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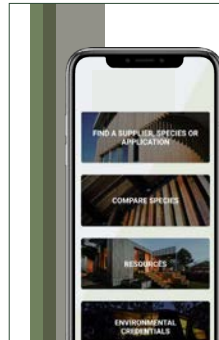
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AFWI explore opportunities at world congress

LAST month, Australian Forest and Wood Innovations (AFWI) made their international debut at the IUFRO World Congress held in Stockholm, Sweden.

The congress, a gathering of forestry experts and stakeholders from around the world, provided a platform to showcase AFWI to the international research community and begin forming future networks.

Deputy Director Dr Patrick Mitchell and Communications and Engagement Manager Maeve McKenna proudly represented AFWI. They were joined by Research Centre Leads Dr. Patrick Baker from the University of Melbourne and Professor Mark Brown from the University of the Sunshine Coast.

Reflecting on his time in Stockholm, Dr Mitchell highlighted the potential impact of these international collaborations and the

exciting opportunities they present for Australia. He emphasised the unique position of Australian forest research and the pivotal role AFWI could play in advancing global forestry innovation.

“I got a greater appreciation of the diversity of forest systems and their significance to people across the world,” he said.

“From meeting people that research everything from Mangrove Forests in Kenya through to Boreal Forests in Sweden. I learnt about new frontiers of how research is helping us to realise the value of forests, including new bioproducts and emerging

technologies in precision forestry.

“Australia’s forest research is currently in a unique position. We have a chance to use AFWI as a vehicle to put Australia at the forefront of forestry and forestry product research and innovation globally,” he said.

Throughout the congress, the AFWI team engaged in discussions with policymakers, researchers, students, and industry leaders, all keen to learn about Australia’s progress in forest research and management practices. These conversations underscored the significance

of sustainability and resilience in addressing worldwide challenges.

The team maximised their participation in talks, plenaries, and poster sessions to deepen their understanding of various topics, from Silviculture and WoodWasps to Gender Equality and Science Communication.



The congress also featured cutting-edge innovations and technologies, including drones, fully automated planters and harvesters, and the pioneering use of hologram technology in forestry operations.



1/ Deputy Director Dr Patrick Mitchell and Communications Manager Maeve McKenna at IUFRO. Image: afwi.au
2/ Patrick Mitchell test drives a harvesting simulator. Image: afwi.au



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DAFF provides update on illegal logging

THE Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) has released its latest update on illegal logging.

In a statement, the DAFF said it continues to engage with international and domestic counterparts to support markets for legally harvested timber.

"One way we do this is through the review and endorsement of Country Specific Guidelines (CSGs) and State Specific Guidelines (SSGs)," the statement read.

"CSGs and SSGs are documents that have been developed and co-endorsed by the Australian Government with relevant partner governments. They help importers and processors to understand the legal frameworks used by other countries and Australian states that regulate timber harvesting. They may also set out some of the documents that you need to gather for due diligence.

"Detailed information on the interactions between CSGs and SSGs and due diligence requirements is available on our website for importers (CSGs) and processors (SSGs).

CSGs and SSGs endorsed and listed for use under Australia's illegal logging laws are featured on these pages of our website. These web pages are updated as



The Australian Government continues to support legal logging avenues. Image: Shutterstock

new CSGs and SSGs are finalised and given effect under legislation, and as outdated and superseded ones are removed. Only those CSGs and SSGs available on the webpage and given effect in the "Regulation at the time of conducting your due diligence may be used when conducting a risk assessment.

We encourage you to complete our future topics survey or email IllegalLogging@aff.gov.au to suggest new countries to cover with CSGs or highlight needed updates to CSGs or SSGs."

EUROPEAN UNION DEFORESTATION REGULATION

In 2023, the European Union (EU) introduced regulations aimed at restricting trade in products that are not 'deforestation-free' or 'degradation-free' according to the EU's definitions. From 30 December 2024, the new deforestation regulation

(EUDR) will require entities placing and making certain products available on the EU market—including cattle, cocoa, coffee, oil palm, rubber, soya, and wood—to meet certain conditions relating to the land on which they were produced. European importers and traders need to ensure the land has not been subject to deforestation or forest degradation since 31 December 2020.

“DUE DILIGENCE IS NECESSARY

"We are engaging with stakeholders to understand their concerns with the EUDR requirements, and will raise appropriate matters with the EU to seek clarification," the statement continued.

"We have published an Industry Advice Notice providing an overview of the EUDR and the potential impact on Australian producers and exporters of affected commodities. As the

EUDR is European legislation, questions on its implementation and interpretation are ultimately for the EU to clarify.

"In relation to timber production and exports, it is important to note that the EUDR does not differentiate between different forest types when defining what constitutes deforestation. The regulation does not restrict export

of timber from Australian native forests to the EU if the production has met certain conditions."

Further information on the regulation can be found on our website. You can provide any views or raise any questions on EUDR directly with the department via europe.tmad@aff.gov.au.

Internationally, the New Zealand Government is introducing a new legal harvest assurance system into law through the Forests (Legal Harvest Assurance) Amendment Act 2023. Under the legal harvest system, forest owners or those responsible for the harvest will need to provide legal harvest information to the log buyer.

For more information on what is proposed, including the first issues paper, and updates on the consultation process, visit the NZ Ministry Primary Industries website at <https://www.mpi.govt.nz/>

State forest reopens after thinning program

THE Mason Hill section at Mannus State Forest, used by the Tumbarumba Mountain Bike Park, has reopened to the public.

