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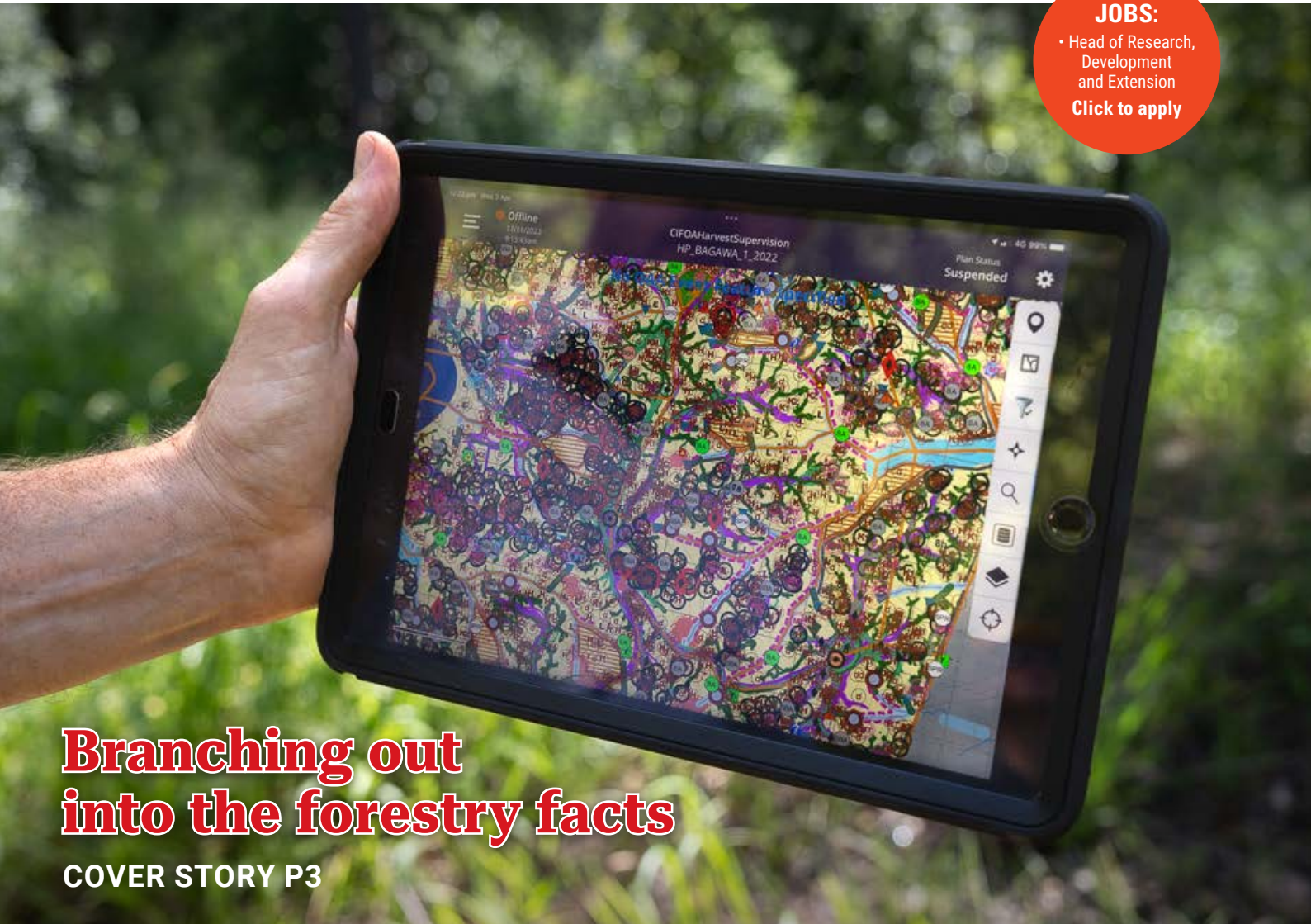


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timber & FORESTRY *e*news

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Branching out into the forestry facts

COVER STORY P3

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Combilift celebrates 21 Years in Australia

IRISH materials handling innovator Combilift has celebrated 21 years of operation in Australia, shortly after marking the 25th anniversary of its establishment in County Monaghan.

Co-founder and managing director Martin McVicar last week joined customers, dealer partners and local staff to mark the milestone in Melbourne.

McVicar recalled how he was initially approached about entering the Australian market by family-owned dealer group Adapalift.

Founder Peter Whiffen discovered Combilift while searching for a solution for a client's unique handling needs.

As an engineer, he was so impressed with the innovation of the Combilift range that he flew to the company's factory in Ireland.

The visit resulted in the establishment in 2003 of Adapt-A-Lift Imports, trading as Combilift Australia, to



Staff from Combilift Australia and Adapalift celebrate 21 years in Australia. Photo: Combilift

import and distribute niche market materials handling products.

McVicar still vividly remembers his first business trip to Australia - from Cincinnati in the United States to Brisbane via Chicago, Los Angeles and Auckland. The ravages of the trip didn't affect the presentation and McVicar left with an order of a C4000 truck, the world's first engine-powered multidirectional forklift, from a steel tubing and pipe specialist which continues to grow its Combilift fleet today.

"For us, every customer is valuable, even if they've only



Peter Whiffen (seated), founder of Adapalift with Martin McVicar, CEO of Combilift. Photo: Combilift

purchased one machine," he said.

McVicar paid tribute to his local partners. "The team from Adapalift have been

instrumental to our growth in the area, with ongoing investment in inventory, parts and training," he said.

For his part, Whiffen values the relationship with Combilift which, he says, "has never lost its focus on the customer, even though it is now a big company".

Adapalift has also benefited from Combilift's unique range.

"That has opened doors for us and allowed us to sell other products to the same customers.

"It extends our range and beautifully complements our other offerings," he adds.

