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NTHA celebrates NSW/ACT best

COVER STORY P 2



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NSW & ACT timber and hardware industry celebrates its best

IT was a night of pride, celebration and memorable industry stories as timber and hardware representatives from across NSW and the ACT came together for the 2026 NTHA Timber & Hardware Industry Awards.

Held at Doltone House Hyde Park in Sydney on Friday, 4 September, the awards celebrated the exceptional businesses, dedicated employees and rising talent helping to drive the industry forward.

From the graduation of NTHA's newest qualified apprentices and trainees to the recognition of five industry legends with more than 30 years of industry service, the evening showcased the talent, commitment and resilience found throughout the sector.

One of the night's biggest moments came when ITI Australia Managing Director Paul Shadbolt was presented with the Industry Icon Award, recognising an extraordinary career spanning more than five decades.

Opening the evening, NTHA Chief Executive Officer David Little paid tribute to the people and businesses that have continued to move forward despite several difficult years.

"What a resilient bunch you are. I am so



Some of the NTHA graduating students. Left to right: Sam Robinson, Marcus Hallam, Issac Formosa, Elise Savannah, Tonia Wisby and Declan Williamson. Image: Vision House Creative

proud to have been part of NTHA and to have served you over the past eight years," Mr Little said.

"Independent and family-owned businesses are at the heart of who we serve. They provide competition, choice, employment and opportunity in communities across Australia, and our industry must continue to get behind them.

"Congratulations to every nominee. Someone, somewhere thinks you are among the very best at what you do, and that is something worth celebrating."

EMERGING TALENT SHINES

The evening began by celebrating the next generation, with NTHA's newest graduates recognised for the determination and

hard work required to complete their qualifications.

Graduating students were:

Maxwell Butler - Certificate III in Timber Building Products Supply

Matthew Cantor - Certificate III in Timber Building Products Supply

Mason Cassar - Certificate III in Timber Frame or Truss Manufacture

Joshua Hall - Certificate III in Supply Chain Operations

Marcus Hallam - Certificate III in Supply Chain Operations

Callum Lindsay - Certificate III in Timber Building Products Supply

Bailey Martin - Certificate III in Supply Chain Operations

Tristan Naumcevski - Certificate III in Timber Frame or Truss Manufacture

Sam Robinson - Certificate III in Supply Chain Operations

Haussein Samad - Certificate III in Timber Building Products Supply

Michael Sparks - Certificate IV in Leadership and Management

Declan Williamson - Certificate III in Timber and Wood Products Operations

Tonia Wisby - Certificate III in Timber Systems Design

Sandeep - Certificate III in Timber and Wood Products Operations

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From P 2

Marcus Debono – Certificate III Cabinetmaking

Marcus Hallam – Certificate III Supply Chain Operations

Reilley Hunt – Certificate III Cabinetmaking

Reece McGuire – Certificate III Cabinetmaking

Alexios Pappas – Certificate III Carpentry

Zach Stace – Certificate III Timber Composite Machining

Elise Savannah – Certificate III Shopfitting

Issac Formosa – Certificate III Shopfitting

The celebration continued when Joshua Curtis of ITI Australia was named NTHA Trainee/Apprentice of the Year.

Joshua thanked the ITI team for its ongoing encouragement and fellow trainee Marcus Hallam for “showing him the ropes”.

Tonia Wisby of North Coast Frames & Trusses was thrilled to be named Student of the Year. She thanked her former NTHA trainer Colin, her employers Jenny and Hudson, and her husband and family for supporting her throughout her training.

ITI Australia also had a strong start to the evening by receiving the Host Employer of the Year Award.

ITI National Marketing Manager Justin Newman thanked Managing Director Paul Shadbolt and the entire ITI team for developing a training program, in partnership with NTHA, that means so much to those who are building their careers within the industry.

INDUSTRY'S HIGHEST ACHIEVERS CELEBRATED

With the graduation ceremony complete, attention turned to the businesses and individuals setting the benchmark across NSW and the ACT.

Aaron Laurent of Windoor Joinery was named Safety Champion for turning real-time data and practical ideas into improved workplace policies and procedures.

The Outstanding Employee Award went to Steve Harwood of Hudson Mitre 10. Steve congratulated his fellow nominees and thanked Paul and the entire Hudson Mitre 10 team, whom he described as “a privilege to work for”.

Cal Wilkins of Meyer Timber received



- 1/ NTHA Apprentice of the Year Joshua Curtis of ITI Australia presented by NTHA CEO David Little.
- 2/ Sales Representative of the Year Cal Wilkins of Meyer Timber with NTHA Chairman Peter Hutchison.
- 3/ NTHA CEO David Little with Paul Shadbolt of ITI Australia MD - Industry Icon award.
- 4/ NTHA CEO David Little with Steve Harwood of Hudson Mitre 10 - Outstanding employee of the year award.

All images: Vision House Creative

the Supplier Sales Representative of the Year Award. Cal thanked the Meyer Timber team and Kent Powell for his mentorship, describing the past 10 years as an incredible journey.

FAMILY BUSINESSES IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Some of the evening's most memorable stories came from the proud family businesses that form the backbone of the timber and hardware industry.

C&N Mitre 10 was named Retail Store of the Year – Under 2,500 square metres.

Owners Nicky Ainley and Chris Lavis spoke about their dream of building a hardware store in a growing Hunter Valley community and the enormous commitment required to make it a reality.

“After putting every ounce of our family into the store and building great relationships with the suppliers who helped us grow, this award is the icing on the cake,” they said.

Johnson Bros Mitre 10 Mona Vale took out Retail Store of the Year – Over

2,500 square metres, with Ged Johnson accepting the award on behalf of the 20 family members now involved in the business.

“Seventy years ago, my dad was a 14-year-old riding a pushbike to deliver hardware products. That grew into a business that has seen more than 50 family members work in it across three generations,” Ged said.

Kings Mitre 10 Ebenezer was named Trade Store of the Year.

Andrew King said the business's team collectively represented around 1,000 years of industry experience and knowledge, making it one of the most experienced hardware teams in Australia.

SUPPLIERS AND MANUFACTURERS RECOGNISED

Cement Australia was named Building Materials Supplier of the Year, dedicating the award to its hardworking team and

Cont P 4

From P 3

the effort its people make to deliver their best every day.

Yates received the Hardware Supplier of the Year Award. Joshua Bacon thanked the Yates team and the independent hardware businesses that have supported the company over many years.