Forestry Corporation has concluded a scheduled harvest thinning program of the commercial plantation.

Thinning is a standard practice across pine plantation sawlog producers in Australia.

FCNSW Tumut Regional

“ THINNING IS A STANDARD PRACTICE ”



The selective removal of the lowest quality stems supports improved growth. Image: courtesy of Forestry Corporation

Manager Roger Davies thanked the public for its patience and understanding during the closure saying the thinning operation was a success.

“The safety of our staff, contractors and public is our highest priority and it is important to note that harvesting operations are

a high-risk activity, where specialised heavy equipment, trucks and falling trees and limbs can all pose a risk to any unauthorised personnel accessing the site,” Mr Davies said.

“The selective removal of the lowest quality stems supports improved growth of the remaining, best trees

at clear-fell, as competition for sunlight, nutrients and water reduces.

“For this reason, we are very thankful to the people of Tumba and visitors alike for following safety instructions and staying clear of the harvest site.

“We would like to thank the community at large for its understanding and cooperation. Please refer to Cycle Tumbarumba for information about re-opening of the MTB trails,” he said.

To find out more about Forestry Corporation’s state forests, please visit www.forestrycorporation.com.au.

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AFPA THE LEADING VOICE FOR AUSTRALIA'S FOREST PRODUCTS SECTOR

Fish habitat project to benefit from landslip timber

REPURPOSED timber from the restoration of Bogong High Plains Road has already delivered benefits for a nearby waterway rehabilitation project on the Kiewa River being undertaken by the North East Catchment Management Authority (CMA) and the Victorian Fisheries Authority (VFA).

The timber, collected from felled trees, was donated by Major Road Projects Victoria (MRPV) and East Gippsland-based construction partner Whelans Group Investments following the completion of repair works on Bogong High Plains Road in the state's north-east after the biggest landslide in Victoria in more than 40 years in October 2022.

The North East CMA has worked with MRPV in line with a Memorandum of Understanding for repurposing timber felled during road projects for waterway rehabilitation. The MOU was established in May 2019 by the Victorian Government among 14 agency parties including all CMAs and the VFA. The



Richard Dalkin from North East CMA; Patrick Newman, Whelans Group; Charlie Whelan, Whelans Group; and James Aroin, Major Road Projects Victoria (MRPV) on the Kiewa River where timber has been repurposed for fish habitat projects. Image: Necma Vic

MOU details the collaborative process between the agencies and how repurposed timber felled during road projects will be used for waterway rehabilitation.

While this is the first time MRPV and North East CMA have partnered together, MRPV has a proven track record of donating timber suitable for fish habitats under the MOU, with previous timber donation recipients including Corangamite CMA, North Central CMA and Goulburn Broken CMA.

The timber provided will form part of a project on the Kiewa River between Tawonga and Tawonga South. Funding via a VFA fish habitat grant is being sought to support the delivery of the project.

MRPV Executive Program Director Alexis Davison said projects where timber has previously been donated from includes Yan Yean Road Upgrade, the Echuca-Moama Bridge Project Stage 3 and Barwon Heads Road Upgrade Stage 1.

"Donating timber from

felled trees on our projects ensures a continued life cycle for this valuable resource, and enables important collaboration between different agencies," Alexis Davison said.

Project officer with the North East CMA, Richard Dalkin, said the partnership with MRPV leveraging a rare opportunity where a road project was located close to the waterway rehabilitation site on the Kiewa River.

"Often the biggest challenge is finding timber in the location where these works are being undertaken," Mr Dalkin said.

"The biggest cost of these waterway projects is cartage of the timber being repurposed.

"We are also working in another partnership with Alpine Shire which is providing timber for this project."

North East CMA chief executive officer, Katie Warner said instream woody habitat (IWH) is important for the health of waterways and biodiversity.

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New opportunities for lower-quality logs

A TRIO of key Australian forestry industry bodies are undertaking collaborative research that will support new market opportunities for Engineered Wood Products (EWPs) using lower-quality *Eucalyptus globulus* (blue gum) and *Pinus radiata* (radiata pine) logs.

This important value-add project, funded by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF), is being led by the Green Triangle Forest Industries Hub (GTFIH), with support from Forest & Wood Products Australia (FWPA) and the Australian Forest Products Association (AFPA).

The origins of the initiative can be traced back to November 2021 when demand for this low-value resource from major importer China ceased. With little-to-no existing domestic demand for timber products manufactured using these logs, timber began accumulating in Australian plantations. New markets are needed to prevent this resource from going unused.

In response, the three collaborating bodies developed a grant application to the DAFF-led Agriculture, Trade and Market Access Cooperation (ATMAC). ATMAC agreed to provide funding for an extensive program of research, which has progressed positively during the past two and a half years.

A specially assembled team is studying relevant end-use market specifications, conducting in-depth market research, and undertaking manufacturing and development trials of EWPs with potential appeal to new export and domestic markets. The ultimate objective is to create additional market opportunities and fresh income



The team's work on GLT has involved dressing and grading selected blue gum and radiata pine boards to assess their visual suitability for use in the manufacture of GLT products. Image: Shutterstock

streams for industry.

"FWPA sees this project as a highly significant initiative and we are committed to offering ongoing support to the Hub as the research is conducted," FWPA CEO Andrew Leighton said.