According to Combilift Australia's managing director Chris Littlewood, whose 10th year with the company is fast approaching, Combilift continues to grow its market share in Australia. This growth has made Australia Combilift's fifth-largest market, with a fleet in the country exceeding 4,500 units.

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It's time to table the facts

IN NSW we grow timber in State forests. Plantations and native forests are carefully managed to provide a supply of timber today and in the future. There are 500 NSW state forests and these have been harvested and regrown for more than 100 years.

The forests in NSW generate \$2.9 billion from hardwood alone for the NSW economy. One of the most iconic builds from the NSW hardwood is the interior of the Sydney Opera House.

The timber industry also supports 22,000 jobs in NSW and the NSW forests each year produce enough timber to build 25% of new homes in Australia. 14% of Australia's total timber needs comes from NSW State forests and becomes power poles, marine wharf piers, timber pallets, timber flooring, decking, furniture and house framing.

Beyond the obvious benefits of building materials, timber has another key benefit: carbon storage. Carbon is stored in growing trees, but carbon is also sequestered in the timber products these trees become. Through careful harvesting the forestry industry is able to continually pull carbon out of our atmosphere.

However, forestry is more than just chop down trees haphazardly, it is a science, and great care is taken with our forests. Here's some insight into the due diligence of timber harvesting and land management in NSW State forests.

Forestry Corporation undertakes thorough operational planning processes to ensure that the potential for



1/ *The iconic Sydney Opera House features interior hardwood timber from the NSW forests.*
2/ *Science underpins every operation in the NSW state forests.* Photos: FCNSW

environment impacts from all forest management activities including timber harvesting as well as activities such as road maintenance, management of recreational sites and fire management is managed and mitigated.

Before a single tree is touched, Forestry Corporation surveys for threatened species and maps and protects their wildlife habitat. Forestry Corporation also maps and protects waterways, Aboriginal cultural heritage sites, old growth and rainforest. Every tree removed for timber is regrown.

Strict protections, developed by scientific panels and adopted by Government, guide every forest operation from fire management, road upgrades to tourism developments and timber harvesting.

Timber harvesting in native State forests is regulated by the Coastal Integrated Forestry Operations Approval (CIFOA). The CIFOA integrates the regulatory regimes for environmental planning and assessment of timber harvesting and associated operations for protection of the environment and for threatened species conservation.

Plantation operations are

also managed. Plantations fall under the Plantation and Reafforestation Act 1999 (P&R Act) and Plantations and Reafforestation (Code) Regulation 2001. The objective of the P&R Act is to undertake plantation operations consistently in line with the principles of ecologically sustainable development.

The Regional Forest Agreements have set aside a comprehensive adequate and representative reserve network and timber harvesting only takes place within the parts of the forest estate that have been identified as sustainable for timber production.

The process of developing operational plans for timber harvesting operations includes a number of steps to ensure due diligence.

Depending on which operations are being planned these include tree marking to identify trees and additional areas to be retained, not already mapped, pre-harvest surveys for flora and fauna species and contacting affected stakeholders.

On average 40% of each native forest operation area is set aside for conservation. 14 out of every 10,000 trees in native forests in NSW are

harvested each year while 14,000 football fields of trees are planted every year.

Site-specific operational plans provide instructions to the harvesting and haulage operators showing which areas are to be harvested, individual native trees and areas that are to be retained, which roads to use to deliver the timber

and a range of other site specific and detailed information.

The site-specific operational plans are used in conjunction with maps provided to staff and harvesting and haulage operators through the Forestry Corporation's MapApp. The MapApp ensures that the application of complex and detailed regulations can be communicated to operators as they undertake their work.

It also allows information from staff and the operators to be loaded into the maps, including GPS tracking of harvest and haulage machinery.

Plans are prepared for specific compartments in State forests and work is scheduled depending on a number of factors including market conditions and weather.

Forestry Corporation's operational plans for native forest harvesting and roading and hardwood timber plantations in coastal NSW are available via our Plan Portal, [click here for more information.](#)

[Click here for Forestry Corporation's latest Sustainability Report.](#)

On the cover: Forestry Corporation uses technology and science to ensure their care of the NSW State Forests is top notch..
Photo: Forestry Corporation.



Decarbonising the building industry

Unlocking the potential of Australian forests.

THE University of Melbourne recently hosted the *International Conference on Decarbonising the Building Industry*, bringing together global leaders, researchers and industry professionals, including leaders in forestry, timber production and sustainability.

A standout session of the conference was the panel discussion on "How to Maximise the Use of Australian Forest Resources to Decarbonise the Building Industry." Moderated by Dr. Bill Leggate from the Department of Primary Industries, the session explored the pivotal role of Australia's unique and sustainably managed forests in providing timber—a strong, versatile, cost-effective, and carbon-negative building material—to support housing

and construction industries in addressing climate challenges.

"Australian forests are not only unique in their biodiversity but also hold the key to achieving significant carbon reductions in our built environment," Dr. Leggate said in his opening remarks. "Our panel today is an incredible lineup of experts who will delve into the innovative ways we can leverage forest resources sustainably."

SUSTAINABILITY ACROSS THE TIMBER SUPPLY CHAIN

Shona Heading from HQ Plantations emphasised the importance of sustainable forest management as the foundation of a low-carbon construction industry. "When forests are responsibly



Matt de Jong presents on certification and responsible supply chains. Photo: Responsible Wood

managed, we can achieve a balance that supports biodiversity, produces high-quality timber, and sequesters carbon," Shona noted. "The first step in decarbonising the building industry is ensuring our forests continue to be

well-managed for generations to come."

Katie Fowden from the Hyne Group highlighted the role of engineered wood products in replacing emissions-intensive materials like steel and concrete. "Engineered timber products like cross-laminated timber (CLT) are game-changers.

