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COVER STORY P3

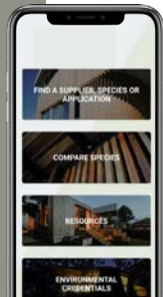


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HIA releases election priorities ahead of ACT election

THE Housing Industry Association ACT and Southern NSW region (HIA) has released its full 2024 ACT election priorities to address the issues facing housing and residential construction in the capital.

"We have released a number of policy priorities that have been developed by our members over the past year, and that we believe can start addressing the housing crisis in Canberra," said Greg Weller, HIA executive director ACT & Southern NSW.

"A crisis is the right way to describe where we are at, with the ACT not performing well across a range of housing metrics that impact on home ownership, the rental market and public or social housing.

HIA says one of the most basic human needs is shelter. "Beyond just survival, it allows individuals and families the ability to participate in the community and economy to their best ability. Across almost every housing metric the ACT is failing."

"Owner-occupied housing in the ACT is at its least affordable in decades. It now requires over 1.7 average



The HIA has listed a number of requirements for the ACT government to implement to address the growing housing crisis. Image: Shutterstock

incomes to service the mortgage on a median-priced dwelling," they shared in a statement.

Rental vacancy rates in Canberra sit at 1.6%, almost half the accepted level of a healthy rental market, increasing competition for renters and putting upward pressure on rents.

The number of detached houses commencing construction in the ACT is sitting 42.0% below the decade average and is the lowest since records started in 1980.

The renovations sector recorded its weakest quarter in 15 years, sitting 23.6% below the decade average.

"Despite the commitment

of the Territory to prioritise infill development, in 2022/23 multi-residential dwelling starts fell by 34% from the previous year and in 2023/24 the ACT will build the lowest number of apartments since 2014/15.

The private housing market has been squeezed by a lack of shovel-ready land, and an explosion in regulation, red tape, and taxation. Yet, at the same time as the private construction and rental sectors are constrained, there has been a failure of the government to meet its obligations for public housing," a spokesperson for the HIA said in a statement.

In 2012 there were 11,846 properties in the public



housing stock compared to 11,612 today. This represents a reduction of 234 dwellings, while the population of the Territory has increased by almost 70,000. As of 1 January 2024 the waiting time for priority housing was 256 days. For those that meet the basic eligibility criteria for social housing is three times the national average at 1,946 days.

"The ACT has a housing emergency. To do nothing other than continue with the status quo is not an option."

HIA's policy priorities for the next ACT Legislative Assembly aim to address the challenges facing housing in the ACT and work to deliver more homes in a timely and affordable way.

"It has been positive that several of the ideas and themes we are progressing have been reflected in the commitments of a number of parties and candidates. We will look forward to working with whoever forms the next government to start creating solutions to the challenges we face," concluded HIA Executive Director Mr Weller.

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Making a difference through Community Grants

Now in its fifth year, Responsible Wood continues to invest in connecting communities to their certified forests through its Community Grants Program.

RESPONSIBLE Wood, Australia's largest forest certification scheme, has announced the launch of its 2024-25 Community Grants Program, aimed at supporting community-driven projects that contribute

to the social, environmental, and economic sustainability of Australia's forests. This initiative is designed to provide financial assistance to local communities, NGOs, and other stakeholders to help conserve forest ecosystems, enhance recreational facilities, and promote forest education.

SUPPORTING LOCAL COMMUNITIES

The 2024-25 Community Grants Program will offer funding to projects that align with Responsible Wood's core values of sustainable forest management. Eligible projects can include conservation efforts, community awareness initiatives, educational programs, and activities that promote biodiversity. Applications are now open, and the deadline for submissions is Friday, 22 November 2024.

Building on the success of previous years, Responsible Wood is committed to furthering its support for local communities that play an essential role in protecting Australia's forest landscapes. This year's program aims to amplify the efforts of grassroots organisations working to ensure the



1/ Members from the Hunter's Hill Men's Shed assist in creating a series of new possum boxes.

Photo: PlantingSeeds

2 & 3/ Volunteers from NSW SES put their skills to work in constructing essential habitats for the possums and other native species.

Photos: NSW SES

4/ The completed boxes are ready for installation as part of the B&B Highway PlantingSeeds project. As one of the recipients of a Responsible Wood Community Grant for 2023-24, PlantingSeeds were able to provide much-needed boxes to further support biodiversity in Australia's urban environments. Photo: NSW SES



long-term health of forest ecosystems across the country.

SUCCESS STORY: PLANTINGSEEDS PROJECT

Fostering biodiversity in urban and regional areas is more important than ever in the face of deforestation through urbanisation and other environmental challenges. PlantingSeeds, one of the recipients of a Responsible Wood Community Grant for 2023-24, is one such organisation doing great work in this space. Their work focuses on engaging communities to plant native vegetation and create habitats that support endangered pollinators, promoting long-term sustainability and



biodiversity in Australia's urban landscapes.

Teaming up with collaborators like Greater Sydney Landcare, the New South Wales State Emergency Service (NSW SES), Responsible Wood, Forestry Corporation of NSW, and local groups from the

Australian Men's Shed Association (AMSA), PlantingSeeds continued their work in 2024. A recent project involving the creation of a series of new possum boxes brought together volunteers from NSW SES Marrickville and Waverley Units

alongside the Hunter's Hill Men's Shed. These boxes serve as essential habitats for possums and other native species, restoring ecological balance in urban areas where natural shelters are scarce.