"This work is a wonderful example of three organisations with a shared commitment to creating a sustainable future for Australian forestry coming together to create new opportunities to help secure our industry's ongoing success."

The technical aspects of the research are being conducted at the Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (QDAF) Salisbury Research Facility in Brisbane, under the direction of Principal Scientist Dr Benoit Gilbert.

The market research elements are being led by Tim Woods of IndustryEdge, a consultancy that provides data analysis, intelligence and advice to the forestry industry.

"The market scopes and assessments conducted by IndustryEdge provided the research team with crucial information relating to the total scale of EWPs in the Australian economy by volume and value, segmented by sector and

utilisation," Woods said.

"This analysis helped the team to identify laminated veneer lumber (LVL) and glue laminated timber (GLT) as the preferred options for technical and market assessment."

A total of 120 blue gum and 60 radiata pine logs were harvested from the Green Triangle and processed at the QDAF Salisbury Research Facility.

"Two-thirds of these logs were rotary peeled for use in LVL manufacturing, and the remaining third were sawn into boards to produce GLT," Gilbert said

"Promisingly, recovery rates calculated throughout each of these processes were found to be consistent with rates found elsewhere in the industry."

During its LVL research, the team measured key characteristics of the peeled veneers, including Modulus of Elasticity (MOE), the measurement industry uses to quantify the ability of timber to resist elastic deformation when stress is applied. Encouragingly, high MOE measurements were observed in veneers recovered from blue gum, offering a potentially attractive attribute for buyers in markets where

strength is the key requirement of LVL.

After applying the industry grading system to predict the visual quality of EWPs manufactured from veneers, the researchers found veneers recovered from both log types to be D Grade – the lowest grade on the scale. This knowledge has allowed the team to focus on manufacturing LVL products intended for use in markets where aesthetic appeal is not a vital consideration for the end user, such as internal structural applications.

Alongside the results of the technical work, the team used the findings of an export and domestic market study focused on LVL to identify five specific types they believe have the greatest potential for successful commercialisation. These products have already been manufactured and the next steps will involve testing to assess the products mechanical properties.

The team's work on GLT has involved dressing and grading selected blue gum and radiata pine boards to assess their visual suitability for use in the manufacture of GLT products. They have now been tested for MOE, modulus of rupture (MOR) or 'bend strength, as well as shear modulus (or modulus of rigidity) and density. This data is currently being collated to help determine the specific GLT prototypes for manufacture.

A GLT market assessment study is set to be conducted, with the findings used alongside the results of mechanical testing to determine the most appropriate GLT products to be manufactured. The suitability of these products for commercial

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JULY**22: WA Field Day - Plantation Forestry - Chowerup Hall, Chowerup, WA 9.30am-4.00pm WAST.**

Forest Australia's WA branch field day focusing on plantation forestry. Join hosts PF Olsen, discussing topics including ongoing Blue Gum operations, conversion operations between agriculture/blue gum/pine, as well as carbon, conservation, and stewardship. For more info visit <https://www.forestry.org.au/wa-events/>

24: Forestry Australia Webinar - ONLINE ONLY 12.30pm-1.30pm AEST.

Forestry's changing landscape: Economic drivers and considerations for our future. Featuring Tim Woods and Rob de Fegely. For full details and to register visit <https://www.forestry.org.au/13484-2/>

25-26: AIBS WA Chapter Conference - Crown Perth, Great Eastern Highway, Burswood.

While specifically targeted at Australian Institute of Building Surveyors members, the conference will be looking at issues across the built environment from decarbonising construction to legislative updates, insurance and Standards. WoodSolutions is sponsoring Dr David Bylund of TMBR Consult in his presentation: Fire Compliance - NCC 2022 Made Easy with

WoodSolutions. The two-day conference also includes a sundowner for networking on Thursday night.

For full details and to book, go to <https://aibs.com.au/2024-Conferences---Events/WA-Chapter-Conference-2024/ProgramandSpeakers.aspx>

28-2 AUG: Gottstein Understanding Forest Science Course - Sunshine Coast, QLD.

The course is open to everyone associated with the timber and forestry products sector in some way. For full details, visit <https://gottsteintrust.org/grants-courses/understanding-forest-science-course>

AUGUST**12-13: Timber Construct Conference - Rydges, Melbourne.**

The Timber Offsite Construction Conference and Exhibition has been rebranded as the Timber Construct Conference to encompass the full spectrum of timber building. The conference provides an invaluable forum to address pressing challenges and opportunities influencing timber's role across the built landscape. Technical sessions will cover research updates, emerging products, building code enhancements, and best practice case studies. For more information, visit <https://timberoffsiteconstruction.com>

SEPTEMBER

7: WFTN 'Cocktails for Charity' event, 2.00 - 6.00pm - Loft West End, Brisbane. Join us for an afternoon of cocktails and charity to support RizeUp, an organisation dedicated to providing life-changing practical assistance to families affected by domestic and family violence. Tickets on sale soon.

13: NTHA NSW/ACT State Awards - Hilton, Sydney.