They not only reduce embodied carbon but also enable faster and more efficient construction processes," Katie explained. "This was further supported

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Australian Forest Products Association

AFPA THE LEADING VOICE FOR AUSTRALIA'S FOREST PRODUCTS SECTOR

From P 4

during the recent visit of His Majesty, King Charles III to the XLAM supplied Cowper Street Development in Sydney. The King, through the Kings Trust Australia, very much focuses on environmental credentials.” Katie urged the construction industry to prioritise homegrown, certified timber products to amplify environmental and economic benefits.

INNOVATION AND RESEARCH

Professor Tripti Singh from the Centre for Timber Durability and Design Life focused on the importance of advancing timber durability and Circularity to increase its adoption in large-scale projects. She highlighted how circularity principles, such as designing for reuse, recycling, and minimising waste, can significantly extend the lifecycle of timber products, “Investing in research and innovation to enhance the longevity of timber structures is crucial,” Tripti said. “When we ensure that timber products are durable and adaptable to Australia’s climate conditions, we not only make them a more attractive option for construction on every scale but also align with sustainable practices by reducing environmental impact and supporting a circular economy.”



From left: Matt de Jongh (Responsible Wood), Chris McEvoy (Radial Timbers), Dr Bill Leggate (Department of Primary Industries), Katie Fowden (Hyne Group), Shona Heading (HQ Plantations) and Professor Tripti Singh (Centre for Timber Durability and Design Life). Photo: Responsible Wood

Chris McEvoy of Radial Timbers offered a perspective on timber’s versatility. “Australian forests provide us with hardwoods and softwoods that meet a wide range of construction needs,” Chris said. “From structural beams to flooring and cladding, our timber products are adaptable to the modern architect’s vision while helping reduce carbon footprints.”

CERTIFICATION AND RESPONSIBLE SUPPLY CHAINS

Matt de Jongh from Responsible Wood underscored the importance of certification in ensuring that timber is sourced sustainably and responsibly. “Certification is not just a label; it’s a commitment to protecting our forests while supporting a sustainable

timber industry,” Matt said. “It gives architects, builders, and consumers’ confidence that the materials they’re using contribute positively to the environment.”

Matt also highlighted the need for stronger collaboration across the supply chain to address challenges such as embodied carbon measurement and consumer awareness. “Our industry has a tremendous opportunity to lead in sustainability, but it requires all of us—forest managers, manufacturers, researchers, and policymakers—to work together.”

ORGANISING FOR IMPACT

Rhianna Robinson from the Department of Primary Industries, who played a key role in organising the session,

reflected on the importance of the conference in bringing experts together. “This session showcased the best of what Australian forestry and timber sectors have to offer,” Rhianna said. “The insights from the panellists demonstrated we have the capability, skills and the products to significantly decarbonise the building industry today.”

LOOKING FORWARD

The panel concluded with a resounding call to action: to unlock the full potential of Australian forest resources while maintaining a steadfast commitment to sustainability. “Australia has the resources and expertise, to support decarbonisation in the building sector,” Dr. Leggate said in closing. “If we continue to innovate, collaborate, and champion sustainable practices, our forests can continue to supply strong, versatile, cost effective and carbon negative timber to manufacture residential and commercial buildings.”

This session illuminated the vital connection between Australia’s sustainably managed forests and the urgent need to reduce the building industry’s carbon footprint. It also underscored the potential of timber as a cornerstone for sustainable construction, paving the way for a greener, more resilient future.

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responsiblewood.org.au



NZ tōtara

A successful small-scale harvest.

By MICHAEL SMITH

AS part of ongoing efforts to demonstrate the feasibility of sustainably managing on-farm tōtara as a high-value specialty species in northern New Zealand, the Northland Tōtara Working Group (NTWG) recently undertook a small-scale harvest – in essence applying continuous cover forestry principles. Timber & Forestry enews invited NTWG spokesperson Paul Quinlan to discuss the results.

As per a previous trial in 2022, the tōtara was harvested from the same Pamu (Landcorp Farming Ltd) property in Northland. “Both harvests involved single-tree selections and low-impact felling and extraction techniques – in accordance with the Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) Plan approved under the Forests Act.”

Mr Quinlan says the earlier harvest involved low-cost, farm-based extraction machinery. “It generally targeted smaller trees and focused on production-thinning amongst dense stands of pole-sized trees. In contrast, the latest harvest targeted larger trees and used bigger machinery.”

The approved SFM plan for the property only allows for a limited annual harvest. “For practical reasons, several years’ worth of allowable harvest volume may be applied for in each logging plan. However, the actual harvest volumes are still small. Selection harvesting in this forest requires frequent but small-scale harvest operations, which has implications for harvest economics.”

Mr Quinlan notes that both harvests were essentially production-thinning interventions to try and improve

the stands in the long term.

“This means a single-stem selection process, with the focus on removing poorer [but still merchantable] trees from the forest for the benefit of adjacent and better trees which are left to grow on – to become even more valuable.”

Some of the trees in the recent harvest were located on steep terrain beneath the adjacent paddocks – including several with DBHs (diameter at breast height) between 75 and 95cm, and approximate log volumes between 4.2 and 6.5m³.

They were deemed too large to be extracted with a small tractor and winch. Instead, a 12-tonne DH4 Tracked Skidder with a powerful winch was engaged.

Mr Quinlan adds that avoiding damage to the residual forest during felling and extraction was key to tree selection. “Harvested trees were generally within 50 metres of the forest edge and where a machine could get close enough on the adjacent paddocks without entering the forest.

“The skidder used the winch rope to assist with directional felling and to extract the logs. Top logs were not separated from the butt logs – and, despite the steep terrain, the



1/ The 12-tonne DH4 Tracked Skidder winching a log from the edge of a paddock.

2/ This large tree with spiral grain and relatively short bole was felled uphill to avoid damaging good trees nearby. Photos: Paul Quinlan

powerful equipment managed to pull the whole logs up and out, without even sniping the log ends.”

It was pleasing to see that, “once again, a low-impact selective harvest was well executed by a very experienced crew”.