This initiative provided

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From P 3

essential urban habitat and educated volunteers about biodiversity's importance in urban settings. The timber for these boxes, donated through the Responsible Wood Community Grant and Forestry Corporation of NSW, demonstrated how sustainably sourced timber can support both forest-level management and certified product initiatives.

A TAILORED APPROACH FOR AUSTRALIA'S FORESTS

The standout feature of Responsible Wood's standards is that they are developed from the ground up and tailored to Australia's specific legal, environmental, social, and economic conditions. From its origins as the Australian Forestry Standard Limited in 2003 to its rebranding in

2017, Responsible Wood has listened closely to environmental groups, expert forest scientists, industry stakeholders and community voices. This approach has led to the certification of over 17 million hectares of forests, ensuring that sustainable forest management practices reflect the realities of Australia's diverse ecosystems, including First Nations rights and land management, fire management, long-term carbon management and protection of water resources and wildlife habitats.

GLOBAL RECOGNITION, NATIONAL STRENGTH

Responsible Wood's certification is regionally significant and globally recognised through its endorsement by PEFC International. This mutual recognition framework allows sustainably grown Australian

timber products to be trusted and traded worldwide, increasing the market potential for certified products while promoting sustainable forestry practices on a global scale.

Responsible Wood's focus on fostering strong local governance and infrastructure by international accreditation norms ensures that the certification process remains independent, transparent, and responsive to both industry needs and environmental challenges. The Community Grants Program is a testament to Responsible Wood's mission, supporting grassroots projects that resonate with the core values of sustainable forest management.

SUPPORTING GLOBAL SUSTAINABILITY

In addition to promoting local initiatives, Responsible Wood and PEFC standards play a key role in supporting

global sustainability efforts, including the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), climate action targets, and the promotion of renewable resources and circularity. This week, the visit of Michael Berger, PEFC International's Secretary General, to Australia for the Responsible Wood Annual General Meeting further underscores the interconnectedness between national standards and global environmental goals.

By taking local action with global frameworks, Responsible Wood continues to lead the way in supporting a sustainable future for forests in Australia.

On the cover: Dr Judy Friedlander (left) joins the volunteers from NSW SES - Marrickville Unit and NSW SES Waverley Woollahra Units, who used their skills to craft possum boxes for local native wildlife. Working with PlantingSeeds the team learned about how urban habitats play a huge role in supporting biodiversity. Photo: NSW SES



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FSC response to EU Commission's proposal to postpone EUDR

ON October 2, the European Commission announced a proposal for an extra 12 months of phasing-in time of the EU Deforestation Regulation (EUDR). The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) was founded in 1994, following the Rio Summit, in response to governmental inaction on global forestry issues.

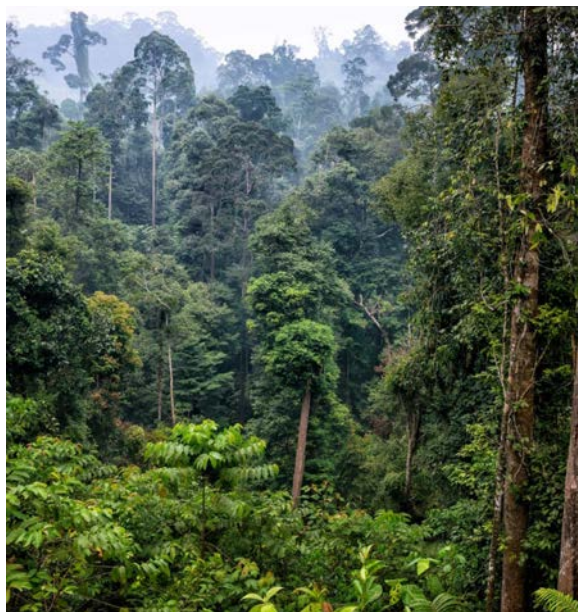
"We welcome ongoing developments in forestry legislation and sustainability initiatives worldwide, and we strongly believe that mandatory and voluntary actions must work hand-in-hand to achieve meaningful sustainability outcomes," said Matteo Mascolo, FSC's Lead for EU Affairs & Engagement.

"FSC fully supports the creation of deforestation-free markets and continues to underline the urgency of swift action to prevent deforestation. FSC was one of 170 NGOs co-signing a

letter of urgency for the timely implementation of the Regulation.

"Our mission, Forests For All, Forever, remains at the heart of our efforts. We have worked diligently to prepare solutions that support businesses in meeting their EUDR obligations ahead of the original deadline, and our commitment to this cause remains unwavering," Dr Joanna Nowakowska, System Performance Director, FSC International said.

While the European Commission's proposal to potentially postpone the EUDR still requires



The Stewardship Council has welcomed the development in forestry legislation. Image: FSC

agreement with the co-legislators, FSC say this should not be seen as a reduction in commitment to this vital legislation.

FSC says it will continue to provide companies with the tools, solutions, and guidance

needed to comply with the EUDR and other relevant sustainability initiatives, ensuring they are fully prepared when the regulation takes effect.

"We encourage companies to leverage FSC's existing and upcoming solutions to complement their efforts in meeting EUDR obligations. We believe that protecting forests is a shared

responsibility, and we remain dedicated to assisting all stakeholders—within and beyond our membership—on this critical journey," concluded Anand Punja, FSC's Chief Engagement and Partnership Officer.



