground that two AFWI case studies are now measuring for financial performance, natural capital and life-cycle carbon. All images: Australian Forest and Wood Innovations

infrastructure in comparable regions nationally.

Jon Lambert, Managing Director of Heartwood Unlimited, said the work opened a new avenue for medium-scale private forestry.

"We are delighted to be partnering in a project that is investigating a new avenue for medium-scale private forestry in Australia. This project has the potential to open many new doors via a platform of solid new data, being collected and analysed by a great team of researchers," Lambert said in the AFWI Highlights Report 2024-2026, released in Canberra.

Radial Timbers already runs the model the researchers will document.

The company saws durable Victorian hardwoods at its mill at Yarram in South Gippsland using a radial cut that takes each log apart in wedges, cutting waste and handling the smaller-diameter logs that plantations yield, and its integrated operation covers growing, milling, engineered wood manufacture and residue use.

"Radial Timbers Australia is very excited to be partnering with this AFWI project as it will provide valuable documented information on key pillars of our circular economy model which we have put into commercial practice," Chris

McEvoy, Managing Director of Radial Timbers, said.

The Gippsland work sits inside a wider AFWI portfolio of 39 active projects worth more than \$67.6 million at 30 June 2026, supported by a \$101.5 million Commonwealth investment and hosted by the University of Tasmania.

Both Gippsland projects run to February 2027.

“THE FINDINGS WILL INFORM INVESTMENT DECISIONS ABOUT MEDIUM-SCALE NATIVE HARDWOOD FORESTRY

“IT WILL PROVIDE VALUABLE DOCUMENTED INFORMATION ON KEY PILLARS OF OUR CIRCULAR ECONOMY MODEL

Four Corners failures strengthen industry case

It is deeply disappointing that the ABC's flagship investigative program *Four Corners* continues to face questions about the reliability of its reporting methods. Recent decisions to remove multiple episodes over serious concerns with anonymous sources only reinforce what the timber and forestry sector has been saying for months: when *Four Corners* turns its attention to native forestry, its approach cannot be trusted to deliver balanced, rigorously verified journalism.

In July and August, the ABC withdrew two full *Four Corners* episodes, *Cocaine Nation* and *Meth Highway*, after identifying problems with the "veracity of certain sources." It later removed *Silent Orders* in its entirety, along with a Background Briefing program and a segment from the earlier Postcode Wars episode. The broadcaster's own statement admitted that verification policies for anonymous interviewees "were not followed to a level that meets our editorial standards." An independent Ombudsman review is still underway. These were not peripheral stories. They were high-profile investigations that relied on the very techniques *Four Corners* uses to claim authority.

That context makes the industry's response to the June episode *Timber Turmoil* even more pointed. The program examined the movement of Tasmanian native hardwood into Victorian mills after state governments ended logging on public land. From the

outset it framed native forestry as a problem to be wound up rather than a sustainably managed sector providing jobs, regional economic activity and a renewable, carbon-storing product. Forest & Wood Communities Australia described it as "advocacy dressed up as investigation." Australian Sustainable Hardwoods rejected the program's presentation of more than \$110 million in taxpayer support, stating that key figures had been bundled misleadingly and that contractual penalties and redundancy payments had been recast as ongoing subsidies. Two former CSIRO chief research scientists wrote directly to ABC managing director Hugh Marks, accusing the episode of repeating contested activist claims while ignoring alternative science and offers of interviews. Formal complaints followed from Timber NSW, the Australian Forest Products Association and other peak bodies.

When a program is forced to pull multiple investigations because its own source-verification standards were not met, industry claims of selective storytelling and predetermined narratives gain considerable weight. The ABC has defended *Timber Turmoil*, insisting no factual errors or failures

of material context were identified. Yet the pattern is hard to ignore. Anonymous sources that cannot withstand internal scrutiny are removed. Scientific and industry perspectives that challenge a preferred narrative struggle to receive equal weight. Regional communities and workers whose livelihoods are at stake are left feeling their side of the story was never seriously tested.

Public broadcasters are funded by taxpayers and hold themselves out as independent, rigorous and fair. When *Four Corners* repeatedly falls short on verification and balance, first on criminal underworld reporting, then on forestry, confidence in its methods is eroded. For an industry that already operates under some of the world's strictest environmental regulations and faces constant political pressure, this is more than an abstract media debate. It is a practical problem: flawed or one-sided coverage shapes public and political opinion, accelerates policy decisions that destroy local supply, and shifts demand offshore to jurisdictions with far weaker standards.

The timber and forestry sector deserves better. Australians deserve better. Until *Four Corners* demonstrates consistent, transparent adherence to the highest standards of verification and impartiality, claims that its reporting cannot be trusted will only grow louder, and with good reason.

“FLAWED OR ONE-SIDED COVERAGE SHAPES PUBLIC AND POLITICAL OPINION



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