Overall, he notes that the high costs of selective harvesting are exacerbated by the poor economies of scale. “Felling and extraction costs included getting the machinery on-site, directional felling, and skidding logs [some of them quite small] to a site on the farm accessible to a portable sawmill.”

Other costs associated with managing the operation

included “preparing and submitting an Annual Logging Plan to MPI [Ministry for Primary Industries], site visits and harvest planning with manawhenua, the contractor, MPI forest inspectors, farm manager and landowner, tree selection, record keeping during and post harvest, and reinstating fences.

“Nevertheless, the value of the tōtara timber should make this a viable operation.”

Some of the timber was milled to order and sold ‘green off the saw’ for \$3,500/m³. It has gone to prestigious carving projects in Te Tai Tokerau Northland – while the rest was

milled and filleted to air-dry for later sale.

Mr Quinlan says the two harvests from the Pamu property highlight two significant points. “First is the importance of matching the right crew and machinery to the job.

“Second is that the timber value needs to be high enough to cover the higher costs of low-volume, low-impact, selective harvests.

“Fortunately, regenerating tōtara is being recognised as an excellent timber, which can make well-executed selective harvests viable – even when only small quantities are involved.”

DECEMBER

6: WTFN Quarterly Breakfast – The Smug Fig, Stones Corner, Brisbane, 8.00am.

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 sites tour – Europe. Contact admin@dana.co.nz

APRIL 10-11: Forestry Australia 2025 Forest Carbon Summit – National Press Club, Canberra. For full details and to register, visit <https://www.forestry.org.au/2025-forest-carbon-summit/>

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.sydnebuildexpo.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.

Queensland tops HIA housing scorecard

"THE ongoing wave of sea and tree changers from other states into Queensland has pushed the Sunshine State to the top spot in HIA's Housing Scorecard," stated HIA Economist Maurice Tapang.

HIA's Housing Scorecard benchmarks contemporary levels of activity in each state and territory against long term averages across indicators of home building and renovations activity, lending data and population flows.

"Population flows from overseas and interstate, into

both North Queensland and the Southeast corner, have supported home buying activity in the state," added Mr Tapang.

"Strong demand amid limited supply has led to a rise in residential building activity in Queensland, including both new homes and renovations.

"Following Queensland in these rankings are Western Australia and South Australia, where there is strong ongoing demand for building new homes.

"Exceptionally low unemployment rate, strong population growth and stable interest rates have sustained the key dynamics necessary for strong demand for new home building.

"With this relatively stable macro-dynamic, it will increasingly be state government policies and economic outlooks that will determine the strength of home building over the short to medium term.

"Just as state and local government policies set the

limit to the floor in this cycle, the diverging outlook between home building markets will also be determined by the same policy decisions.

"States that are able to offer employment opportunities and more affordable residential land will see a stronger outlook for home building activity in coming years.

"As it stands, the momentum of ongoing population growth and home building in Western Australia could see it top this Scorecard in 2025," concluded Mr Tapang.

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Specialty Commercial and Specialty Acoustics set to launch

AUSTRALIAN door manufacture Specialty Doors has launched two new product-based businesses, Specialty Commercial and Specialty Acoustics. Specialty Commercial is focused on timber profiling and custom componentry, while Specialty Acoustics offers a range of acoustic products.

Director Marcus Bastiaan said the new product businesses were an answer to sustained enquiry and a chance to expand The Specialty Group's product range.

"The new companies give us the chance to broaden our existing product range. We have found a growing demand from existing customers for

quality timber componentry and a renewed focus on acoustic performance from the Australian and New Zealand building industries."

Specialty Commercial is focused on production and supply to primarily the Queensland and New South Wales market. The company is currently operating from Brisbane and supplies resellers to order. Marcus Bastiaan said the company will embark on an instore range of timber componentry products in the New Year.

"This is the first time we have offered resellers stock lines. First to market will be a range of entry door handles made from recycled Australian Hardwoods."



Marcus Bastiaan... Director of The Specialty Group. Photo: The Specialty Group

The company's focus on sustainable sourced and recycled timber has been an opportunity to showcase Australia's world class forestry standards. Marcus Bastiaan believes the construction industry should

be championing native forestry products, and that it's up to manufacturers like Specialty Commercial to offer products that compete with imported species.

"We have the best hardwood in our backyard, and we intend to showcase more of it. Too often when it comes

to componentry the building industry gets pigeonholed into using imported species like Pine, Beech and American Oak. Our new range is price

Cont P 9



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OneSafe Group celebrates 100th meeting milestone

THE OneSafe Group has recently celebrated its 100th meeting, marking a significant milestone in its ongoing commitment to enhancing safety across the forestry industry.

Initiated in 2016, OneSafe Group was established as a collaborative by OneFortyOne and its partners to improve safety practices within the forestry industry and communities involved.

Companies represented in the group are: OneFortyOne, Fennel Forestry, Greenfreight, LV Dohnt, Merrett Logging, Moreland Holdings, QUBE Forestry, Reid Logging, Tabeel Trading, LITA, PFP, GEM, Teagle, TPPL, Trimble, I&D Contracting, and WFC.

OneFortyOne Marketing and Operations Manager Ockert le Roux said the group aims to align safety practices with a shared approach to managing risks.

"This initiative brought together senior leadership from various organisations and includes contractors as integral stakeholders in safety strategy," Ockert said.

"Since the group's inception we've made measurable progress in safety throughout the local industry."

OneSafe Group innovations include the



OneSafe Group was established as a collaborative by OneFortyOne and its partners to improve safety practices within the forestry industry. Photo: OneSafe

development of a Contractor Safety Induction System, application of machinery isolation improvements, and implementation of fatigue guidelines.

"Additionally, the group has introduced Guardian safety systems throughout its log haulage network and in selected light vehicles in the high-risk category" Ockert said.