ITI Australia was named Timber Supplier of the Year, adding another major honour to an already memorable evening for the company.

Managing Director Paul Shadbolt said he could not be prouder of the people he worked with, particularly ITI's trainees, and thanked NTHA for its training partnership with the business.

Nicco Timber Windows & Doors received the Best Off-site Manufacturing Award.

John Toskas dedicated the win to his father, Nick, whose vision established Nicco, and to the company's skilled and passionate team.

"We have an incredible group of people who are extremely proud of their craft. This recognition would not have been possible without them," he said.

Oxley Frame & Truss was named Best Frame & Truss Operation. The company thanked its entire team for helping the business come so far and acknowledged the suppliers who had supported and believed in it.

DECADES OF DEDICATION HONOURED

Five highly respected industry figures were recognised for more than 30 years of service, together representing an extraordinary contribution to the timber and hardware sector.

Gary Walker has spent almost 50 years building on his father's legacy at Belmont Timber. He has also contributed his time and experience through roles with the NTHA Board, FTMA, the Housing Industry Association and the Timber Development Association.

Kent Powell has played an integral role in the growth of Meyer Timber since commencing his career in 1996. He said he was proud of what the business had become and its ability to provide

people with such a wide variety of career pathways.

Jenny Compton has dedicated more than 35 years to Hardware & General and is now a company director. During that time, she has built many enduring relationships across the industry.

Judy Windred began at Hardware & General as a junior office assistant more than 45 years ago and has since undertaken numerous roles throughout the business.

NTHA Chairman Peter Hutchison was also recognised for a career spanning more than four decades, including 35 years in executive management and almost 19 years leading NTHA as Chairman.

Peter said he was honoured to stand alongside people who had made such significant contributions to the industry.

He also highlighted the importance of NTHA's awards in bringing together trainees, apprentices, host employers and established businesses and celebrating the people that ensure the industry continues to grow and evolve.

A TRUE INDUSTRY ICON

A highlight of the evening was the presentation of the Industry Icon Award to ITI Australia Managing Director Paul Shadbolt.

Paul has dedicated more than five decades to the timber industry and has led ITI Australia since establishing the business as an indent timber importer. From those modest beginnings, the ITI Group has grown into a major business operating across Australia and New Zealand.

Accepting the award, Paul reflected



1/ Gary Walker from Belmont Timbers receives his 30+ years of industry service award from NTHA CEO David Little.



2/ NTHA CEO David Little presents Kent Powell with his 30+ years industry service award.



3/ NTHA Chairman Peter Hutchison receives his 30+ years industry service award from NTHA CEO David Little.

All images: Vision House Creative

on starting the company from an office measuring just 3.4 metres by four metres.

He credited ITI's remarkable growth over the past 39 years to its employees, loyal customers, his family and the industry mentors who encouraged him during the company's early years.

Paul said it was impossible to build a career like his without the support of family, acknowledging that they were often the people making sacrifices behind the scenes.

Looking to the future, he said his vision remained as strong as ever: to champion independent and family-owned businesses, which he described as the backbone of the industry.

He also highlighted timber's renewable and environmental credentials and called for an independent review of the industry's organisational structure to identify duplication and help build a stronger, more unified voice.

It was a fitting highlight of the night that celebrated not only outstanding achievement, but also the relationships, family businesses, emerging talent and shared commitment that make the timber and hardware industry so special.

AWARD SPONSORS

NTHA acknowledged the generous support of all the sponsors who made the evening possible.

On the cover: Celebrating NTHA Award winners at the recent 2026 NSW/ACT Awards event.
Image: Vision House Creative

SA Government invests \$450,000 into “The Shed”

AUSTRALIA'S capacity to develop faster-growing, higher-quality and more climate-resilient plantation trees received a major boost with the opening of a new \$1.2 million Tree Breeding Australia (TBA) research facility in Mount Gambier.

The Malinauskas Government has invested \$450,000 to secure the delivery of this new purpose-built facility, known locally as ‘The Shed’.

Located on Kilsby Road, the research facility will accommodate up to 12 staff – mostly technical specialists to provide better infrastructure for TBA's national tree breeding and genetic improvement programs across both hardwood and softwood plantation species.

Key capabilities at the site include the storage and management of genetic material used in seed and pollination programs, with plans to progressively undertake DNA sequencing and analysis on-site, reducing the need to send samples interstate or overseas.

The new Tree Breeding Australia research facility represents another jewel in South Australia's crown as a national leader in research, innovation and builds on the Malinauskas Government's investment in the recently opened \$16 million Forestry Centre of Excellence.

Built by Parham Construction, the facility was delivered by an entirely local trade base comprising more than 15 businesses.



Advanced tree breeding could make a world of difference. Image: Shutterstock

TBA purchased the Kilsby Road site in 2005, building on an organisational history dating back to 1983 when it began operating locally as a cooperative focused on the genetic improvement of plantation timber species. Today, it is the premier breeding organisation in Australia for plantation softwood and hardwood species.

TBA's longer-term plans include a purpose-built glasshouse at the site to assist quarantine measures for the introduction of plants interstate and to fast-track the propagation of elite genetics.

The organisation also maintains administrative services at the Forestry Centre of Excellence, supported by the South Australian Government and located in Mount Gambier.

MORE ABOUT TBA TREE BREEDING AND GENETIC INFLUENCES

The performance of trees in plantations is determined by the genetic makeup of the trees and the environmental conditions under which the trees are grown. Site selection (soil type and climate) and management practices (silvicultural regimes) will significantly impact on the growing environment and influence the productivity and quality of the forestry resource. Improved genetics can increase both profitability and quality, but without the need for additional silvicultural inputs, further increasing profits made from the sale and processing of improved forest product.

Productivity and profitability of trees grown in plantations will be maximised only by using the best genetics and silviculture in combination. Further, due to genotype by environment interaction, the best genotypes in one environment are not necessarily the best in another production region. For example, genotypes best suited to high rainfall areas may perform poorly relative to other genotypes under drier and more marginal conditions. As a consequence, TBA breeds genotypes specifically suited to the different growing environments and end product uses.

Source: SA Department of Primary Industries and Regions and Tree Breeding Australia

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FWCA calls for review and suspension of controversial native forest carbon method

FOREST & Wood Communities Australia has formally asked the Emissions Reduction Assurance Committee to review the Federal Government's controversial Improved Native Forest Management (INFM) carbon-credit method, warning that substantial unresolved questions remain over leakage, additionality and potential over-crediting.

