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New trade remedies body a win for AFPA

COVER STORY P2

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AFPA welcomes new trade remedy

A win in Federal Parliament last week tops off a busy year for AFPA.

AFPA has welcomed legislation passed by Federal Parliament last week to establish a single, specialist trade remedies body to better support Australian timber manufacturers.

The Customs Amendment (Safeguard Inquiries) Bill 2026 transfers responsibility for conducting safeguard inquiries from the Productivity Commission to the Anti-Dumping Commission, which will be renamed the Australian Trade Remedies Commission (ATRC).

AFPA acting CEO Richard Hyett said: "We sincerely thank the Federal Government for strengthening Australia's trade remedy arrangements and recognising the need for greater specialist capability.

"Moving responsibility for safeguard actions from the Productivity Commission into a single specialist agency – the ATRC – will help to improve the capabilities and effectiveness of the overall trade remedies system.

"Consolidating responsibility for all trade remedies functions within the ATRC will also enhance regulatory efficiency, streamline processes and provide Australian manufacturers and consumers with a single expert body."



Attendees at the AFPA events in Hobart included (L-R) Dr Julianne O'Reilly-Wapstra, currently at the University of Tasmania; Christian Staacke from AFPA; Dr Patrick Mitchell, deputy director at AFWI; and Tim Lester from AFPA. Image: courtesy Australian Forest Products Association

Hyett said the widespread support for the legislation demonstrated these changes and their objectives have been well received across industry and other stakeholders. AFPA's submission on the bill ([click here](#) to read) called for a clear and accessible pathway for Australian industries to bring forward cases to the ATRC when they believe they are being harmed by unfair or damaging trade practices.

"However, we remain concerned that the ATRC must be provided with adequate resources to fulfil its expanded remit and undertake its responsibilities effectively," Hyett said. "Furthermore, international trading systems are evolving rapidly due to significant geopolitical uncertainty. Australia must be vigilant and look to

continue to evolve our trade remedies system to meet the increased risks of the changing landscape."

The Canberra win followed hard on the heels of AFPA's successful September supply chain meetings, Annual General Meeting and dinner in Hobart. Federal Minister for Agriculture Julie Collins MP was one of the guest speakers at the dinner, where she took the opportunity to announce an additional \$150 million in the Federal Government's Forestry Growth Fund (see *Enews* #915).

The Minister told those assembled: "Our Government's political opponents have sought in recent weeks to portray your industry, and these jobs in regional Australia including right here in Tasmania, as a threat. So I want to be clear with you this evening that our Government does not see your industry as a threat.

"We know it is a huge opportunity. Which is why the investments I am announcing tonight are so critical. Forestry is an industry we will continue to back," Minister Collins concluded.

On the cover: Federal Minister for Agriculture and Forestry Julie Collins MP speaking to AFPA members in Hobart about the Federal Government's support for forestry. Image: AFPA



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FSC Forest Week calls on businesses and consumers to take action.

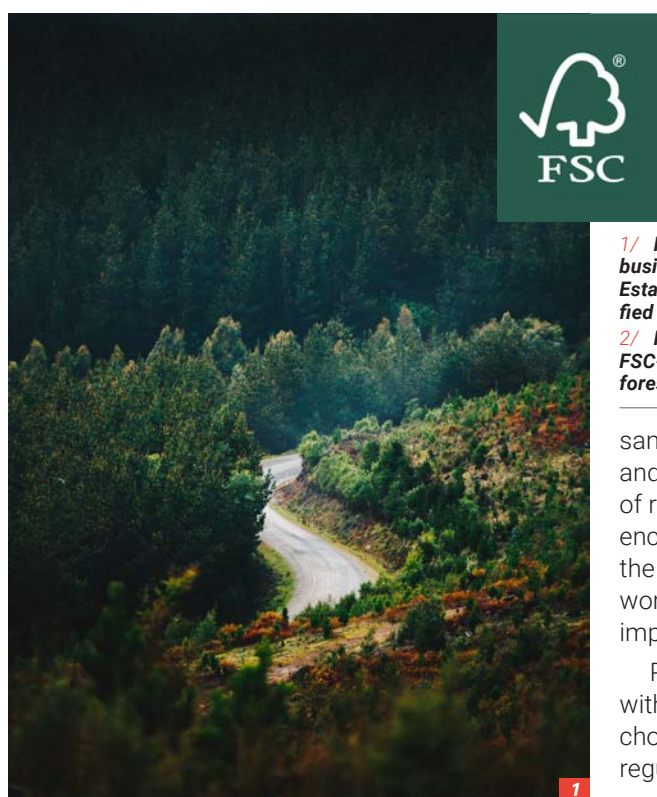
FSC's Forest Week campaign is currently running from 21–27 September, bringing together brands, manufacturers, forest managers, consumers, NGOs, industry groups and more to raise awareness of responsible forest management and its vital role in addressing climate change and biodiversity loss.

Forests cover nearly 32% (about 4.14 billion hectares) of the world's land area, providing habitat for much of the world's biodiversity, helping regulate global carbon and water cycles, and supporting food security, local livelihoods, renewable biomaterials and energy. As the climate and biodiversity crises continue to intensify, there has never been a more important time to raise awareness and encourage positive action for forests.

Since its launch, FSC Forest Week has grown into a powerful global movement. From community engagement activities and workplace initiatives to forest walks and FSC-certified product launches, participants continue to find new and engaging ways to connect people with forests and amplify the campaign's impact every year.

Under this year's theme 'Do one thing for forests', FSC encourages everyone to take one positive action for forests and inspire others to do the

“FSC FOREST WEEK HAS GROWN INTO A POWERFUL GLOBAL MOVEMENT



forest week 

2

1/ FSC took some of Australia's leading businesses into Timberlands Pacific's Taswood Estate in northern Tasmania to learn about certified forestry on this year's official forest walk.

