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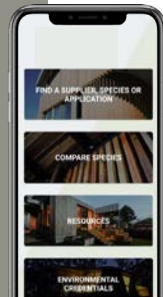
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Pollies need to embrace timber

With the housing crisis a major issue, the timber industry has solutions.

Ahead of the 2025 Federal Election, Australia’s forestry and timber sector reminds the members of the 47th Parliament and candidates hoping to be elected to the 48th Parliament that it can help ease the national housing crisis and build the homes of tomorrow. The reminder comes at the same time new figures show the country fell almost 70,000 new homes short of its 2024 target, CEO of the Australian Forest Products Association (AFPA), Diana Hallam, said recently.

“Following the building boom spurred by Covid and subsequent downturn, Australia’s timber manufacturers have timber ready now to help build the new homes our country needs. Not only is our locally grown and processed timber a quality building material, but it also stores carbon, helping Australia fight climate change,” Hallam said.

Australian Bureau of Statistics figures show Australia fell 68,606 homes short of its 2024, 240,000 target – with detached



The timber sector has plans and resources in place to address the housing crisis. Image Shutterstock

housing approvals falling 2.8% in December.

“As the Federal Election draws closer, Australia needs policy solutions on the table that will help drive construction of the new homes Australia needs for the future,” said Hallam. “When you use Australian timber to build those homes the benefits multiply quickly. You’re using a local and quality product that harnesses local industry and workforces – with many located in regional communities. You then have the added benefit of significant carbon storage

in the home and structural timber is a far more climate-friendly construction material than energy-intensive steel or bricks.”

Last year, AFPA in conjunction with Master Builders Australia (MBA) launched How Timber Can Help Solve Australia’s

Housing Crisis (click here to download), showing the local forestry and timber sector’s capacity to help build 50,000 new homes annually. That capacity remains and stands ready and waiting with recent figures showing local structural sawn softwood sales at a nine-year low in 2023-24.


“Our sector has the product ready to go to build new homes. We do however require effective national, state and local government policy to help boost the construction sector and encourage an uptick in building new homes with timber products,” Hallam said.


“AFPA will continue working with both the Albanese Government, Coalition and key crossbenchers in the Parliament to ensure as much of our wonderful home grown, sustainable timber goes into Australia’s new homes of tomorrow, supporting local economies, communities and helping fight climate change,” Diana Hallam concluded.

Source: AFPA

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Forest Carbon Summit speakers

The expert lineup will guide attendees through the forest carbon landscape.

CANBERRA'S National Press Club is where some of the biggest events in Australia have been discussed, so it's a fitting venue for Forestry Australia's 2025 Forest Carbon Summit.

This two-day event is designed to equip forest carbon practitioners, forest managers and a diverse range of stakeholders with the knowledge and tools needed to successfully navigate the forest carbon landscape. The event aims to provide attendees with an improved understanding of the demand for forest carbon, ethics in the carbon market and the technical and administrative requirements of forest carbon projects.

The list of main summit speakers has just been released and it's reason enough to book.

The three keynote speakers listed come from a range of backgrounds but all bring a level of insight and expertise will illuminate questions around the issue.

Dr Simon Longstaff AO, executive director at The Ethics Centre began his working life on Groote Eylandt in the Northern Territory of Australia. He is proud of his kinship ties to the Anindilyakwa people. After a period studying law in Sydney and teaching in Tasmania, he pursued postgraduate studies as a Member of Magdalene College, Cambridge. Simon has been Executive Director of The Ethics Centre for 30 years and in that time he has helped countless people to better consider their place and actions on Earth. In 2013, he was made an officer of



1/ **Dr Simon Longstaff of The Ethics Centre will be one of the keynote speakers at the Summit.** Photo courtesy The Ethics Centre



2/ **Climateworks Centre CEO Anna Skarbek.** Photo: courtesy Climateworks Centre



3/ **Dr Robert Waterworth, FLINTpro.** Photo: courtesy FLINTpro

the Order of Australia (AO) for "distinguished service to the community through the promotion of ethical standards in governance and business, to improving corporate responsibility, and to philosophy."

Anna Skarbek is CEO of Climateworks Centre, which she has led since its creation in 2009. Co-founded by philanthropy and Monash University, Climateworks bridges the gap between research and climate action, operating as an independent not-for-profit within the Monash Sustainable Development Institute. Anna is an Asia Pacific Advisory Board member for GFANZ (the Glasgow Financial Alliance on Net Zero), a member of the Nature Finance Council, a board director of SEC Victoria, the Green Building Council of Australia, the Centre for New Energy Technologies and newly appointed member of the Net Zero Economy Authority. Anna was a founding board director of Australia's Clean Energy Finance Corporation and the Carbon Market Institute. She was a member of Australian

Government advisory groups during the development of low carbon and biodiversity legislation and programs, and a member of state government advisory panels that informed the first commitments to net zero emissions.

