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"Close to breaking point": Cost of business taking a toll on the Forestry sector

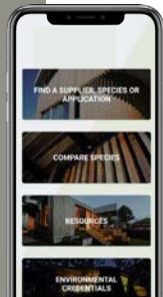
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SA, NT & WA Timber & Hardware Industry Award nominations now open

NOMINATIONS are officially open for the prestigious 2025 South Australian, Northern Territory and Western Australia Timber & Hardware Industry Awards. The much-anticipated event will recognise a wide range of industry nominees who consistently demonstrate exceptional skills in customer service, innovation, and business advancement.

Hosted by the National Timber & Hardware Association (NTHA), the gala evening will be held at the National Wine Centre in Adelaide on Friday, May 30. The awards offer a valuable opportunity to



appreciate timber merchants, hardware stores, suppliers, manufacturers, and individuals who go above and beyond to ensure the success of your business and the industry as a whole.

SA, NT & WA Timber & Hardware Industry Awards categories include:

- NTHA Trainee/Apprentice of the Year

- NTHA Student of the Year
- NTHA Host Employer of the Year
- Emerging Leader
- The REAL Difference Award
- 30+ Years Industry Service
- Trade Store of the Year
- Retail Store of the Year Under 2500sqm
- Retail Store of the Year Over 2500sqm
- Garden Department of the Year
- Best Frame & Truss Operation
- Trade Supplier of the Year
- Retail Supplier of the Year
- Garden & Outdoor Supplier of the Year
- Safety Culture Award
- Supplier Sales Representative of the Year

If you know of or work with a team member who is committed to their role and performs at a high level every day, nominate them now before judging closes by scanning the QR code.

All tickets include pre-dinner drinks, and a three-course meal, along with beer, wine and soft drinks served throughout the highly anticipated event. Get your tickets sell out quickly so



book yours now through the displayed QR code.

Several tiers of sponsorship opportunities are also available on the night. To take part in this opportunity phone: 1800 822 621 or email membership@ntha.com.au

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Australian manufacturing close to breaking point

AUSTRALIA'S forestry and forest products sector is warning that locally based manufacturing facilities are close to breaking point with spiralling energy, logistics and insurance costs taking a major toll on business operations, Chief Executive Officer of the Australian Forest Products Association (AFPA), Diana Hallam said.



Rising costs are making it increasingly difficult for Australian manufacturers to continue with many close to breaking point. Image Shutterstock

The warning comes as Australia and New Zealand based paper and packaging manufacturer Oji Fibre Solutions (Oji FS) announced it will likely end paper production at one of its major NZ mills because it's no longer profitable. The closure will cost around 230 local jobs. The mill supplies paper to Oji FS's three Australian packaging facilities.

"The forestry and forest products supply chain is Australia's 6th largest manufacturing sector and the processing and manufacturing facilities that employ local people and create local products, from timber house-frames to packaging, cardboard and paper and other home furnishing products are under extreme pressure with rising costs. The challenges we face

here are the same as those across the Tasman," Diana Hallam said

"One of AFPA's member manufacturers has reported its future Queensland electricity contract will increase threefold from \$50 per megawatt hour to over \$150 early next year. Rising energy costs like this, along with increasing transport and logistics and insurance costs, coupled with the depressed market for building and construction products like timber – is proving to be a very difficult storm for manufacturing businesses to weather.

"Our sector is responsible for injecting \$24 billion into the economy annually. We directly employ 80,000 people and indirectly employ another 100,000 on top. Many of these jobs are the lifeblood of regional centres. It is vital to maintain the scale and integration of our sector – if the cost of one element in the supply chain becomes too difficult it will have a huge

ripple impact across the rest of the sector.

"The cost of local manufacturing and the flow on impact to local jobs and communities is shaping up to be a huge Federal Election issue in 2025. Large manufacturers need affordable and reliable power to run their equipment and make local products. Right now, those costs are out of control and flowing onto those other input costs like transport. "Forest products manufacturing needs a solution to this crisis and AFPA along with the rest of our sector will be campaigning on this issue ahead of the 2025 Federal Election," Diana Hallam concluded.

The Waikato Times reported last week that despondent workers from the Kinleith mill left their place of employment after hearing that up to 230 jobs are likely to be cut as Mills parent company faces "extreme financial headwinds".

Chief executive Jon Ryder revealed the number of jobs that could be cut by June 2025.

It is understood the company will simplify operations at the mill by focusing on pulp and discontinuing loss-making paper production.

"Manufacturing paper has become unprofitable. Paper production at Kinleith Mill has suffered significant losses for several years and we see

no prospect of the situation improving," Ryder told media.