2/ From educating customers to choosing FSC-certified products, this week, do one thing for forests. Images: supplied

same. By getting involved, businesses and individuals help raise awareness of responsible forest management and encourage their community to consider the one thing they can do to support the world's forests while strengthening the impact of FSC's work together.

Positive action for forests can start with the materials and products we choose every day. Many products we regularly rely upon, from paper and

packaging to furniture and building materials, come from forests, and responsible sourcing is a crucial consideration across supply chains and purchasing decisions.

Research commissioned by FSC shows that consumers are increasingly looking to make a positive impact through their everyday choices, with three out of four preferring products that do not harm plants and animals, and two out of four wanting to protect forests by buying independently certified products ([click here](#) for more details). By choosing responsibly sourced forest-based products, businesses and consumers alike can help support forests, protect wildlife and contribute to thriving communities.

This FSC Forest Week, what's your one thing for forests?



Alison Penfold fighting for timber

The National MP for Lyne has been a staunch defender of the sector and an even stronger opponent of the INFM.

By **DONYALE HARRISON**

ALISON Penfold, Federal MP for Lyne, has a long history of standing up for the forestry industry in her electorate and beyond. Recently, she made an impassioned statement in the House of Representatives about the impacts of the Improved Native Forestry Management (INFM) method on timber workers (see *Enews* #916) before the disallowance motion was voted down.

Enews spoke with Penfold last week on the INFM's impacts, which are already being felt by locals in the Wauchope region thanks to the native forestry harvesting moratorium in the wake of last year's Great Koala National Park announcement.

"We had workers hauled in at Herons Creek mill and the initial round of redundancies," Penfold said. "And then the green mill shut. It was a pretty big mill, 10 kilometres from where I live in Wauchope, and now it's gone.

"The remaining mills say their supply of logs is significantly down and some of what they're getting is scrappy, while at the retail end, they've had their sales of hardwoods for decking and so on reduced by a third."

Penfold mentioned she will be meeting with more mill teams when she is back home from Canberra, but this month has been largely about the fight against the INFM.

"At the heart of the matter is the fact it's a motion that's taken over sensible policy on forestry," she said. "The hard yards had already been done in terms of sustainable forestry: the three-year harvesting plans, the time that the foresters spend working out which trees to select, which ones to leave, all the



1/ Alison Penfold MP (right) with her team at a mobile office in her electorate. Getting out into the electorate has made clear the impacts of forestry closures.

2/ Alison Penfold with Nationals Leader Matt Canavan (left) and AFP's Richard Hyett at National Forestry Day this year. All images: supplied

rules on protecting threatened areas and species.

"Now we've ended up with a completely emotional policy based purely on politics that isn't going to make one iota of difference to koala or glider populations. But what it has done is brought misery on communities up and down the coast. I don't think we've seen the end of the job losses. I certainly don't think we've seen the end of the mill closures either."

“WE’VE ENDED UP WITH A COMPLETELY EMOTIONAL POLICY BASED PURELY ON POLITICS”

The timber sector has underpinned the economy in Lyne since the mid-19th century. While the peak has long passed, the remaining jobs had been considered stable and well paying, giving regional families security and putting much-needed cash injections into the community, from machinists and mechanics who supported the mills themselves, to logging and haulage contractors, local lunch spots and even accountants. More broadly the local schools and volunteer groups had relied on donations and residents from the successful sector. Now, it's all being taken away based on a myth – a myth that is causing significant anger in her electorate.

"I know many of the people that work in the mills and who own them, and they are good people who will be hugely affected by this," Penfold said, noting that it is particularly upsetting to see much of the flawed rationale behind the INFM coming out of ANU.

The Senate debate on 10 September was guillotined, meaning there was a strict time limit imposed by the Minister, only 40 minutes in the House of Representatives. "We had many people on our side who wanted to speak," Penfold said. "All Chris Bowen and his Assistant Minister could talk about was the academics of the decision. I'm an alumni of the ANU and, when I was there, it had the best forestry program. They loved the forest; they knew it backwards and forwards, and actually taught proper sustainability, proper environmental management. Now it's all how to shut down a forest.

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From P 4

"It breaks my heart to see where we've ended up in this country on forestry policy. I've seen it happen in live export. We're heading that way again with fisheries. There's consistency across the way that Labor governments look at productive industries."

She added, "Quite frankly, regional communities are sick and tired of being told how to live, what industries they can have, what cars they can drive, what energy they can use. That's why there's such anger out there."

It's particularly frustrating for Penfold because she doesn't attribute the actions of the ALP to malice. "They're decent people on the other side of the House, but this is just not an issue they give a shit about. It's outside their ballpark," she said, before apologising for her very understandable swearing.

"The Labor party wants be holier than thou when it comes to climate change. But there's no holier than thou in the misery they're wreaking on regional Australia. And they're taking all their advice from the David Lindenmayers of the world, not from the real people making the decisions in the forests, who frankly do care more about the forests than that side of the Parliament."

Penfold is certain that the decision not to disallow the INFM as an Australian Carbon Credit Unit (ACCU) method was not based on parliamentarians having a solid understanding of the issues



The timber industry is central to the electorate of Lyne, from reliable jobs that support the community to supporting community ventures including the Bulahdelah Men's Shed.

involved. "No one has even mentioned the alternative ACCU method proposed by Forestry Australia that was ignored in favour of the INFM," she said.

"But in this particular case, we shouldn't be using ACCUs at all. The Great Koala National Park was announced first: there is no potential for additional carbon savings here because the decision to create the park was already taken. It's a complete breach and a complete undermining of the Australian carbon credit scheme, and this government has allowed it to happen on their watch.

"We haven't even talked about the leakage in the INFM method: the people who voted against the disallowance have

voted for importing timbers from far less protected forests. I hope they can sleep well knowing the damage they're going to do to the orangutans."

As for the economic benefits for regional Australia that Minister Bowen alleged would flow from the INFM during the Parliamentary debate, Penfold is blunt: "This is just a fallacy. This is gaslighting Australians.