The final keynote speaker announced is Dr Robert Waterworth, co-founder and chief science, policy, and innovation officer at FLINTpro where he has led the development of the world's first SaaS-based system designed to maximise the utility of models, spatial data and satellite products for land sector reporting. Rob has over 25 years of experience in land sector monitoring systems across the private sector, academia, and state and federal governments. This has given him a profound understanding of the intricacies involved designing and building technical systems to meet policy and reporting needs. He is a sought-after

expert and is an IPCC lead author, UNFCCC expert reviewer and has authored numerous peer-reviewed papers and guidelines, including the upcoming land sector guidance for the Greenhouse Gas Protocol.

Other newly announced speakers include forest ecologist Prof Rodney Keenan of the University of Melbourne, who has extensive experience across Oceanic forestry as well as his current roles as non-executive director of Sustainable Timber Tasmania and Chair of the Research Advisory Committee for Australian Forest and Wood Innovations; plantation specialist Andrew Morton, the managing director of Indufor Asia Pacific (Australia); and Amanda Naismith, who supports New Forests' carbon, forestry and agriculture investments in Australia, New Zealand and the United States.

They join an already announced list of experts. Additional speakers, and a final program, will be announced in the coming weeks.

For more information and registration details, click [here](#).

“AN EXPERT
LINE-UP OF
SPEAKERS”

New Zealand afforesting opportunity

THE New Zealand Ministry for Primary Industries/Manatū Ahu Matua has released a Request for Information (RFI) regarding partnering to plant trees on Crown-owned land. The goal is public-private partnerships to plant trees on Crown land that will support New Zealand's climate change targets and creating more forestry jobs.

Forestry Minister Todd McClay said forestry is critical to New Zealand's economic future.

"These partnerships would drive economic growth by creating more forestry jobs in our regions, provide more wood for domestic processing and over time boost the value of exports," he said.

"This policy strikes the right balance between planting more production and native

forests, and making better use of Crown assets without impacting productive farmland or compromising high value conservation land."

Conservation Minister Tama Potaka said potential partnerships could help improve biodiversity and water quality: "While native forests store carbon and support a low emissions future for our whenua, they're also important for biodiversity and can strengthen environmental resilience to floods, droughts, and storms.

"We will ensure commitments are upheld where land is subject to Treaty of Waitangi settlement obligations or being held for potential future Treaty settlement redress.

"We are also keen to explore potential Iwi collaboration



NZ Conservation Minister Tama Potaka. Photo: supplied

through public-private partnerships," Potaka added.

The RFI is open until 5pm New Zealand time on 28 February and is designed to gauge interest in the proposal and understand what would make afforesting Crown-owned land an attractive and

viable opportunity.

Views are sought on:

- opportunities for afforestation;
- conditions and contractual arrangements that would enable you to undertake afforestation;
- and barriers to afforestation and what government could do to help overcome these.

Potential

partners are invited to describe the activities they're interested in and suggest partnership models and types of agreements they'd consider.

For more information and supporting documents, click here.

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New Forestry TradeMutt shirts

The shirts come with a mental health message and support services.

MORE than 10 years ago, TradeMutt's founders Dan Allen and Ed Ross met on a worksite in Sydney. They didn't have a huge amount in common, but they bonded over their love for Jim Carrey movies and hard work. When Allen suddenly lost a good made to suicide the following year, it hit hard and the two of them realised they wanted to do something about it.

Together, they launched TradeMutt, a workwear and social enterprise company. They make great work shirts (and more these days) and not only does each brightly patterned shirt bear the legend This Is A Conversation Starter on the back, inviting colleagues to talk about mental health concerns, 50% of profits go to TIACS, a professional mental health counselling service for tradies, truckies, farmers, and blue collar workers that's completely free.

Special forestry-themed TradeMutt shirts are now available for order, with delivery expected in August. All forestry industry businesses are invited to



The design, Koliinboolok Kaalk Biik, tells the story of fire regenerating the forest. Image: supplied

participate in the order, which is being coordinated by Amanda Bell, forest industry safety manager at Australian Forest Products Association.

The AFPA Growers Chamber Work Health and Safety Subcommittee has worked with TradeMutt and a Perth-based Indigenous artist to develop a special forestry-themed design.

The artwork is titled Koliinboolok Kaalk Biik (The Black mans/peoples forest country).

The ngammai (sun) represents the kolinn

(Blackfellow's) regular use of wiin (fire) to regenerate the boai (grass), kaalk (wood) and biik (country/ground). Regenerated forest creates homes for the koloonoon (snake), baraimal (emu), maram (kangaroo), kaan (cockatoo) and poongil (eagle hawk) to name just a few. The Forestry industry regenerates to keep the natural cycle of life going. The industry has many pathways from sapling to finished product creating work which as a result creates communities.