"Under this proposal, there would be no change to the wastepaper collection service provided by OjiFS Fullcircle, which will continue to collect, sort and bale wastepaper throughout New Zealand for recycling."

"This is a difficult change to propose because of the impact on our hard-working team. We acknowledge the history and importance of Kinleith Mill in the local community and region and have made every effort to ensure we continue operating at the site.

Paper production will continue to the end of June 2025 to meet customer obligations.

“MANUFACTURING COSTS ARE OUT OF CONTROL”

On the cover: Diana Hallam, CEO of AFPA expresses major concern over spiralling manufacturing costs and the impact this is having on small businesses.
Photos: Inset - FWPA.
Main - Shutterstock

New FWPA board welcomed

FOREST & Wood Products Australia (FWPA) held its Annual General Meeting (AGM) on Thursday 14th November through an online meeting. FWPA board members and staff were in attendance, along with members and industry stakeholders.

In his address to the AGM, FWPA Chair Craig Taylor emphasised FWPA's appreciation for the support of our industry associations, in particular, our three national representative bodies, the Australian Forest Products Association, the Engineered Wood Products Association of Australasia and the Australian Timber Importers Federation. He also expressed FWPA's thanks for the support received from the Australian Government through the Department of Agriculture,



From Left: Yvonne Pengilly, Tony Arnel, Craig Taylor, Steve Dadd, Nick Roberts, Michelle Freeman, Katie Fowden and Cameron MacDonald. Image supplied

Fisheries and Forestry.

The 2024 AGM marked the end of service for three FWPA board directors. Craig expressed gratitude on behalf of FWPA to Steve Dadd, Nick Roberts and Yvonne Pengilly for their care and dedication during their time on the board. To fill these

vacancies, FWPA Members (both those in attendance at the AGM and those that had submitted proxies in advance) unanimously elected Dr Michelle Freeman, Mr Matt Crapp and Mr Cameron MacDonald as Non-Executive Directors of FWPA for four-year terms.

"We welcome Michelle, Matt and Cameron to the FWPA board and thank them for their willingness to support our company with their time and expertise," said Craig.

"I am certain the new directors will bring unique perspectives and similarly strong commitment to excellence as our outgoing colleagues." Craig extended his appreciation and recognition to continuing board members Katie Fowden and Professor Tony Arnel, and to the entire FWPA team led by Andrew Leighton FWPA's CEO.

The Australian Forest Products Association (AFPA) welcomes new Forest and Wood Products Australia (FWPA) board directors – Matt Crapp, Dr Michelle Freeman and Cameron McDonald and thanks outgoing directors – Stephen Dadd, Nick Roberts and Yvonne Pengilly for their

service and commitment to our sector's national Research and Development (R&D) Corporation.

AFPA Chief Executive Officer Diana Hallam said, "On behalf of our members, I congratulate Matt, Michelle and Cameron and wish them well in helping lead and steer FWPA over the course of the next few years as it continues vital R&D work for Australia's forest and wood products sector," Diana Hallam said.

"All three are well known to AFPA and we're thrilled to see such high calibre people recruited to the FWPA Board. Matt already makes a valuable contribution on the AFPA Board, while Michelle has done an excellent job in recent times as Forestry Australia President, and Cameron has made a substantial contribution to AFPA and our Growers Chamber over several years.

"I also thank our current AFPA Chair, Stephen Dadd for his dedication to serving FWPA for nine years, as well as Nick Roberts and Yvonne Pengilly. Chair Craig Taylor, Chief Executive Officer Andrew Leighton and the rest of the FWPA team deserve praise for their ongoing work and efforts in support of our sector.

"FWPA performs vital work for Australia's forest industries and it's essential that passionate and qualified industry representatives are involved in the governance of the organisation. As we head into a Federal Election year particularly, AFPA looks forward to continuing our working relationship with FWPA for the betterment of our sector and the Australian economy," Diana Hallam concluded.

Australian Forest Products Association

AFPA THE LEADING VOICE FOR AUSTRALIA'S FOREST PRODUCTS SECTOR

Lightweight Timber Framing project to modernise housing construction

THE timber framing industry is on the cusp of a major update, with a collaborative research project led by the University of Tasmania and Forest and Wood Products Australia (FWPA).

The Lightweight Timber Framing project funded by Australian Forest and Wood Innovations (AFWI), is part of a broader 'Future Framing Initiative' managed by FWPA.

In partnership with over 20 industry stakeholders and eight universities, the project will provide the research and development background to bring contemporary products and systems into the Australian Standards that allow for streamlined design and approvals, with the goal of accelerating house construction across Australia.

Timber remains the top choice for residential



The project focuses on making it easier for builders, designers and engineers to work with lightweight timber framing, ultimately speeding up construction while using our forest resources more effectively.