Join us in celebrating the New South Wales & ACT Timber and Hardware Industry. Nominations open at <https://www.ntha.com.au/events/2024-nswact-state-awards-nominations/> Contact Tahlia at events@ntha.com.au

23: Latin America Forest Investment Conference - Porto Alegre, Brazil.**24-25: International Woodchip and Biomass Trade Conference - Porto Alegre, Brazil.****25-27: Field Trip - Rio Grande do Sul State, Brazil.****OCTOBER****22-23: International Woodchip and Biomass Seminar and Networking Event - Singapore.**

29-31: Forestry Australia's 2024 Symposium - Mercure Ballarat Convention Centre, Golden Point, VIC. Theme: Healthy and resilient forests for our future, will facilitate conversation and collaboration that regardless of land tenure and ownership, healthy and

resilient forests should be the objective for all forest and land managers. The Symposium is a focused three-day gathering, consisting of two days of plenary and concurrent sessions, and a day of Field Trips. The two-day program will feature a range of Keynote and Invited Speakers, who are experts and thought leaders in their field. The Symposium will also feature several social functions, facilitating networking and collaboration in an informal and relaxed environment. For more information, visit <https://www.forestry.org.au/2024-symposium/>

NOVEMBER

13-15: AFCA annual Gala dinner & conference - Launceston, Tas. For more information visit: <https://www.afca.asn.au/Events/afca-2023-conference-photo-gallery>

SAVE THE DATES 2025

MARCH 22: NTHA SA/NT/WA State Awards - National Wine Centre, Adelaide. Join us in celebrating the SA, NT & WA Timber and Hardware Industry. Contact Tahlia at events@ntha.com.au

MAY 30: NTHA QLD State Awards - Brisbane City Hall, Brisbane. Join us in celebrating the New South Wales & ACT Timber and Hardware Industry. Contact Tahlia at events@ntha.com.au

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Positive boost for packaging paper and board

AUSTRALIA'S packaging paper and paper board imports were up 4.3% in total, year-ended April 2024 according to Industry Edge.

In the results released in late June, imports totalled 236.1 kt for the year with the major increase in imports being in Corrugating Medium and Testliner/Multiply. For the most part, these are recycled grades, but the Corrugating Medium includes increased imports of 'semi-chemical' medium, which includes virgin fibre pulp.

IndustryEdge states at a time when the Australian economy is struggling under the heavy weight of cost-of-living pressures, it is unsurprising to observe relatively small movements in trade volumes of packaging products. As a further example, exports of packaging paper and paperboard were up 3.4% over the same period, but the order of magnitude is far greater, tracking above 800 kt per annum.

"This 'raw' paper and board data is relevant in another context. The material is all 'unconverted' or ready to be converted into finished packaging products," reports stated.

"The modest movements in these volumes are notable, but most important is the context provided by the huge rise in pre-converted or finished packaging imports that are described below. Increases in finished goods imports are one of the drivers for increased local production of paper bags and sacks, as an example, but there is growth in other formats also."

FINISHED PACKAGING IMPORTS

AUSTRALIAN PACKAGING PAPER & PAPERBOARD IMPORTS: APR '24 AND YEAR-ENDED APR '24 ('000 TONNES & %)

April 2024 ('000 tonnes)	Prior Month	Current Month	Prior Year	Current Year	Comparison with Prior	
					Month	Year
Containerboard	10.5	12.6	88.0	115.1	19.5%	30.8%
Kraftliner	3.2	2.9	51.5	46.7	-8.5%	-9.5%
Corrugating Medium	4.7	8.2	29.1	44.1	73.6%	51.8%
Testliner/Multiply	2.6	1.4	7.4	24.3	-45.3%	228.8%
Cartonboard	12.4	14.7	132.0	115.7	19.0%	-12.3%
Coated Kraftback	2.4	2.6	14.3	13.0	6.8%	-9.1%
General Bleached Cartonboard	9.9	12.1	117.6	102.7	21.9%	-12.7%
Sack Kraft	0.4	1.0	6.4	5.3	165.4%	-17.2%
All Packaging	23.3	28.2	226.4	236.1	21.5%	4.3%

Source: ABS & Industry Edge

Imports lift 23.5% to 193.8 kt tonnes, year-ended April.

Annual imports of pre-converted packaging products increased across the year-ended April 2024, up 23.5% to a total 193.8 kt for the year. As shown in the table below, imports are dominated by three large grades. The largest proportion of annual imports is now taken up by the smaller-sized Sacks & Bags, accounting for 45.1% of all imports. Folding Cartons make up the second largest proportion (28.5%), and Corrugated Cartons rank third (20.4%).

For the year ended April 2024, annual imports of Sacks & Bags <40cm grew 38.6% to 87.4 tonnes. Folding Carton imports were up 10.1% to 55.3 tonnes, and Corrugated Cartons were up 27.2% to 39.6 tonnes.

MOULDED FIBRE PRODUCT IMPORTS

Imports lift 8.8% year-ended April.

Australia's imports of Moulded Fibre products increased in value across the year ended April 2024, up 8.8% compared to the prior year. Import values steadily increased to peak around

early 2023, then flattened out for the rest of that year. In January & February 2024, import values jumped, but have fallen back subsequently, totalling AUD6.5 million in April.

Total annual imports for the year ended April 2024 were valued at AUD73.7 million, compared to the AUD67.7 million imported during the year prior. Used for a variety of

purposes, including disposable medical pans, imports were sourced from a variety of supplier countries, however, the majority originated in the Asian region.

The two key supplier countries continue to increase their share, holding 93.5% of the market, whilst supplies from most other countries fell. Chinese supplies continued to dominate, accounting for 65.6% of the total imported value (AUDM48.4), while Malaysia accounted for 27.9% (AUDM20.6).

Source: IndustryEdge, first published in Pulp & Paper Edge.