Orders are now being

taken for hi-vis and polo shirts. Hi-vis shirts are available in male and female sizing, in yellow or orange. The shirts are UPF50+ fabric, Day / Night hi-vis compliant, 150 gsm cloth weight fabric with mesh venting. Minimum order requirements mean there may be a need to substitute one colour for the other. In that event purchasers will have the option for a full refund.

Polo shirts are unisex, UPF 30+ with rib collar and sleeve cuffs. The polo shirts are a charcoal colour with patterned side panels.

For order details, contact candice.haydam@ausfpa.com.au

AFPA has requested one order per company. Orders close on 14 February, so act fast.

If you have any questions, please contact the Amanda Bell at amanda.bell@ausfpa.com.au.

On the cover: Dan Allen (right) and friend Ed Ross began TradeMutt as a way of bringing discussions about mental health into workplaces, especially trades. Image: courtesy TradeMutt

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Gene tech support in NZ

SCION, the leading Crown Research Institute for forestry in New Zealand, has come out in support of proposed regulatory changes to better enable the development of gene technology in that country.

In its submission on the government's Gene Technology Bill (click here for the submission call), Scion said the changes will help New Zealand remain competitive on a global scale.

"Other countries are already adopting gene technologies to generate economic benefits and protect human and environmental health while developing cleaner and more sustainable processes," said Dr Alec Foster, Scion's acting general manager – forests to biobased products.

"To remain competitive, New Zealand needs a regulatory

framework that enables collaborative advanced technology development while honouring our unique cultural heritage and environmental stewardship responsibilities."

The Bill's purpose is to enable the safe use of gene technologies and regulated organisms by managing the risks they pose to people and the environment. Foster notes it will facilitate a collaborative, co-ordinated science approach that will give New Zealand a pathway towards economic prosperity, social advancement and environmental innovation.

"These proposed regulations lay the foundations for New Zealand's future bioeconomy - where advances in food and fibre production and sustainable technology drive economic growth and tackle global challenges," he said.

Prime Minister Christopher



Dr Alec Foster says the regulatory changes would help New Zealand advance safely. Photo: supplied

Luxon recently announced plans to ease restrictions on gene technologies by the end of 2025 to enable research and product development.

"New Zealand has historically relied on imported gene technology products, while our regulations have constrained domestic research and innovation," Foster said. "Now, as technologies advance

and global regulations evolve, New Zealand is modernising its regulatory framework to capitalise on these opportunities."

Scion is pioneering multiple gene technology projects. "We're advancing research on enhanced carbon sequestration in trees and conducting world-first field trials of gene-edited conifers designed to improve forest productivity and enable future biorefinery applications," Foster said.

These and other initiatives help showcase the direct benefits of gene technology in addressing complex environmental and economic challenges, particularly across the forestry and industrial sectors.

Consultation on the Bill is open until 17 February.



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- China SW log and sawn timber 5 & 10 year supplier predictions
- China domestic hardwood forests, harvest overview
- China pulp industry and imported woodchip demand trends
- 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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FEBRUARY

10: Woodsolutions Timber Futures Seminar – 4.00pm - 7.00pm, Carrillo Gantner Theatre, Parkville, VIC. For more details and to register, visit <https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/woodsolutions-timber-futures-seminar-tickets-1202833931669?aff=MediaRelease>

12: Forestry Australia Webinar - Managing deer in forestry settings – ONLINE EVENT, 12.30pm-1.30pm (AEST). For more details and to register, visit <https://www.forestry.org.au/webinar-managing-deer-in-forestry-settings/>

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

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

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.sydneybuildexpo.com>

11-17: Japanese Wood Architecture Tour – Japan. Tour the world's oldest and most impressive wooden buildings. From Hōryū-ji, the world's oldest wooden building to the World Expo in Osaka - home to the world's

largest wooden ring building. For more information and view the program, visit <https://timberconstruct.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/Japanese-Study-Tour-2025-Sponsored-by-WoodSolutions.pdf>

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>

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

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.

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/>

SEPTEMBER

2-3: Timber Queensland Biennial Conference "Doing Timber Business in Queensland" – Brisbane. For more information, email admin@timberqueensland.com.au

OCTOBER

13-14: Timber Construct 2025 – Melbourne. More details to follow.

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

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

23-24: Field Trip – Vietnam.

Have some news to share?

Send media releases, news stories, events, any timber and forestry news related information with us anytime to Nicky, Donyale and Jess -

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Fair Work review published

An independent statutory review of IR changes is mostly positive.

LAST year, Murray Watt, the Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations, announced the appointment of Mark Bray, an emeritus professor of industrial relations at the University of Newcastle and Alison Preston, a professor of economics at the University of Western Australia, to conduct an independent review of the Secure Jobs, Better Pay Act and of the amendments made by Part 16A of Schedule 1 to the Closing Loopholes Act.

On Monday, the draft review was published and is now available for download (click here).