Photo Shutterstock

construction, with 80 per cent of new homes in Australia built using timber framing each year.

As a renewable resource, timber also plays a crucial role in the fight against climate change.

The Lightweight Timber Framing project is one of eight selected through AFWI's inaugural \$5 million National Open Call for research, which targets sector challenges and promotes innovation.

This project has received strong backing, with \$1.1

million in contributions from industry partners.

"AFWI is very proud to support this exciting and transformative project, it clearly demonstrates the support of industry, federal government and university sector for collaborative research that targets wood-made, carbon-positive solutions for the needs of the Australian community," AFWI's Interim Director, Dr Dean Williams said.

"I am really delighted that AFWI is able to support this

high-quality project with its enormous potential.

"Being able to connect our current and future researchers with industry to deliver positive environmental, economic and social outcomes right across Australia is core to AFWI's purpose.

"And this is just the start, we have more projects in the pipeline that

will deliver positive impacts all along the forestry and forest products value chain."

"We're focused on making it easier for builders, designers and engineers to work with lightweight timber framing, ultimately speeding up construction while using our forest resources more effectively. This project is all about productivity, there are other stages still to come in future with more universities collaborating," Dr Wallis said.

Cont P 6

2024-25 Community Grants Program applications are now open

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From P 5

Andrew Dunn, CEO of the Timber Development Association and industry champion for this project, said the current timber framing design and construction practices no longer reflect modern building practices or the use of engineered wood products, making it difficult for timber to remain competitive in the housing market.

"Timber framing is the preferred construction method, but we're falling behind because builders, carpenters, and engineers need simpler and more straightforward compliance processes," he said.

"The design and approvals processes are outdated, still based on traditional sawn timber methods, while today's homes increasingly use engineered wood products.

Competing materials don't face these challenges."

This research project brings together experts from eight universities and from across the wood products industry with the aim of updating the existing standards to better align with modern construction needs, while ensuring our homes are safe, perform well and are more affordable.

"We're starting with some straightforward improvements, looking at elements like wall studs, floors, and roofs, and how we can incorporate prefabricated components more effectively on-site," Dr Wallis said.

"Currently, the construction practices in a deemed-to-satisfy framework, for an easier pathway through design and approvals, aren't tailored for prefabricated elements, which limits speed and efficiency.

"By removing unnecessary timber elements, such as noggings and ensuring safe work practices that don't add extra material, we can make the process faster."

"We'll also explore ways to use more of the current timber resource, which is sometimes rejected, and address issues like timber distortion to keep frames straighter. There are a number of innovative solutions identified by the industry, and we're collaborating with eight universities to tackle these challenges."

Dr Louise Wallis, Research Lead and Deputy Director of The Centre for Sustainable

Architecture with Wood (CSAW) at the University of Tasmania said the research project aimed to modernise design and construction practices of timber-framed houses.

"This is essential to keeping skilled individuals in the field and building capacity within the sector," Wallis explained.

"The support from AFWI is pivotal. It's not just funding the research; it's also enabling direct collaboration between industry and academia, it's rare to see this level of collaboration where researchers and industry jointly tackle a problem," Mr Dunn said.

The next \$5 million Open Call for Research will be launched in early 2025. Updates and more information on AFWI's projects can be found at www.afwi.au.

“RESEARCHERS AND INDUSTRY JOINTLY TACKLING A PROBLEM



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- 2024 imported woodchip suppliers to China
- Opportunity for/threat of South China eucalyptus plantations harvest impact on future China woodchip import demand
- Future harvest predictions for Australian hardwood plantations
- Alternative markets for Australian eucalyptus pulpwood
- The role that tree carbon is playing/could play in Australia
- India -- A market for Australian SW and HW logs

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DECEMBER

6: WTFN Quarterly Breakfast – The Smug Fig, Stones Corner, Brisbane, 8.00am. For more details and to RSVP by 4 December, contact Tahlia at events@ntha.com.au

SAVE THE DATES 2025

FEBRUARY 13: DANA The Future of Australian Eucalyptus Plantations and of Australian log exports to China and India Seminar – Jasper Hotel, Melbourne. Visit <https://www.danaevents.co.nz/2025melbourne/home> for more information. Contact admin@dana.co.nz

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

MAY 7-8: Sydney Build 25 – ICC, Sydney. Australia's largest construction and design show. Enews is a media partner for

Sydney Build 2025. For more details visit <https://www.sydneybuildexpo.com>

MAY 26-30: LIGNA 25 – Hannover, Germany. The world's leading trade fair for woodworking and wood processing plant, machinery and tools. For more details visit <https://www.ligna.de/en/for-visitors>

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.