"The Minister talked about economic diversity, but he would not have a clue what economic diversity looks like," said Penfold.

She explained that many replacement jobs for those lost in forestry and timber production were expected to come from tourism opportunities and jobs with the National Parks and Wildlife Service. "I have huge respect for the work of the National Parks Service," Penfold said, "but there are no jobs. There is no tourism. The small number of Parks jobs planned are a fraction of those being lost.

"We also need to ask who is going to be properly managing the forest. So many National Parks are locked up, you can't even get into some areas. We know that the real danger to koalas is not from forestry; it's from hot-burning fires. So, I think suggesting that this move is good for wildlife is the biggest fallacy."

Enews asked if any of Penfold's local RFS branches had heard about increased

“REGIONAL COMMUNITIES ARE SICK AND TIRED OF BEING TOLD HOW TO LIVE

Cont P 6

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NSW forestry approvals

The NSW government has called for input on future forestry approval pathways.

THE Federal Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water has announced a strategic assessment underway to support sustainable forestry operations in regions covered by Regional Forest Agreements (RFAs) in NSW.

There are three RFAs for the Eden, North East and Southern regions in NSW. These RFAs cover both public and private forests and set a framework for:

- ecologically sustainable management and use of forest resource
- long-term stability of forests and forest-based industries
- establishment of a comprehensive, adequate and representative reserve system to protect environmental values including old-growth, wilderness and biodiversity.

Forestry operations in RFA regions are currently exempt under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act). As part of recent changes to the environmental legislation, this will end on 30 June, 2027 and RFA forestry operations will need approval under the EPBC Act if they are likely to have a significant impact on matters of national environmental significance.

The Australian and NSW governments are working together to develop a landscape scale approval pathway for forestry operations in NSW RFA



The NSW Government is seeking feedback on a strategic assessment of forestry operations in NSW RFA areas under the EPBC Act. Image: courtesy Forestry Corporation of NSW

regions delivered through a strategic assessment.

The strategic assessment will provide industry certainty and strengthen environmental protections, examining the potential impacts of forestry operations on matters of national environmental significance within the NSW RFA regions of Eden, Southern, and North East NSW.

Matters of national environmental significance include:

- threatened species and ecological communities
- migratory species



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The assessment will consider the potential impacts and identify ways to manage impacts from public native forestry, private native forestry and plantation forestry operations conducted under relevant

NSW forestry laws, codes, plans and approvals.

If approved, the strategic assessment will:

- provide a landscape-scale approach to protecting Matters of National Environmental Significance in NSW forests;
- provide environmental benefits for forests in NSW;
- give industry and the community certainty; and
- allow covered forestry activities to proceed without separate EPBC Act project approvals.

The NSW government is currently accepting comments on the draft terms of reference until 16 October 2026. **Click here** for the feedback form and more information.

From P 5

funding with the loss of forestry fires crews from the area. "Nobody is thinking of them," was the blunt reply.

"I've been talking to a lot of my crews because they're out with the start of the fire season," Penfold said. "They're out doing awareness campaigns, because the fuel load is huge. I live across the road from the Broken Bago State Forest,

and they haven't burnt off this winter.

"Without the forestry fire management, I absolutely fear the catastrophe that's coming our way. And you know what they're going to say? Oh, that's climate change.

"No, it's the failure of state governments to manage their forestry resource, given they've locked it up. We're setting the regions up for a natural

disaster to go with the economic disaster this decision will inflict."

At a time when we've become sadly used to politicians giving lip service about their support of forestry then acting in ways that benefit only their billionaire mates in the mining or fossil fuels sectors, it's good to see someone with genuine passion for defending timber jobs. Thanks for the good fight, Alison!

OCTOBER

6: Forestry Australia – University House, The Australian National University, Canberra. Special colloquium celebrating the *centenary of national forestry education* in Australia, held immediately prior to the 2026 Forestry Australia Symposium. Free of charge, however registration required for catering and logistics. **Registrations close: 10am, Tuesday 29 September 2026.** For more information and to register, visit <https://www.trybooking.com/events/landing/1643036>

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. Event is almost full. For more information and to obtain tickets, visit: <https://timberdesignawards.com.au/>

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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Tracking tree health

Satellite-enabled smart sensors could transform monitoring of Australia's forests.

SCIENTISTS are trialling satellite-enabled smart sensors on trees across the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area to provide an unprecedented picture of how Australia's forests are responding to changing environmental conditions.

Using low-Earth-orbit satellites, the project will extend continuous environmental monitoring into remote forests beyond the reach of mobile networks including parts of western NSW. It will collect real-time data on how individual trees and ecosystems respond to drought, bushfire and climate change.

Better information about how forests respond to environmental change will help governments, land managers and researchers make more informed decisions about biodiversity conservation, carbon storage, climate adaptation and natural hazard management such as bushfires and drought.

Project lead Professor Brendan Choat from the Hawkesbury Institute for the Environment at Western Sydney University said Australia has relatively few intensively monitored forest plots capable of continuously measuring how trees and ecosystems respond to environmental change.

"Australia's forests are changing as our climate changes, but until now we've lacked the continuous monitoring needed to understand exactly how they respond," Professor Choat said. "This project will give us an unprecedented picture of what happens before, during and after events such as drought and bushfire, helping us better protect these ecosystems into the future."

Led by researchers from Western Sydney University and UNSW Sydney, the Space-Enabled Smart Sensing for Forest Monitoring project is being funded through the NSW Smart Sensing Network's (NSSN) Grand Challenge Fund.

The project brings together Luxembourg-based satellite



A sensor on tree at the Bullaburra wet sclerophyll site in the Blue Mountains measures tree water stress. Image: Neil Ross, Western Sydney University

telecommunications company OQ Technology, Scenic World, the Blue Mountains World Heritage Institute and the NSW Space Research Network to develop the next generation of environmental monitoring technologies.