FWCA has lodged a formal request under section 255AA of the Carbon Credits (Carbon Farming Initiative) Act 2011, requiring ERAC to consider whether it should undertake a statutory review of the INFM Method.

FWCA has also asked ERAC to consider using its section 27A powers to temporarily suspend processing of new projects under the Method while those integrity questions are examined.

FWCA Chair Steve Dobbyns said the application was based on specific statutory and technical issues rather than competing views about forest policy.

"This is now an ACCU integrity question. If Australian taxpayers and businesses are going to buy carbon credits generated by shutting down timber production, the claimed carbon abatement must withstand rigorous scrutiny."

The FWCA request identifies six major areas requiring review: the Method's 40 per cent ceiling on indirect leakage, treatment of international timber imports, additionality of projects linked to pre-existing government commitments, FullCAM modelling and potential over-crediting, different provisions applying to State and non-State project proponents, and substantial changes introduced after public consultation.

Leakage cap demands explanation

The final Method requires an independent expert to assess indirect carbon leakage caused when Australian timber production is reduced, including impacts occurring overseas, but prevents the deduction exceeding 40 per cent.

That ceiling is difficult to reconcile with



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

new Australian research finding that 81.3 per cent of reductions in Australian native forest timber production have been displaced into imports.

The same research found 86.8 per cent of

displaced demand was supplied from countries with elevated illegal-logging risk profiles. The study did not directly calculate carbon leakage but concluded that the observed timber displacement demonstrates potentially substantial international carbon and biodiversity consequences.

Mr Dobbyns said FWCA was not claiming that 81.3 per cent timber leakage automatically meant an 81.3 per cent carbon deduction.

"But if an independent assessor concludes the real carbon leakage is 50, 60 or 70 per cent, the Method appears to force that assessor back to 40 per cent. ERAC should explain how an artificial ceiling can still satisfy the legal requirement for conservative carbon accounting."

Forestry Australia had already warned ERAC during consultation that published forest-carbon leakage estimates ranged from about 42 to 95 per cent and that the proposed leakage treatment was insufficiently conservative.

Additionality questioned

FWCA is also challenging the Method's treatment of the Great Koala National Park.

ERAC acknowledged concerns arising from the NSW Government's pre-election park commitment but concluded that it was reasonable for a state government to pursue an ACCU project as a means of delivering an election commitment and enhancing its longevity.

However, NSW Labor's December 2022 election costing had already committed \$80 million to support establishment of the Great Koala National Park, with the funding expressly identified as coming from the Snowy Hydro fund.

"The statutory test is not whether carbon credits make a government policy cheaper or easier to fund," Mr Dobbyns said.

"The test is whether the claimed abatement was unlikely to occur in the ordinary course of events without the carbon-credit scheme. ERAC needs to explain how a pre-existing park commitment with an identified public funding source satisfies that test."

FullCAM and post-consultation changes also under scrutiny

FWCA has asked ERAC to independently examine Forestry Australia's technical concerns that the prescribed FullCAM modelling may systematically overstate the carbon benefit of stopping selective native forest harvesting.

Forestry Australia has argued that the Method was not supported by sufficiently clear and convincing evidence and that important modelling assumptions could produce material over-crediting.

ERAC itself acknowledged that significant changes were required following consultation, including replacing the original fixed 5 per cent leakage deduction with the final project-specific 0–40 per cent system.

FWCA has simultaneously lodged Freedom of Information and other information-access requests seeking the technical basis for the 40 per cent cap, the exact Method version considered by ERAC, post-consultation drafting changes, additionality assessments and other records underlying approval of the Method.

Mr Dobbyns said transparency was now critical.

"If the Method is robust, an independent statutory review and release of the underlying evidence should strengthen confidence in it.

If it cannot survive that scrutiny, projects should not be registered and ACCUs should not be issued under it until the defects are corrected."

Enews called Steve Dobbyns to clarify if he had received any formal acknowledgement from ERAC, but at the time of going to print nothing had been received.

SEPTEMBER

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 sales visit <https://events.ntha.com.au/events/nationaltimberhardwareassociationntha/2273829>

16: WoodSolutions and Timberinsight' Conference – Crown Perth, 8.30am - 5.00pm.

Full day conference and exhibition. Topic: Transitioning to timber and MMC. For more information and booking, visit <https://timberinsight.com.au/events/woodsolutions-built-evolution-transitioning-to-timber-and-mmc/>

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://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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\$150m Federal investment in forestry

AUSTRALIAN Forest Products Association (AFPA) has welcomed the Federal Government's Forestry Growth Fund announcement, which will help to build a stronger, more sustainable and modern forestry industry for the future.

Under the program, grants and initiatives will be delivered across five key streams focused on modernising the sector, supporting secure and well-paid jobs, strengthening innovation, securing sustainable fibre supply and increasing Australia's sovereign capability.

AFPA Acting CEO Richard Hyett said the \$150 million in funding was a significant vote of confidence and step in the right direction for Australia's forestry and forest products sector.

"Forestry is already a major contributor to regional communities and the national economy, and this much-needed investment provides us with a vital opportunity to build on that strong foundation," Mr Hyett said.

"We sincerely thank the Government and Federal Minister for Agriculture Julie Collins for listening to industry, and applaud the fund's strong focus on innovation, workforce development, fibre security and high-value manufacturing closely aligns with the funding priorities previously raised by industry.

"It's positive to see this program – which aligns with the Timber Fibre Strategy. This consultation has been crucial because the people working across our industry understand where the opportunities are and what is urgently needed to help forestry grow and thrive.



New independent AFPA board Chair appointed

AFPA is also delighted to announce the appointment of highly respected agribusiness leader John McKillop FAICD as Independent Chair of the AFPA Board.

Mr McKillop brings more than 25 years of senior executive experience, alongside an extensive governance portfolio across peak national industry bodies, member-owned structures, commercial agribusinesses, and environmental ventures.

His extensive leadership background includes serving as Independent Chair of the Red Meat Advisory Council (RMAC), Chair of Sea Forest, Manor Estates Holdings and Compass Agribusiness Management. He has also served on the boards of key national bodies such as Meat & Livestock Australia (MLA) and Dairy Australia.