"Guardian is an in-vehicle monitoring system which detects distractions and fatigue related events when the vehicle is in use. It alerts drivers through an alarm and a chair-shaker when a microsleep event occurs. It also sends a notification to fleet owners to investigate and address events with drivers.

OneSafe Group has been instrumental in improving safety standards within the

forestry industry by introducing safety leadership training, increasing safety awareness, and developing robust safety protocols like the Drug and Alcohol Policies and Fatal Risk Control Protocols.

The group also shares best practices and lessons learned from incidents across participating organisations, embedding safety metrics and performance audits into regular operations and contracts.

"By learning from each other and implementing improvements, we have achieved an 86% reduction in Total Recordable Injury

Frequency Rate (TRIFR) over the past 9 years."

As OneSafe Group celebrates its 100th meeting, the collective looks forward to further reducing the TRIFR, and future goals include expanding safety culture transformation, continuing to develop safety innovations and tools, and strengthening partnerships with contractors to collectively improve safety outcomes.

"Reaching our 100th meeting is a testament to the dedication and collaborative spirit of everyone involved in the OneSafe Group," Ockert said.

"Our ongoing efforts to innovate and improve safety practices have made a significant impact, and we are committed to continuing the pursuit of a safer industry for all."

“ACHIEVED AN 86% REDUCTION IN TRIFR

From P 8

competitive and made from Australian timbers like Blackbutt, Tasmanian Oak and Spotted Gum."

Specialty Acoustics has an entirely different mission. The company is focused on providing quality acoustic

products to meet growing demand in the construction industry. Through a technical and installation partnership with Acoustic Doors Australia the companies provide specification, manufacturer and installation services. Marcus Bastiaan said the

business will give builders the technical and onsite support they need.

"Acoustic products are highly engineered and require careful installation. The new company's product and service offering gives site managers peace of mind

and offers accountability to commercial construction companies."

Specialty Commercial and Specialty Acoustics will officially launch on Australia Day 2025. Alongside Specialty Doors, the three businesses sit within The Specialty Group.



Business Grants

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

Enews has partnered with a professional grant writing business. Watch this space as not all grants are made public. We will publish grants for various states/

territories for our industry here in Enews. Our connection might be available to assist you with eligibility criteria, grant writing, application process and

lodgement. They have a high success rate, so contact us if you would like to make an appointment. Contact: editors@timberandforestryenews.com

Timber Innovation – Round 3

PROVIDES grants for native timber industry businesses to explore, invest and implement opportunities to support their transition under the Victorian Forestry Plan.

The Forestry Transition Program is providing support for workers, businesses and communities who are impacted by the cessation of commercial native timber harvesting in Victorian State forests.

The Victorian Timber Innovation Grant Program aims to support impacted forestry businesses to explore, invest, and implement new business opportunities.

The Program will support Victorian forestry businesses to:

- Explore, test or deliver new or innovative business models
- Diversify and reorientate core business activities into alternative industry sectors.

A cash co-contribution is not a requirement for projects with a total value of up to



The grants are to assist native timber industry businesses to explore, invest and implement opportunities to support their transition under the Victorian Forestry Plan. Image: Shutterstock

\$250,000 where jobs will be retained or created. For projects with a total value of over \$250,000, a minimum 1:1 cash co-contribution will be required by the applicant for every dollar over \$250,000.

Businesses that meet the following criteria can apply for a Victorian Timber Innovation Grant:

- Have or had a Timber Sale Agreement, Forest Produce Licence or Forest Produce Agreement issued by VicForests that was current as of 1 January 2023
- Have or had a timber harvest/haulage contract with VicForests that was current as of 1 January 2023
- Are a haulage sub-contractor

contracted since 1 July 2020 to a business with a current VicForests harvest and/or haulage contract, and derived at least 30% of annual revenue from that contract based on an average of the last 5 financial years

- Are a road contractor who has had a contract since 1 July 2020 to a business with a harvest/ haulage contract with VicForests that was current at 1 July 2023, and had at least 30% of annual revenue derived from road construction or maintenance operations on the road network used for hardwood log haulage based on an average of the last 5 financial years.

- Are a road contractor who has had a contract with VicForests since 1 July 2020, and had at least 30% of annual revenue derived from road construction or maintenance operations on the road network used for hardwood log haulage based on an average of the last 5 financial years.
- Are a seed collector who has at least 30% of annual revenue from the VicForests contract, based on an average of the last 5 financial years
- Are a business undertaking forest-based activities which has had at least 30% of annual revenue derived from a VicForests contract based on an average of the last 5 financial years.

GRANT DETAILS

Provider: VIC Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions (DJPR)

Amount: Up to \$1,000,000

Closes: 30 June 2025

Location: Victoria

Who Can Apply:

Businesses that meet the specified criteria

Co-Contribution Required:

Unspecified by provider
<https://www.deeca.vic.gov.au/forestry/grants/timber-innovation-grants>

Build to rent bill an important step

THE Community Housing Industry Association (CHIA) and National Shelter have declared the passage of the Build to Rent housing bill through the Senate as an important step in combating the rental crisis facing Australia.

The Build to Rent legislation now contains changes put forward by CHIA, National Shelter and the Property Council of Australia. These mean tenancies will now be offered for a minimum of five years instead of three, while incentive payments and tax treatment will catalyse greater investment in the supply of high-quality rental housing.

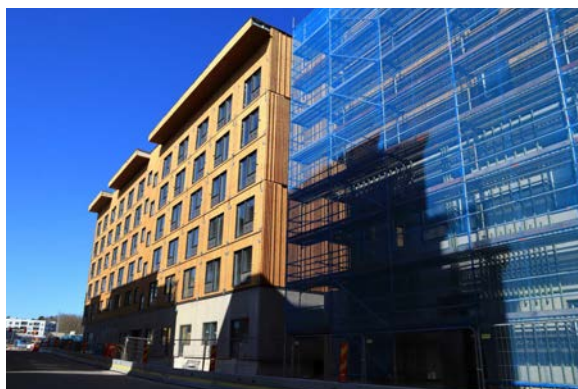
Build to Rent operators will also be prevented from using no fault evictions and the definition of affordable tenancies will ensure

properties are available to people on moderate and low incomes, with rents capped below 74.9 per cent of the market value or 30 per cent of income, whichever is lower.