Unlike traditional monitoring, which relies on periodic field visits or sensors within mobile coverage, the project will provide continuous, real-time measurements from remote forests. The sensors will monitor how trees use water, grow and respond to environmental stress, while also measuring soil moisture, microclimate, wildlife activity and insect populations.

Building on Western Sydney University's Blue Mountains Hub for Ecology and Conservation, and long-term monitoring sites near Bourke established by UNSW ecologist Associate Professor Daniel Falster, the project will create a connected network spanning ecosystems from the World Heritage-listed rainforests of the Blue Mountains to semi-arid woodlands near Bourke. The project also builds on lessons from the

2019–20 Black Summer bushfires and WSU's Dead Tree Detective citizen science project, highlighting the need for continuous monitoring of Australia's forests.

A/Prof Falster said the expanded monitoring network would provide unprecedented insights into Australia's remote forests.

"We are working at four locations east and west of Bourke, from Narran Lakes to Wanaring, in collaboration with Climate Friendly on properties where tree regeneration supports carbon projects," A/Prof Falster said.

"While the existing sites are within the outer limits of mobile coverage, many comparable forests across this vast region, including Sturt National Park, are not. Satellite-enabled sensing could allow us to extend continuous monitoring into these more remote areas and gain a much clearer picture of how Australia's inland forests are changing."

Successful field validation could pave the way for wider adoption of the technology across forestry, biodiversity monitoring, carbon farming, agriculture, land rehabilitation and natural hazard management.

OQ Technology Founder and CEO Omar Qaise said the project demonstrates the growing importance of satellite-enabled IoT infrastructure in supporting environmental monitoring in remote and climate-sensitive regions.

"Australia is an ideal environment to showcase how satellite communications can support critical monitoring applications in remote and climate-sensitive regions," Qaise said. "The long-term opportunity is not only to monitor forests more effectively, but to build a model for resilient, standards-based connectivity that can support remote industries, public infrastructure and climate adaptation more broadly."

For more details, [click here](#).

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New FWPA CEO

THE board of Forest and Wood Products Australia (FWPA) has announced Dr Julianne O'Reilly-Wapstra as the organisation's new CEO.

Dr O'Reilly-Wapstra brings more than two decades of senior executive, board, and operational leadership experience across the forestry, research, and government sectors. She currently holds the post of Dean of Natural Sciences at the University of Tasmania, overseeing a large team, managing complex operations and directing substantial research and development portfolios.

The FWPA board welcomed the appointment, saying: "We are delighted to welcome Dr Julianne O'Reilly-Wapstra as Chief Executive Officer of FWPA. Julianne is an exceptional, outcome-driven leader who brings a rare blend of people management expertise, deep technical knowledge, commercial acumen, and high-level governance capability. Having worked at the intersection of research, industry, and government for 26 years, she is uniquely positioned to drive FWPA's strategic vision and deliver measurable



Dr Julianne O'Reilly-Wapstra will bring her multi-layered expertise to FWPA. Image: FWPA

value to our members and the broader forest and wood products sector."

Dr O'Reilly-Wapstra also currently serves as a non-executive director on the board of Australian Forest and Wood Innovations (AFWI), having previously led the successful \$101.5 million federal funding negotiation to establish the national research institute.

Previous positions include chair of the Tasmanian Forests and Forest Products Network, where she oversaw significant membership growth and governed the Tasmanian Regional Forestry Hub, and director of the ARC Training Centre for Forest Value.

Dr O'Reilly-Wapstra said: "It is a privilege to be appointed to lead Forest and Wood Products Australia at such a pivotal time for our industry. The forestry and wood products sector faces a changing economic, environmental, and global landscape, but it is also primed with incredible opportunity.

"FWPA plays a critical role in supporting innovation, capability, and profitable market growth for its members. I look forward to working closely with our members, industry partners, and government stakeholders to execute FWPA's strategic priorities, build industry capability, and ensure our sector can thrive."

Dr O'Reilly-Wapstra will relocate to Melbourne to take up the role from 1 December.

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Fuel costs hit hard

THE numbers at www.fuelsecurity.com.au tell a bleak story: nationally, diesel prices are up over 56% since the start of the Iran War. In many regional centres, diesel is selling at over \$3/L (with an average regional cost of \$3.30 across the nation) and 973 of 3052 diesel stations were without supply on Tuesday of this week.

But as forestry groups, trucking organisations, farmers and everyday motorists have called on the Federal Government for fuel tax relief after cuts which began in April ended in early August, those calls have gone unheeded.

On the weekend, the Federal Opposition announced its Fuel Price Shield policy, which would automatically halve the fuel excise when the two-week average closing price of Brent crude sat above US\$100 a barrel. The cut would



Costs are up, fuel supply is down at petrol stations across the country. Image: CC/Yu Chu Chin

end three months after being triggered, or once the eight-week average price fell back below US\$100, whichever came first.

In addition, the 32-cent-a-litre heavy vehicle road user charge would be set to zero, giving truckies significant direct relief and households and businesses additional indirect relief by lowering prices.

Economists were mixed in their responses to the policy, with some saying that all fuel tax cuts were driven by politics, regardless of the party, and led to higher inflation and others pointing out that cuts to the excise did little to limit demand at a time of supply problems.

However, Luci Ellis, Westpac's economic spokesperson, told the ABC that the experience of the last fuel excise cut suggested that such a measure could help curb inflation, saying that in June and July, "petrol prices came down, and that actually stopped all those fuel levies and extra price increases coming on in other prices, so if we can nip that in the bud, that would be a good outcome."

Meanwhile, the RBA is pointing the finger at fuel costs as a leading cause of high inflation. An all-but certain rate rise at next Tuesday's meeting is poised to deliver yet more pain.

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Technology meeting industry challenges

Automation offers practical pathways to safer, more productive forestry operations.

AUSTRALIA'S forestry sector is facing a familiar challenge: how to grow capacity, maintain safety and improve productivity at a time when skilled labour is limited and operational demands are increasing. New FWPA-supported research shows automation and robotics could help industry respond to these pressures in practical, targeted ways.