At the executive level, Mr McKillop has managed large-scale primary production operations, environmental land management, and significant asset portfolios across Australia. His past leadership roles include CEO of Kidman and Co, CEO of Hassad Australia, Managing Director of AgCap, and Managing Director of Clyde Agriculture.

Holding a Master of Business Administration from Deakin University and having completed executive education at Harvard Business School, Mr McKillop is a Fellow of

the Australian Institute of Company Directors (FAICD).

AFPA Board statement: "We are delighted to welcome Mr McKillop as Independent Chair of the AFPA Board. John is a proven leader with deep expertise in managing complex, vertically integrated supply chains, leading policy advocacy with government, and driving strategic growth across Australia's primary industries. His track record in stakeholder engagement, natural resource stewardship, and governance will be invaluable as AFPA continues to advance the sustainable growth and interests of Australia's forest products sector."

Incoming Independent Chair Mr McKillop statement: "It's a privilege to take on the role of Independent Chair for the Australian Forest Products Association. The forestry and forest products sector play a vital role in Australia's economy, regional communities, and transition toward a sustainable, low-carbon future. I look forward to working closely with the Board, CEO, members, policymakers, and industry stakeholders to build on AFPA's strong advocacy and ensure the sector's long-term prosperity."

Mr McKillop will begin the role in October this year, and we look forward to introducing him to members and stakeholders during the last quarter of 2026.

Special acknowledgements from the NSW/ACT NTHA awards night

TEAM LAVIS – MITRE 10

Chris & Campbell from *Timber and Forestry Enews* attended the NTHA awards on Friday night and it was an amazing event, well organised and the room was full to absolute capacity and the atmosphere was buzzing with excitement.

As part of the ceremony, we wanted to acknowledge the exciting news our former senior editor of *Enews*, Nicky Ainley and her husband Chris Lavis, were the winners of 'Retail Store of the year under 2500 sqm.'

Nicky and Chris purchased a Mitre 10 store some years back but also built a temporary "pop up" store to serve the local community until a new purpose-built store could be established. All of this was going on whilst their second outlet was in the process of – let's call it: an exhaustive development application.



1/ Nicky Ainley and her husband Chris Lavis of C&N Mitre 10. Image: Chris Parker



2/ Eva Dellow, Truett Dellow, Ron Gattone and Declan Williamson – team Masswood. Image: Chris Parker



3/ Masswood's impressive 24m hydraulic vertical press. Image: Masswood/Sophie B Photography

Eventually the DA was approved and in true Nicky style, the garden area includes a beautiful coffee trailer fitted out with a full-service barista.

Congratulations to Nicky and Chris for their dedication, hard work and great results.

TEAM MASSWOOD

Our sister publication *Timber Trader News* first featured the team from Masswood in our Jan/Feb 2025 issue (Masswood: your

new partner for glulam and finger jointing solutions) and it was then we meet Declan Williamson who was then undertaking an apprenticeship. Declan won Trainee / Apprentice of the year in 2024.

Friday night was the final step in Declan's journey, and we were very pleased to witness him receive his certificate III in Timber and Wood Products Operations. Well done Declan, you are an important part of team Masswood, and everyone is very proud of you.

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Responsible Wood CEO Simon Dorries announces resignation

RW BOARD ANNOUNCEMENT

ON behalf of the Board of Responsible Wood, I wish to advise that our Chief Executive Officer, Simon Dorries, has tendered his resignation after more than 11 years of dedicated service to Responsible Wood and sustainable forest certification in Australia.

Simon joined the organisation in May 2015 and has played an instrumental role in the development and growth of Responsible Wood and the PEFC certification system in Australia. During his time as CEO, Responsible Wood has strengthened its position as Australia's leading forest certification scheme, while building greater awareness of the importance of sustainably managed forests and responsibly sourced wood and paper products.

Simon has always been much more than simply the CEO of Responsible Wood. He genuinely believes in certification, in

the principles behind PEFC, and in the role responsible forest management can play in supporting our forests, our industry and the communities that depend upon them.

His passion, technical knowledge and commitment to Responsible Wood have been evident throughout his leadership. He has represented the organisation nationally and internationally with professionalism and integrity and has built strong relationships across the forest and wood products sector, government, environmental organisations and the broader PEFC network.

Simon has made the decision to take on a new professional opportunity as he begins transitioning towards eventual retirement. While we are naturally disappointed to see him leave Responsible Wood, the Board fully supports his decision and wishes him every success in this next chapter.

On behalf of the Board, our members and the broader Responsible Wood

community, I sincerely thank Simon for his outstanding contribution over the past 11 years. He leaves Responsible Wood in a strong position and with a legacy of which he should be extremely proud.

The Board will shortly commence a recruitment process for the next Chief Executive Officer of Responsible Wood, with the position to be publicly advertised. During this transition, Matt de Jongh, Responsible Wood's Sustainability Manager, will act in the CEO role, ensuring continuity for our members, certificate holders, stakeholders and PEFC partners. Responsible Wood's work and commitment to forest certification and responsible sourcing will continue without interruption.

We look forward to acknowledging Simon's contribution more formally before his departure and, most importantly, thanking him for the passion and commitment he has given Responsible Wood over so many years.

Exclusive interview with Simon Dorries

Enews called Simon to wish him all the very best and thank him for his outstanding service over the past 11 years. Many readers will be interested to know Simon is planning his transition to retirement but will remain with Responsible Wood until the end of September and will also attend the Annual General Meeting in October.

Simon is handing over the reins to Matt de Jongh. Matt is currently sustainability manager with Responsible Wood and has been with RW for more than 4 years. The Board is responsible to review potential applicants to formally appoint a replacement.

Simon holds a Bachelor of Applied Science and has worked in the Forest and Wood Products Industry for over 35 years. He commenced with the Plywood Association of Australia in 1985 as a cadet scientist while undertaking a science degree through part-time study. Simon stayed with

the Plywood Association for 30 years through a number of name changes to eventually become General Manager of the Engineered Wood Products Association of Australasia.

Now, in addition to his role as CEO at Responsible Wood, Simon is currently Chair of Standards Australia Committee TM-011 Engineered Wood Products.

We asked Simon to list 3 memorable events, and these are:

"Changing the name and branding from Australian Forestry Standards to Responsible Wood."

"The outstanding success and significant update in 2021 with the revision of standard AUS./NZ 4708."

"Following this revision, recognition of the standard 4708 with the Green Building Council."

We went on further to ask Simon about the growth of PEFC within Australia and where they are today.