While acknowledging that the results were somewhat hampered by the tradition of adversarialism in the Australian Industrial Relations sphere, and the limited time frame between the commencement of various provisions of the Act and the Review, Bray and Preston received 47 submissions to the Review and had multiple stakeholder consultation periods.

The panel found that the Secure Jobs, Better Pay reforms are, on the whole, achieving the Australian Government's intent, operating appropriately and effectively and with minimal unintended consequences. In particular, it found that the reforms were making workplaces fairer, with improved job security, a smaller gender pay gap and upwards wage growth.

The positive findings include the policy of multi-employer bargaining that allows two or more employers with common interests to be covered by the same enterprise agreement.

Senator Watt told the ABC that "There's certainly no evidence in the report that



1/ **Professor Alison Preston, one of the authors of the review, has a background in labour economics and industrial relations and a particular interest in gender equality.** Photo supplied



2/ **Senator Murray Watt, Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations.** Photo: courtesy Queensland Labor



3/ **ACTU secretary Sally McManus applauded the improved worker conditions shown in the Review.** Photo: Matt Hrkac/CC license

backs up the claims from the Coalition and employer groups that multi-employer bargaining will damage productivity or damage the economy."

But Business Council of Australia (BCA) chief executive Bran Black strongly disagreed. He told the ABC, "The report suggests the system as changed recently is fundamentally okay and that is fundamentally inconsistent with the message that I hear from members and from businesses.

"Our view is that the pendulum has swung too far in favour of union interests and we know that because productivity is sitting at negative 0.8 of a percent."

(Click here to listen to the interview.)

A report from the Australian Productivity Commission, however, says Australian productivity levels are still being affected by policies that prioritised job security during the Covid pandemic emergency. The two biggest drags on recent productivity have not been changed IR laws but a combination of a significant drop in productivity in the mining sector, where

labour productivity is typically volatile, and a notable climb in employment, particularly youth employment.

As the report by James Thiris, senior research economist, says: "Many new workers joined the labour force – including younger, less experienced and less educated workers – which can act as a drag on productivity in the short-term as new entrants tend to take time to acquire new on-the-job skills and catch up to their more experienced colleagues." (Click here for the full report.)

In a statement from the BCA, Black said, "The Same Job, Same Pay amendments have created an IR system that favours union interests, rather than striking the right balance between protecting workers and simultaneously supporting innovation and growth."

The BCA said the group is disappointed the review did not take on "employers' sensible calls for amendments to the Fair Work Act, which include needed changes to intractable bargaining and forced bargaining provisions that are impacting some of the country's most productive sectors" and that "it was

remarkable no changes were recommended to the [ABCC] laws given last year's allegations of systemic misconduct across the CFMEU."

The Review found that the abolition of the Australian Building and Construction Commission (ABCC) and its integration into the Fair Work Ombudsman (FWO) had resulted in different powers and penalties, however it brought building and construction workers into line with all other Australian workers with respect to laws and regulations and that there were substantial ongoing issues of noncompliance by unions and employers.

It said: "The Review Panel notes that the FWO's wages recoveries for the building and construction sector have been higher than the ABCC's recoveries over a shorter period of time. These may be indicative of a more 'balanced approach' to noncompliance by employers and employee organisations in the sector."

The Review also noted that FWO has 42 ongoing investigations into the CFMEU,

Cont P 10



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Modular Timber Construction webinar

WOODSOLUTIONS' first free webinar for the year will run next Tuesday at 11am, Australian Eastern Summer Time. Titled 'Modular timber construction solutions for affordable housing in Australia', it brings together leading experts to discuss Haven Home Safe's seven-star NatHERS rated project in Horsham, Victoria—a 25-home development using modular, carbon storing, and low embodied emission timber construction.

The webinar hopes to help architects, engineers, developers, and builders looking to deliver sustainable, efficient, and impactful housing solutions:

- Discover how modular timber construction accelerates project timelines while lowering the carbon footprint and reducing construction waste.
- Gain practical insights and strategies for integrating prefabricated design to achieve seven-star NatHERS energy ratings.
- Understand the role of responsible, certified



The Haven Home Safe and ARKit teams in Horsham. Photo: courtesy Haven Home Safe

wood procurement and incorporating ESG principles into your own housing projects.

The speakers will be Jack Haber, head of development at Haven Home Safe, Craig Chatman of ARKit, a residential and commercial prefab building solution company, and Matt de Jongh, sustainability manager at Responsible Wood.

The project has delivered three one-bedroom and 22 two-bedroom homes in the regional Victorian town of Horsham. All were delivered as volumetric modular construction solutions by ARKit, using termite-resistant,

plantation-grown timber framing.

The project has previously been the subject of a WoodSolutions story ([click here](#)).