JUNE 29-JULY 2: 5th International Conference on Timber Bridges – Rotorua,

New Zealand. The focus is on timber bridges and the current need for resilient infrastructure to support thriving communities. For more information and to register your interest, visit <https://ictb-conference.org/2025/>

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

OCTOBER 22-23: Melbourne Build 25 – MCEC, Melbourne. Victoria's largest construction and design show. For more details visit <https://melbournebuildexpo.com>

OCTOBER 23-24: Field Trip – Vietnam.

Trump's tariffs may have little impact on new-home prices, experts say

PRESIDENT-ELECT Donald Trump has vowed to impose sweeping new tariffs on imports, leading his critics to argue that the plan will raise prices and spur inflation.

Nearly 10% of building materials used in residential construction are imported, according to the



President elect Donald Trump has confirmed sweeping tariffs for countries he claims support drug and illegal immigrant trafficking. Image: Pixabay

NAHB and Canada probably accounts for the bulk of

those imports. "Any tariffs that raise the cost of building products will have a detrimental effect on housing affordability," says NAHB CEO Jim Tobin. A steep tariff on Canadian lumber would likely hit homebuilders the hardest—and could raise the prices of new

homes, at least temporarily. But observers are sceptical that Trump would impose a steep, immediate tariff on such a fundamental raw material imported from a close ally. NAR's Chief Economist Lawrence Yun said that it's possible any tariff on lumber could be imposed over a ramp-up period to allow U.S. timber mills to boost production.

Source: Realtor.com

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Certified for the future

How PF Olsen Australia’s FSC journey is supporting biodiversity in plantation forests.

AMID the towering trees of a Western Australian plantation, a rare Numbat scurries across the forest floor, its striped back blending with the shifting light. Nearby, a pair of Mallee Fowl tend to their nest, where newly hatched chicks are sheltered within a pile of logging residue. These moments of life unfolding in PF Olsen Australia’s plantations exemplify the impact of FSC-certified responsible forestry.

The Numbat (*Myrmecobius fasciatus*), an Endangered species, and the Mallee Fowl (*Leipoa ocellata*), listed as Vulnerable, have found refuge in the plantation forests managed by PF Olsen Australia (PFOA). The discovery of 14 individual Numbats on a single PFOA property and the successful nesting of Mallee Fowl in logging residue are both remarkable conservation successes, illustrating how sustainable forestry can support biodiversity.

PF Olsen, established in New Zealand in 1971, achieved FSC Forest



Emus swimming to cool off. Photo: FSC

Management certification in 2002. In 2010, it expanded to Australia, where PF Olsen Australia obtained FSC certification in 2013. Today, PFOA manages

approximately 156,000 hectares of plantation forests across five states, with a focus on responsible forest management and biodiversity protection.

PFOA’s commitment to biodiversity is driven by its 10-year Landscape Biodiversity Improvement Program and supported by investment manager New Forests’ focus on investing in forests for a climate and nature-positive future. PFOA’s program launched following recent changes in the

status of the investment vehicle that owns the plantations. To develop the program, ABZECO conducted an independent review of data collected over the past decade in support of FSC certification. This review led to the identification of five key themes, each with associated objectives:

- **Threatened species:** Increase the security of the most threatened flora and fauna on the estate.
- **High-quality ecosystems:** Expand the area of high-quality ecosystems.
- **Large old trees:** Protect and secure large old trees throughout the asset.
- **Remnant connectivity:**



14 individual Numbats on a single property in Western Australia. Photo: FSC

Cont P 9



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From P 8

Enhance connectivity between remnant native vegetation.

Stakeholder partnerships:

Strengthen relationships with reputable stakeholders.

The progress toward these objectives is reported annually in PFOA's Environment and Sustainability Report. Now entering its third year, the program encompasses over 25 individual enhancement projects, including weed removal, fox and cat control, threatened species monitoring, and habitat restoration. PFOA collaborates with Natural Resource Management agencies and local universities to ensure the application of the best available knowledge and science.

Key highlights of the program include:

- Identification of 14 individual Numbats on a single property in Western Australia.
- Observation of a Mallee Fowl pair establishing a nest in logging residue and successfully rearing two chicks.
- Creation of new wetland areas to support waterfowl.

FSC certification has been instrumental in ensuring that PFOA carefully manages the environmental values within



Mallee Fowl pair establishing a nest in logging residue and are successfully rearing two chicks. Top image shows male adult and one chick. Bottom image shows one chick, well camouflaged. Photo: FSC

its forests. "FSC certification ensures we focus on preserving and enhancing the natural resources in the forests we manage," says David Bennett, PFOA's Risk and Compliance Manager. This also positions us to add value to plantation assets as Australia develops its Nature Repair Markets."