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

Simon replied with "98% of all commercial growers in Australia are now certified with PEFC through Responsible Wood."

When asked about personal relationships, Simon replied with "It is a great industry to serve, filled with amazing people and we at Responsible Wood have a great team and it has been my honour to be part of that."

We wanted to explore more about his transition to retirement and Simon replied with "My plan is to still work within the industry and around 2 days per week from home and will announce more about this, later in the year"

Today is R U OK? Day

Look after the people who keep your business moving forward and encourage others to have the conversation too.

TIMBER, forestry and related businesses, you know the individuals who are in your team. We all know that the people around us go through life's ups and downs, which is why we encourage you to not underestimate the power of an R U OK? conversation.

The R U OK? Organisation has undertaken research which identified that a third of people don't realise the difference they can make by checking in with someone they care about despite the fact the 9 out of 10 of those asked, 'Are you OK?' reported feeling grateful, cared about and supported.

They also state that 1 in 4 people might hesitate to ask even when they think someone is struggling. That is why we are being reminded that if someone's on your mind, trust your instinct and start a conversation.

A conversation could change a life.

R U OK? recommends four simple steps:

- Ask,
- Listen,
- Encourage action,
- Check in.

You don't have to solve the problem, being willing to give someone a safe space and the time to talk is the most important thing you can do.

Looking after the mental health and well-being of your team is part of creating a supportive, safe workspace. Psychosocial hazards in the workplace are real and may include bullying, excessive workloads, conflict, poor workplace relationships and fatigue. All issues that can affect workers' mental and physical health.

So, this R U OK? Day, take the opportunity and a little time and have a

chat over coffee. Check in with someone on the other side of the desk, talk in the warehouse or out in the yard and ask how someone's really going.

And if someone says they're not OK, don't brush it off. Listen, encourage them to seek appropriate support and check back in.

Because a successful team isn't just one that's achieving their KPI's and making money, it's also one that genuinely looks out for others, and you and your business will be better in the long run.

Support services 24/7:

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Preparing for the fire season ahead

FORESTRY Corporation firefighters have stepped up preparations for the approaching bushfire season through a five-day intensive training camp on the Mid North Coast.

Held at Mount Seaview near Wauchope, the camp brought together 45 staff members completing nationally recognised qualifications in Fire Fighter, Advanced Fire Fighter and Crew Leader roles.

Forestry Corporation Fire Training and Operations Coordinator Nathan Fischer said the fire camps play an important role in ensuring firefighters are prepared to protect communities, forests and assets during the fire season.

"Forestry Corporation has a responsibility as a firefighting authority to ensure our people are trained, capable and ready to respond to fires in the landscape," Mr Fischer said.

"With two million hectares of State forests across NSW, it's essential we maintain a skilled workforce that can respond safely and effectively wherever they're needed.

"The training combines classroom learning with practical field exercises, helping firefighters build confidence and capability in fire behaviour, tactics, leadership, communications and equipment operation."

The camp included a live fire scenario, providing participants with hands-on experience in a realistic fire situation.

Among those undertaking training was Tamworth-based Production Supervisor Mat Newberry, who completed a Crew Leader course having previously gained qualifications as a Firefighter and



1/ **Mat Newberry undertaking his crew leader course.**

2/ **Just one of the teams undertaking firefighting training.** All images: FCNSW

Advanced Firefighter.

Mr Newberry joined Forestry Corporation as a seasonal firefighter after serving 16 years with Fire and Rescue NSW and said the Crew Leader course provided valuable insight into the responsibilities of leading a team of firefighters.

"The biggest shift as a Crew Leader is moving from being on the tools to looking at the broader operation," Mr Newberry said.

"You're responsible for the safety and wellbeing of your crew, identifying hazards and risks, monitoring changing fire conditions and making sure critical information is communicated from your position on the fireground to those managing the operation."

Having worked in both structural and forest firefighting environments, Mr Newberry said the experience had broadened his understanding of fire management.

"Forest firefighting is vastly different to structural firefighting, and it presents a unique set of challenges as we often see across the state over spring and summer," he said.

"Since joining Forestry Corporation, I've had the opportunity to expand my knowledge and experience through wildfire operations and specialist training, including working as a Planning Officer within Incident Management Teams during major incidents."

"These training camps are beneficial to our staff, the instructors bring a huge amount of experience and knowledge to the training, and it's a great chance to learn from people who have worked on fires in different forest types across NSW and beyond," he said.

"It also helps build relationships with other Forestry Corporation firefighters, which is important when you're working together during major incidents."

Forestry Corporation currently has around 500 staff members trained as forest firefighters.

The organisation also maintains a statewide fleet of fire tankers, light vehicles fitted with firefighting equipment, contracted aircraft and more than 100 drones operated by trained pilots.

Heavy plant machinery used in forest operations, including bulldozers, is also made available through the broader forest and timber industry to support firefighting efforts across NSW.

Forestry Corporation is currently planning further fire training camps at Wallerawang near Lithgow in September and at Bondi Forest Lodge near Bombala in October.

Click here to learn more about Forestry Corporation's firefighting operations.



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Hyne Group looks to sell XLAM

THE Hyne Group announced it has commenced a strategic review of its XLAM Cross Laminated Timber (CLT) manufacturing business. Whilst XLAM has been the southern hemisphere's pioneer and leading manufacturer of CLT, the division's specialist focus on the commercial construction sector has limited alignment with the Hyne Group's continued targeted expansion in Australia and New Zealand, nor does it fit with the long-term strategy of the Group's parent company, James Jones & Sons Ltd.

The review will assess all scenarios, but the preferred outcome is to secure a new owner with the capability, passion and commitment to build on XLAM's strong foundation, continuing to manufacture Cross Laminated Timber and providing specialised design and engineering services that support sustainable, carbon-storing construction throughout Australia, New Zealand and the broader southern hemisphere.

The Group has therefore commenced a formal process to seek expressions of interest from suitably qualified parties within Australia and New Zealand, as well as North America and Europe.

XLAM remains very well positioned to benefit from the growing adoption of 'Modern Methods of Construction' and demand for innovative building solutions. These include prefabricated and modular building systems, hybrid timber construction and vertical building

extensions, where the strength-to-weight advantages and carbon storage benefits of Cross Laminated Timber continue to build market share and market penetration.

Hyne Group Chief Executive Officer Jim Bindon said the Group remained optimistic that a suitable purchaser could be found while being transparent with employees, customers and stakeholders about the process.

