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Will Victoria's native timber industry be revived?

One Nation and Coalition make pledges ahead of state election.

TWO years after Victoria's native forest logging industry was shut down, the sector is back on the political agenda. With the November state election approaching, both One Nation and the Liberal-National Coalition have signalled support for restarting commercial native timber harvesting, a move that could reshape regional economies still grappling with the fallout from the 2024 closure.

Native forest logging on public land ended on 1 January 2024 after the Labor government brought forward a previously planned 2030 phase-out.

The decision affected around 1,000 workers and 200 businesses, according to

a 2026 Victorian Auditor-General's report. The government allocated \$1.5 billion for transition support. While 87 per cent of

affected workers either retired or found new employment, the report noted many shifted into part-time, casual or contract roles. It concluded it was "not clear if workers' new jobs meet their needs or are sustainable."

Towns across Gippsland and eastern Victoria felt the impact most acutely. Communities that once relied on sawmills, harvesting contractors and related services saw local economies contract. Industry figures and regional leaders have repeatedly pointed to reduced full-time work, loss of skilled labour and ongoing uncertainty for remaining businesses.

One Nation has made the clearest commitment to reverse the ban. Victorian leader Warren Pickering said the party would reopen native hardwood forests to selective harvesting under a model similar to Tasmania's, using detailed forest practice plans with monitoring and oversight. Old-growth forest and sensitive habitats would be "strictly protected," and the system would be "self-sustaining by funding management operations through harvest revenue."

Narracan One Nation candidate Ben Lucas expanded on the approach, saying the party supports country-of-origin labelling for timber products and a "local wood first" policy for government



1/ **Melina Bath, Nationals MP for Eastern Victoria.**

2/ **Danny O'Brien, Nationals leader and Member for Gippsland South.**

Images 1 & 2: Parliament of Victoria

3/ **Ben Lucas, One Nation candidate for Narracan.**

4/ **Warren Pickering, One Nation Victorian leader.**

Images 3 & 4: One Nation Victoria

Cont P 3

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Forestry industry ready and resourced for bushfire season

AUSTRALIA'S sustainable and innovative forestry industry is well prepared for the upcoming bushfire season, and plays a critical role in preventing, managing and responding to bushfires.

With the 2026-27 bushfire season starting this week, AFPA joined forestry members near Bunbury, in Western Australia, to highlight the industry's commitment to reducing bushfire risks in regional communities, as the warmer months approach.

AFPA Senior Policy Manager and bushfire spokesperson Dominic Lane said the well-resourced industry has a long and effective tradition of helping keep forests, assets and communities safe.

"Our sector is fully committed and ready to reduce and manage bushfire risks and invests significant resources every year on preparedness and prevention," Mr Lane said.

"We work closely with local, state and national emergency management



(L-R): AFPA's Senior Policy Manager and bushfire spokesperson Dominic Lane, and Forest Industries Federation WA (FIFWA) plantation division spokesperson Brad Barr near Bunbury, WA. Image: AFPA

authorities and volunteers to protect forests, farms, reserves, wildlife and communities."

A recent AFPA survey found the sector invests more than \$100 million each year in bushfire prevention, mitigation and response across Australia.

"This includes around \$8 million on fire towers, detection cameras and other

monitoring systems, almost \$65 million on firebreaks, roads, prescribed burning and fuel management, and almost \$30 million on more than 1,200 firefighting appliances and 1,500 personnel," Mr Lane said.

"Forestry companies also contribute around \$15 million through insurance and other levies that support bushfire preparedness and response."

Mr Lane said the industry works hand-in-glove with local fire authorities and regularly undertakes hazard reduction burning and embraces new techniques to reduce fuel loads.

"For example, Wespine in WA is using cattle in plantation forests to reduce fuel loads, as part of an innovative new trial. Called pyrograzing, this biological method offers a highly customisable, low-emission approach to fire management.

"Overall, we sincerely thank and applaud the forestry sector for their strong contribution and work in this critical emergency management area."

From P 2

procurement. He described a self-funding model in which harvest revenue would support forest improvement and fire prevention. "I don't know if you're picking up on a theme here with One Nation, but we don't need to overlord and control everything, the industry are the subject matter experts," Lucas said. He added that the policy remains broad and open-ended, with further detail to come through consultation if the party gains influence.

The Liberal-National Coalition is also developing a policy to restore native forest logging. Nationals leader Danny O'Brien has previously vowed to bring the industry back. Melina Bath, the Nationals MP whose portfolio includes timber, confirmed the Coalition is finalising packages and ensuring costings are correct. "We will be announcing a suite of packages and policies in relation to this," she said. Bath has argued a revived industry would "look different to what the Labor government shut down in 2024" and would need to address workforce rebuilding. In an earlier media release responding to the Auditor-General's findings, she criticised

the transition, stating Labor "shut a sustainable industry first and considered the consequences second."

For forestry stakeholders, the pledges represent a potential turning point. Victorian Forest Products Association chief executive Andrew White has called for a long-term industry plan that extends beyond the election cycle. Capital investment in manufacturing is expensive, he noted, and the sector needs certainty whether focusing on softwood plantations or hardwood. White has also welcomed practical measures such as country-of-origin labelling and preferential treatment for local wood, describing them as overdue amid competition from imports.

Regional voices echo the sense of opportunity. Orbost District Chamber of Commerce and Industry secretary Garry Squires has said any measured return, beginning with thinning operations, would be well received in towns still dealing with the after-effects of the shutdown. Demand for domestic firewood remains unmet in some areas, he observed, while the broader resource of Victorian eucalypt forests continues to exist.

The debate sits against a backdrop of competing priorities. Labor maintains the transition was necessary due to litigation, timber supply constraints and bushfire risks, and argues restarting native forestry would impose fresh costs on Victorians. Environmental groups have warned against any return, citing ecological concerns. Yet for regional communities that lost jobs and economic activity, the political shift has revived discussion about jobs, local supply chains and active forest management.

Whether the pledges translate into detailed, costed policy remains to be seen. The Coalition is still working through its final position, and One Nation has acknowledged its outline is high-level. What is clear is that native timber has returned as a live election issue. For an industry that went quiet in 2024 and for the towns that depended on it, the prospect of a restart is significant news, and one that will be closely watched in the weeks ahead.