AUSTRALIAN CONVERTED PACKAGING IMPORTS: YEAR-ENDED APRIL 2024 ('000 TONNES & %)

'000 tonnes	YE Apr '23	YE Apr '24	% Change
Corrugated Cartons	31.16	39.63	27.2%
Folding Cartons	50.23	55.33	10.1%
Sacks & Bags >40cm	6.63	5.18	-21.8%
Sacks & Bags <40cm	63.10	87.44	38.6%
Packing containers	4.31	4.58	6.4%
Box files	1.47	1.66	12.2%
Total	156.91	193.82	23.5%

Source ABS & Industry Edge

From P 6

use will be demonstrated through destructive testing at a commercial facility.

Another significant project deliverable is a detailed analysis of four key export markets for future trading opportunities: Japan, South Korea, Singapore and Malaysia. The team has also identified that some of these markets may provide additional opportunities for intermediate products such as veneers and lamella.

“We are extremely pleased with the progress our dedicated team of scientists and researchers have made since the commencement on this project,” Scott Whicker, ATMAC Project Coordinator at the GTFIH said.

“Everyone involved should be commended for their commitment to generating outcomes that will have meaningful, tangible



The analysis helped the team to identify laminated veneer lumber (LVL) and glue laminated timber (GLT) as the preferred options for technical and market assessment. Image: David Dodge, Green Energy Futures Via Flickr

benefits for the forestry industry in Australia and the Green Triangle, through the creation of ingenious fresh opportunities for application to a large Australian timber resource that might otherwise have remained underutilised.”

Former GTFIH Executive General Manager Liz McKinnon, who now manages external affairs for the Green Triangle’s hardwood plantation sector,

said important steps are being taken towards commercialising the project outcomes.

“Industry has actively promoted this innovative work to the Victorian State Government in a bid to attract funding to support a feasibility study into the creation of a new manufacturing hub in the Green Triangle’s Glenelg Shire, located close to the resource base and export

channels,” McKinnon said.

“This important next phase will illustrate how this project will not only diversify our market base but will also drive regional economic growth, generate long-term sustainable jobs, and build a comprehensive domestic-focused evidence base to support new plantation investment.”

The researchers are on track to complete all scheduled activities by 30 June 2025, with key findings, progress and milestones continuing to be communicated to industry throughout the project.

The Green Triangle Forest Industries Hub (GTFIH) is a collaboration representing a cross-section of the industry, created to grow a vibrant industry, sustainable for the future.

On the cover: Research is underway to find new domestic and export markets for lower quality wood. Image: Shutterstock

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Concerns grow over affordable housing as DA process put under spotlight

CALLS are once again being made to the government to rapidly step up its efforts to ease the housing crisis, as new figures reveal the stubbornly slow growth and low proportion of social housing in Australia.

New Australian Institute of Health and Welfare data shows the proportion of households living in social housing is shrinking - dropping from 4.7 per cent in 2013 to 4.1 per cent in 2023.



Councils are expected to be more accountable for DA processing times as major delays continue to impact building rates across Australia. Image: Shutterstock

welcomed the recent measures announced to hold local governments more accountable and reduce planning approval timeframes.

“The measures announced by the NSW Government to hold local governments more accountable and reduce planning approval timeframes are welcomed, but more needs to be done,” said David Bare, HIA Executive Director NSW.

“The timeframes published in the Government’s order are still too high and the period set for councils to achieve these timeframes is too long” added Mr Bare.

The average DA determination time listed in the Order of 85 days from 1 July 2027 is still more than double the 40 days (deemed refusal) specified for most DAs in the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979.

“Stronger measures are needed to mandate shorter assessment timeframes now and reduce the excessive submission requirements, particularly for low-impact developments. The use of complying development also needs to be expanded across the state to decrease the number of developments that need a DA and help reduce overall council workloads.

“If we are going to meet the state’s housing targets and address the housing shortage, then more needs to be done now to speed up the time it takes to get a planning approval” concluded Mr Bare.

Meanwhile, the number of social homes grew by just 2,870 between June 2022 and June 2023 - all while more than 184,000

households officially sat on a waitlist.

Everybody’s Home spokesperson Maiy Azize said the glacial pace of social housing growth is failing to meet demand.

“Australia is only building about 3,000 social homes every year - at this rate, it would take us more than 200 years to build enough homes just to meet today’s needs,” Ms Azize said.

“Even if the government meets its five-year target of 30,000 it’s simply not enough to meet today’s chasmic shortfall of 640,000 homes.

“The government must start aiming for at least one in ten homes to be social homes. That would turn our housing crisis around and make housing more affordable for everyone,” Maiy said.

It comes as construction firms remain concerned over the government’s ambitious, five-year, new building plan with skilled labourers still in shortage.

Meanwhile, the HIA has

“**STRONGER MEASURES ARE NEEDED**”

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UK timber import market strengthens

THE UK timber import market enjoyed a stronger month in April 2024, with volumes 4.7% higher than those in April 2023, according to the latest TDUK statistics from ttjonline reports.

The better April has reduced the deficit gap between 2024 and 2023 to 109,000m³, down from 150,000m³ at the end of Q1.

This latest improvement has moved all product groups into single-digit reductions, except plywood imports which are 2% higher in 2024 to date.

In softwood imports, for example, the value of imports in the first four months of 2024 was 7% lower than during the same period in 2023, caused by a 4% reduction in volume and a 3% fall in the average price of a

basket of softwood imports.

