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Aphid devourers arrive in mass in South Australia

COVER STORY P2

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Ladybirds swarm South Australia

A natural combatant to aphid pests in pine plantations.

IN South Australia's south-east, near Mount Gambier, an extraordinary natural phenomenon is unfolding. Millions of ladybirds are aggregating in dense swarms, covering the ground, fences, and Stobie poles along Wandilo Forest Road in Dismal Swamp. Local photographer Darren Archibald captured this spectacle, noting patches of ladybirds up to two inches thick in some areas. This surge, linked to the region's ongoing drought, is a boon for the timber industry as these ladybirds—identified as the native common spotted ladybird (*Harmonia conformis*)—feed on aphids, a significant pest of radiata pine plantations in the Green Triangle region.

The drought has stressed radiata pine trees, making

“MONTEREY PINE APHID CAUSES 30% GROWTH REDUCTION IN RADIATA PINES



Photographer, Darren Archibald, was not immune to the mass of ladybirds whilst photographing them. All images: Darren Archibald - Turn 8 Photography

them more susceptible to aphid infestations. Michael Bleby, a 40-year veteran of the Southeast forestry industry, explains that the Monterey pine aphid (*Essigella californica*) thrives under these conditions, feeding on pine needles in greater numbers. This aphid, first recorded in Australia in 1998 near Canberra, has since spread to all pine-growing regions, including

South Australia. It causes browning and defoliation of needles, weakening trees and leading to substantial losses in the plantation industry, particularly in drier years. Research also shows that repeated infestations exacerbate needle loss, with studies in radiata pine plantations indicating a 30% reduction in basal area growth over six years due to severe defoliation.

Other aphid species impacting South Australian pine plantations include the pine woolly aphid (*Pineus pini*), which has been a concern in softwood plantations across eastern and southern Africa but is also present in Australia. This aphid causes dieback by feeding on sap, leading to reduced growth and, in severe cases, tree mortality. The

five-spined bark beetle (*Ips grandicollis*), often associated with aphid-damaged trees, can further exacerbate damage by vectoring blue stain fungi like *Ophiostoma ips*, which hinders water conduction and can cause vascular wilt in pines.

Ladybirds are a natural ally in this battle. Invertebrate

Cont P 3

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From P 2

ecologist Kris Messenger highlights their role as aphid predators, noting that the common spotted ladybird primarily feeds on aphids rather than plant material, making them beneficial for both gardens and forests. She attributes their mass gatherings to over-wintering behaviour, where ladybirds use pheromones to aggregate in sheltered spots like Stobie poles to stay warm. This behaviour ensures their survival through winter, allowing them to resume pest control in spring.

The ecological balance in Mount Gambier's pine plantations underscores the importance of natural pest control. While the Monterey pine aphid and pine woolly aphid pose ongoing threats, the ladybird swarms offer a temporary reprieve.

However, long-term management strategies are crucial. Research suggests that remedial treatments with NPS fertilisers can improve foliage retention in radiata pines by up to 20%, reducing aphid damage, though some trees remain susceptible. Selective thinning of vulnerable trees has also been proposed as a viable strategy to reduce aphid impact by 15%, supporting plantation productivity.

For South Australia's timber industry, the ladybird







Photographer, Darren Archibald, captures the massive numbers of ladybirds swarming on a pole.

swarms are a welcome sight amidst drought challenges. As the region continues to grapple with environmental stressors, understanding and supporting natural predators like ladybirds will be key to sustaining healthy pine plantations. Gardeners and foresters alike can take heart—Mount Gambier's ladybird flush means fewer aphid woes, at least for now.