On the cover: Two years after commercial logging ended, the native timber industry is back on the Victorian political agenda.
Image: Shutterstock

Timber, Furnishing and Textiles Union hails “significant win”

AFTER more than a decade of campaigning, the Timber, Furnishing and Textiles Union (TFTU) says Australian timber and manufacturing workers finally have a more credible pathway to defend jobs against damaging import surges.

The Customs Amendment (Safeguard Inquiries) Bill 2026, which passed Federal Parliament on 17 September, transfers responsibility for safeguard investigations from the Productivity Commission to the Anti-Dumping Commission. That body will be renamed the Australian Trade Remedies Commission (ATRC), consolidating safeguards, anti-dumping and countervailing investigations under one specialist roof.

Travis Wacey, National Policy Research Officer at the TFTU and National Assistant Secretary Elect, described the change as “a significant win and reform, and a common-sense one.”

“It does give Australian industry a fighting chance,” he told *Timber & Forestry Enews*. “Previously it was sitting with the wrong body... fundamentally free trade-focused and neoliberal. The reality was that no one [applied for safeguard relief] because they knew that it would be knocked back.”

Wacey has represented the union (first the CFMEU, then the TFTU) on the International Trade Remedies Forum since 2011 and co-chairs the Forum’s “Strengthening the Anti-Dumping System” subcommittee with the Australian Industry Group. That subcommittee formally recommended the safeguards transfer as part of a broader package of reforms.

WHY THE CHANGE MATTERS

Safeguards differ from anti-dumping measures. An anti-dumping case requires proof that goods are being sold into Australia at less than their normal value (often below the cost of production) and causing material injury. A safeguard asks a simpler but still demanding question: has there been a



Travis Wacey, National Policy Research Officer, Timber, Furnishing and Textiles Union. Photo: TFTU

sharp surge in imports that is causing, or threatening to cause, serious injury to the domestic industry? Temporary measures, including tariffs, can then be applied while the industry adjusts.

“The thresholds are pretty high,” Wacey noted. “You need the surge of imports and evidence that it has caused serious injury... higher thresholds than in the anti-dumping space. But the benefit is you just need to demonstrate that the conditions of a surge have been met, as opposed to that it’s being dumped under the cost of production. That’s where the extra flexibility is.”

Until now, Australia was an international anomaly. Most comparable countries house all trade-remedy levers

in a single specialist agency. Australia kept anti-dumping and countervailing powers with the Anti-Dumping Commission while parking safeguards with the Productivity Commission.

“In all the other countries in the world, they pretty much have a trade remedy system where all the levers... are available under one roof,” Wacey said. “Australia was a little bit of an anomaly... Consolidating them into a specialist commission really makes sense. It’s a really good step in the right direction.”

The union’s campaign dates back more than a decade. It first pushed the idea during the Brumby anti-dumping review in 2012, formally recommended the transfer in its 2015 submission on the China-

Australia Free Trade Agreement, and kept the pressure on through Senate Estimates, parliamentary inquiries and the ITRF process.

RESOURCES AND EFFECTIVENESS

Like AFPA acting CEO Richard Hyett, Wacey stressed that the new Commission must be properly resourced.

“Our position... is that the Australian Trade Remedies Commission needs to be appropriately resourced... so that when the Australian industry puts up a good case, they are adequately resourced to do the investigation in a timely manner, and with the appropriate expertise, doing onsite verification,” he said. “That function needs to be funded in a way which doesn’t dilute the ability of the Commission to deliver its other responsibilities, such as anti-dumping and countervailing investigations.”



SAFEGUARD INVESTIGATIONS SHIFT FROM PRODUCTIVITY COMMISSION TO ANTI-DUMPING COMMISSION

From P 4

The government has already signalled support. A Statement of Expectations issued by Industry and Innovation Minister Tim Ayres in September 2025 directed the then Anti-Dumping Commission to prioritise timely remedies, issue preliminary affirmative determinations earlier where warranted, improve industry access (including for SMEs), and respond to the heightened risk of trade diversion. An additional \$5 million in funding was provided to support capability.

REAL-WORLD PRESSURES ON TIMBER

Wacey pointed to sharp rises in imports of engineered wood products and wooden kitchen furniture as evidence that the new tool may soon be needed. LVL imports rose 51.9 per cent in 2025-26 and were running another 32 per cent higher in the first seven months of 2026 compared with the same period the previous year. Wooden kitchen furniture imports were up more than 30 per cent in volume and more than 40 per cent in value over the same January-July window.

The union supports industry consideration of anti-dumping action on LVL, including product that may incorporate low-priced Russian timber inputs redirected through third countries.

"What's common knowledge is that the industry is considering an anti-dumping investigation into imported engineered wood products, particularly LVL from China, re-routed from Russia," Wacey said. He was careful not to pre-

empt any formal application but noted that in non-market economy cases investigators can adjust the "normal value" calculation for artificially cheap inputs such as timber, energy and labour.

He also highlighted the risk of trade diversion. When the United States imposes high tariffs on kitchen cabinets and softwood lumber, and Canada applies provisional safeguard duties on wood cabinets and vanities, displaced product has to go somewhere.

"When there's dumping in one jurisdiction, countries put up trade barriers... and then that production... will tend to go to the place with the weakest anti-dumping system in place, or the jurisdiction where it's less likely to be used," he said.

LOOKING AHEAD

Success, Wacey said, will not be measured by the legislation alone.

"The measure of success won't be getting legislation passed but will be how many investigations the Commission starts and whether Australian manufacturing capability and jobs are still there."

He wants the industry to rebuild the capacity and confidence to use the

system. Past timber cases such as the plywood case in 2008-09 and the structural timber case in 2011-12 ended in disappointment and left a lingering perception that the process is long, expensive and unlikely to succeed. Paper-sector cases (copy paper at Maryvale, newsprint at Boyer) showed the system can work when the evidence is strong and the institutional culture is supportive.

"There's a bit of capacity building that I think we need within local industry just to be aware of the opportunity," Wacey said. "Despite the fact that we might have lost a bit of expertise... there's an opportunity to build that up again and to start pulling a few of those levers to level the playing field."

The union will continue pressing the remaining recommendations from the ITRF subcommittee, many of which are still under government consideration, and will push for ongoing adequate funding. It will also participate as an interested party in relevant investigations, as it is currently doing in the aluminium windows and doors case.