"Where practical and appropriate, our new development projects are using sustainably sourced structural timber framing," said Haven Home Safe's Jack Haber. "The added benefit of this project is the speed of modular construction which saves dollars.

"Our preference for timber-based structural solutions is about our builders

and installers being very comfortable and familiar with the material, noting the Horsham project installation only required two carpenters to install. But it's also important to note that timber's sustainability credentials align with Haven Home Safe's ESG commitments."

Chatman noted that modular construction's ability to deliver diverse, value-for-money housing options was a major advantage and a key factor in the Horsham project. This approach aligns well with the needs of social and affordable housing renters, most of whom are seeking smaller, one- to two-bedroom homes.

"Building with a modular prefabricated system offers significant benefits, including a much faster construction speed compared to traditional methods, a lower carbon footprint, and a reduction in construction waste," he said.

"It's also important to note that there's no compromise on quality."

For more information and the RSVP link, [click here](#).

From P 8

but acknowledged: "The dissenting report also stated that the FWO is not a like-for-like replacement for the ABCC and is not the best equipped or resourced agency to apply the law on building and construction sites."

Regarding the National Construction Industry Forum (NCIF) established under the Act, the Review said that "The NCIF is still in its infancy, so evidence is limited as to any impact on the building and construction industry. However, the Review Panel is encouraged by the work of the NCIF in attempting

to drive cultural change and cooperation in the industry, including the development of the Blueprint and the appointment of Dr Rod Harrison to assist with its development.

"The Review Panel agrees that a tripartite approach is key to building cooperation, understanding issues and providing advice to government on the sector. The Review Panel considers that the NCIF has the potential to drive a more conciliatory approach by all industry participants and to drive broader cultural change in the industry."

ACTU secretary Sally McManus put out a response

to the Review pointing out Unions' support for the improved worker conditions under the Act and criticising employer group complaints.

"The independent panel says the early signs are positive, that collective bargaining is increasing, especially the coverage of workers under collective agreements. Wages have started to improve," McManus said.

"The review shows real wages have picked up by more in the past 12 months than under all nine years of the Coalition Government. Yet employer groups keep trying to take these measures away. This would mean the real

wages that working people are finally starting to see would significantly weaken as well.

"The last thing working people need is a return to the decade of wages flatlining under the Dutton Coalition. These reforms greatly contributed to getting wages moving and that must be what bosses don't like: having to pay people a cent more than they have to."

The Panel recommended another review in two to three years time with possibly more beyond that to see the full impact of the IR changes as they play out over time.

Conference abstract call

FORESTRY Australia's conferences rely on the best and brightest in the sector to present their findings and share their expertise. With planning for the 2025 Conference in October well underway, the call for abstracts has gone out ahead of the 16 March deadline.

Abstracts are sought for oral presentations, workshops, whole sessions (these include a series of oral presentations, panel discussions, interviews, quiz the speaker, debates, coffee table or 'campfire' discussions, yarning circles and solution rooms), poster presentations, and short student presentations (3-minute – students are also welcome to present in other sessions).

The Committee members are also open to proposals for other styles of presentation to

support learning and the exchange of ideas that are not mentioned in the Call for Abstracts.

The 2025 Conference Program Sub-Committee is looking to develop a diverse, authentic and engaging program built around the following sub-themes:

1. Restoring forests and landscape This includes Traditional, cultural and Indigenous forestry; Stakeholder, social and cultural values; Post fire recovery; Forest restoration in the Asia/Pacific; Investment including carbon and biodiversity markets; Restoration for multiple values; Agriculture, private forests and trees on



Forestry Australia conferences are places for learning but also coming together to find solutions. Photo: supplied

farms, and; Biodiversity and ecosystem services.

2. The role of forests in securing Australia's Future This includes Policy & policy impacts; Markets, business and housing; Social acceptance, Stewardship and engagement; Recreation and tourism; Fire; Biosecurity; Timber and forest products, and; New partnerships and opportunities.

3. Learning and innovating in

the forest sector This includes Innovation; Lessons from the past to inform the future; Technology; Workforce, training and capacity building; Decision making and risk; Silviculture; Forest health as well as Climate change.

Together, attendees will discuss ideas, envision pathways

and explore a future that supports Australia's forests to provide positive environmental, cultural, economic and social outcomes.

Abstract submissions close 11.59pm AEDT Sunday 16 March 2025 and the conference will be held 20–23 October at the Adelaide Convention Centre, click [here](#) for details, to submit an abstract, click [here](#).

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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@timberandforestrynews.com

Living Carbon grants

MANAGING carbon is both a challenge and an enormous opportunity for landholders.

If you are a landholder in NSW, you may be eligible for a NSW Government grant to set up a carbon planting project. This could help you secure the health of your land, improve productivity, and unlock new income streams. Your land could be used to revegetate habitats for threatened or iconic species such as koalas.