The report, *Discovering Global Automation & Robotics Relevant to Australia's Forestry Needs: An Industry-led Technology Scan*, completed by Lincoln Agritech with guidance from an industry Steering Committee, reviewed more than 300 global technologies and assessed their relevance to Australian forestry. Importantly, the project focused on technologies that solve real industry problems, not automation for its own sake.

The scan considered opportunities across nurseries, plantation establishment, harvesting, logistics and fire management. Priority areas included operator-assist systems for harvesting machinery, nursery automation, autonomous and semi-autonomous planting, drone-based fire detection, exoskeletons for physically demanding work, truck platooning and augmented reality tools for planning, training and operational support.

While some technologies are still



The report breaks down the possibilities of automation in forestry into separate workflows and business types. Image: supplied

emerging, others are already being used commercially overseas. The report suggests the most immediate opportunities may be in tools that reduce physical strain, improve consistency, support hard-to-fill roles or increase operator safety.

BENEFITS FOR INDUSTRY

This research provides a shared evidence base to inform investment decisions, trials and future collaboration. Instead of each business independently scanning the global market, the project helps identify where automation is mature, where further testing is needed and where collective action could reduce risk. These include:

- Safer work: reducing exposure to hazardous, repetitive or physically demanding tasks;
- Workforce support: helping operators do more with available labour and creating pathways for new technical skills;
- Productivity gains: improving consistency, precision and planning across the value chain;

- Smarter investment: giving members clearer information on which technologies are ready now and which require further development; and
- Future competitiveness: positioning the industry to respond to labour, safety, productivity and sustainability expectations.

A key message is that automation should be integrated into business systems, workforce planning, training and safety processes. For many businesses, the best starting point is to define the

operational challenge first, then assess whether technology can help solve it.

This could mean identifying high-risk or repetitive tasks, reviewing where labour shortages or downtime are affecting performance, and involving staff and contractors early so any technology adopted is practical, safe and fit for purpose.

WHAT NEXT?

Businesses can get started by first reviewing the report, identifying one or two priority pain points, and then using the supporting Australian Forest Robotics Wiki resource ([click here](#)) to explore relevant technologies in more detail.

From there, consider shortlisting commercially available options, speaking with suppliers and peers, and testing solutions through small-scale trials or collaborative pilots.

Click here to read the full FWPA report *How automation could help workforce challenges, improve safety and strengthen long-term productivity*.



Business Grants

Access state and/or federal funding to grow your business!

Enews has partnered with Business Grant Advisors – a professional grant writing business with a high success rate. Watch this space as not all grants are made public. Enews will publish Federal or State/Territory-based grants

for our industry here.

Business Grant Advisors can assist you with eligibility criteria, grant writing, application process and lodgement. They offer hourly through to full end-to-end service. You can schedule an

appointment directly on a day and time that suits you based on their listed availability. The initial appointment is free for a confidential chat. Go online to book: <https://calendly.com/profshelli/introductory-session>

Transforming Queensland Manufacturing Grants Program: Round 2 now open

Enews previously advertised this grant back in issue #903, however, the QLD government later placed this grant on hold, and we have been waiting for it to reopen.

We are delighted this grant is back, but it has a short application window. For those applicants who contacted Business Grants Advisors previously, we understand they have been in touch with you already regarding your application. For others in Qld, this is now your opportunity!

The Transforming Queensland Manufacturing Grants Program (TQMGP) is helping shape the future of Queensland's manufacturing sector.

Administered by the Department of Natural Resources and Mines, Manufacturing and Regional and Rural Development, the TQMGP offers \$79.1 million in grant funding over 3 years, delivered through 6 competitive rounds.

Eligible Queensland-based manufacturers can apply for matched funding grants of \$100,000 to \$1.5 million for projects that are:

- Facilitating pathways for export opportunities
- Reshoring or onshoring manufacturing activity currently undertaken interstate or overseas
- Improving manufacturing productivity and competitiveness
- Stimulating private sector investment and generating jobs.

Grants are available for:

- Advanced manufacturing equipment

which meets program objectives (up to 50% of eligible costs)

- Software purchasing to support system integration and manufacturing process improvement e.g. enterprise resource planning (ERP), material requirements planning (MRP), manufacturing execution system (MES).

There are requirements for individual businesses and those that are part of a group structure (see URL in box). To be eligible for an offer of funding, an applicant must meet each of the following eligibility requirements:

- Have a majority manufacturing turnover or be part of a structure that has majority of manufacturing turnover (manufacturing as defined under Division C of Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification (ANZSIC) 2006 (Revision 2.0));
- Have 5–200 full-time equivalent (FTE) employees or be part of a structure that has 5–200 FTE employees;
- Have a project site in Queensland;
- Have an existing manufacturing presence in Queensland at the time of application. A minimum of five FTE employees must be located in Queensland;
- Have operated within Queensland for a minimum of three consecutive years prior to submitting their application;
- Must be purchasing advanced manufacturing equipment with Industry 4.0/5.0 features or software purchasing to support system integration e.g. ERP, MRP, MES;

- Be the manufacturing entity that will own any equipment to be purchased under the proposed eligible project;
- Be registered for GST and have an active Australian Business Number (ABN);
- Not have been or be part of a group structure that has been awarded more than \$1.5 million in funding from the TQMGP across any number of rounds.

Eligible project costs include:

- Advanced robotics, automation and/or Industry 4.0 and 5.0 equipment;
- Sector-relevant technology, system or process to support system integration and manufacturing process improvement;
- Artificial intelligence (AI) systems to support manufacturing processes;
- Associated project costs critical to the success of the proposed project;
- Freight and/or electrical upgrades specific for the new manufacturing equipment (not more than 10% of equipment funding).