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2024-25 Community Grants Program applications are now open

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responsiblewood.org.au

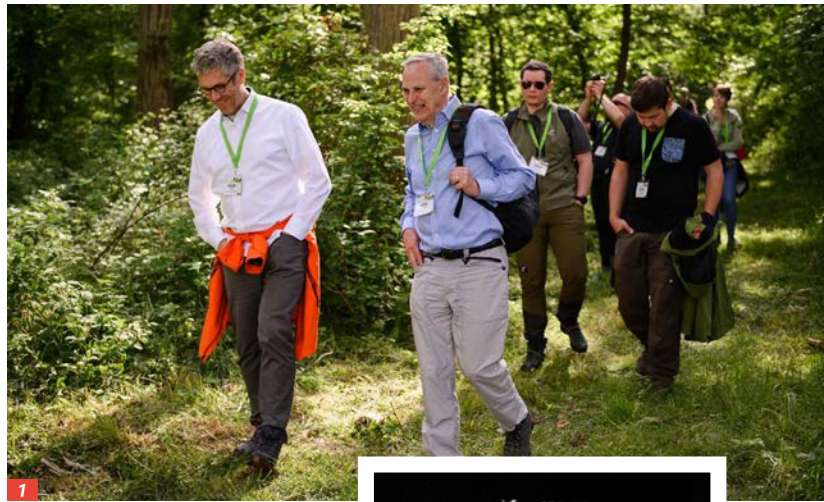
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Michael Berger visits with Responsible Wood

MICHAEL Berger, Secretary General of the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC), visited Australia this week to speak at the Responsible Wood Annual General Meeting (AGM) in Western Australia. His visit marks a significant moment for Responsible Wood and the broader sustainable forestry sector as Berger participates in field visits to certified forests and chain of custody organisations, engages with members and stakeholders, and discusses the future of sustainable forest management.

As part of his trip, Berger took part in a forest field trip to observe firsthand the practices that have



1/ Michael Berger visits a certified French forest at the PEFC Forest Forum.

2/ Michael Berger presenting at a workshop in Hobart. Photos: courtesy Responsible Wood

positioned Australia as a leader in sustainable forestry. He also met with

are managed sustainably, balancing cultural, environmental, social, and economic viability.

At the AGM, Responsible Wood released its 2023-24 Annual Report, which highlighted its achievements over the past year, including expanding the reach of the

certification scheme and strengthening its role in supporting the future of the built environment. This report further underscores the ongoing relevance of the Responsible Wood standard in addressing modern challenges such as climate change and biodiversity loss through deforestation.

PEFC'S LEADERSHIP IN RESPONDING TO GLOBAL CHALLENGES

Berger's visit also comes at a time when PEFC is taking on a global leadership role in responding to the European Union's Deforestation Regulation (EUDR). The EUDR aims to prevent deforestation linked to products entering the EU market. PEFC has been actively engaging with the European Commission to ensure that the regulation aligns with the realities and needs of its global members and certificate holders. Of note, the European Commission has proposed delaying the implementation of the EUDR to December 30, 2025, for large companies



2

key stakeholders, reflecting PEFC's commitment to supporting nationally relevant certification systems and ensuring they meet global sustainability goals.

CELEBRATING 20 YEARS OF RESPONSIBLE WOOD

The timing of Berger's visit coincides with Responsible Wood celebrating a rich history in the Australian forest products sector. Founded as Australian Forestry Standard Limited in 2003, Responsible Wood has grown into the country's largest certification scheme, covering over 17 million hectares of certified forests. Over the past two decades, Responsible Wood has worked closely with local stakeholders, communities, and forest managers to ensure that Australia's forests

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Cont P 7

OCTOBER

22-23: International Woodchip and Biomass Seminar and Networking Event – Singapore.

29-31: Forestry Australia 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 QLD State Awards – Brisbane City Hall, Brisbane. Join us in celebrating the QLD Timber and Hardware Industry. Contact Tahlia at events@ntha.com.au

MAY 30: 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

MARCH 25-28: DANA Global Wood Products Supply and Demand Trends Seminar,

Global Forest Investment Conference, and WWII Battle of the Bulge Battle sites tour – Europe. Contact admin@dana.co.nz

JUNE 22-26: World Conference on Timber Engineering – Brisbane. WCTE is the world's leading scientific forum for the presentation of the latest technical and architectural solutions and innovations in timber construction.

OCTOBER 20-22: International Woodchip and Biomass Seminar and Networking Event – Singapore.

OCTOBER 23-24: Field Trip – Vietnam.

From P 6

and June 30, 2026, for micro and small enterprises. It has invited the European Parliament and the Council to adopt this proposal by the end of the year.

As forests face increasing pressure from climate change through pests, droughts, and bushfires, the role of sustainable forest management certification has never been more relevant. PEFC's advocacy on the international stage ensures that certification systems remain effective and credible while supporting certificate holders in navigating regulatory changes like the EUDR. By representing global

members, including those in Australia, PEFC ensures that certification continues providing a pathway to sustainable forestry practices that meet environmental and sustainable development goals.

PEFC'S 25TH ANNIVERSARY AND FORESTS' ROLE IN CLIMATE ACTION

Berger's visit follows PEFC's 25th anniversary celebration at its Forest Forum in Paris in May. This milestone brought together members and international stakeholders to focus on forests' role in combating climate change. The event emphasised the pivotal role that forest

products such as biomass, wood, and fibre can play in decarbonisation and mitigating climate change impacts.

As the world warms and forests are increasingly affected by changing climates, sustainable forest management is becoming even more relevant. The 2024 PEFC Forest Forum spotlighted good practices

in forest management from around the world that promote resilience and sustainability in a world that is, on average, 2°C warmer. The forum also showcased how on-the-ground efforts in forest management can help mitigate the impacts of climate change while ensuring long-term sustainability.