"Trade remedies... is a bit like a regulatory arms race," Wacey said. "Whenever you do something to try to defend Australian industry, you get a response from exporting countries or exporters themselves... It's really important to be vigilant in this space."

For the TFTU, the legislation is a long-sought milestone. The real test will be whether the new Australian Trade Remedies Commission gives workers and manufacturers a genuine fighting chance when the next import surge hits.

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UK forester gains experience in NSW forests

An exchange program enables a three-month learning placement with Forestry Corporation of NSW.

A FORESTRY professional from the United Kingdom is gaining first-hand experience in sustainable forest management in NSW, as part of an international exchange program.

Karen Batten, a Forest Manager with F&W Forestry UK, is halfway through a three-month placement with Forestry Corporation of NSW under the 2026 Young Professional Foresters' Exchange Program.

Since arriving in Australia, Karen has spent time with Forestry Corporation's Hardwoods Division on the North Coast and is now working in the Softwoods Division in the Snowy Valleys, experiencing the diverse forestry systems used across NSW.

The placement will enable Karen to gain experience in silviculture, plantation management and harvesting operations.

During her time in Australia, Karen is writing a blog published by the Institute of Chartered Foresters in the UK, detailing her experiences working in Australian forestry operations.

"Everyone at Forestry Corporation has been so generous with their time and knowledge and I hope to convey even a snippet of the interesting work that they undertake," Karen said.

“IF I HAD TO PICK THE BIGGEST TAKEAWAY... IT WOULD BE HOW DATA COLLECTION IS UTILISED



1/ Karen Batten stands beside a towering native hardwood trunk on the NSW North Coast during her exchange placement.

2/ Examining a marked softwood stem, Karen gains practical insight into plantation assessment and measurement techniques. Images: FCNSW



Karen said she was impressed by the productivity of NSW's hardwood plantations, the scale of the state's softwood estate and the innovation that is applied to forest management in Australia.

"If I had to pick the biggest takeaway from my first month with Forestry Corporation, it would be how data collection is utilised across the organisation," she said.

"Being exposed to this and other data collection techniques has broadened my understanding of the possibilities to move beyond observations and adopt similar approaches to support management decisions.

"I want to sincerely thank my colleagues and hosts at both the Coffs Harbour and Tumut offices who have shown me around and shared their knowledge so readily," she said.

The Young Professional Foresters' Exchange Program provides emerging forestry professionals with opportunities to build international networks, share expertise and gain practical experience in different forest management systems around the world and is delivered through a partnership between Forestry Australia, the Institute of Chartered Foresters in the UK, the Canadian Institute of Forestry and the New Zealand Institute of Forestry.

Click here to find out more about Forestry Corporation

OCTOBER

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

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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

12: Forestry Australia Webinar – ONLINE EVENT, 12.30pm - 1.30pm

AEDT. Topic: Forest Recreation & Tourism. **Registrations close 11 Nov at 10am.** Registration cost: (inc. GST) Forestry Australia Member: \$15 | Non-Member: \$70 | Student Members: Free. The webinar link and joining instructions 24 hours will be sent 24 hours prior. A recording will be available should you be unable to attend live. To book, visit <https://forestry.memnet.com.au/MemberSelfService/EventBooking.aspx>

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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Timber Design Awards shortlist

Welcome to the 2026 finalist reveals, part six.

THERE are now just over two weeks to go until the 2026 Timber Design Awards gala, and the shortlist keeps revealing projects that treat timber as far more than a material choice.

This week's finalists stretch from a culturally grounded Optus campus pavilion at Macquarie Park whose MASSLAM beams and Blackbutt palette echo the remnant Sydney Turpentine Ironbark Forest, a whole-of-building adaptive reuse of a 1970s Brutalist tower in Melbourne's CBD where Spotted Gum and Blackbutt waffle ceilings and battens transform inherited concrete, a sunken Melbourne home wrapped in Tasmanian Oak veneer and charred cladding that folds architecture into landscape, a Carlton flagship store and workshop built entirely from reclaimed Victorian Messmate, and a Kensington arcade whose Australian-certified glulam portals and prefabricated cassettes turn a residual laneway into communal infrastructure.

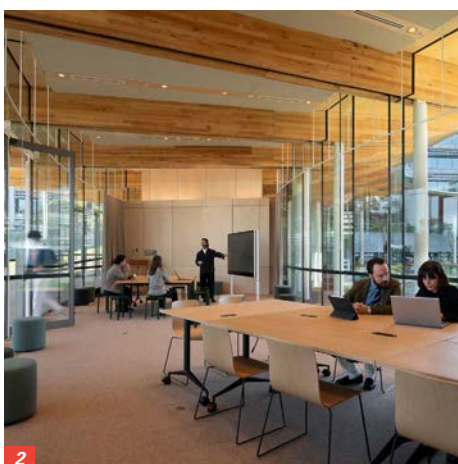
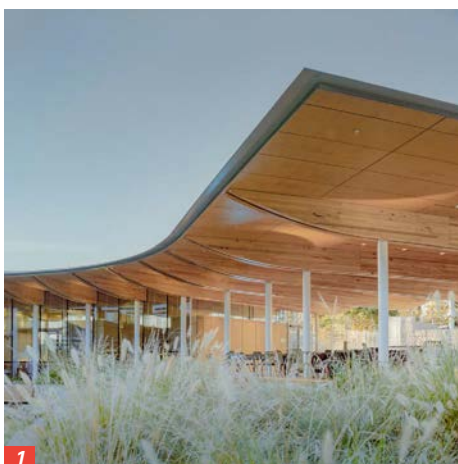
As with the earlier finalists (see *Enews* #918, #917, #916, #915 and #914 for more), timber is the common thread: durable, low-waste, adaptable and full of meaning, whether it is carrying cultural design principles, anchoring adaptive reuse at commercial scale, or giving reclaimed hardwood a third life.

COMMERCIAL BUILDING

Optus O Pavilion

Conceived as a place of arrival, gathering and welcome, the O Pavilion marks entry into the Optus Campus at Macquarie Park. It's a transitional, open and inviting building that mediates between landscape and workplace, shaped from the outset through engagement with Balarinji, who established Cultural Design Principles informed by the knowledge and custodianship of the Wallumedegal people, the Traditional Custodians of the land. These principles guided the pavilion's siting, curved form, thresholds and relationship to Country.