"This is a critically important step forward," said CHIA CEO, Wendy Hayhurst. "We have a cast iron commitment that provides a pipeline of genuine affordable housing managed by the people who are experts in doing so - community housing providers.

"When done correctly, Build-to-Rent provides tenants the sort of stability they badly need but can't get because private ownership is out of their reach.

"The challenge is far



Social housing is important to help low income individuals and families have access to stable and secure housing. Image: Shutterstock

spokesperson, John Engeler concurred: "Any day that gives people more housing security is a good day. National Shelter is pleased to have worked with CHIA and the Property Council to contribute to enhancing this legislation.

"This bill provides a consistent nation-wide level of certainty, especially the provisions around no-fault evictions, five-year leases and improved affordability.

"This legislation is badly needed, especially for people on lower incomes. With the amendments agreed today, a good piece of legislation is now great.

from over, but we have built incredibly important foundations. We thank the Government and independent cross benchers, especially Senator David Pocock for persisting with this process. We also acknowledge the role of the Greens for making the case for housing reform and passing this legislation."

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Bushfire preparations underway to protect NSW's pine forests this summer

FORESTRY Corporation firefighters are gearing up for the summer bushfire season in NSW's pine plantations.

With the onset of warmer conditions, solid fuel fire bans have been introduced in key pine growing regions in the Riverina and Central West to protect the forest estate from fire. State forest pine plantations in NSW produce enough timber to build a quarter of new homes across Australia each year.

That's around 40,000 new homes – the equivalent of the housing in Bathurst, Oberon and Orange.

Under an accelerated planting program, Forestry Corporation has raised and planted 50-million seedlings in State Forests since the Black Summer Bushfires in 2019 and 2020. The priority has been restoring the state's timber resources and ensuring a sustainable timber supply for the future.

Dedicated to protecting the state's pine plantations, Forestry Corporation firefighters are preparing for summer with a series of fire camps seeing staff train and upskill on new and existing fireground equipment and appliances.

Fire camps are week-long, intensive training sessions that prepare firefighters and train new staff for the upcoming fire season.

"As a firefighting authority,



Forestry Corporation is dedicated to keeping their fire tankers up to date and ready to protect NSW communities and forests. Image: FCNSW

Forestry Corporation takes firefighting seriously, we have a commitment to ensure we keep our people, our communities and our estates safe," Bathurst-based Stewardship and Fire Supervisor Dave Anderson said.

"We hold three fire camps each year in different locations across NSW to train new staff towards their initial certification and to advance our current staff," he said.

A fire camp in Wallerawang was attended by more than 40 people and eight staff members who trained, assessed and mentored the team.

Senior Manager Fire and Natural Hazards Rebel Talbert said Forestry Corporation currently has more than 500 trained firefighters rostered on to respond to state forest fires across NSW.

"Our statewide fleet includes fire appliances, pieces of heavy

plant machinery, contracted aircraft and over a hundred drones and trained pilots," Ms Talbert said.

"More than 500 pieces of heavy plant like bulldozers, which harvest renewable timber in state forests, are also made available by the broader forest industry to fight fires in NSW."

Currently a major multi-year program is underway to upgrade Forestry Corporation's firefighting fleet and improve safety for our firefighters.

In response to a recommendation of the Independent Bushfire Inquiry, burn-over Compressed Air Foam System (CAFS) protection systems are being retrofitted to all existing light firefighting fleet and installed standard on new vehicles. In addition, new fire tankers are being purchased to replace ageing vehicles.

"As a statutory firefighting

authority managing two million hectares of land and supporting community firefighting efforts across the landscape, it is vital that we maintain safe and efficient fleet and equipment, and investments in our fleet will further enhance efforts made in recent years to improve the safety, efficiency and effectiveness of our fleet," Ms Talbert said.

Forestry Corporation took receipt of the first batch of new dual cab Category 1 fire tankers last year. The new Cat 1 tankers are based at Grafton, Bathurst and Tumut and have been deployed to firegrounds multiple times over the past and current fire seasons.

The latest generation fire tankers carry 3500 litres of water and have front mounted water cannon and thermal cameras that can be controlled within the cabin. Built by the NSW Rural Fire Service the tankers feature all the latest safety and firefighting equipment and have been well received by Forestry Corporation firefighters.

"Forestry Corporation of NSW works collaboratively with the other agencies to protect communities, the environment and the State's essential timber assets from the risk of fire. We are well prepared heading into the fire season with a skilled workforce, a fleet of equipment, drones and heavy plant ready to deploy to aid rapid response, detection and suppression of fires" Ms Talbert said.



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Nature's best friend!

Sniffer dog detects tree disease to help protect nation's woodlands.

DETECTION dogs have been used in the UK for the first time to successfully identify tree disease helping track down the deadly tree pathogen *Phytophthora ramorum*.

In collaboration with the UK's Forest Research, Canine Assisted Pest Eradication successfully trained

Ivor, a cocker spaniel x labrador, aged six, to identify the highly destructive pathogen. This destructive organism can cause extensive damage and even death to more than 150 plant species including significant mortality on larch, which are important timber trees.