As the world looks for solutions to deforestation and climate change, forest certification will continue to play an important role. The efforts of Responsible Wood and PEFC ensure that these resources are managed sustainably, based on science, for today's needs and future generations

“THE ROLE OF SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT CERTIFICATION HAS NEVER BEEN MORE RELEVANT”

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Visit a forest this spring/summer

WITH the summer season rolling in, Forestry Corporation has released its ultimate guide to free camping, picnic and visitor sites in NSW State forests.

From scenic trails and lookouts to pet-friendly campsites, pristine waterholes and popular tourist attractions, State forests offer great family outdoor adventures this spring/summer.

“State forests are a fabulous resource for the community – they are free to use, offer an array of facilities and more basic ‘back to nature’ camping and visitors can even bring their dogs along,” said Louise Faulkner, Manager Tourism and Partnerships.

“We love people visiting the forest and ask everyone to



Forestry Corporation is encouraging people to get out and enjoy our local forests this summer holiday season. Image:supplied

look after the sites for others – take your rubbish with you.”

State forests are also working forests where tourism, wildlife protection, primary industries like grazing and apiary and sustainable

timber production co-exist.

“It is important to remember that State forests are working forests and visitors may come across trucks and closed areas related to sustainable timber

harvesting,” said Northern Regional Manager Dean Caton.

“Each year we harvest and regrow timber from State forests which goes into thousands of homes as framing, flooring and decking and critical infrastructure like powerpoles and wharf timbers.

“When visiting State forests we ask people to read and obey signage, especially staying

out of closed areas where operations may be taking place and it is not safe to enter,” he said.

Cont P 9

2024 CHINA SOFTWOOD SUPPLY AND DEMAND OUTLOOK REVIEW

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3. Some factors affecting China softwood demand
4. China softwood demand and import supply forecasts 2029 and 2034

In 2023 China imported 28 million cubic metres of softwood logs and 30 million cubic metres of softwood lumber (RWE).

What will imports be from each of 27 countries in 2029 and in 2034?

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From P 8

"Trucks may also be using forest roads so visitors should use radio call ups if they have them and drive slowly and to the road conditions. Trucks often cannot use the edges of roads as they are too heavy for the soft verges so visitor's vehicles need to be ready to move to the side if they come across a truck.

"Being aware of your surroundings in the forest is key to a safe visit - whether it is watching where you walk, being mindful of overhead hazards or keeping your distance from passing trucks."

To help you find some of the best spots to visit the Forestry Corporation staff have nominated their favourite State forest sites and here's their advice:

"Cooperook State Forest is one of those places that slowly grows on you with

repeated visits. There is so much history there, and I understand why people refer to it as such a peaceful spot. It really is!"

- **Leah Moncrieff, Partnerships Leader.**

"My favourite site is around Sealy Lookout in Orara East State Forest near Coffs Harbour. It's not too remote, easy to get to and there's some great lookouts and walks in unique areas."

- **Owen Lewis, Forestry Worker.**

"Once a year, we travel with a few other families and stay at Moonan Cottage in the small town of Moonan Brook at the western base of the Barrington Tops. We take day trips to 'the Tops' and our must-stop places always include The Firs

(Stewarts Brook State Forest) for its dense pine forest with ethereal vibes. A (literally) cool place on a hot day. And Moonan Outlook, with views for days to the south and west and brilliant sunsets. It's just magic."

- **Louise Faulkner, Manager Tourism & Partnerships.**

"Tirril Creek in Bulga State Forest. Subtropical rainforests can be found in spots along the creek line, as well as scenic rockpools for splashing your feet in. Pretty special."

- **Mark Drury, Ecologist.**

"I love a bit of fishing, so Koondrook and Perricoota State Forests adjacent to the Murray River down on the Victorian border are always on my list. Great spots for fishing for native fish (Murray Cod and Yellow belly) as well as boating and kayaking. Bermagui State Forest on the NSW South Coast is also excellent for fishing and camping, while Currowan

State Forest near Batemans Bay has good bass fishing and canoeing."

- **Rob Young, Partnerships Leader**

"Gulabaa – Place of Koala in Cowarra State Forest between Wauchope and Port Macquarie. It's so close to the Pacific Highway but still home to a beautiful native forest. It's also home to WildNets, The Big Koala (part of the Hello Koalas Sculpture Trail) and the soon-to-be-open Wild Koala Breeding Facility managed by Port Macquarie Koala Hospital/Koala Conservation Australia. With picnic facilities and walking trails in development, and Bunyah Café coming soon too (thanks to Bunyah Local Aboriginal Land Council), this tourism precinct is a must-stop for any visitors to the Mid North Coast."

- **Kathy Lyons, Senior Manager Country & Community**

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Community encouraged to stay safe in the forest

ONEFORTYONE and forest contractors are urging the public to adhere to safety signage and stay safe in the forest.

OneFortyOne Health, Safety, and Risk Manager Chandru Samy emphasised the importance of following signage, particularly at harvest sites.

"Harvesting sites are hazardous due to the presence of harvesting machines, trucks, falling trees, and other heavy machinery," Chandru said.

"Ignoring signage and entering an active harvest site is dangerous, not only to yourself but also to those working in the forest."

Chandru explained that constant communication

during operations ensures everyone and all equipment are accounted for at all times.

"Visibility from the harvesters for example is relatively limited outside of the tree they're cutting down, so good communication means operators can do their jobs safely and with the peace of mind that everyone on site is safe too," he added.

He also noted that anyone unexpectedly or unauthorized on site is at risk and can endanger crews.