Timber sits at the heart of the design. Sixty-eight MASSLAM glue-laminated timber roof beams, generally 700 x 165



1/ Curved MASSLAM beams and Blackbutt decking frame the open outdoor workplace zone.
2/ Timber-lined collaborative spaces overlook the landscape through high-performance glazing.

Photos by Richard Glover

mm, give the pavilion its civic rhythm and warmth, repeating in a curved portal sequence that follows the site's contours. Engineered Australian Blackbutt flooring extends that warmth into the foyer and circulation spaces, while Blackbutt hardwood decking creates a generous outdoor workplace zone linking the building to the adjacent O Lawn. Inside, Hoop pine and Baltic Birch plywood linings integrate acoustic performance, service access and visual continuity, with perforated ceiling panels achieving an NRC of 0.70.

The timber palette draws on the remnant Sydney Turpentine Ironbark Forest that once defined Macquarie Park, helping the pavilion feel embedded in its landscape rather than imposed on it. Deep eaves, high-performance glazing and a prefabricated timber structure

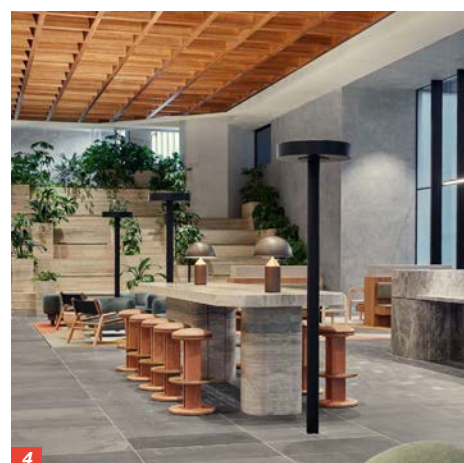
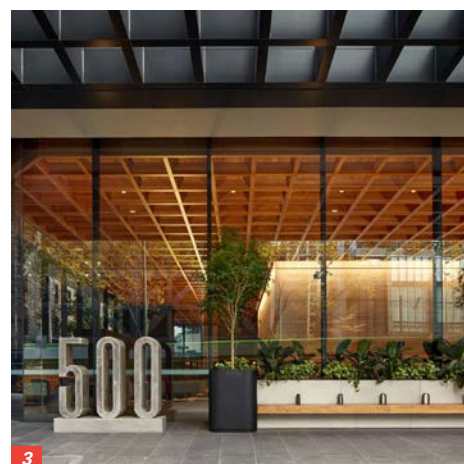
support a calm, adaptable workplace setting - technically resolved, culturally grounded and rich in everyday use.

See images 1 and 2.

FITOUT COMMERCIAL AND PUBLIC

500 Bourke Street

500 Bourke Street is a whole-of-building adaptive reuse of a 36-storey Brutalist commercial tower in Melbourne's CBD. Originally designed by Godfrey & Spowers in 1977, the building was repositioned through a \$160 million deep retrofit that retained the existing structure and facade, saving approximately 57,155 tonnes of embodied carbon.



3/ The glass-fronted entry reveals the warm timber waffle ceiling of the lobby.

4/ Spotted Gum waffle ceiling and Blackbutt battens transform the ground-floor amenity spaces. Photos by Willem Dirk

Cont P 9

From P 8

Timber is central to the material strategy, introducing warmth, texture and Australian identity into an inherited concrete frame. On the upper levels, expansive timber waffle ceilings transform lift lobbies and shared amenity spaces, their geometry derived from the building's original concrete waffle slab structure. At ground level, a custom Spotted Gum waffle ceiling on a 1m grid with 300mm-deep blades crowns the lobby, prototyped at full scale before manufacture, while solid Blackbutt battens wrap the Wellness Mezzanine, Flex Reception and Conference Facility using Sculptform's concealed clip-fix system, so not a single fixing is visible.

All timber is FSC, AFS or PEFC certified, or sourced from reused stock, sitting within a broader sustainability framework that achieved a 6 Star Green Star rating, 100% renewable energy operation and carbon neutral certification from day one. The result shows how timber can anchor an adaptive reuse strategy at commercial scale, transforming a 47-year-old tower into a workplace that competes with new-build benchmarks while retaining the value of what already exists.

See images 3 and 4.

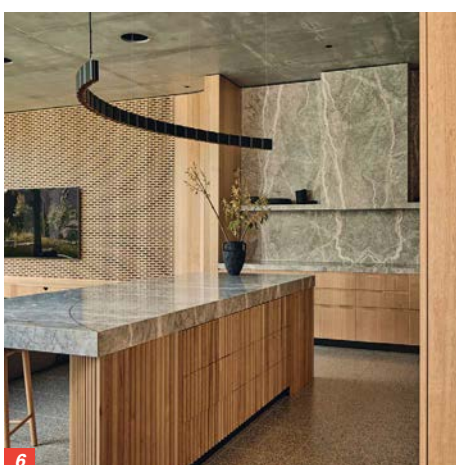
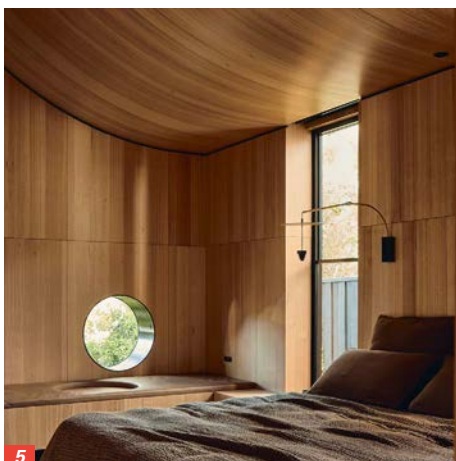
FITOUT RESIDENTIAL

Babylonia

Responding to a sloping site in Melbourne's north-east, Babylonia is a sunken, layered home that draws on an elevated rear garden and mature eucalypts to embed itself in the landscape. Curved rooflines respond to boundary setbacks and tree growth, while a restrained palette of terrazzo and Tasmanian Oak unifies the composition around a double-height central volume.

Timber lining is used to create moments of enclosure within the home's larger concrete volumes. Crown-cut Tasmanian Oak veneer wraps walls and ceilings, transitioning seamlessly into acoustic panelling that softens the atmosphere throughout. The same veneer extends across custom joinery, cabinetry and doors, with a suspended battened ceiling by Sculptform adding rhythm and warmth to key spaces.