"Over the past 14 years, the XLAM team has established the business as Australia's leading Cross Laminated Timber manufacturer, delivering some of Australia and New Zealand's most innovative and award-winning timber buildings while genuinely advancing the use of sustainable construction."

"Our clear preference is to see XLAM continue under new ownership, preserving its manufacturing capability,

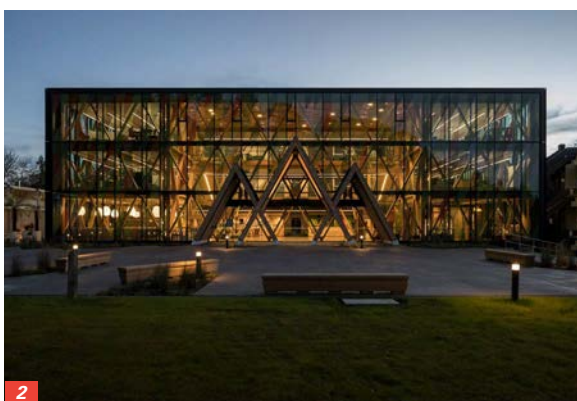
specialist expertise and the opportunities it creates for our people, customers and the broader construction industry."

"XLAM is a highly respected business with world-class manufacturing capability, experienced technical expertise and an enviable portfolio of landmark projects. We believe it offers a compelling opportunity for an organisation whose long-term strategy is centred on mass timber, prefabricated and modular construction, and the commercial construction industry."

The Hyne Group will work closely with employees, customers, suppliers and government throughout this process and will provide further updates as appropriate.

Enews contacted Katie Fowden who stated the initial EOI period was open until 30 September, and all enquiries should be directed to her.

Contact the Hyne Group's General Manager, Corporate Affairs, Katie Fowden on katie.fowden@hyne.com.au



1/ Inside XLAM's CLT Factory at Wodonga, Vic. Image: XLAM
2/ Featuring XLAM project - Scion Innovation Hub, Rotorua NZ. Image: Patrick Reynolds/Scion Innovation Hub, Te Whare Nui o Tuteata, Rotorua, NZ

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More timber design excellence

Another six standout finalists in the 2026 Australian Timber Design Awards.

COMMERCIAL BUILDING

MEET New Sydney Fish Market by 3XN, in association with BVN and ASPECT Studios, a finalist in this year's Commercial Building category

At Blackwattle Bay on Sydney Harbour, this bold new landmark reimagines the traditional working fish market as a contemporary public institution and global destination, turning the market-typology inside-out to give visitors an authentic, behind-the-scenes experience of a leading waterfront destination. Beneath the roof canopy sits a public market hall twice the size of the previous site, with 12,000sqm of fishmongers, restaurants, cafés and specialist vendors, while a large-span timber structure keeps the hall column-free and flexible.

The hallmark of the design is the roof itself: a sweeping timber and aluminium canopy spanning 20,000sqm, made from over 6,000 lineal metres of engineered timber and 594 glulam beams. It's Australia's largest engineered timber roof, delivered using DfMA principles, with a double-curved geometry integrating structure, environmental systems and civic identity in one move. It admits diffuse daylight, enables natural ventilation, supports a photovoltaic array and harvests rainwater for reuse, storing more than 1,000 tonnes of biogenic carbon along the way.

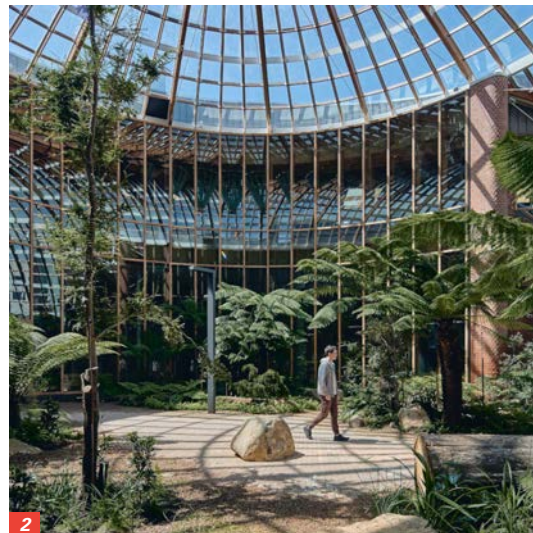
The glulam is glued laminated European spruce, manufactured by Rubner in Italy from PEFC-certified forests, enabling spans of up to 32.7m over a marine structure while easing the load on a building constructed over water. The project achieved a 5 Star Green Star Design & As Built rating, with passive design and a large PV array delivering a 35% reduction in operational energy.

PUBLIC BUILDING

Meet **"The Forest"** by Woods Bagot - a finalist in this year's Public Building category.



1/ View of the internal timber roof structure showing the wave light panels.



2/ Internal view of the walls and roof structure.

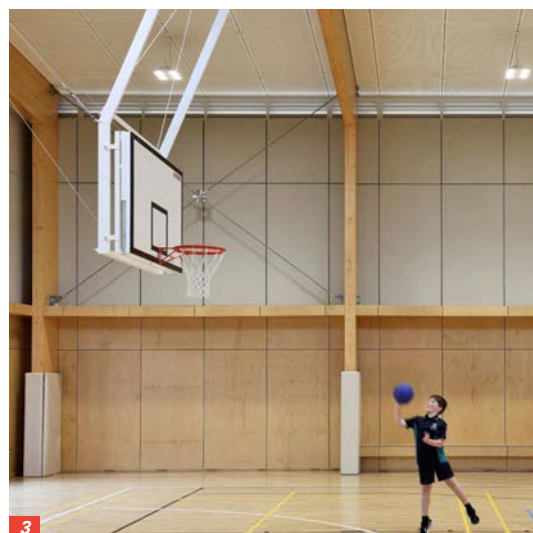
3/ Sprung timber flooring using Oak with hoop pine panels lining the walls.

All images: supplied by Timber Design Awards

Delivered for the University of Tasmania in Hobart, The Forest is a highly connected campus that knits together existing buildings through adaptive reuse, mass timber and Australia's largest commercial application of hempcrete. Rather than a single new building, the brief called for a campus - a fluid educational ecosystem of collaboration spaces, quiet study and civic gathering, tied together by a connective ground plane.