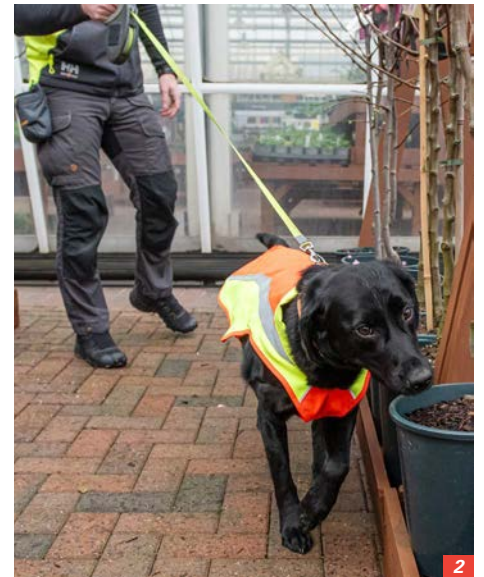
Ivor was trained using a variety of detection training techniques including initial scent recognition. The first round saw Ivor successfully identify *Phytophthora ramorum* in soil, plant material and sterile distilled water. Further training phases saw Ivor faced with a number of scenarios which helped reinforce his detection abilities by introducing new working environments. Ivor was then able to build up to distinguishing *Phytophthora ramorum* from the scent of other *Phytophthora* species often found in the same environments to ensure effectiveness in real-world scenarios.

The damage to trees, woods and forests from pests and diseases is significant, with the rapid



1/ Ivor's highly sensitive nose is able to smell *Phytophthora ramorum* amidst all the other timber and plant smells.

2/ The ability to confirm the presence of *Phytophthora ramorum* can make a huge difference in the fight against this pathogen. Photos: Forest Research



increase in movements of goods and people between countries and climate change increasing the risk of spread in recent years, and this is the latest UK government innovation in the fight to protect the nation's trees and woodlands.

The UK's Chief Plant Health Officer Professor Nicola Spence said: "This groundbreaking research using detection dogs to identify *Phytophthora ramorum*, alongside other innovative approaches to tackle pests and diseases, will play a key role in maintaining biosecurity to meet the vision set out in our world-leading Plant Biosecurity Strategy."

"Climate change and globalisation are increasing the number and the diversity of pests and diseases our nation's trees and plants are exposed to. These new threats can cause significant damage, economic losses and in many cases tree death.

Dr Heather Dun, Forest Research Pathologist at the

UK's government's world-leading Forest Research organisation, said: "The results from the trials have been incredibly encouraging, with a first-time 89 per cent detection rate highlighting the huge potential of dogs in our fight against pests and diseases."

"Biosecurity is incredibly important and detection dogs like Ivor are an exciting new

method for helping to protect our trees."

Canine Assisted Pest Eradication Director Luke Jones said: "We believe that innovation drives progress. We're passionate about discovering the potential of detection dogs who are one of nature's 'super-computers'."

Detection dogs have previously been used to tackle the outbreak of the Asian longhorn beetle pest in Paddock Wood, Kent, in 2012, where a team of dogs from the Austrian Plant Health Inspectorate successfully helped to detect the beetle.

Following the success of the initial trials, Forest Research is now exploring the use of detection dogs to help combat other pests and diseases such as *Ips typographus*, also known as the eight-toothed spruce bark beetle, fulfilling commitments set out in the GB Plant Biosecurity Strategy.

For more information about *Phytophthora ramorum* click here.

Learn more about Forest Research by clicking here.

- Groundbreaking project successfully trains detection dogs to specifically identify the tree pathogen *Phytophthora ramorum*.
- Trial results show trained spanador - a cocker spaniel labrador cross - achieve 89% successful first-time detection rate, following trials led by Forest Research.
- Latest step in UK Government action to combat the increasing threat of tree pests and diseases, due to a changing climate.

A walk up in the trees

Exploring how New Zealand is making the most of forestry.

By **JESSICA HOCKRIDGE**

THOUGH just across the Tasman Sea from Australia, New Zealand is a world apart in its unique natural beauty and innovative approach to forestry. Having visited twice—once as an 18-year-old and more recently—I've gained a deeper appreciation for the country's lush landscapes, particularly the Redwood Forest. On my first visit, I admired its towering trees purely for their aesthetic beauty. However, my latest trip allowed me to see these giants not only as a natural wonder but also as a part of New Zealand's forestry industry.

New Zealand's progressive relationship with forestry stretches back to 1897, when the country foresaw the

need for future timber production and began trial plantings of non-native trees that grew faster than indigenous species. This foresight led to the creation of forests like the stunning Whakarewarewa Forest, where the Redwood trees—planted in 1901—have grown into towering giants over 120 years old. These trees, which once amazed me for their sheer size, now represent New Zealand's commitment to sustainable forestry practices.



The Redwood Treewalk does a stunning loop, displaying the beauty of the Redwood trees.
Photo: Jessica Hockridge

Mexican Cypress, and, of course, the towering Californian Redwoods. Each species serves a purpose, but redwood timber stands out.

Redwood timber, prized for its durability and striking appearance, plays an important role in New Zealand's construction industry. From residential fencing to interior panelling, the wood's versatility is well-known. Its remarkable longevity—thanks to a thick bark and high foliage—makes it particularly resistant to fire and insect damage, ensuring these majestic trees continue

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to serve both functional and aesthetic purposes for years to come.

The redwood trees found in New Zealand are originally from California in the USA and are the tallest living trees with some hitting over 115 metres tall and over 9 metres in diameter. Some of the Californian redwoods are over 2,000 years old. They are a slow growing tree and due to their long lifespan the Californian redwoods have been called the 'everlasting redwood'.

The tallest redwood in the Whakarewarewa Forest is quite a bit smaller at 72 metres high and 2 metres in diameter. The New Zealand redwood trees however, are fast growing which is great for a faster turn around on timber.

The natural growing strip of Californian redwoods is quite small at only 700km long and a varying width of 8km – 56km. Redwoods require a specific temperate climate with regular rainfall and dislike constant sea spray and heavy winds. New Zealand is very lucky as it has a matching inverted latitude to the redwood belt, so it falls into the favoured growing band. However, naturally the conditions are not exactly the same causing some differences between the trees growing on opposite hemispheres.