Outside, charred timber cladding sits as a dark, recessive element within the landscape, its richly textured surface



5/ Crown-cut Tasmanian Oak veneer wraps the curved walls and ceiling of the bedroom.

6/ Fluted timber joinery and marble surfaces define the central kitchen island. Photos by Peter B Bennetts

shifting with the light while the concrete forms and surrounding vegetation remain the primary focus. The result is a home where architecture, interiors and landscape move as one continuous, layered experience.

See images 5 and 6.

RECYCLED TIMBER

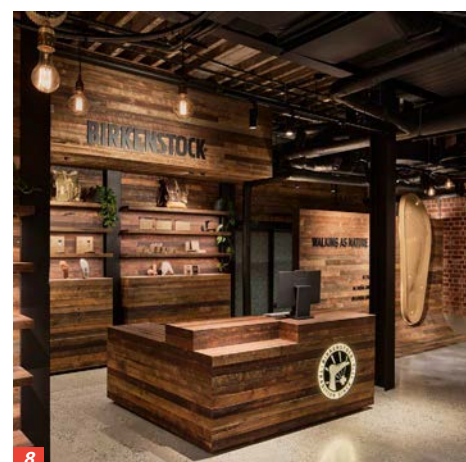
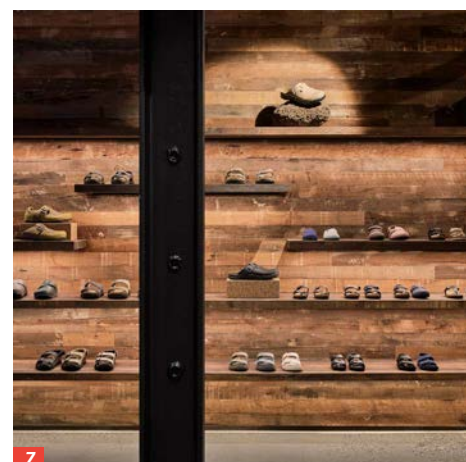
Birkenstock at the Maltstore

Inside Carlton's heritage-listed CUB Maltstore, timber isn't a finish, it's the architecture. Every new element in Birkenstock's flagship store, repair workshop and workplace begins with the same reclaimed Victorian Messmate, recovered from demolished homes and commercial buildings by Rustic World Timbers. Around 2.5 cubic metres of it shapes 170 square metres of wall lining, 85 linear metres of shelving, joinery and modular display cubes, one continuous material carrying the whole fitout.

The Messmate performs three roles at once: enclosure, display and furniture. Cantilevered shelving emerges straight

from the wall lining, floorboards curve seamlessly up a display wall, and a rough-sawn face is deliberately left on every board, preserving nail holes and weathering as visible history. Above it all, the Maltstore's century-old Oregon ceiling framing stays exposed, putting reclaimed hardwood in direct conversation with original industrial structure. Every element is mechanically fixed rather than glued, meaning timber that has already lived two lives is detailed to be recovered for a third.

See images 7 and 8.



7/ Reclaimed Victorian Messmate shelves display the footwear collection against the lined walls.

8/ Continuous reclaimed Messmate forms the counter, wall lining and display elements. Photos by Peter Clarke

AUSTRALIAN CERTIFIED TIMBER

Swift Walk Arcade

Occupying a narrow residual site in Kensington, Swift Walk Arcade turns an external laneway into an enclosed arcade, bringing the tactile warmth of mass timber to a concrete heavy precinct

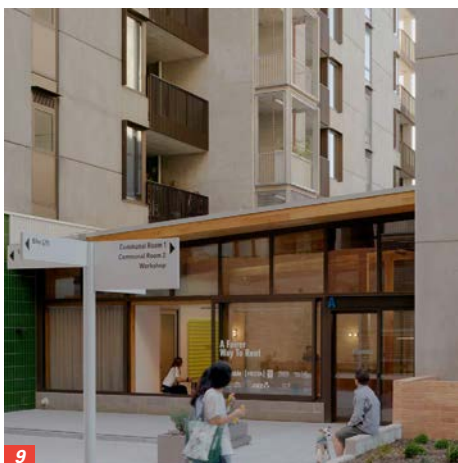
Cont P 10

From P 9

and delivering year-round communal infrastructure for 362 apartments across the Assemble development.

The architecture is defined by a repetitive glulam portal frame and skillion roof, developed with Australian Sustainable Hardwoods (ASH) and rationalised into off-site prefabricated modules. Prefabricated timber cassettes with structural plywood undersides are left exposed as the interior ceiling, and the entire timber framework was craned into position and installed in just two days. A two-metre glulam spacing creates a welcoming rhythm, illuminated by deep skylights that flood the residents' coworking area, leasing desk, parcel room and sheltered passage with daylight.

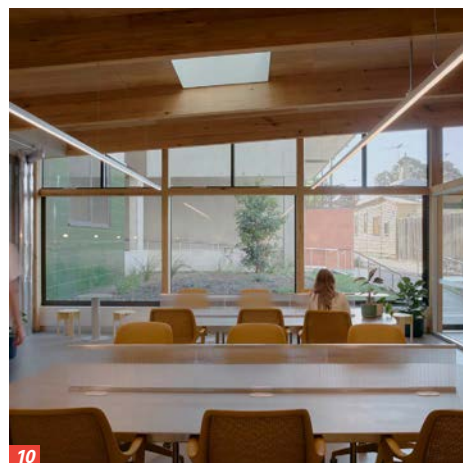
Every specified timber product in the project is Australian Certified, sourced through ASH's chain of custody certification under PEFC and FSC schemes. That traceability, from Victorian and Tasmanian forests to the Macaulay Road site, backs up the project's structural honesty and material reduction



9

10/ Glulam portal frames and timber canopy create a welcoming street-level arcade entrance.

11/ Exposed prefabricated timber cassettes form the ceiling of the residents' coworking space. Photos by Ben Moynihan



10

philosophy - tracking timber from mill to fitout in support of local, circular economy principles.

By substituting typical steel or concrete with glulam, the project dramatically lowers embodied carbon, showing how an overlooked footprint can become valuable communal infrastructure that strengthens daily social connection.

See images 9 and 10.

Across these finalists, timber keeps doing more than look good; it sequesters carbon, carries culture, enables reuse and makes places that feel genuinely human.

That is the quiet strength of the material: durable, low-waste, adaptable and full of meaning. It continues to prove its value project after project, and the Timber Design Awards highlight the incredible work and projects that treat timber with care and intelligence.