Within plywood, softwood plywood imports experienced probably the greatest change in sources of supply for many years.

Volume in the month was around 5,000m³ higher than in April 2023, with Brazil leading the increases by supplying nearly 3,500m³ more in the month. China and Chile also supplied more, as did Uruguay and Canada, though there was a substantial fall in volume from Finland.

Overall, for the quarter, the value of all plywood imports was still 10% below the level in the first four months of 2023. Softwood plywood



Softwood plywood imports experienced the greatest change. Image: Shutterstock

values were 18% lower and hardwood plywood values remained 7% down.

Meanwhile, housing starts in England in Q1 2024 were 39% below Q1 2023, following on from a 50% reduction in Q4 2023 over Q4 2022; a fall that will naturally impact the demand for timber.

Comparing tropical hardwood imports for the first four months of each of the last three years reveals strong growth from the Congo Republic. A near doubling

of share to account for 26% of tropical hardwoods resulted from an 18% growth in 2024 to date, driven mainly largely by a 40% increase in sawn Sapeli.

Romanian Oak has been gaining favour among UK hardwood importers

for several years, but in 2024 significantly higher quantities of sawn beech have propelled Romania's share of temperate hardwoods into double figures, with more than 4,500m³ imported in 2024 to date, enabling Romania to account for 40% of the UK's beech imports.

Spain has increased its supply of particleboard to the UK by 110% in the first four months of 2024.

Source: ttjonline

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Scion appoints new Board Chair

MINISTER for Science, Innovation and Technology Hon Judith Collins KC has appointed Richard Westlake as Chair of the Scion Board, starting 1 July 2024.

He succeeds Dr Helen Anderson whose two terms on the Scion Board ended in June.

Richard will join existing Board members for their first official meeting together in Rotorua on 25 July.

He brings more than three decades of leadership and governance experience across a variety of sectors to Scion. He was the establishment Chair for two state-owned enterprises, MetService and Quotable Value, and for six years he served as Deputy Chair at GNS Science. Notable government appointments have included serving as Chair of Better Border Security, and Standards New Zealand.

His contributions to the private and voluntary sectors are also impressive, having chaired New Zealand Home Loans since 2019 and Hospice New Zealand since 2022. Other roles have included Careerforce Industry Training Organisation, the Dairy Goat Co-operative, Dairy NZ's predecessor Dexcel Trust, Canterbury Opera and Kiwibank, where he was one of the founding directors.

Richard says he is looking forward to working with Scion's Board and Executive Management Team to provide guidance during a challenging period in New Zealand's science sector.

"With the Science System Review underway, I acknowledge the feeling of uncertainty that people working at the coalface are experiencing.

"At the same time, Scion will remain committed to forest research and building on the huge opportunities emerging particularly in industrial biotechnology and advanced manufacturing.

"Working together, we expect that our outstanding team of scientists and those who support them will continue Scion's mission of driving impactful scientific research and development, to deliver significant benefits for New Zealand in a variety of areas."

Scion chief executive Dr Julian Elder has expressed his enthusiasm for the new Chair appointment.

"We are looking forward to welcoming Richard to Scion and in particular, Te Whare Nui o Tuteata, our headquarters in Rotorua.

"His extensive experience and distinguished track record in governance and leadership of change will be invaluable as we continue to navigate the complexities and opportunities in our sector.



Richard Westlake has been appointed Chair of Scion NZ which remains committed to forest research.

Image: Scion

Richard's deep understanding of both the public and private sectors will bring a fresh perspective to our Board and help us drive our strategic objectives forward."

In addition to his Board roles, Richard has an extensive career history that includes being the Chief Executive and South Island General Manager for Trust Bank Canterbury/

Westpac Trust from 1995 to 1999 and holding various banking and merchant banking positions in New Zealand and Australia between 1976 and 1995. Richard's early career saw him as a fast jet pilot in the Royal Air Force, UK, from 1973 to 1976, demonstrating his diverse and robust leadership background. His affection for aviation continues today as President of the Kāpiti Districts Aero Club.

He owns a governance consultancy that he established over 20 years ago and has worked extensively with the Institute of Directors for much of that time.

Richard will chair a Board made up of existing Scion directors Stana Pezic, Brendon Green (Ngāti Hikairo, Ngāpuhi), Nicole Anderson (Ngāpuhi, Te Roroa, Te Aupōuri), Phil Taylor and Kiriwaitangi Rei-Russell (Te Arawa - Ngati Whakaue, Tūhourangi Ngati Wāhiao, and Ngati Awa - Te Pahipoto), and Future Director Zara Morrison (Ngāti Whakaue, Ngāti Tūwharetoa).

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Short rotation forestry: chance to reshape NZ's energy future

Part One. By MICHAEL SMITH

THE pressing need to invest in sustainable energy sources has presented an opportunity for regional New Zealand to adopt short rotation forestry (SRF) for bioenergy production.

Timber & Forestry enews invited Dr Alan Jones, silviculture and forest carbon scientist at Scion – and co-author of the recently released Short Rotation Forestry Bioenergy Handbook – to comment on the prospects for SRF as the country looks for ways to transition to a circular bioeconomy and meet its net zero carbon commitments.

Dr Jones says Scion's modelling "shows that short rotation forestry as a feedstock for bioenergy has the potential to replace 6% of New Zealand's annual fossil fuel demand from less than 1% of the land area.