The Department is investing \$5 million in Living Carbon grants to assist eligible applicants in delivering carbon abatement through planting projects in 3 regions in NSW:

- The Riverina Local Land Services region
 - The North Coast Local Land Services region
 - The MidCoast Local Government Area.
- Successful applicants



This North Coast LLS farm had few extant trees when the owners purchased it, since then they have re-established multiple habitat trees and understorey. Photo: courtesy Katrina Harrison

will receive up to \$200,000 of grant funding, and the landholder is expected to commit funding and/or in-kind contributions to complete the project.

A suitable project would:

- Plant between 10 and 200 hectares of appropriate species on your land
- Plant with the aim of revegetating habitat for threatened or iconic species

endemic to your area

- Deliver on and comply with all Australian Carbon Credit Units (ACCU) Scheme and Accounting for Nature (AfN) method requirements, beyond the lifetime of your grant.

In return for funding, successful applicants must commit to sharing information and helping build capacity within the sector. This will help other landholders understand the potential benefits, risks and costs of carbon projects.

Carbon projects must already be registered under the national Australian Carbon Credit Unit (ACCU) Scheme with the Clean Energy Regulator to be eligible for a grant. Only the Environmental Planting Pilot method is currently eligible for this grant. Other methods may be added in the future.

To be eligible you must be:

- A private landholder who is

the proponent of the carbon project

- An Aboriginal or Traditional Owners group that owns or has legal right to the land and who are the proponent of the carbon project
- Public land managers may be considered for inclusion following discussion with Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water and pre-approval to apply. NSW National Parks are not eligible for these grants because they have access to funding for similar projects through a different initiative.

GRANT DETAILS

Provider: NSW Climate and Energy Action

Amount: Up to \$200,000

Closes: 30 Apr 2025

Location: Specific NSW regions

Who Can Apply:

Non-government, community groups, businesses, individual and other

Co-Contribution Required:

Yes

<https://www.energy.nsw.gov.au/business-and-industry/programs-grants-and-schemes/primary-industries-productivity-and-abatement/living-carbon>

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Trade chaos

Trump's tariff announcements have had a destabilising effect.

ON Tuesday morning, Australians heard that US President Donald Trump had reached a 'deal' with Mexico and Canada, that would delay implementation of his announced 25% tariffs on the majority of imports from those countries for 30 days.

White House National Economic Council director Kevin Hassett told CNBC that the tariffs had been misunderstood. "President Trump was absolutely 100 per cent clear that this is not a trade war, this is a drug war," Hassett said.

However, Trump had previously said that Canada and Mexico "have to balance out their trade, number one". He has also said on social media that tariffs would help pressure Canada to join the US.

He went on to say that illegal immigration and fentanyl, including from China, were also significant concerns. The comments were particularly baffling in the case of Canada as *Forbes* reports that the number of people who cross illegally from Canada into the United States is smaller than illegal crossings into Canada from the US, as is the flow of fentanyl (click here for full details from *Forbes*).

An editorial in the *Wall Street Journal* pronounced it the "dumbest trade war in history" and some Canadian consumers have implemented a boycott on American products that has not lifted with the delay.



President Trump at his inaugural parade in January. Image: Staff Sgt. Danny Gonzalez (Public domain shot released by US military)

The deal struck on Tuesday involves Canada increasing its border security plus anti-fentanyl measures, while Mexico's President agreed to send 10,000 National Guard members to reinforce its border in return for the US doing more to stop the flow of high-powered guns into Mexico.

The delay has given a reprieve to US builders, who rely on Canadian softwood timber imports. Despite Trump's claim while signing the original tariff order that "we have all the trees you need," Canadian timber represents 70% of the US\$8.5bn in timber imports and is already subject to a 14.5% import duty. Relatedly, 71% of the imported US\$456 million of lime and gypsum (which are used for drywall/plasterboard) came from Mexico in 2023.

The additional 10% on current duties from China (and on imports that are eligible for

temporary duty exemptions) was still going ahead at the time of writing, as was the cancellation of China's de minimis duty-free exemption for packages worth under US\$800 sent to individuals. Which has the bright side of perhaps ending Shein unboxing videos on TikTok.

China has promised to challenge the tariffs levelled at it at the World Trade Organization. On Tuesday evening it announced a series of counter tariffs, including 15% on coal and liquified natural gas. Canada and Mexico had also planned counter tariffs until their deals were reached.

While Chinese wood products account for only about a quarter of the volume of Canada's when it comes to US imports, the country is a major export market for US wood products and retaliatory actions will almost certainly damage this. Meanwhile,

both Chinese producers and American customers will suffer from the extra 10% import tariffs lifting prices on a swathe of home-building products out of China, from fixings to steel and aluminium to appliances.

As the flurry of announcements meets the chaos of whether or not they're implemented, it's hard to accurately predict the full impact on Australia, but global stock markets plummeted (again, after last week's AI selloff) with some bounce after the announcement of the delays, and the Aussie dollar dropped to four-year lows.