The new-build component uses a mass timber framed roof with Tasmanian Oak GLT columns and beams, exposed throughout the teaching and study spaces. Some of the timber is on its third life - originally fitted out in the Crisp and Gunn warehouse in the early 1900s, repurposed again in the 1990s for the Forestry Tasmania Building, and now reused as wall panelling, including 100-year-old Oregon beams that first travelled from the United States over a century ago.

By retaining 60% of the existing onsite structures and designing every new element for disassembly and adaptability, the project achieved a 40% reduction in upfront carbon against a reference scenario.



SPORTS & RECREATION

Meet Roleystone Community College Additions and Alterations by With Architecture Studio, a finalist in this year's Sports & Recreation category.

Located at an independent public school in the hills southeast of Perth, this new Sports and Drama building is the first mass timber building for the Department of Education in Western Australia. Large timber portal frames encase the playing courts below, with glulam columns fixed to precast concrete pedestals and a roof spanning 21 metres in a single span across the space.

The glulam structure uses spruce throughout, while load-bearing timber

From P 14

framing in treated pine carries through the rest of the building. Inside, sprung timber flooring in oak engineered hardwood meets the performance demands of the sports hall and drama rooms, and pre-finished hoop pine plywood panels line the walls to a datum height of 3m, giving students the chance to engage with the timber at a personal scale. Due to bushfire requirements external timber use was minimal, but a tongue-and-groove spotted gum soffit still threads timber through the building's exterior.

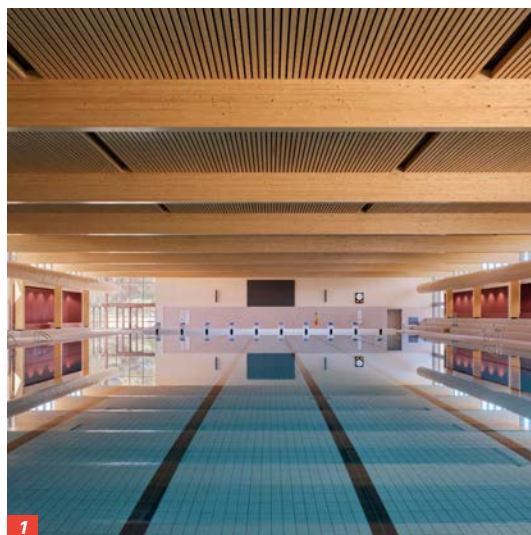
The project is part of a Department of Education trial to lower the carbon footprint of WA public schools, combining structural timber, timber-based linings and timber stud frames with site-wide cement reduction and reclaimed brick. Together, these choices cut building carbon emissions by 50% against the business-as-usual design.

Meet **Adelaide Aquatic Centre** by JPE Design Studio, Warren and Mahoney and Karl Winda Telfer, a finalist in this year's Sports & Recreation category.

Completed at the end of 2025, this new benchmark for sustainable leisure and sports infrastructure accommodates everyone from high-performance athletes to families and rehabilitation patients, with a 50 metre indoor competition pool, a 25 metre outdoor pool, dedicated therapy pools, water play areas and integrated fitness and wellness spaces.

The defining move is structural: the primary load-bearing system is built almost entirely in engineered timber, with approximately 324m³ of glulam and 108m³ of CLT forming the building's core. Major beam components up to 37 metres long, supplied full length, are among the largest timber beams ever used in Australia, spanning the main aquatic halls column-free. Full-length precambered beams eliminated critical connections above the corrosive pool environment, improving durability while reducing cost, with connection design specifically tailored for the C4 corrosion zone.

Around 3,130m² of prefabricated acoustic timber ceiling modules integrate structure, acoustics and design into a single system, while the timber components themselves were prefabricated in Hermagor, Austria and



1

1/ **Featuring prefabricated acoustic timber ceiling modules.**

2/ **Full outside view of the completed project.**

3/ **Concierge desk handcrafted from Blackbutt and Blue Gum.** All images: supplied by Timber Design Awards

shipped via Zeebrugge to Melbourne before final delivery to Adelaide, a genuinely international feat of logistics and coordination.

The all-electric building runs on no fossil fuels, with demand-controlled ventilation, heat recovery, a four-pipe heat pump system and a 450kW rooftop PV array, guided by Green Star principles throughout design.

RESIDENTIAL CLASS 1 - ALTERATION OR ADDITION

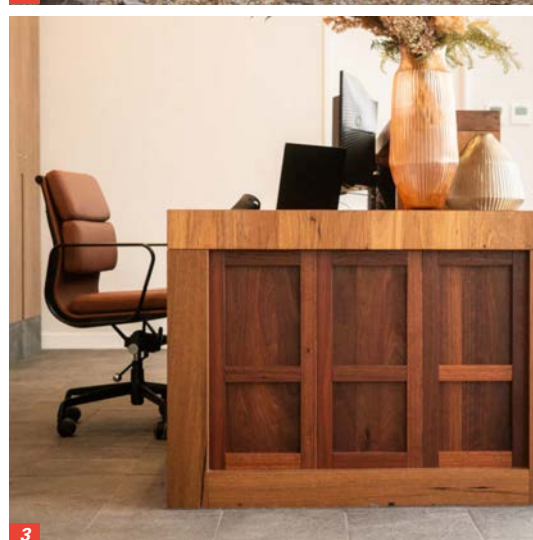
Meet **Wilson's Cottage** by Casey Brown Architecture - a finalist in this year's Residential Class 1 - Alteration or Addition category.

On the south coast at Kiama, Wilson's Cottage is a careful transformation of a 10 x 10 metre garage into a compact three-bedroom family home. The original steel posts, beams and roof structure were retained and reworked, with the mezzanine and roof cruciform strengthened using large recycled ironbark beams, wire-brushed back to their original patina.

Every piece of timber in the cottage carries its own history. Floorboards, wall linings and structural timbers were recovered from the demolished Summer Hill Flour Mill and a torn-down cottage on the site itself, then collected, stored and reworked in a shed on site before being installed. Recycled spotted gum lines the walls and ceilings, following the line of the original roof, while externally the rough-sawn recycled cladding is stained black with hardwood cover battens marking each



2



3

joint and 95% of the structure is timber. Almost all the timber is reclaimed, the result of a project that found a compact family home entirely within what was already there.

FURNITURE & JOINERY

Meet the **Anzac Park East Concierge Desks** by Thor's Hammer, a finalist in this year's Furniture & Joinery category.