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Handing over the Komatsu Forest baton

Dean O'Connor appointed managing director as Brett Jones retires.

KOMATSU Forest Pty Ltd is pleased to announce the appointment of Dean O'Connor as Managing Director, effective 1st October 2026. Dean succeeds Brett Jones, who has retired from the position following an extensive career with Komatsu Forest and a significant contribution to the development and growth of the business in Australia and the broader Asia-Pacific region.

After almost 40 years in the forestry business, Brett Jones announced his decision to step down from his role as Managing Director of Komatsu Forest Pty Ltd. Reflecting on his time with the company, Brett said he is deeply proud of what has been achieved since Komatsu Forest Australia was formed 36 years ago. His time with the company and within the industry has been a significant and rewarding part of his working life, marked by many achievements, challenges and lasting relationships.

His decision to retire has been made for personal reasons. Taking over the role of Managing Director is Dean O'Connor, who will be familiar to many across the industry. Dean has been involved in the industry for a similar length of time and brings with him a broad range of experience and knowledge, providing strong continuity as he takes on the role.

Dean brings more than 30 years of experience across the forestry and forest equipment industries, including more than two decades in senior roles within the Komatsu Forest Group. His career spans Australia, New Zealand, Southeast Asia and North America, providing extensive international experience and a strong understanding of the markets in which the company operates.

Dean began his career in New Zealand in 1994 with the local Timberjack dealer, before joining Timberjack Asia Pacific in 1997 and becoming General Manager of Waratah Forestry Attachments Australia in 2001.

He joined Komatsu Forest in 2004



1/ Brett Jones is retiring after nearly 40 years in forestry full of significant contribution, developments and achievements.



2/ Dean O'Connor brings over 30 years of experience and knowledge to his new role of managing director for Komatsu Forest. All images: Komatsu Forest

as International Business Manager, with responsibility for markets across New Zealand, Asia and Southern Africa. Later Dean went on to hold senior management roles in North America from 2006 to 2009 and New Zealand as General Manager of Komatsu Forest New Zealand from 2009 to 2015.

After serving as General Manager of EMS Limited in New Zealand from 2015 to 2018, Dean returned to the Komatsu Group as Managing Director of Southstar Equipment New Zealand in 2022. Later that year he became National Sales Manager for Australia and Business Manager for the New Zealand branch, positions he held

until his new appointment.

This appointment provides a strong and experienced leadership transition for Komatsu Forest Pty Ltd, combining extensive industry knowledge, international experience and a long association with the Komatsu Forest Group.

To support a smooth transition, Brett will continue to work part time for the next six months, assisting Dean and his team where required. This will ensure a seamless handover and provide ongoing support during the transition period.

Brett would like to take this opportunity to express his sincere gratitude to everyone who has supported him and Komatsu Forest Australia throughout his time with the company.

"Over the years, there have been many tough periods, but also many rewarding moments, and I am incredibly grateful for the relationships we have built and the achievements we have shared along the way.

"It has been a privilege to work with you all. I sincerely thank you for your continued support, trust and partnership throughout my time with KF, and I wish everyone continued success for the future."

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NTHA ups safety training opportunities this National Safe Work Month

SAFETY is everyone's business, and this October, the National Timber & Hardware Association (NTHA) is putting practical safety training front and centre for the industry.

National Safe Work Month is a timely reminder that workplace safety cannot be left to chance. For timber and hardware businesses, where workers regularly handle heavy products, load and unload goods and manage deliveries, understanding safety responsibilities can make a real difference to their safety.

This year's theme, 'Safe work is for life', is a reminder that workplace safety goes beyond preventing injuries today. It is about protecting your workers' health, safety and well-being, now and into the future.

This October, NTHA is stepping up to support members with two non-accredited, practical online workshops delivered through its Registered Training Organisation (RTO 5343) (Fitec Pty Ltd t/as NTHA Training).

KNOW YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES: CHAIN OF RESPONSIBILITY

NTHA's Chain of Responsibility: Share the Load Workshop will be held online via Teams on Wednesday, 14 October from 9.30am to 11.30am AEDT.

If your business consigns, packs, loads or receives goods, it is crucial that you and your employees understand the Chain of Responsibility (CoR).

It is designed to give relevant staff a clearer understanding of their responsibilities and the action required when a potential compliance issue arises.

Businesses can potentially be legally liable for breaches of the Heavy Vehicle National Law (HVNL), even when they have no direct role in driving or operating a heavy vehicle.



Two important workshops to keep your people safe. Register today. Images: Fitec Pty Ltd t/as NTHA Training

The two-hour workshop will cover:

- Who is part of the CoR.
- What 'reasonably practicable' means.
- Shared responsibility.
- What to do when a CoR issue is identified.
- Managing safety risks within an overall safety management system.

MOVE SMARTER. WORK SAFER

NTHA's MOVE SMART: Safe Manual Handling Workshop will also be held online via Teams on Wednesday, 28 October from 1pm to 3pm AEDT.

For an industry where lifting, carrying and moving timber and other products is part of everyday work, manual handling safety matters.

The workshop covers how to identify risks and hazards, prevent workplace injuries, follow safe work procedures and risk assessments, and use safer techniques when lifting and handling awkward or heavy pieces.

The non-accredited session is suitable for both new and experienced workers and is designed to improve safety and confidence on the job.

MAKE SAFETY A PRIORITY



You only need to look at the recent fatality numbers to understand why workplace safety remains crucial. In 2024, 188 workers were fatally injured at work in Australia, while 146,700 serious workers' compensation claims were recorded in 2023–24, involving at least one week of working time lost.

A strong safety approach means identifying hazards before something goes wrong, making responsibilities clear and giving workers the confidence to speak up when they see a risk.

For business owners and managers, National Safe Work Month is an ideal opportunity to refresh procedures, involve teams in safety discussions and address areas where additional training could strengthen day-to-day practices.

NTHA is making that easier for your business by bringing practical training directly to them online.

Both workshops cost \$250 per person, and NTHA members can use their training vouchers by contacting the NTHA Training Team at info@ntha.edu.au

Safe work is for life. This October, make safety part of the way your business works every day.

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2026 SA, NT & WA Timber & Hardware Industry Awards



The 2026 Timber and Hardware Industry Awards celebrate the people and businesses shaping the future of SA, NT & WA timber and hardware industry.