GRANT DETAILS

Provider: Business Queensland

Amount: \$100,000 - \$1,500,000

Round 2 Closes: 25 November 2026

Location: Queensland

Who Can Apply: Businesses

Co-Contribution Required: Yes

<https://www.business.qld.gov.au/industries/manufacturing-retail/manufacturing/grant-programs/transforming>

Timber Design Awards shortlist

Welcome to the 2026 finalist reveals, part four.

WITH less than a month to go before the official gala dinner for this year's Timber Design Awards on Wednesday, 21st October, we're counting down the finalists.

This week's selection comes from multiple categories, but all of them have sustainability at their core, with ultra-low waste, recycling, energy efficiency and resilience all starring in the following projects (see Enews #916, #915 and #914 for more).

As with the other finalists, these are highly innovative and imaginative designs, but many feature surprisingly simple, repeatable construction that can be scaled up and down for quick build times and minimal impacts on site, delivering genuine sustainability at all stages, with recyclability or re-use options at the end of life.

Click here for your tickets to the award night and dinner, to be held at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Sydney's The Rocks. It's a great excuse to break out your best cocktail wear and catch up with the people who are making the best of the timber we all love.

FURNITURE & JOINERY

The Lamella Chair

This chair was developed for the Keep exhibition in 2025 by interior design and architecture practice Richards Stanisich. The exhibition called for furniture designed to last for decades in a throwaway culture and was curated by David Clarke and presented by the American Hardwood Export Council.

The Lamella Chair piece transforms a discarded 1990s metal-framed chair through hundreds of individually hand-stitched American Maple shingles.

The Lamella Chair design draws on traditional Japanese armour, timber roofing and the protective shell of the armadillo – the layered timber surface behaves almost like draped fabric.

Designed by Kirsten Stanisich and constructed in collaboration with film and theatre technician Meg Ashforth, the piece is as much about repair and reuse

as it is about craft, giving new life to an object otherwise headed for landfill.

For more from Richards Stanisich, **click here**. See *image 1*.



1/ A discarded metal-framed chair was covered in shingles of American Maple to create this newly imagined piece of art. Photo by Felix Forest All images: courtesy Timber Design Awards

RESIDENTIAL CLASS 1

Gingkin

Perched at 1300m on a high plateau west of the Blue Mountains, above Jenolan Caves and looking out to Kanangra Walls, Gingkin is a small-footprint, off-grid, modular farmhouse built for one of the coldest, windiest climates in NSW. Here, it's colder even than Oberon, with regular winter snowfall and a climate closer to Thredbo than anywhere else in the state.

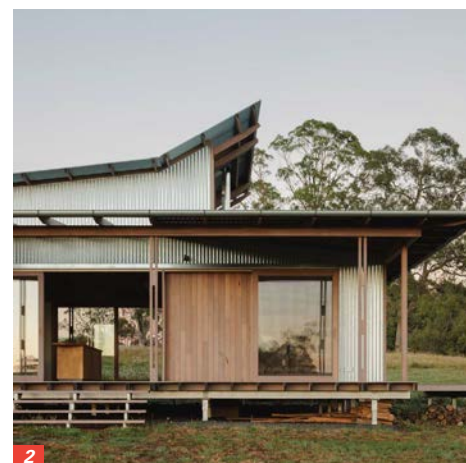
The brief for designers Incidental Architecture was simple but disciplined: provide the minimum level of amenity needed for comfortable habitation of a genuinely harsh site. That discipline shaped every material decision. The house is planned entirely on a 3.6 x 3.6m grid, allowing floors, roofs and joinery to divide with almost no offcuts. There was less than 1m³ of material waste across the whole build. Standard-length LVL floor joists, 4.5m roof rafters and simple AS1684-compliant wall framing kept engineering straightforward and cost under control, while paired Blackbutt columns and shiplapped cladding soften the building's more utilitarian galvanised

steel elements exactly where people come into contact with it.

Inside, Blackbutt ply lines the walls and ceiling of the central living space, with offcuts run into 100mm strips to form an acoustic ceiling: nothing wasted, even in the finishing. A 16kW PV array and modular battery system keep the house fully off-grid, oriented true north to capture winter sun while sheltering from prevailing winds.

Finally, 95% of the structure is timber. Built for \$4800/m² of internal space, Gingkin shows what's possible when a demanding site and a disciplined brief are followed all the way through.

For more from Incidental Architecture, **click here**. See *images 2 and 3*.



2 & 3/ Gingkin, a snug retreat on a harsh high country plateau, was an extremely disciplined build generating little waste in the build or running costs. Photos by Clinton Weaver

From P 14

COMMERCIAL BUILDING

Hoskins Building

Set within The Illawarra Grammar School in Mangerton, NSW, the Hoskins Building is on track to become Australia's first CLT Passivhaus school. Exposed cross-laminated timber from KLH Massivholz forms the walls, floors, roof, beams, columns, stairs, ceilings and joinery. In all, 850m³ of PEFC/FSC-certified CLT stores around 630 tonnes of CO₂.

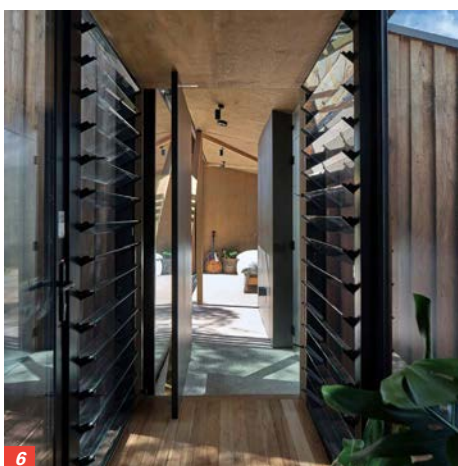
Designed by betti und knut architecture and built by Rohrig Group, it's also the first Australian commercial project to specify CLT, rather than glulam, for its columns and beams, using Hilti Quick Connect fastening for fast, prop-free assembly that can be fully disassembled without screw fixings.