"We've built on research from a decade ago and assessed the feasibility of rapidly upscaling bioenergy production from forests. And we've found there are particular regions well-suited to short rotation forestry, which provides a real opportunity for communities to transform their economic base and reshape the country's energy future."

A key outcome of Scion's research is the handbook, which targets landowners, forest investors and government agencies.

Dr Jones says the research "recommends that short rotation forestry should be established on lower value land (Land Use Capability Classes 5-7) in locations where transport distances to processing locations can be minimised.

"Our spatial analysis has



Scion senior technician Sumedha Amarasena and scientist Alan Jones measuring the growth of eucalypts in a field trial. Image: Scion

identified several wood supply regions where high centres of future bioenergy demand coincide with the availability of such land. These include Northland, Central North Island, East Coast, Hawke's Bay, Canterbury and Otago-Southland wood supply regions."

He also notes that even if available residual forestry waste is used efficiently as a bioenergy feedstock, there will still be a need to grow new forests to keep up with future demand for bioenergy, and to supply liquid biofuels for transport.

"The differences in cost between slash recovery and short rotation forestry will be dependent on a range of factors, with land costs being prominent. Slash recovery has a potential advantage because it would be derived from land with existing forestry use ... while SRF will be established on former grazing land.

"For the purposes of our assessment, we

targeted the cheapest areas of afforestable land for new SRF plantations. This puts SRF biomass production in a similar cost-benefit ballpark to residual biomass recovery from existing forest plantations.

"The key thing with SRF is this biomass production system enables ongoing expansion of biomass generating capacity on areas of economically marginal land, which provides options for landowners."

According to Scion's modelling, SRF would involve

growing and harvesting trees on 12- to 18-year rotations (considerably less than the conventional 28-year harvest cycle).

Dr Jones says it's all about developing forest systems that are optimised for bioenergy. "But the benefits would go much further if decentralised processing of harvested material was promoted to

stimulate regional economies and fast-track bioenergy availability.

"It makes sense to build processing facilities in more economically disadvantaged regions because the energy itself is a lot cheaper to transport once it's chipped and dried, or transformed into liquid biofuels."

Scion's productivity modelling suggests that stocking between 650 and 1,250 stems per hectare would be ideal for bioenergy

– depending on species, site and rotation age. "Under this regime, with no pruning or thinning, plantations would return a mean annual increment (MAI) of between 20 and 30 tonnes per hectare.

"The stocking rates we suggest are not especially radical from



Short Rotation Forestry Bioenergy Handbook targets landowners, forest investors and government agencies. Image: Scion

Cont P 15

Former forestry building wins architecture award

THREE Australian projects are among the category winners of the 2024 WAFX Prizes, awarded by organisers of the World Architecture Festival (WAF).

The WAFX Prize recognises projects that best use design and architecture to take major world issues across 11 categories, such as Carbon and Climate, Re-Use, and Ethics and Values.

Among the winners was Woods Bagot's University of Tasmania Forestry Building which won the Building Technology category.

The project consists of the restoration and redevelopment of the former Forestry Building in Hobart CBD: the centrepiece of the University of Tasmania's Southern Campus Transformation.

The site comprises two heritage-listed 1920s redbrick warehouses, a former 1980s warehouse showroom and a 22-metre dome-shaped conservatory designed by Morris-Nunn and Associates in 1997.

The project team is reimagining the site as an inner-city hub for learning, research and collaboration through a highly connected campus that unifies the disparate built elements onsite with integrated landscape, through-block connections and publicly accessible thoroughfares.



The University of Tasmania building was one of three winners for Australia. Image: Woods Bagot via WAF

Once complete, the campus will be characterised by vibrant civic spaces, underscored by a connection to place and community.

The design team strives to create a campus – not a building – through a master plan that features a collection of diverse and rich interstitial spaces to meet the disparate needs of the university. As a highly flexible structure, the building's demountable design will enable the university to adapt the interior environment as the university's pedagogical needs change.

Key design principles included a building that identifies with each of the disciplines it houses; that is warm and welcoming to staff, students, and the community; and that embraces people and their ways of working on a human scale.

Building off the existing structures, the new additions

develop upon found conditions for a campus that's both historically rich and highly sustainable. New functional elements are inserted within the existing built elements to create a cohesive learning landscape. Spaces are organised into six discrete typologies, including focused study zones, 'alone together' spaces, public collaboration areas, private collaboration areas, relaxation quarters, and places for meeting others.

Targeting 40 percent less embodied carbon than comparable buildings, the project team has adopted a comprehensively circular strategy for building materials. This means material recovery where possible; the elimination of carbon-intensive materials; and the introduction of only sustainable materials.

New materials have been selected for their provenance and sustainability, from the

timber studwork to the recycled-content carpets, to the bio-based wall linings. Once complete, the Forestry Building will be the largest example of a commercial use of hempcrete in Australia.

The building will operate as an education tool by including interpretative signage, highlighting the materials and construction methods that underpin the sustainable design, from the circular strategy to the comprehensive life-cycle assessment. Pedagogical tools will signpost the site's history, from the 1922 Crisp & Gunn hardware store and joinery workshop to the 1997 Forestry Tasmania dome.

Celebrating the confluence of architecture and landscape, the design team will reinstate the indoor urban forest previously housed beneath the glass dome, creating a verdant focal point for the campus that connects its interstitial spaces.