USING THE FOREST

The Redwoods Forest began as a nursery, today over a century later it has become so much more. Redwood timber good for general building purposes such as fencing, internal panelling and cladding. NZ Natural Timber is one of the companies offering cladding made with the New Zealand Redwood timber. It is a stunning design choice for its beautiful tones.

Alongside the existing uses



1/ A display board along the ziplining track highlights the positives of native trees.
2/ Spectacularly designed lanterns scattered throughout the Treewalk, created a stunning display as light danced among the trees.
 Photos: Jessica Hockridge

for the timber, New Zealand is exploring what else is possible. “There are 200 scientists nearby looking for new ways to use trees to create new materials and energy”, writes the Redwood Treewalk.

New Zealand’s forestry industry is not just about harvesting timber—it’s about innovation. Scientists are exploring new ways to use trees as ‘living factories,’ growing the raw materials needed for eco-friendly products. For instance, plant-based chemicals are now being used to replace oil-based ones, leading to the creation of a new industrial-strength glue for wood products.

This innovative approach is helping to reduce the industry’s environmental footprint while opening new possibilities for sustainable production.

The Treewalk also expanded on the crossover of sustainability with other industries, “We also work with other industries to find new uses for their [by-products], adding kiwifruit residue to this plastic biospife (hybrid spoon-knife) for eating Zespri Kiwifruit and adding pieces of paua shell into 3D printer “ink” for bioplastic printing.

“To keep building our economy on forestry and forest products, we also have to protect forestry’s future. That means growing resource-efficient forests and keeping them safe from pests and disease.”

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

The legacy of New Zealand’s early forestry practices continues through institutions like Toi Ohomai, which trains

the next generation of forestry experts. It is New Zealand’s largest vocational training facility for forestry and is found in Rotorua right near the Redwoods Forest.

Toi Ohomai offers hands-on learning in everything from forest management to wood manufacturing and carpentry. The facility ensures that students are equipped with the skills needed to lead New Zealand’s forestry industry into a sustainable future.

Toi Ohomai has state-of-the-art facilities that were built using the trees grown in Rotorua and aims to provide the future workers with experienced tutors, industry recognised qualifications, hands on learning and more. The goal is to support the needs of the growing timber industry with well trained, skilled workers who are passionate about every stage of forestry from planting to the finished products made from the timber grown here in New Zealand.

ENGAGING THE PUBLIC

For those who aren’t training in the Toi Ohomai there are other learning opportunities. The Treewalk is one of the striking features of the Redwood Forest. The 700-metre-long Treewalk is a captivating journey that allows visitors to learn about forestry and how it impacts them as they explore the forest from a unique vantage point. Starting 6 metres off the ground and reaching heights of up to 12 metres, the walk features 22 platforms and 23 bridges—the longest of which spans 37 metres. Remarkably, the structure was built using 5,500 metres of locally grown and milled macrocarpa timber, demonstrating New Zealand’s commitment to sustainable forestry in both design and

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material. The Treewalk does a great job of showcasing what can be created with timber.

The Treewalk shared about its unique design:

"The tree walk was constructed with no screws or bolts attached to the trees. The tree walk is suspended without damaging the tree [at all].

"The walkway is suspended from the trees using a specially designed sling. The sling carefully wraps around the redwood trunks, without causing the tree any harm. As the trees grow, the slings can be easily adjusted to allow for the growing trees.

"Care was taken to minimise damage to the surrounding forest during construction. The platform sections were completed on site and were manually winched in parts up to the tree."

The Treewalk is an incredible display of construction and engineering, it really highlighted timber as a main feature. It was fascinating to walk across the many bridges and see the huge slings around the trees holding everything up. On each platform there was also timber plaques displaying information about the trees, the building of the Treewalk, the history of the forest, the wildlife, what is done with the timber, and what the future may hold. As we walked through we saw many people stopping on each platform to read the plaques and engage with the interactive pieces on them.

LIGHT IT UP

As day turns to night, the Treewalk transforms into a magical experience, with lights illuminating the towering redwoods. Designed by the renowned David Trubridge company, these lights blend seamlessly into the forest, creating a serene atmosphere that highlights both the beauty

of the trees and the innovative use of sustainable materials.

The David Truebridge company is internationally recognised for their designs and environmental responsibility. The lights are made from a special composite timber created out of wood waste from New Zealand's radiata pine, bonded with a non-toxic adhesive and placed on a stainless-steel frame. The lights will have a 50-year lifespan in the forest.

The actual design of the lights was inspired by the native birds in the forest, designed to mimic the mottling on their wings and the rough shape of each of the birds.

In every step the Redwoods Treewalk was created to inspire, promote and educate on timber and the forest, so that all who visit might walk away with new knowledge about the timber and forestry industry.

A COUNTRY'S COMMITMENT

New Zealand overall is very committed to sustainable forestry, the Redwood Treewalk was proud that "most of New Zealand's larger forest companies are either Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certified or working towards FSC certification. FSC certification ensures that products come from well managed forests that provide environmental social and economic benefits."

My exploration of New Zealand's commitment to forestry extended beyond the Redwood Forest. During a



The walkways between the trees came alive with light as the daylight disappeared. Photo: Jessica Hockridge

ziplining adventure, we paused to enjoy tea made from native tree leaves. As we sipped, our guides shared fascinating insights into the many benefits of New Zealand's native trees. The company also handed out little tokens which we wrote out names on and each of these represents a tree that will be planted in the area as they partner with a Māori group to replant native trees in a previously cleared area. They focused on the company's desire to be caring for New Zealand's overall forestry and doing their part.

Forestry, timber, and building industries touch all of our lives, whether we realise it or not. New Zealand's commitment to sustainable forestry practices aims to ensure that these industries not only thrive but also contribute to a greener, more responsible future. With spaces like the Redwood Forest and initiatives like the Treewalk, New Zealand is leading the way in helping people understand, engage with, and appreciate the importance of forestry for generations to come.

Source: Timber Trader News



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