Through continued monitoring, collaboration with

universities, and partnerships with Natural Resource Management agencies, PFOA ensures its conservation practices are informed by the latest scientific research.

"As we look to the

“ FOCUS ON INVESTING IN FORESTS

future, our goal is to create a landscape where native species thrive alongside sustainable forestry practices," says Bennett. "By working with experts and stakeholders, we are ensuring that our conservation efforts contribute to long-term ecological health."

FSC is a non-profit organisation that provides a proven sustainable forest management solution. Currently, over 160 million hectares of forest worldwide are certified according to FSC standards. It is widely regarded as the most rigorous forest certification system among NGOs, consumers, and businesses alike to tackle today's deforestation, climate, and

biodiversity challenges. The FSC forest management standard is based on ten core principles designed to address a broad range of environmental, social, and economic factors. FSC's "check tree" label is found on millions of forest-based products and verifies that they are sustainably sourced, from forest to consumer.



A leader in sustainable forestry with a common goal: protect healthy, resilient forests for all, forever. Visit us at fsc.org

Council greenlights EU certification framework

THE final green light has been given to a regulation establishing the first EU-level certification framework for permanent carbon removals, carbon farming and carbon storage in products. This voluntary framework will facilitate and encourage high-quality carbon removal and soil emission reduction activities in the EU, as a complement to sustained emission reductions.

The regulation will be the first step in introducing a comprehensive certification framework for carbon removals and soil emission reductions into EU legislation. It will help the EU to achieve its goal of climate neutrality by 2050.

The regulation covers the following activities across the EU:

- permanent carbon removals that capture and store atmospheric or biogenic carbon for several centuries (e.g. bioenergy with carbon capture and storage, direct air capture with storage) carbon storage activities that capture and store carbon in long-lasting products for at least 35 years (such as wood-based construction products) carbon farming activities that enhance carbon sequestration and storage in forests and soils, or that reduce greenhouse gas emissions from soils, carried out over a period of at least five years (e.g. reforestation, restoring peatlands or wetlands, improved fertiliser use).

Carbon removal activities will have to meet four overarching criteria in order to be certified:

- they must bring about



The regulation will be the first step in introducing a comprehensive certification framework for carbon removals and soil emission reductions into EU legislation. Image: Shutterstock

- a quantified net carbon removal benefit or net soil emission reduction benefit
- they must be additional, meaning that they go beyond statutory requirements at the level of an individual operator they need the incentive effect of the certification to become financially viable
- they must aim to ensure long-term storage of carbon while minimising the risk

of carbon release

- they should do no significant harm to the environment and should be able to result in co-benefits to one or more
- sustainability goals

In addition, activities eligible for certification will need to be independently verified by third-party certification bodies.

Certification schemes

will be in place for operators to prove compliance with the regulation. These will be subject to robust and transparent monitoring, verification and reporting rules to promote trust in the system and ensure environmental integrity.

Liability mechanisms will also be in place for operators in order to address any release of captured carbon back into the atmosphere.

Four years after the entry into force of the regulation, the Commission will establish an electronic EU-wide registry to ensure transparency and full traceability of the so-called certified units, which will be issued to reflect carbon net benefit generated through certified carbon removal and soil emission reduction activities.

The regulation will now be published in the EU's Official Journal and enter into force 20 days after its publication. It will then become directly applicable in all EU member states.

On 30 November 2022, in an important first step towards the further integration of carbon removal schemes into EU climate policy, the Commission proposed a regulation creating a voluntary EU-wide framework to certify high-quality carbon removals.

The Council adopted its negotiating mandate at Coreper level on 17 November 2023, while the European Parliament reached its position on 21 November 2023. After three rounds of negotiations, the EU co-legislators reached an agreement on the final shape of the regulation on 20 February 2024.

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HIA welcomes 'Housing Bills' support

"THE Housing Industry Association (HIA) welcomes support that will enable passage of the stalled 'Housing Bills' that can play an important role in supporting more young Australians' access to housing and address the declining rates of home ownership," said Jocelyn Martin, HIA Managing Director.

"The Help to Buy scheme is an important initiative of the Federal Government to enable 40,000 eligible home buyers to obtain and secure a deposit for a new home faster.

"Equally, the Build-to-Rent Bill coupled with broader targeted policy measures, has the potential to boost the number of rental properties and specifically



The help-to-buy scheme will provide a positive boost to the housing market and has been welcomed by the HIA. Image: Shutterstock

new apartments, which are in critical shortages with rental vacancies at record levels and apartment construction numbers at decade lows.