Built to the International Passivhaus Standard, the building achieved 0.15 ACH50 airtightness – 75% better than the certification threshold – cutting heating and cooling demand by around 80%. A 1000m² biodiverse green roof and 40kW rooftop solar system round out a genuinely timber-first approach to sustainable education architecture. Structural engineering was provided by 3EM Structure.

For more from betti und knut architecture, [click here](#) and for more from KLH Massivholz, [click here](#). See image 4.



4/ Sustainable CLT materials and a Passivhaus certification make the Hoskins Building at the Illawarra Grammar School an education in itself. Photo by Martin Mischkulnig



5 & 6/ A spotted gum felled on the property was used to clad this addition, with pine and Tasmanian Oak starring on the inside. All images: supplied

CLASS 1 ALTERATIONS AND ADDITIONS

Not Firewood

Not Firewood takes its name from a simple refusal: when an existing *Corymbia maculata* (spotted gum) on the site had to come down, Andrew Wilson of WARC Studio and the owners decided it wasn't going to end up as mulch or firewood.

Instead, the tree stayed on site as part of the alterations and additions to this detached suburban home. Julia's Onsite Timber Milling brought a portable mill to the property and cut the timber directly into 19mm rough-sawn boards: a decision that increased yield by 25% over dressed cladding, maximised the timber's absorption of staining oil, and gave the exterior a striking, textured finish. That cladding, along with two operable spotted gum screens over the west-facing studio windows, now wraps the addition entirely in timber sourced from the tree it replaced.

Inside, the structure tells its own sustainability story. Exposed hardwood post-and-bracing (kiln-dried at 1.6MJ/kg embodied energy) opens up full-height, full-width glazing on the parents' wing without the steel portal frame that would usually be required, cutting embodied carbon dramatically against a steel equivalent's 35MJ/kg.

Built by RMB Builders with structural engineering by Structplan, Not Firewood is a symphony of timber. Radiata plywood lines the interior walls and ceilings, Tasmanian Oak floorboards mark the threshold between old and new, and a slab-on-ground floor keeps thermal mass working hard through the seasons. Deep eaves and the operable screens manage solar gain through the year, while an extensive native garden planting program was added specifically to support local pollinators.

For more from WARC Studio, [click here](#). See images 5 and 6.

FITOUT RESIDENTIAL

Flooded Gums

Marker Architecture perched this resilient guest retreat on a rural riverside site at Millers Forest, NSW, on stilts to answer a brief for low-maintenance, flood-safe accommodation.

The interior is fully timber-lined, embracing functional decoration with expressed timber structure and patinated metal tension rods sitting alongside Spotted Gum plywood panelling and European Oak flooring to create a warm, cocoon-like atmosphere.

As an occasional dwelling, the budget prioritised essential joinery and core appliances, freeing up strategic investment in premium linings and exposed structures that tie the interior seamlessly to the exterior. Key furniture pieces, including the bedhead, armchair and entrance table, were crafted from solid Spotted Gum and offcuts of the same Armourpanel used across the walls, turning construction waste into considered design details. The joinery and furniture were delivered by Jasper Design Group, Cranbrook Workshop and Nicco Timber Windows & Doors.

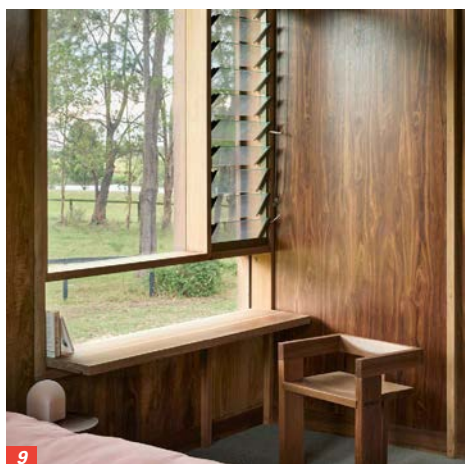
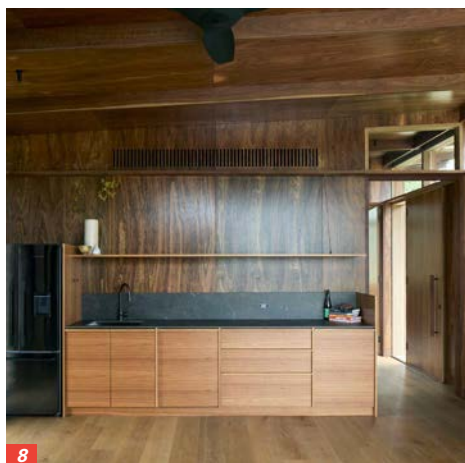
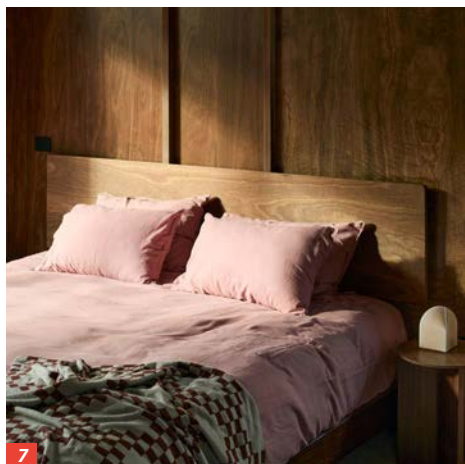
PEFC-certified Spotted Gum plywood replaces plasterboard throughout, eliminating gypsum entirely, while FSC-