Commissioned by Amalgamated Property Group, these two sculptural desks welcome visitors to the new Anzac Park East precinct in Canberra. Rather than conventional reception furniture, the brief called for pieces that speak to the history of the site. Their design translates the original Anzac East building's façade, vertical window rhythm and structural columns into contemporary timber joinery.

Built from recycled Blackbutt and Blue Gum salvaged from Canberra homes constructed in the 1960s, each desk required more than 100 hours of craftsmanship to complete. The timber's age was chosen deliberately, connecting the era of the original building with the one that has replaced it.

Bathla Group collapse given a short-term lifeline

AT the time of writing, the debt-ridden Bathla Group had just reached a short-term funding agreement with five of its lenders – allowing it to continue for another two weeks.

According to a statement released by the administrator, Teneo, the funding will allow construction to continue for those exclusive lenders' projects. However, construction on other projects has been suspended, resulting in 213 employees being stood down.

The group is reported to have around 350 employees, with a number of these on working visas.

The Bathla Group head office is located at 137 Gilba Road, Girraween in NSW and total debt has been reported to be \$3.4 billion. This level of failure could have a significant impact on suppliers, subbies and businesses throughout NSW in particular and that full impact won't occur overnight.

In an interview this week, Premier Chris Minns was asked if he had been approached for financial assistance and he replied with "Yes. We [NSW Government] were asked for an initial \$20m immediate cash injection followed by another potential \$100m but said his Government would not bail out a private company." He went on later to say he would not rule out discussing with the administrator - funding to potentially assist with the completion of what has been reported as 3000 unfinished homes under construction.

SUPPLIERS AND SUBBIES ACT AS CASHFLOW BUFFERS

The structure of the construction industry leaves large suppliers and subcontractors particularly vulnerable when a major builder or developer fails.

Subcontractors often finance projects before receiving payment, covering labour, materials, and equipment costs while awaiting progress payments according to contractor agreements. When a builder or developer fails, expected payments may have been delayed and then cease, but the supplier or subcontractor bills don't stop. Wages,



Volume homes under construction. Image: Shutterstock

equipment finance, their own suppliers, raw materials, PAYG and super must still be paid. That's how one company's cashflow problem quickly hits the next business – the domino effect.

CONSTRUCTION ALREADY UNDER PRESSURE

The warning comes as Australia's construction sector continues to record elevated levels of insolvency. More than 3400 construction companies entered external administration in the 12 months to June 2026, accounting for around a quarter of corporate insolvencies across Australia. In NSW more than 1500 construction businesses entered external administration during the financial year. With Bathla Group yet to be included, NSW has a lot of potential pain to come.

Financial distress in the sector is also increasingly reaching business owners personally. Australian Financial Security Authority (AFSA) latest June-quarter figures show 30.4 per cent of personal insolvencies involved people with business interests. AFSA has also identified growing vulnerability among people working in construction and labour-intensive industries, while its latest industry analysis shows construction accounted for 22.9 per cent of business-related personal insolvencies - the highest of any industry.

PROTECT YOUR BUSINESS AND WATCH FOR THE EARLY SIGNS

Watch for changes in debtor payment behaviour. Typically accounts slip

and become overdue and this increases with each subsequent payment.

Sometimes, payments don't settle the full amount due for that period or claim. Watch for requests to increase trade account limits,

payment extensions or where your calls are not returned and/or explanations are vague or simply don't feel right. These can be warning signs that somebody else's cashflow problem is going to become yours.

PRACTICAL STEPS FOR ALL BUSINESSES

- Review trade accounts on a regular basis. Paying close attention to the level of debt, your imposed credit limit, length of time to pay and review history.
- Do you have any customers working for or with debts owed to them by Bathla Group (there are going to be a lot). It is time to ask.
- Don't be afraid to contact your customer and place the account on hold if risk is growing or you hold concerns. Manage your business risk and exposure.
- Review your title procedures and check if you are/can use Personal Property Securities Register (PPSR).
- Consider credit risk insurance cover and if you have it in place, it could be time for a review.

A large collapse like Bathla Group could take 18 months or more to work its way through the various levels of businesses and supply chains. Take steps now to understand your potential exposure through your business and those closer to the group.

Don't be afraid to look at new markets and customers operating in different fields. Now could be the time to increase the marketing budget. The steps you take today could save your tomorrow.

FSC unifies Australia–New Zealand governance

THE VOTE WAS UNANIMOUS

THIS decision marks an important milestone for FSC across the region, solidifying a formal role for New Zealand-based members in FSC Australia and New Zealand's (FSC ANZ) governance and laying a stronger foundation for expanding FSC's work, engagement, and impact in New Zealand.

Voting closed on Monday 3 August, with all ballots collated and independently verified by FSC ANZ's Company Secretary. Every vote cast by New Zealand-based FSC members was in favour of the proposed model. This follows the passing of three special resolutions at FSC Australia's AGM in May enabling the proposed cross-Tasman governance arrangements.

New Zealand-based directors will be added to the FSC ANZ Board at the next Annual General Meeting to strengthen New Zealand's representation and voice across the organisation's Environmental, Social and Economic chambers.

Importantly, this is just the beginning.

FSC ANZ is planning to establish a dedicated presence in New Zealand, adding a new team member based in the country to work closely with members, certificate holders and stakeholders on the ground. This role will enable



FSC-protected NZ forest. Image: supplied



FSC ANZ to continue its work of building stronger relationships, supporting greater engagement, and creating new opportunities to advance FSC's mission across New Zealand.

FSC AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND

"We're really excited about what this next chapter means for FSC in New Zealand," said Melanie Robertson, CEO of FSC Australia and New Zealand.

"This decision has been driven and owned by our New Zealand-based

members, and we're pleased to have reached this point. We want to strengthen our relationships in New Zealand, be more connected to the people and organisations working there while increasing FSC's impact. Having a team member based in New Zealand will be an important part of that."

This development reflects FSC ANZ's ambition to work more closely across both countries while recognising the unique opportunities and needs of the New Zealand market.

FSC ANZ will now work with the Board of Directors and FSC International to progress implementation of the new governance model, while continuing to engage with all members across Australia and New Zealand on timelines and the transition process.

For FSC, New Zealand is a crucial part of the organisation's future, and we are investing in building that future together with our members and stakeholders.

“EVERY VOTE CAST BY NEW ZEALAND-BASED FSC MEMBERS WAS IN FAVOUR OF THE PROPOSED MODEL



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