"While the opportunity to own a home can be challenging, and the type of homes families aspire to are

changing shape, previous research conducted by HIA shows an overwhelming majority of Australians continue to agree that home ownership matters.

"The measures supported as part of these 'Housing Bills' alongside other

forms of housing incentive programs are critical to boost housing supply. They are critical in supporting first home buyers raising the deposit more quickly and easily.

"We know from previous schemes, including the first home loan guarantee scheme and state and territory first home buyer grants, that targeted housing support measures work, are effective in helping bridge the deposit barrier to get people into their own home sooner.

"HIA will continue to support and advocate for policies that assist more first home buyers and those that have fallen out of home ownership get into housing and help them achieve their home ownership aspirations," concluded Ms Martin.

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New access for popular National Park

THE WA Cook Labor Government is continuing to rejuvenate John Forrest National Park with a \$5 million contract now awarded for an accessible walkway and bridge across Glen Brook.

Advantesting Civil Engineers will build the structure, which will offer visitors stunning views over the surrounding granite outcrops, Jane Brook and Glen Brook, and the Railway Reserve Heritage Trail.

It will also allow visitors to walk or cycle between the new West Ridge car park, expected to be completed by early 2025, and the future Park Hub.

Construction is due to begin early next year and is expected to be completed by mid-2025.

"John Forrest National Park is an iconic part of Western Australia, and it's exciting to see the key elements

of this project coming together," Environment Minister Reece Whitby said.

"Combining style with functionality, the Glen Brook bridge will not only provide a functional connection between key areas in the park, but it will also showcase its natural beauty by offering visitors sweeping views over the waters, granites and open forest.

"The Cook Labor Government wants WA's environment to be open and accessible, and that's exactly what we're doing with these improvements to John Forrest National Park."

"This is the vital link between the parking and the park,"



Artist's impression of Park Hub and Jane Brook: the iconic Western Australian National Park is getting some upgrades to make it even more accessible to visitors. Image: via WA Government

improvements were made to the park's facilities.

The improvements will make the park more accessible to a broader range of visitors and allow more people to enjoy the natural beauty.

Kalamunda MLA Matthew Hughes added.

"We're delivering, as we promised, a better experience all round for visitors to John Forrest National Park."

John Forrest National Park is WA's first national park. It is a popular location for the local community and tourists. However, prior to this improvement project commencing, it had been a long time since any significant

The project includes a new Park Hub with a café and interpretation space, improvements to existing picnic areas, gardens, carparking, and improved walking and new off-road cycling trails.

The Department of Biodiversity, Conservations and Attractions (DBCA) has engaged with park users, key stakeholders and Traditional Owners over several years to inform the project.



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Dean Anderson appointed Chair of Softwood Working Group

THE Softwoods Working Group (SWG) has announced the appointment of Dean Anderson as its new Chair.

“Dean brings a wealth of experience and expertise to the job and has dedicated more than 40 years to the forestry industry across Australia,” SWG Executive Officer Carlie Porteous, said.

“Under his leadership, we are confident the SWG will continue to thrive and further its mission of fostering sustainable growth and resilience within the forestry sector.

“Dean holds a Bachelor of Science (Forestry) from the Australian National University, is a Graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors, and is a qualified Incident Controller.

“Throughout his career, Mr Anderson has held senior roles in commercial operations, natural forest management, environmental assessment, and plantation management. His experience is predominantly in New South Wales but includes stints in South Australia, Tasmania, New Zealand and Scotland.”

Ms Porteous said Mr Anderson has served as either an Incident Controller or Deputy Incident Controller for multiple state-significant bushfire emergencies.

“Notably, he was part of Australia’s first deployment of forest firefighters to North America in 2000. Dean and others were awarded the National Emergency Medal for their contributions during the 2019/20 Black Summer bushfires,” she said.

“Dean also has a strong background in governance, having served on the board of the Timber Development Association for 15 years, including five years as Chair, promoting timber use and addressing technical aspects of timber construction.

“Dean steps into the role following the remarkable 37-year tenure of Peter



Dean Anderson has been appointed the new Chair of The Softwoods Working Group replacing the recently retired Peter Crowe. Dean brings a wealth of experience and expertise to the position. Photo: Dean Anderson via LinkedIn

“I look forward to working with our diverse membership, which includes representatives from local government, forest product processors, and plantation growers, as well as the wider community.

“Together, we will continue to ensure that our region prospers from the softwood plantations that

are vital to our economy and environment,” he said.

“SWG’s ongoing focus on key priorities will include the protection of softwood plantations from fire; coordinated and effective weed control, especially blackberry; supporting Australia’s forest product needs while addressing climate change and land competition; and advocating for improved infrastructure and showcasing the benefits of softwood plantations.”