Cont P 16

From P 15

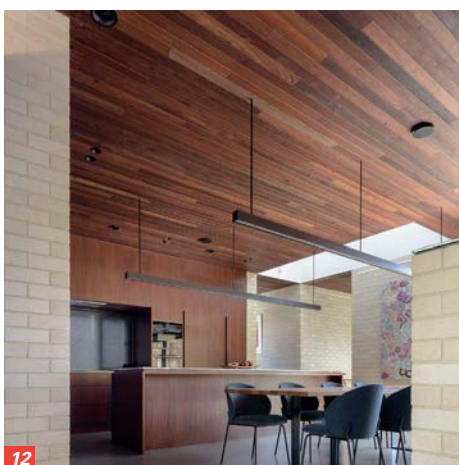
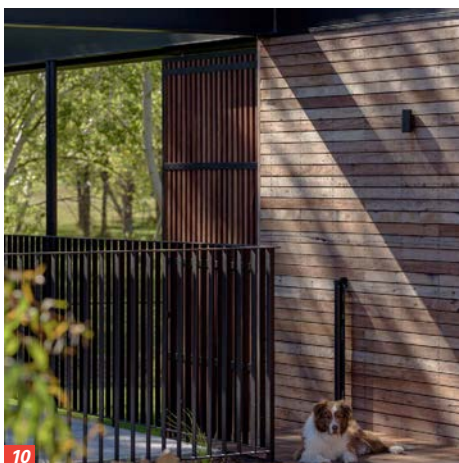
certified oak flooring and plant-based Osmo oil finishes round out a healthy, low-toxicity material palette. The result is a compact, resilient sanctuary built by Robert Plumb Build with engineering by Cantilever that treats sustainability and warmth as the same design problem.

For more by Marker Architecture, [click here](#). See images 7 to 9.



7/ The bedhead was made from Spotted Gum and Armourpanel offcuts.

8 & 9/ The interior of this small riverside retreat is lined with resilient hardwoods that deliver low-maintenance, floodproof results. Photos by Alex McIntyre Photography



RECYCLED TIMBER

Batten House

In Curtin, ACT, next to the Yarralumla Creek open space network, Batten House responds to its highly visible position beside a public cycleway with a centralised courtyard that can be opened up or screened off using easily movable timber batten screens, giving the residents control over privacy through the day and year.

The responsive design by Ben Walker Architects was realised by Ewer Constructions and Matrix Joinery with engineering by Marshman O'Neill, but it's the material choices that make it truly special.

Recycled and remilled Ironbark, sourced through Thor's Hammer Recycled Timber, wraps the home inside and out: shiplap weatherboards to the exterior, V-joint lining boards to the ceilings and eaves and decking boards underfoot,



10 & 11/ Positioned beside a popular public space, Batten House's exterior features easily movable timber screens that can close to provide privacy or open up to let walkers and cyclists see the best dog.

12/ The recycled and remilled Ironbark carries into the interior, with more than 10.4km of boards used in total. Photos by Ben Guthrie and Rohan Thomson

all chosen for durability, warmth and to reduce the need for new material. More than 10.4 kilometres of recycled timber runs through the project in total, including furniture made from timber salvaged from the original house that once stood on the site: a king bed, dining tables and bedside tables, carrying part of the old home's story into the new one.

For more by Ben Walker Architects, [click here](#) and for Thor's Hammer Recycled Timber, [click here](#). See images 10 to 12.



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Working forests deliver value

Queensland's future homes, manufacturing capability and regional economies will depend on decisions made today about the state's future forest resource.

A technical report commissioned by the South & Central Queensland Regional Forestry Hub has identified significant opportunities to strengthen future timber supply, support regional investment and improve long-term resource security across Queensland.

The study explores plantation expansion, afforestation opportunities, native forest regrowth management, carbon sequestration and forest resource planning.

The technical report was commissioned to help address one of the most significant challenges facing the forest and timber sector: ensuring Queensland can meet future demand for timber products while supporting regional jobs, manufacturing growth and environmental outcomes.

The work aligns closely with Queensland Future Timber in Focus: Prosper 2050 Delivering Now 2026–2030, the Queensland Government's first five-year implementation plan under the Queensland Future Timber Plan 2050, which aims to secure and grow sustainable timber resources to support housing, infrastructure, economic development and environmental outcomes.

The study findings highlight several significant opportunities and challenges for the sector:

- Spatial modelling identified significant areas of land suitable for future plantation development and assessed opportunities involving timber production, carbon storage and grazing across the South and Central Queensland region.



Queensland pine plantation with state forest in the background.
Image: CC/Willem van Aken,CSIRO

Click here for the report.

- A study undertaken through the native regrowth carbon sequestration project identified approximately 1.5 million hectares of commercially important regrowth or potential regrowth forest and highlighted opportunities to better recognise the carbon value of managed forests. **Click here** for the report.
- A technical report examining manufacturing competitiveness identified constrained timber supply and increasing demand as key challenges for future industry growth.
- Analysis of forest management models found multiple-use forests consistently generated greater long-term benefits than protection-only models, with an assessment estimating approximately \$5.4 billion in benefits over a 100-year evaluation period. **Click here** to download the fact sheet.

Kerry Fullarton, Manager of the South & Central Queensland Regional Forestry Hub, said the study provides practical evidence to support future planning and investment decisions.

"Queensland has significant

opportunities to strengthen its future forest resource, but realising those opportunities requires informed decision-making and a long-term view of resource security," said Fullarton.

"This study provides industry, government and investors with practical evidence about where future timber supply opportunities exist and the planning, investment and policy settings that can help support them."

The Queensland Future Timber Plan identifies supply, supply chains and markets, regulatory settings, workforce development, and research and innovation as critical priorities for the sector. The Hub's study contributes evidence across many of these priority areas, including plantation expansion, afforestation opportunities, carbon outcomes, resource security and future investment confidence.

Fullarton said the findings demonstrate the important role evidence-based planning will play in achieving Queensland's long-term timber supply goals.

"The Queensland Future Timber Plan recognises the importance of securing future timber resources to support housing, manufacturing, regional jobs and economic growth," she said.

"The study commissioned through the Hub helps identify practical opportunities to expand future timber supply while supporting environmental outcomes and regional development.

"Most importantly, it provides a strong evidence base to help inform future industry, investment and policy discussions."

For more on the South & Central Queensland Regional Forestry Hub and links to project reports, **click here**.



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