Any policies that weaken China's buying power will have a strong negative effect on the Australian economy and the inflationary impact of the tariffs on US prices will also impact the global economy, even if Australia escapes direct tariffs.

Trump is also threatening to impose tariffs on the EU "pretty soon". In a press conference on Sunday, US time, he said, "It will definitely happen with the European Union, I can tell you that, because they've really taken advantage of us ... it's an atrocity what they've done."

Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk, whose country currently holds Europe's rotating presidency, said, "We have to do everything to avoid this totally unnecessary and stupid tariff war or trade war." He described it as a "conflict among allies".



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Victoria fires

Plan ahead to help affected regions recover.

VICTORIANS in the regions cannot catch a break. With large parts of the state still in transition from the sudden closure of native forestry harvesting in Victoria a year ago, this summer has seen successive heatwaves and wild weather drive destructive fires across the west and south-west, at the same time as cost-of-living pressures have seen the volunteer firefighting force drop in numbers.

Worst of all, the scale and duration of the disaster has wiped out the major earnings period for tourism businesses in the affected regions, even those that have not been directly impacted by the fires, with cancellations not only for the recent Christmas/New Year and summer holidays periods,



The tourist town of Halls Gap has lost over half a million visits after two nearby fires in two years. Photo: Shutterstock

but for months in advance.

The summer boom can represent over a third of a year's income for tourism-related businesses and those that support them, and yet many will not qualify for hardship support because the impacts are indirect: their properties haven't been

damaged, only their bookings. Given how tight things are right now, some owners have frankly admitted they are at risk of closure.

Losing businesses in regional areas has a far higher detrimental impact than losing businesses in towns and cities. Not only are there fewer other

options for employees, but business closures and family relocations quite often go hand in hand, so a town loses not just a shop or service, but also enrolments at the local school and important members of volunteer communities.

There's bigger all we can do to completely stop bushfires in Australia, but there is a lot we can do to support the people affected by them. If you're in a position to book a holiday in the affected region, get in and book it as early as you can. The deposit will help businesses with liquidity and the bank will look favourably at there being future bookings. And if you can only manage a quick getaway, make time to buy quality wine, gourmet food and gifts for the year while you're there!

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Greens call for end to native forestry

The proposal has been called scientifically ignorant by AFPA.

YOU can smell the election on the horizon. Late last week, prominent Greens gathered on the NSW Far South Coast to announce a new forestry policy. In exchange for ending native timber harvesting in NSW, the package would deliver a \$140.4 million per annum for 20 years transition fund to restore habitats and support forestry workers moving into other roles and gazette the Great Southern Forest National Park.

The proposed park is around 400,000ha and stretches from Nowra to Eden and inland to Tumut. As for the money, "This funding will go directly towards ecological restoration and ensuring a just transition for communities and workers. The Greens will pay for this plan by making the big corporations pay their fair share of tax," according to the optimistic online policy statement (click here to read in full).

When it came to the reasoning behind the policy, the key point given was a 2024 survey showing 70% of people in NSW support an end to native forest logging on public land.

This survey was carried out by the Australia Institute, polling 1008 Australians nation-wide. According to the published report (click here for download), respondents were told "Victoria and Western Australia ended native forest logging earlier this year" and were then asked if they support or oppose an end to native forest logging on public land



From left, Senator Mehreen Faruqi, Deputy Leader of the Australian Greens, Senator Nick McKim, Australian Greens Spokesperson for Forests and Sue Higginson MLC, NSW Greens Spokesperson for the Environment at the policy launch. Image: Instagram/@mehreenfaruqi

across the rest of Australia.

Ignoring the small sample size, the findings are almost the exact opposite of those from the 2023 Social License to Operate report prepared for the North East Forestry Hub by StollzNow Research (click here). There, 2200 surveys (1194 in North East NSW and 1006 in Greater Sydney) found that 72% believed NSW native forest harvesting is a legitimate industry and 67% agreed that some of our public native forests should remain available for producing hardwood timber.

One interesting aspect of the StollzNow research is that it included focus groups where issues such as the difference between a National Park and State Forest were discussed, as were the differences between harvesting plantations and selective harvesting of native timbers. As is evidenced by the results, the better-

educated group was more receptive to sustainable native timber harvesting.

Chief Executive Officer of the Australian Forest Products Association (AFPA), Diana Hallam responded to the Greens' announcement on Monday.

"Like a broken record and far from the progressive force they claim to be, the Greens have announced they're taking a position to end native forestry to the Federal Election," Hallam said. "Make no mistake, this stance aims to destroy the economic livelihoods of rural communities, increase bushfire risks across the country, hamper our ability

to sequester carbon to fight climate change, offshore more jobs and force Australia to rely on more imported native hardwood for essential products – often from countries that don't adhere to our world leading forestry management practices. The Greens are environmentally irresponsible."