Crowe OAM, who was recently celebrated for his outstanding contributions.”

Ms Porteous said in recognition of his service, Mr Crowe has been honoured with the title of Chair Emeritus of SWG.

Mr Anderson said he was privileged to be elected Chair by the members of SWG.

“ SWG WILL CONTINUE TO THRIVE ”

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Collaboration to boost bushfire response

WITH a scorching summer forecast ahead, the Western Bundjalung community's Ngullingah Jugun Aboriginal Corporation, in Grafton NSW, is working with Forestry Corporation to bring together knowledge of cultural burning with government bushfire management.

A fire training course has been held in Jubullum Village, near Tabulam, made possible through Fire, Country and People, a three-year Australian Government-funded project.

Fire and incident management specialists Fireground provided accredited firefighting training to members of the Western Bundjalung community.

Forestry Corporation's Aboriginal Heritage and Partnerships Manager John Shipp said the fire training will improve both the community

and government response to wildfires.

"This program creates an opportunity for the Jubullum community to work with government agencies to develop a path forward for effective and sustainable bushfire management," Mr Shipp said.

"This will improve the resilience of the community to major bushfires.

"The use of fire in the environment is only one aspect of the community's land management, which has existed for sixty-odd thousand years," he said.

Ngullingah Jugun Aboriginal Corporation CEO Ryan Walker said the training will better prepare the community to



The program creates an opportunity for the Jubullum community to work with government agencies to develop a path forward for effective and sustainable bushfire management. Image: Shutterstock

respond to bushfires with firefighting agencies.

"Having 20 accredited firefighters in our community will build on our capacity to fight fires alongside government agencies, create work opportunities locally and give our people the ability to better prepare for bushfire emergencies," Mr Walker said.

"With government agencies listening to our community on fire management and taking

on board our approach to managing the environment this will help the broader community to avoid bushfires in the future," he said.

Federal Minister for Emergency Management Jenny McAllister said this partnership integrates traditional knowledge with contemporary fire management practices to protect our communities.

"The Albanese Government is partnering with state governments and communities to enhance local resilience across the country," Minister McAllister said.

Fire, Country and People will also help to build the scientific evidence base behind cultural burning.

A research program will look to understand the effect that traditional Aboriginal fire practices have on the intensity and extent of bushfires.

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Image: AKD

Countdown is on to major trade fair

IN its 50th anniversary year, LIGNA seems to be reflecting on its origins. Back in 1975, the trade fair branched off from HANNOVER MESSE as an independent brand amidst the oil crisis. Now, 50 years later, the woodworking and wood processing industry is once again facing economic challenges, and LIGNA is stepping forward to provide optimism and forward-looking solutions. Six months ahead of its opening, the world's leading trade fair for the woodworking and wood processing industry has already secured commitments from 1,100 exhibitors spanning more than 105,000 square meters of exhibition space. For context, LIGNA 2023 saw 1,300 exhibitors occupying 114,000 square meters and attracted 80,000 visitors.

"The excellent registration numbers for LIGNA 2025 are a tremendously important signal for the entire woodworking community. It's far from guaranteed that companies would commit to their leading trade fair given the current, often extremely challenging economic climate," says Stephanie Wagner, Head of LIGNA at Deutsche Messe. She continues, "Participating in a trade fair is a significant investment. LIGNA exhibitors require large spaces and intricate stand designs to showcase their large, complex machines and systems in live operation. That our customers are willing to make this investment despite the current economic situation underscores the high significance LIGNA enjoys. As organizers – VDMA and Deutsche Messe – we are both grateful and proud to host LIGNA in its 50th anniversary year, serving the



A range of new technologies and products will be on display with hands-on demonstrations and more. Image: Shutterstock

entire industry."

Dr. Bernhard Dirr, Managing Director of VDMA Woodworking Machinery, highlights LIGNA's pivotal role in driving investment and innovation: "The anticipated recovery is still delayed, but our surveys show that most companies expect a clear upturn from the second quarter of 2025—perfectly timed for LIGNA. Confidence and trust are key to overcoming the current investment backlog. It's equally essential that politicians establish clear frameworks post-election to foster innovation and investment. LIGNA's timing could not be better – I am confident our industry will gain significant momentum."

LIGNA 2025 focus topics

During the five days of the trade fair in May 2025, exhibitors will showcase innovative solutions around the LIGNA focus topics: "CONNECTIVITY," "SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTION," and "ENGINEERED WOOD." With a strong international presence – two-thirds of exhibitors come from abroad and one-third from Germany

protecting the environment, preserving resources for future generations, and improving working conditions. LIGNA.ENGINEERED WOOD delves into the development of intelligently designed wood products, such as composite materials created by binding or fixing wood strands, particles, fibres, veneers, or panels for diverse applications. With these themes, LIGNA continues to drive innovation and transformation across the woodworking and wood processing sectors.