"No one wants to be part of



OneFortyOne's Health, Safety and Risk Manager, Chandru Samy emphasises the importance of following signage, particularly at harvest sites. Image: OneFortyOne

an accident," Chandru said.

Forest area closures in place during harvest operations and are usually reopened within weeks.

"To ensure the safety of everyone in the forest, we urge all visitors to follow

any signage. If you're unsure, find another location to explore," Chandru said.

"We all share the responsibility of maintaining a safe environment."

"Local forests are beautiful places to enjoy, and with over 300,000 hectares of forest in the region, there's

always somewhere to explore safely."

OneFortyOne has also published a video explaining some hazards in the forest, available to view on their Facebook page and website.

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Image: Shutterstock

Unexpected westward range shift in European forest plants

THE common wood sorrel (*Oxalis acetosella*) migrates westwards at a speed of around 5 kilometres per year and northwards at around 0.1 kilometres per year. The main driver is nitrogen deposition.

New research reveals nitrogen pollution, and to a lesser extent climate change, unexpectedly as the key driver behind surprising westward shifts in the distribution of plants.

A study published in *Science* has uncovered that many European forest plant species are moving towards the west due to high nitrogen deposition levels, defying the common belief that climate change is the primary cause of species moving northward. This finding reshapes our understanding of

how environmental factors, and in particular nitrogen pollution, influence biodiversity.

While it is widely assumed that rising temperatures are pushing many species toward cooler, northern areas, this research shows that westward movements are 2.6 times more likely than northward shifts. The primary driver? High levels of nitrogen deposition from atmospheric pollution, allow a rapid spread of nitrogen-tolerating plant species from mainly Eastern Europe.

The establishment of these



New research shows many European forest plant species are moving towards the west due to high nitrogen deposition levels, defying a common belief. Photo: phys.org website

highly competitive species in areas with high nitrogen deposition rates often comes at the expense of the more specialised plant species.

The results highlight that future biodiversity patterns are driven by complex interactions among multiple environmental changes, and not due to the

exclusive effects of climate change alone. Understanding these complex interactions is critical for land managers and policymakers to protect biodiversity and ecosystem functioning.

Key findings include:

- European forest plants shift their distributions at an average velocity of 3.56 kilometres per year.
- 39% of the plant species shift westward. Northward shifts are only observed for 15% of the species.
- Nitrogen pollution, rather than climate change, is surprisingly, the main factor behind westward distribution shifts in European forest plants.

Source: Science.org & Phys.org

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Native Forest Transition: Closure of Impacted Business grants

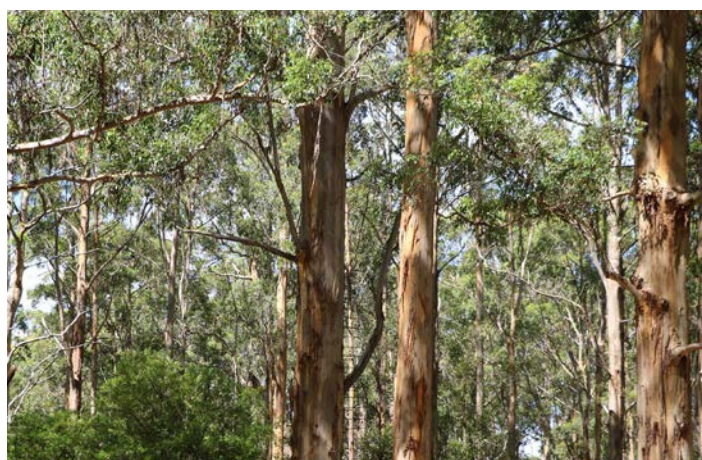
APPLICATIONS for the Native Forest Transition: Closure of Impacted Business grant through the Western Australian Government are currently open with eligible businesses encouraged to apply.

The grant is a \$1 million non-competitive grant program that aims to help any business reliant on native timber to exit the industry. It offers eligible businesses up to \$50,000 in financial assistance to help with expenses associated with closing their business.

Financial assistance will be offered through a two-stage online application process with:

Stage 1 – Business Closure Schedule: eligible businesses are invited to apply for \$5,000 to seek professional support that may include financial, accounting, legal or wellbeing services that support the decision to close and the development of a business closure schedule. Applicants will need to demonstrate eligibility and provide details regarding the professional services they wish to undertake.

Stage 2 – Closure Activities: Eligible businesses that have successfully applied for Stage 1 can then access up to a further \$45,000 to



Financial assistance will be offered through a two-stage online application process. Image: Adobe

undertake the approved activities identified in their business closure schedule. Funding will be reimbursed on the provision of tax invoices for approved expenditure items.

Eligible applicants are required to meet the following criteria to be eligible:

- Must be a Western Australian business operating within the native forestry industry for at least 3 years prior to, and at the time of the announcement on 8 September 2021.
- Businesses must have a valid and active ABN or ACN and not have any pending litigations or insolvency processes underway.
- Businesses must be able to demonstrate a 50% or greater reliance on the native

timber industry over at least one financial year from 2019/2020 to 2021/2022, with at least either:

- 50% of inputs used in manufacturing processes are from native timber
- 50% of business revenue is derived from the sale of goods or services from the native timber industry.

It must be the only business held by the business owners/directors. Where business owners/ directors hold additional ABN or ACN numbers, applications will be assessed on a case-by-case basis to ensure the majority of their income (i.e. 50%) is derived from the eligible business.

- Must be registered for GST with a minimum turnover of

\$75,000.

- Must not have received funding through any other Native Forest Transition grant program.

There are a number of organisations that are ineligible for funding including Local, State, or Federal Government Authorities/ Agencies, those who have had funding declined and businesses outside of Western Australia.