Hallam pointed out that sustainable native forestry was supported by a heavily researched IPCC assessment.

"It's really disappointing that the Greens keep trashing this wonderful industry to drive clickbait donations from supporters they continually mislead and deceive," said Hallam. "They really should ask themselves how they'll deal with decimated local communities and economies, dodgy imports and the hugely increased fire risks locked-up forests create – if they succeed."

She expressed gratitude for the Albanese Government and the Opposition both supporting sustainable forestry, as well as a number of independents, concluding, "This Federal Election – we need more science informing the political debate, not outdated and irrelevant spin from the Greens."

“IT'S REALLY DISAPPOINTING THAT THE GREENS KEEP TRASHING THIS WONDERFUL INDUSTRY”

Finding the best solutions

THE Growers Research Advisory Committee (GRAC) is a flagship initiative of Forest & Wood Products Australia (FWPA), placing collaborative decision-making at the heart of research, development and extension (RD&E) efforts.

Established in 2017, the GRAC is a formal mechanism for FWPA to understand industry priorities and gain direct input from members when designing RD&E programs. This results in industry-led RD&E, designed to improve the quality of the resource base, reduce risk and increase productivity and utilisation, delivering value directly back into the industry.

Engagement and consultation with stakeholders are pivotal for FWPA to continue delivering programs that meet member needs and remain relevant as industry priorities evolve.

A formal advisory committee ensures a range of perspectives are considered and provides a clear process by which priorities are discussed, confirmed and drawn on to plan RD&E activities. It also creates an avenue to assess the outcomes of research and discuss its application and adoption by the industry.

FWPA says the GRAC's mission, driven by growers, is to "double the value of Australia's commercial forests by 2040, by fostering an innovation culture in our enterprises, applying world's best practices, collaboration and investing into research and development as appropriate."

The GRAC represents all large Australian forest growers and managers. All FWPA grower members are invited to join, with most organisations represented by a senior leadership member, such as a CEO, general manager or science manager.



This membership helps to maintain a commercial focus and perspective when assessing RD&E programs and ensure they contribute to factors such as increasing plantation productivity, building resilience, improving quality, mitigating risk and losses and reducing costs.

For example, Suzette Weeding, general manager land management at Sustainable Timber Tasmania (SST) says most of their aims focus on enhancing value and understanding risk, as well as managing and monitoring threatened species that live in native forests. Reflecting this, GRAC-supported research (click here) developed a method for surveying giant freshwater crayfish using E-DNA. It used water sampling analysis to locate threatened freshwater crayfish and facilitate their management and monitoring. Another project contracted in 2024 will address the issue of automatically monitoring multiple threatened forest species in real-time using acoustic detectors.

Weeding sits on the GRAC Executive alongside Sharon Occhipinti, General Manager Forest Services, HVP Plantations. They agree that the GRAC has provided significant benefits towards collaboration, prioritisation and efficient use of resources.

"The GRAC has given industry and STT a means to collaborate on research projects and understand our



priorities as a whole, rather than on an individual level," Weeding explains.

"It has enabled us to better coordinate research and grow what we saw as a dwindling research capacity in our industry. People need to be confident that research priorities are appropriately identified and followed through on."

Occhipinti shared that the GRAC has united varying expertise to address complex research questions. "Some challenges are too big for one organisation to solve," she said. "The GRAC brings a breadth of experience and skillsets into the conversation, and allows the industry to address challenges, risks, opportunities and research gaps.

"Typically, an academic will pitch an idea to you. We're trying to flip that on its head by deciding what research we want to do and who to work with," Occhipinti added.

Positive feedback from members and the GRAC's demonstrated impact on the industry are becoming more widely recognised. As a result, FWPA is looking at how the GRAC model could be applied to other areas of the industry, such as improving and expanding research investments for processor members.

For more detail on the GRAC, [click here](#) and [click here](#).

Source: FWPA



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HEAD OFFICE

Timber Media Australasia Pty Ltd
PO Box 3001
Maraylya NSW 2765

PUBLISHER

Timber Media Australasia Pty Ltd

EDITORS

Nicky Ainley
Donyale Harrison
Jess Hockridge
editors@timberandforestryenews.com

ADVERTISING

Campbell McInnes // +61 (0) 406 223 007
campbellm@timberandforestryenews.com

ACCOUNTS

Chris Parker // +61 (0) 413 710 203
cparker@ttnews.com.au

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Spindle 4, 1st Top, 22 kW (30 hp), Straight and Profile Jointer and Outboard Bearing -

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CONTACTS

Media releases and editorial:

Nicky Ainley // Donyale Harrison // Jessica Hockridge

e: editors@timberandforestrynews.com

Display ad bookings:

Campbell McInnes // e: campbellm@timberandforestrynews.com

Accounts:

Chris Parker // e: cparker@ttnews.com.au