The other Australian winners included the University of Technology Sydney - National First Nations Centre by Warren and Mahoney in association with Greenaway Architects, Oculus and Finding Infinity.

In all, 33 future projects are recognised in the WAFX Prizes. An overall winner will be announced at WAF in Singapore between 6 and 8 November, along with the winners of the WAF Awards.

Source: World Architecture Festival

From P 14

a commercial production forest perspective – but there are a number of potential biophysical risks that could emerge with such a regime,

including fire.

"However, such risks would be comparable to, for example, a densely stocked pulpwood plantation. The important point is that such considerations should be carefully evaluated

before SRF establishment, – similar to other types of forest plantations, which also require their suitability and inherent levels of risk to be carefully appraised across a range of landscape types."

In next week's edition, we'll look at the ideal species identified by Scion for short rotation forestry, and the optimal genetic traits to maximise production.

Timber takes centre stage in plans for Hobart's new stadium

It's been slated to become the world's "largest timber-roofed stadium" and plans have now been revealed for the new multi-purpose stadium in Hobart.

Concept designs for the new \$715 million home ground of the Tasmanian Devils football team have been unveiled, with timber to be a key focus of the proposed stadium in nipaluna/Hobart's Macquarie Point.

Cox Architecture was announced in May 2024 as the lead design consultant for the project alongside Tasmanian architecture practice Cumulus Studio, specialist engineers and technicians AECOM, Cova, Aldanmark, and Pitt and Sherry, and international partner Schlaich Bergermann Partners (SBP).

Minister for Sport and Events, Nic Street, said the stadium design is "welcoming, functional and uniquely Tasmanian."

"When completed, the stadium will be the largest timber-roofed stadium in the world," Street said. "While

developing this stadium is an important step in realising our dream of seeing our own AFL and AFLW teams running out on our own field, this facility will offer so much more.

"The maritime heritage of the broader area has also been taken into account, and culturally informed under the guidance of Aboriginal community members."

The stadium form, with its low profile and woven-style facade, was inspired by the historic character and formation of the roundhouse structures that once served the state's railway network on site. Within the venue, a seating bowl design has been adopted, in a move that seeks to bring crowds closer to the field. The facility will house approximately 23,000 seats.

A defining feature will be a fixed and transparent, dome-shaped roof, which will be supported by an internal frame made from steel and Tasmanian timber. The transparency of the roof will allow natural light to penetrate, assisting with natural turf growth and eliminating the need for sizeable light towers. The see-through roof portion will be composed of a fluorine-based plastic material called ethylene tetrafluoroethylene (ETFE) that is resistant to corrosion and temperature fluctuation.

The renders indicate a stage pocket in the northern stand will host entertainment and performance events, while simultaneously minimising impact to the field. The facility will also include a 1,500-person function room with views of kunanyi/Mount Wellington, and separated catering and back-of-house facilities with a below-ground service road.

Accessibility, inclusivity and pedestrian flow has been prioritised through the inclusion of a single continuous concourse that will service the whole stadium.

Under the plans, an existing 1915 goods shed that was granted heritage listing in early 2024 will be relocated to a different area on the site.

A State Significant Development Application is being prepared for submission this July.

Source: MPDC & Architecture AU



1



2

1/ A defining feature is a fixed and transparent, dome-shaped roof, which will be supported by an internal steel and Tasmanian timber frame. Image: Courtesy Macquarie Point Development Corporation (MPDC) / Cox Architecture

2/ Plans indicate the multipurpose stadium in Hobart's Macquarie Point is slated to become the world's "largest timber-roofed stadium." Image: Courtesy Macquarie Point Development Corporation (MPDC)



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Timber engineering conference heads to Brisbane



Admissions of abstracts are currently open with the closing period being extended to the end of July 2024

Image: via lendlease

DELEGATES from around the world are being invited to join the World Conference on Timber Engineering, to be held in Brisbane in 2025.

“WCTE is the world’s premier scientific dissemination forum for presenting and discussing the latest technical and architectural developments and innovations in timber engineering and construction,” organisers shared on their website.

“The scope covers research, education, and practice topics from all over the world. The conference has attracted wide international representation and attendance, bringing together researchers, engineers, architects, consultants, contractors, project managers, suppliers, and manufacturers from across the globe.

“The use of timber in building construction is growing at a rapid pace in Australia and there is a rise in engineering and architectural firms, developers and investors, now emphasising timber engineering as a preferred solution for many projects, providing further relevance to the research carried out by the timber design and construction community.



The event will be held in Brisbane in 2025. Image: Shutterstock

Brisbane will play host to the event which will run from June 22 to June 26th, 2025 at the Convention Centre in South Bank. Registrations of interest to attend the event are now open.

Additionally, organisers are inviting authors to submit 2-page abstracts / mini papers for the conference.

“Submissions are sought for both oral and poster presentations, which must address the principal conference theme ‘Advancing Timber for the Future Built Environment’,” organisers shared.

“The WCTE 2025 technical program will have a focus on research carried out by the timber design and construction community

due to the rise in engineering and architectural firms, developers, and investors, now emphasising timber engineering as a preferred solution for many projects.”

Abstracts should be submitted in one of the focus areas: Engineering Focus, Architectural Focus or Practitioner Focus

All accepted submissions will be included in the conference proceedings and published in Proceedings.com.

The deadline for submissions has been extended to Wednesday, July 31st with successful authors to be notified by October 2024.

For more information visit: <https://www.wcte2025.org/>



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