Award Categories

- NTHA Trainee/Apprentice of the Year
- NTHA Student of the Year
- Outstanding Employee Award
- 30+ Years Industry Service
- Safety Champion Award
- Industry Icon
- Workplace Equity Award
- Trade Store of the Year
- Retail Store of the Year Under 2500sqm
- Retail Store of the Year Over 2500sqm
- Best Off-Site Manufacturing Award
- Building Materials Supplier of the Year
- Hardware Retail Supplier of the Year
- Timber Supplier of the Year
- Supplier Sales Representative of the Year



Recognising excellence matters:

- Celebrate businesses and individuals who go above and beyond every day
- Highlight outstanding customer service, innovation, and professionalism
- Recognise contributions to community support and sustainable practices
- Shine a spotlight on those driving growth and setting industry benchmarks

Don't miss your chance:

- Secure your tickets before sales close to avoid missing one of the timber and hardware industry's most anticipated events.
- Join industry leaders, merchants, suppliers, manufacturers and emerging talent on **Friday, 30 October 2026**.
- Held at the prestigious National Wine Centre in the heart of Adelaide.
- Celebrate the outstanding businesses and individuals helping shape the future of the timber and hardware industry across SA, NT & WA.
- With strong interest expected again this year, early ticket purchases are encouraged to secure your place at this premier industry celebration.



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From abandoned zoo to underground library

Open House Hobart reveals full 2026 program.

From an abandoned zoo that once housed Tasmania's last captive thylacine to an extraordinary underground library beneath MONA, Open House Hobart is inviting Tasmanians to step inside some of the state's most fascinating buildings, places and spaces when the event returns on 7 and 8 November.

The Australian Institute of Architects Tasmanian Chapter has unveiled the full 2026 Open House Hobart program, featuring more than 70 buildings and experiences across Hobart and surrounding areas, with free building openings, guided tours, talks and special events celebrating architecture, design and the stories that shape our communities.

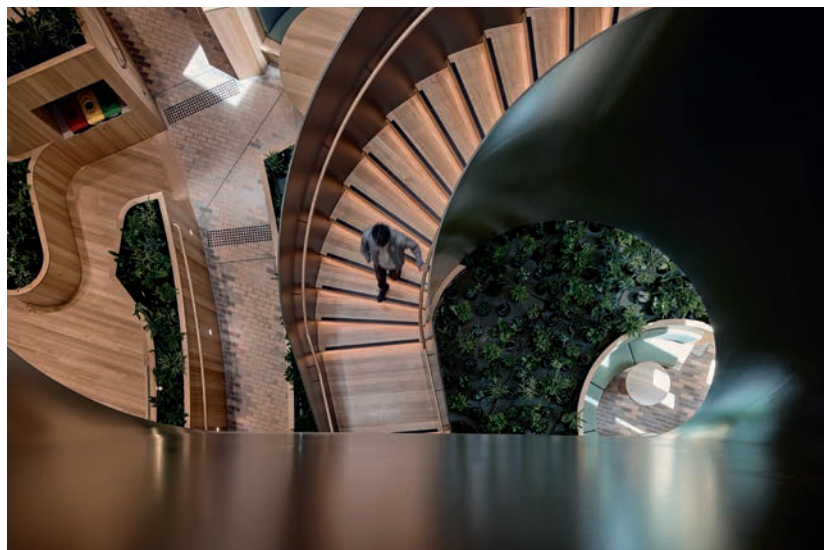
The launch coincided with World Architecture Day on Monday 5 October, an international celebration of architecture and the role it plays in shaping our communities and everyday lives. This year's program reflected that spirit, inviting people to look beyond the buildings themselves and discover the people, ideas, materials, histories and stories that make the places around us meaningful.

A PROGRAM OF SURPRISES

This year's program offers a remarkable mix of the familiar and the unexpected.

Visitors can venture underground into Phrontisterion, MONA's extraordinary library, home to more than 30,000 books, maps and rare volumes, or explore the hidden spaces beneath Princes Park and Alexandra Battery.

They can step inside Parliament House, the Supreme Court, Hobart Town Hall and the State Library and Archives for rare behind-the-scenes access, and discover the stories held within some of Tasmania's most important civic buildings.



The Forest is an incredible project transforming an old industrial building into a stunning learning space heavily featuring timber for both structure and aesthetics.
Photo by Peter Bennetts

Historic buildings feature alongside contemporary architecture throughout the program. Visitors can explore Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church, a convict-built Gothic Revival church dating from the 1840s, discover the layers of history revealed by the restoration of the Black Swan, or step inside Domain House and the Philip Smith Centre to see how historic buildings have been adapted for contemporary learning and community life.

For those curious about Tasmania's mid-century architectural story, the program includes several remarkable examples of modernism, including houses designed by Esmond Dorney, the recently adapted Snow's Dry Cleaning building in Glenorchy, and the Riverfront Motel, where visitors can explore a surviving piece of Glenorchy's mid-century landscape.

There are also plenty of opportunities to see how architecture is responding to contemporary challenges.

At The Forest, former industrial buildings and a 1997 glass dome have been transformed into a new learning environment featuring an indoor temperate rainforest, mass timber and

extensive use of hempcrete. At Weld Street Passivhaus and A Compact Architecture, visitors can see how design and construction can deliver highly energy-efficient and comfortable buildings, while Hard Core explores the possibilities of rammed earth construction.

The program also looks at housing, from Family Sorell's

exploration of terrace housing as a contemporary model for affordable homes to intimate houses where materials, landscape and craftsmanship are central to the experience of living.

Beyond buildings, Open House Hobart will offer walking tours, design experiences, conversations and opportunities to discover the stories of the places around us. Visitors can explore the history of Glenorchy with archaeologist and heritage officer David Parham, look more closely at Hobart's Art Deco buildings, discover the history of worker housing at Drip Village, or explore the relationship between architecture, landscape and winemaking at Pressing Matters and Stargazer Wines in the Coal River Valley.

ARCHITECTURE MEETS PERFORMANCE

The program will also feature a unique collaboration between architecture and performance at the newly reimagined Millington Coffin Workshops by Taylor and Hinds Architects.

For ARIA HOUR, Second Echo

In 2025, Open House Hobart and Open House Southern Midlands attracted more than 20,000 visits across two weekends, demonstrating strong public interest in exploring Tasmania's built environment.