A look at the ten LIGNA halls and the open-air site reveals a familiar structure: Halls 11 to 15 and 27 will feature Tools and Machinery for Custom and Mass Production, demonstrating how craftsmanship and industrial applications can successfully converge through innovative technologies. Halls 25 and 26 will focus on Sawmill Technology, Wood Based Panel Production, and Energy from Wood. The open-air site and pavilions will be dedicated to Machinery for Forestry, Roundwood and Sawntimber Production. A key highlight of the outdoor exhibition area will be the new format LIGNA.TruckStop, will serve as a central hub for skilled trades. Show trucks, vans, and transporters will allow suppliers to present their products directly to trade visitors in an engaging and accessible way.

The world's leading trade fair for the woodworking and wood processing industry is jointly organized by Deutsche Messe and VDMA Woodworking Machinery in Hannover and is celebrating its 50th anniversary in 2025. Further information on LIGNA is available at www.ligna.de

– LIGNA offers the industry a comprehensive platform to explore design options for essential transformation processes.

"With the LIGNA focus topics, we address both craft businesses and industrial groups, as the entire industry is dealing with complete digital networking, the establishment of a circular economy, and the development of intelligent products". The focus topics bring together international solution providers to tackle these three key challenges," Stephanie Wagner said.

LIGNA.CONNECTIVITY provides solutions for achieving vertical and horizontal integration by creating interfaces with existing systems to enable seamless digital networking. LIGNA.SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTION highlights economically viable approaches for the woodworking trade and industry, focusing on



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NSW Government to deliver 1400 home sites

THE Minns Labor Government says it is delivering on its commitment to stimulate housing supply with sites for another 1400 homes to be delivered through its Building Homes for NSW program, as housing developers are invited to register their interest in market sites.



The NSW Government will deliver 1400 home sites as it shows its commitment to stimulating the housing supply.
Image: Shutterstock

The land audit has delivered another 11 sites which will be able to deliver approximately 1,300 homes. The sites announced today include two sites at Menai and Haberfield earmarked for transfer to Homes NSW, delivering an estimated 242 dwellings with roughly 130 social and affordable homes.

Landcom is investigating three sites at Rooty Hill, St Leonards and Chatswood, and they have the potential to deliver almost 850 homes, including more than 80 affordable dwellings. Two sites in Darlinghurst and one each in Turramurra, Frenchs Forest, Wakeley, and Wallarah on the Central Coast will be developed into housing in partnership with the private sector.

The final approach to delivering housing on the sites, including details on quantity and types of housing, will be confirmed following further due diligence and subsequent planning and regulatory approvals.

To fast-track the delivery of homes, housing developers and members of the public are invited to submit their interest in purchasing surplus NSW Government sites to deliver

new homes and help ease the state's housing crisis.

Property and Development NSW (PDNSW) has launched a Registrations of Interest (ROI) campaign, calling on parties to indicate their interest in developing a mix of low, medium and high-density market housing at 22 sites across Sydney and regional NSW.

The Government's objectives for delivering housing on property audit sites are:

- To maximise dwelling yield
- To minimise time to delivery of new housing
- To support the delivery of affordable and key worker's rental housing, where practicable and feasible
- Support modern methods of construction, where practicable and feasible
- Support increased productivity in the housing sector through innovative approaches to development and construction
- Ensure value for money

ROI participants will have the opportunity to identify sites they have an interest in acquiring and propose how they would deliver housing on the sites. This information

will be considered alongside the Government's objectives for the program to inform how housing will be delivered on these sites.

The redevelopment sites across Greater Sydney, the Hunter Region, and Central West NSW will deliver over 100 new social homes—

an increase of 79 homes above the existing supply.

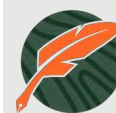
The sites are shovel-ready, with construction set to commence on these sites in the first half of 2025.

"This is a whole-of-government effort to unlock more private, social and affordable housing," Minister for Planning and Public Spaces Paul Scully said.

"The majority of homes delivered during the Housing Accord Period will be delivered by the private sector and that is why we are unlocking surplus land to deliver more well-located homes.

Minister for Housing and Minister for Homelessness Rose Jackson said, "As part of the Minns Government's Building Homes for NSW program, Homes NSW has identified an additional nine sites across the state that will deliver over 100 new social and affordable homes for people in need.

"Every home we deliver is a step toward a fairer and more secure future for families across NSW. These new sites will bring us closer to ensuring everyone has a place to call home."



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