Applications will be carefully considered and assessed against the eligibility criteria. The state says in its absolute discretion, it will determine:

- Whether the type of business of an applicant is eligible for the grant; or
- Whether the use of native timber is material to the business of the applicant.

Successful applicants will be required to enter into a letter of agreement with JTSI.

Applications for this grant close on December 31 2025.

To view grant guidelines, click here. To view grant FAQ information, click here.

Further information can be obtained from the Native Forest Transition - South West Development Commission - NFTEnquiries@swdc.wa.gov.au

FWPA provide resources for being bushfire prepared

THE coming of spring brings increased attention to bushfire risk in many regions of Australia. As we approach the warmer months, fire and emergency authorities have warned that this year the country could face "a heightened threat of bushfires" following the warmest Australian August on record (see issue 824).

Bushfire events pose a monumental threat to the forest and wood products industry that can be felt across the supply chain – from damage to plantations and forests to impacts on wood product quality and productivity.

FWPA maintains a strong focus on bushfire preparedness, management and mitigation in its research programs and resource development to protect commercial interests and reduce risk.

Our aim is to equip members across the sector with information and practical tools that will create more resilient products and practices within the industry and in the longer term, better protect Australian homes.

Below is a summary of key resources and information on bushfire risks and impacts, and best practice for timber construction in fire-prone areas developed via FWPA's WoodSolutions program for the benefit of our members and supply chain customers.

BUILDING IN BUSHFIRE-PRONE AREAS

Timber framing and wood

products can be used in a range of applications for residential construction subject to the requirements of Australian Standard AS3959 – Construction of buildings in bushfire-prone areas.

A bushfire attack level (BAL) assessment is a calculation of the degree of risk of bushfire attack on an individual building site. Across six levels, each BAL rating has requirements regarding which building materials can be used and how, for residential construction.

FWPA's WoodSolutions program provides several resources for understanding and calculating a BAL assessment:

- **Blog:** Building with wood and BALs

An overview of BALs and the guidance they provide for the use of timber in bushfire-prone areas.

- **Webinar:** Demystifying Bushfire Attack Level BAL Assessment

Hear from bushfire expert Dr Maria Kornakova about the BAL process, how it is calculated and its benefits.

- **Tool:** BAL Bushfire Calculator V2.1

An online calculator to determine the BAL for a specific construction site.

- **Fact sheet:** Building in bushfire prone areas (Fact sheet 19)

A printable summary of key Standards related to fire safety and an overview of WoodSolutions resources

to support the construction industry.

Additionally, a podcast is available: WoodChat episode 14 – Building with wood in bushfire-prone areas;

Best-practice methods on building with wood in bushfire-prone areas, with a focus on the important work FWPA is doing to provide resources for the construction industry and consumers about building resilient homes with timber.

FIRE SAFE DESIGN

Of course, considering fire safety at the design stage is an important early step in improving bushfire readiness and resilience. WoodSolutions has published several design guides on this topic, suitable for a broad range of building practitioners including fire safety engineers, building certifiers, structural engineers, fire authorities, architects, and building consultants and is the go-to source for the correct specification and application of timber in bushfire zone construction. A number of guides can be found on the FWPA site.

BUSHFIRE RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT - CURRENT RESEARCH PROJECTS

Several FWPA-supported research projects are currently underway, examining aspects of fire behaviour, impact and mitigation. Their findings will continue to equip all facets of the forest and wood products industry with greater knowledge, understanding and guidance for

managing risks and reducing the impacts of fires.

Some examples are:

- **Quantifying the wider economic impact** of a large-scale fire in the Green Triangle plantation estate

While the direct impact of fires can be determined relatively simply, the impact of a large-scale fire on the wider community is more complex – especially given that the disruption to wood flows can be experienced for decades. This project seeks to quantify the impact on the wider community including processors, contractors, their employees and the service industry. The Green Triangle region will be used as a case study, and the method is expected to be transferrable to other regions.

- **Cost/benefit analysis** of the fire risk mitigation & nutrient impacts of treating pine thinning residues

Pine thinning residues left in situ increase fire risk. This project examines the cost/benefit of treating thinning residues in terms of fire risk mitigation and nutrient retention.

EXISTING RESEARCH AND RESOURCES

FWPA's WoodChat podcast regularly interviews leading experts on bushfire risks, impacts and mitigation, covering a range of research and projects across Australia.

Increasing access to tree seedlings for timber

ACCESS to tree seedlings for commercial plantations and biodiversity plantings has just become easier with the next generation at Hills Transplants growing the business.

From what started 60 years ago as a humble backyard market garden at the family home in Don, Tasmania, Stephen Hill has morphed what his father John started into a multi-layered commercial enterprise.

Not only do the Hills grow seedlings for the forestry industry and agriculture producers, and raspberry cane propagation, but they also supply the nation's biggest grocery chains with herbs and other leafy greens year-round using the latest techniques and technology.

Now, Stephen's sons Josh and Sam are looking to diversify Hills Transplants even further and make it easier for Tasmanian landowners to access tree seedlings for commercial timber and biodiversity or

“THEIR APPROACH IS CUSTOMER-FOCUSED”



1/ Sam and Josh Hill with pine seedlings.
 2/ After completing their annual pack out, Sam and Josh Hill sold the surplus eucalyptus seedlings, which led them to diversify their business. Photos: Tree Alliance

riparian area purposes, trading as S & J Seedlings.

“We believe there is a market out there for us to grow to order certain species for landowners and farmers to plant trees on their land,” Josh said.