Tasmanian Chapter President of

"You might walk past a building every day without ever wondering what is inside, why it looks the way it does or what stories it holds. Open House gives people the opportunity to slow down,

Click here to view the full 2026 program.



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Four Corners under ongoing scrutiny from ACMA

THE timber industry is still waiting for answers over ABC's 'Timber Turmoil', but scrutiny of *Four Corners* itself has intensified following two Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) findings against the program in 2026.

Following the broadcast of 'Timber Turmoil', Steve Dobbyns, Chair of the Forestry Contractors Association, lodged a formal complaint with ACMA, raising concerns about the program's accuracy, impartiality and presentation of the forestry industry.

ACMA has confirmed the complaint has been received and is under assessment.

While there has been no finding yet in relation to 'Timber Turmoil', the complaint comes at a significant time for *Four Corners*.

In March, ACMA found the August 2024 episode 'Water Grab' breached both accuracy and impartiality provisions of the ABC Code of Practice. The regulator found the program did not have sufficient evidence to support an assertion that a Northern Territory pastoral station had illegally used fire to clear land, and that the program failed to adequately present credible alternative scientific perspectives.

The ABC subsequently agreed to publish an editor's note and clarification, increase accuracy and impartiality training for news journalists, and develop advanced training for managers of investigations.

Then, in September, ACMA found that *Four Corners*' 'Sacrifice' episode breached impartiality requirements in its coverage of the redevelopment of the Australian War Memorial.

The regulator found that the cumulative effect of the program's framing, use of strong and emotive language, and selection and differing treatment of



ACMA is following the evidence as it assesses whether *Four Corners* breached its broadcasting obligations. Image: Shutterstock

interviewees unduly favoured critics of the redevelopment.

Importantly, neither of these 2026 findings resulted in a financial penalty against the ABC.

The latest case also highlights a broader question about what happens after ACMA identifies a breach.

The ABC has rejected the 'Sacrifice' episode impartiality finding and said it

does not propose to take any remedial action. ACMA is considering whether to exercise any formal regulatory response, but the regulator has acknowledged that under broadcasting legislation it may recommend remedial action but cannot compel the ABC to take it.

That means the latest *Four Corners* finding has not resulted in a correction, withdrawal or other remedy being imposed on the program. The ABC has said it stands behind the program and its reporting team.

Against that backdrop, 'Timber Turmoil' is now being assessed while *Four Corners* faces broader questions about how its investigative reporting approaches contentious and complex issues.

The issue is not whether *Four Corners* should investigate powerful industries or challenge established positions. That is an important role for public-interest journalism.

The question is whether that scrutiny is accompanied by the level of accuracy, context and impartiality required under the ABC's own standards, particularly when programs deal with industries and issues where competing evidence and viewpoints are central to the story.

Four Corners remains one of Australia's most influential investigative programs. That influence makes the question of accountability particularly significant.

For the timber industry, the next step is now in ACMA's hands.

Its eventual assessment of 'Timber Turmoil' will not only determine whether the program met the ABC's standards on this particular story. It will also be closely watched as another test of how meaningful regulatory scrutiny of Australia's most prominent investigative programs can be.

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LIGNA 2027: fully represented industry

LIGNA 2027 is in strong shape seven months ahead of its opening, with the event taking place from 10 to 14 May without a public holiday or bridge day.

"The industry is fully represented across LIGNA's core segments; no major name is missing. Quite the opposite: we have even gained new companies from adjacent industries," says Stephanie Wagner, Global Director LIGNA at Deutsche Messe AG. She attributes the strong interest to two new formats, LIGNA.Builds and LIGNA.TruckStop.

"LIGNA.Builds addresses one of the industry's most pressing current topics. Modern, industrialised timber construction affects all of us," Wagner says. The format will feature a live construction site at the Expo roof in the outdoor area, with technology partners including HOMAG Group with WEINMANN, System TM, KALLESOE, HUNDEGGER, SCM and WEINIG, alongside new participants such as EGGER Group and WÜRTH.

The timber construction company building the house is WOLF SYSTEM GmbH, based in Osterhofen, Bavaria. The project reflects WOLF's expertise in timber-frame construction and its current development of a new residential neighbourhood for employees, comprising multi-family buildings, semi-detached houses and townhouses, and a seminar room. LIGNA.Builds is being implemented with project partner holzbau.tech from Rosenheim and supported by the Technical University of



LIGNA 2027 is shaping up strongly, with new timber construction and trade-focused formats joining the established exhibition program.
Image: LIGNA

Applied Sciences Rosenheim.

LIGNA.TruckStop is also attracting new exhibitors. Wagner says the format is "developing very dynamically", with new participants including Bosch Powertools, fischer, HÄFELE, HECO SCHRAUBEN and SPAX joining established names such as FESTOOL and Makita. The format is nearly tripling in exhibition space and doubling the number of participating companies.

A key feature is TruckStop's direct integration into the LIGNA.Builds live construction site, connecting exhibitors' solutions with modern timber construction and the requirements of carpentry and joinery trades.

As of the end of September 2026, LIGNA 2027 had approximately 1,100 exhibitors occupying 100,000 square metres of exhibition space, compared with 1,425 exhibitors and 113,832 square metres in 2025.

CONCENTRATED INDUSTRY EXPERTISE: MORE COMPACT HALL STRUCTURE

While the exhibitor base remains stable, some larger

exhibitors are booking smaller stands due to challenging economic conditions. "The overall exhibition space at LIGNA 2027 will be somewhat smaller than at the previous event, while the exhibitor base will remain stable," Wagner explains.

Dr Bernhard Dirr, Managing Director of VDMA Woodworking Machinery, says timber-construction-related segments are proving comparatively resilient, while a positive trend is emerging in prefabricated housing.

In response to the changed space situation, LIGNA is reorganising the 2027 exhibition grounds around a more compact, thematic structure. Some exhibitors will move to different halls, allowing companies to be grouped more systematically by product and focus area.

Hall 11, which has previously been only partially occupied, will no longer be used. Wagner says the change will integrate exhibitors into LIGNA's higher-traffic core areas, while giving visitors shorter walking distances and more intuitive navigation.

"In 2027, LIGNA will be more compact in terms of its thematic structure and provide visitors with even clearer navigation and shorter routes," Wagner says.

For more information on LIGNA, visit www.ligna.de



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