“The approach is customer-focused, catering to specific orders and delivering seedlings when required.

“If a farmer comes to us with a particular order for a specific species, we have quality seed for, we're more than happy to pack the right amount and get them out the door exactly when they want them.

“Two or three years ago, we just started selling a few

extra pines and eucalypts that we had a surplus of at the time after we finished our pack out for the year... it became very successful.

“We're fairly new at it and we will be kind of relying on someone to come to us with different lines that we could potentially use so, therefore, we can trial it and get the seed and then grow it,” he said.

Josh added that species they planned on producing seedlings for at varying levels and by demand and advance orders included:

TRADITIONAL TIMBER HARVEST SPECIES

- Pinus radiata (Radiata pine)

- Eucalyptus globulus (Blue gum)
- Eucalyptus nitens (Shining gum)
- Acacia melanoxylon (Blackwood)

POTENTIAL WOOD VALUE SPECIES FOR A NICHE MARKET, IF MANAGED CORRECTLY.

- Acacia dealbata (Silver wattle)
- Allocasuarina littoralis (Drooping sheoak)
- Allocasuarina littoralis (Black sheoak)
- Banksia marginata (Silver banksia)

PRIMARILY BIODIVERSITY PLANTING SPECIES

- Melaleuca armillaris (Bracelet honey myrtle)
- Eucalyptus pauciflora (Little snowman)
- Corymbia ficifolia (Red flowering gum)
- Callitris rhomboidea (Oyster Bay pine)
- Melaleuca ericifolia (Swamp paperbark)
- Eucalyptus viminalis (White gum)

Josh said finding seeds for certain provenance requirements was difficult, with standard seedlings their leading market driver at this stage.

He said 12 months' notice from the landowner would be ideal when placing an order to enable them to plan, order the seed and grow the seedlings.

Carpentry apprentice picks up prestigious award

ERSIN Elmas, a fourth-year carpentry apprentice with Lonsdale Building Group, has won the prestigious HIA Alec Fuller Victorian Apprentice of the Year award.

A passion for working with his hands and creating things from scratch led Ersin to begin his apprenticeship, and he has gone from strength to strength in the intervening years. He now takes responsibility for a wide range of tasks on site, from reading and interpreting plans and ordering materials through to framing and finishing carpentry.

Ersin impressed both the judges and his host employer with his commendable work ethic and wide range of skills.

"Ersin describes starting his apprenticeship as one of the best decisions he's ever made, and our judges are in clear agreement with him," says HIA Victoria Executive Director Keith Ryan.

"He has displayed great talent as well as dedication

“ERSIN HAS DISPLAYED GREAT TALENT

to his craft, and he has a very bright future in the residential building industry."

HIA warmly congratulated the award winners and finalists on the night:

- Alec Fuller Victorian Apprentice of the Year winner Ersin Elmas of Lonsdale Building Group. Finalists: David Lillie of Lonsdale Building Group, Jade Egan of Supreme Green Landscaping, Jessica Herrod and Paige Hunter of Eric Jones Stairbuilding Group, Riley Clifford of Gant Builders and Taleisha Rech-Ellery of HIA Apprentice host B&D Builders.
- Ersin Elmas won the fourth-year carpentry award. Finalists: Christopher Mason of HIA Apprentice host Constructive Interior Finishes, Daniel Connor of Coaststyle Building Solutions, Dannii Jennings of Proud Projects - highly commended, Ethan Lowe of Axxess Building & Construction, Jack Kennett of Gant Builders - highly commended, Jaymes Ireland of Noy Builders and Samuel Rizzo of One Zero Create & Construct.
- Riley Clifford of Gant



Carpentry apprentice among winners at the annual HIA awards.

Builders won the third-year carpentry award.

- Jessica Herrod of Eric Jones Stairbuilding Group won the third-year joinery award, Finalist Natarsha Wollensack of Eric Jones Stairbuilding Group.
- Campbell Eastwood, a second-year carpentry apprentice with HIA Apprentices, hosted by VPM, won the HIA Judges Rising Star award.
- David Lillie of Lonsdale Building Group won the second-year carpentry award. Finalists: Campbell Eastwood of HIA Apprentices host VPM and Thomas Wells of HIA Apprentices host Restored Building Company.

- Paige Hunter of Eric Jones Stairbuilding Group won the second-year joinery award.
- Jade Egan of Supreme Green Landscaping won the second-year landscape construction award.
- Taleisha Rech-Ellery of HIA Apprentices, host B&D Builders, won the first-year carpentry award.

"The HIA Awards showcase the best of the best in the residential building industry and the outstanding quality of work undertaken by HIA members. They are also a celebration of the future of Victoria's vitally important residential building industry.

"The outstanding calibre of apprentices recognised at the 2024 HIA-Stratco Victorian Apprentice Awards shows that future is very bright," concludes Mr Ryan.

The HIA Alec Fuller Victorian Apprentice of the Year award is named in honour of Alec Fuller, a past President of HIA and passionate supporter of apprentices in the residential building industry.

From P 14

Private Forests Tasmania forester Rob Smith said landowner interest is growing in niche species that have both biodiversity and a wood value outside of the traditional commercial plantation varieties.

"PFT is doing a lot of work in this space as demand for speciality timbers grows,"

Smith said.

"In fact, one of our successful Stems for CO₂ Program grant recipients will be planting *Castanea sativa* (Spanish chestnut) and *Quercus rubra* (Red oak) next year, which will provide us with some great insights and a real example of what can be achieved.

"Many species have

the potential to grow in Tasmania, but species selection depends on site requirements and other factors such as the site's characteristics (climate, soil and other ecological factors), deciding which species and provenances are likely to thrive in the conditions and deciding which of one or more species, at the same time, satisfy the objectives of

the planting scheme.

"There are more options for private landowners to consider now in planting for both biodiversity and potential timber harvest with alternative eucalyptus, cypress, hardwood species gaining traction as well as Tasmanian natives," Smith said.

Source: Tree Alliance

Australia to brace for severe weather season

THE Bureau of Meteorology is urging communities to get ready and prepare for Australia's severe weather season.

While severe weather can happen at any time, every year between October and April is Australia's peak time for: tropical cyclones, severe thunderstorms, flooding, heatwaves and bushfires.

National Community Information Manager Andrea Peace said that the Bureau issues regular forecasts and warnings about the likely severity and impacts of severe weather and the impact of severe weather can be reduced by getting ready before it happens.

"Tropical cyclone activity varies from year to year but an average of 4 tropical cyclones cross Australia's coast each



Australia's severe weather season brings an increased risk of damaging cyclones and bushfires.. Image: Shutterstock

year. Based on historical patterns alone, a near-average number of tropical cyclones in the Australian region could be expected this season, with a higher proportion likely to be more severe," Ms Peace said.

"Any tropical cyclone can be dangerous, and it only takes one to significantly impact communities. Last year we had 8 tropical cyclones across northern Australian waters. Four crossed our coast bringing damaging winds and heavy rainfall leading to flooding."

During the warmer months, severe thunderstorms are more common, bringing heavy rainfall, damaging winds, large hail and the risk of flooding anywhere in Australia.

The highest risk for severe thunderstorms is usually along the east coast including northern New South Wales and southern Queensland. There's also a significant risk through inland Western Australia and across the tropical north during the wet season.

Flash flooding and riverine flooding are more common during severe weather seasons, particularly across northern and eastern parts of

the country.

Australia also has an increased risk of severe and extreme heatwaves over the warmer months.

The Bureau issues heatwave warnings when a severe or extreme heatwave is forecast within the following 4 days.

This can lead to dangerous and destructive fires throughout Australia.

"The Bureau works closely with fire authorities to monitor weather conditions, and issue fire danger ratings and warnings to keep the community informed," Ms. Peace said.

"Fire authorities are advising an increased fire risk in the spring months for parts of Queensland, the Northern Territory, western Victoria and south-east South Australia.

"They also advise a potential early start to the fire season in parts of South Australia and Victoria, and extending to Tasmania if there are warm and dry conditions leading into summer."

Severe weather can develop quickly and threaten lives and property. Now is the time to prepare your home and property, review and update your emergency plans and create your emergency kits. The local emergency authority in each state and territory provides advice on how to prepare.

Stay up to date with the Bureau's forecasts and warnings. Download the BOM Weather app and set up warning notifications.

“ SEVERE WEATHER CAN DEVELOP QUICKLY

Do you have SOMETHING to say?

Share observations, comments, opinions, by email and, subject to normal editorial rules, your feedback will be published. Send media releases, news stories, events, any timber and forestry news related information anytime to Nicky, Donyale and Jess at the following dedicated email address - editors@timberandforestrynews.com

Hello!

s B d f

@ #

Dear Editor

Georgia forestry counts the cost of Hurricane Helene as Milton hits

HURRICANE Milton has caused widespread damage to parts of Florida after making landfall last week. Extreme weather was unleashed across Florida with residents recovering from a combination of strong winds, rain and even tornadoes.

At least 14 people have been killed and millions have been left without power after the hurricane made landfall as a category three storm on Wednesday, October 9th.

The hurricane whipped up winds of more than 160 kilometres per hour, triggered dozens of tornadoes and sucked water out of Tampa Bay.

Milton originated in the Gulf Of Mexico as a tropical storm on October 5 and grew from a category one to a category five storm in less than 24 hours.

As it approached Florida's west coast, there were fears that it would hit Tampa, a city of about 3 million people, in what would have been the first direct hit on the city since 1921.

Milton was downgraded to a category 3 not long after making landfall at Siesta Key, near Sarasota, and while the storm created widespread



1/ 8.9 million acres of Georgia's forestry land has faced destruction thanks to Hurricane Helene. Image: Bill McMannis, CC BY 2.0

2/ Hurricane Helene made landfall two weeks before Milton causing damage to forestry areas Image: courtesy NASA/JPL-Caltech

damage it was not the 'worst case scenario' officials were planning.

US President Joe Biden has already confirmed that the damage bill will tip \$50 billion US.

It comes as Georgia's timber industry confirms losses of \$1.28 billion from Hurricane Helene which made landfall just two weeks ahead of Milton on September 24.

The Georgia Forestry Commission has now

“1.28 BILLION LOSS FOR GEORGIA'S FORESTRY

reported that Helene crossed 8.9 million acres of Georgia's forest land.

The total figure represents the sum of losses to businesses that support forestry, losses to workers in the related industry, and estimated recovery and restoration costs the timber business will face.

The Commission also said that they are working with state and federal partners to figure out what resources might still be useful for impacted landowners.

“We depend on our farmers and

timber growers to provide the food and fibres we use every day, and that drives our economy as part of Georgia's No. 1 industry,” Gov. Brian Kemp said.

“Following the immense losses caused by Hurricane Helene, and with Hurricane Milton possibly bringing further impacts to our state, I'm urging all of our local, state, and federal partners to join efforts in bringing them relief.

“That's why we're calling on the federal government and Congress to act quickly in appropriating relief funds and helping them rebuild their livelihoods,” he said.



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