On the cover:
The orange spotted backs of the ladybirds identify them as *Harmonia*. Image: Darren Archibald - Turn 8 Photography

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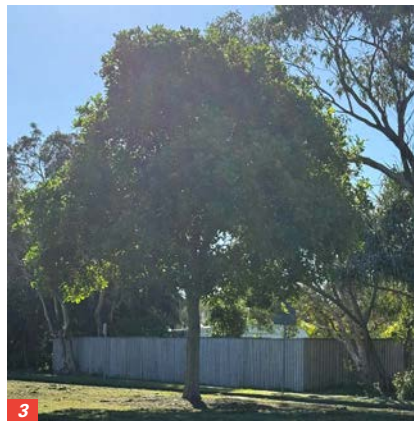
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Reforestation as remembrance

ANZAC Day, observed on 25 April, is a cornerstone of Australian identity, commemorating the 1915 Gallipoli landings and honouring all who have served in all wars and peacekeeping operations since. For the timber and forestry industries, deeply embedded in regional Australia, this day resonates through a shared commitment to legacy and renewal. The industry's reforestation efforts, rooted in sustainability, offer a profound way to reflect on Anzac Day—drawing a symbolic parallel between the enduring growth of trees and the lasting memory of those who served.

Trees have always held symbolic weight in acts of remembrance. Their growth over decades mirrors the way Anzac Day ensures the sacrifices of veterans are passed down through generations. The timber and forestry industries, which collectively plant 70 million seedlings annually across Australia, embody this principle of renewal. Each tree planted today ensures forests for tomorrow, much like Anzac Day ceremonies ensure the memory of service endures. This alignment of values—sustainability and remembrance—offers a meaningful way for the industry to honour the Anzac spirit without overshadowing the day's solemnity.

The historical role of timber in Australia's war effort deepens this connection. During World War II, Queensland's sawmills operated at full capacity to support the war, producing three-ply veneer from kauri pine for bunk beds, prefabricated huts, and barges. These materials directly aided soldiers, including those whose service in the Pacific



1/ The Sunshine Coast, QLD honours those who were part of the Gallipoli campaign of World War 1 with an avenue of trees.

2/ The honorary avenue of trees on Beerburum Street stretches from Dicky Beach to Battery Hill, QLD

3/ Tuckeroo trees were chosen for the avenue.

All images: Jessica Hockridge

campaigns is commemorated on Anzac Day. The industry's contribution during wartime laid a foundation for its modern role in regional communities, where Anzac traditions remain strong. Today, the timber used in those war efforts has been replaced through reforestation, a cycle of renewal that echoes the Anzac ethos of preserving memory for future generations.

Sustainability is central to this reflection. Forestry Corporation of NSW emphasises that every tree

harvested is replaced, ensuring forests remain a renewable resource. In New South Wales alone, the industry employs 22,000 people and contributes 2.4 billion dollars annually to the economy, much of it in rural areas where Anzac Day events like dawn services and marches are community cornerstones. The act of replanting—whether for commercial plantations or environmental restoration—can be seen as a quiet tribute to the Anzac legacy, ensuring the land remains productive and vibrant, much like the memory of those who served.

This connection also carries an educational dimension. The industry's reforestation efforts often involve community engagement, such as school programs that teach sustainable forestry practices. These initiatives can foster a deeper understanding of Anzac Day's significance, linking environmental stewardship with historical remembrance. In regions like South Australia's Green Triangle, where forestry spans over 1 million hectares of plantation forests, the industry's commitment to replanting ensures that the land continues to support communities—many of which have deep ties to military history.

The timber and forestry industries employ approximately 80,000 people directly and support 100,000 more indirectly, predominantly in rural Australia. Their work ensures that the landscapes surrounding Anzac Day ceremonies—whether in small towns or larger regional centres—remain green and thriving. This environmental legacy complements the cultural legacy of Anzac Day, creating a synergy between the industry's daily efforts and the nation's annual act of remembrance.

As Australia pauses on Anzac Day to honour its heroes, the timber and forestry industries offer a quiet but powerful tribute through their reforestation work. The millions of trees planted each year stand as a living testament to renewal, mirroring the enduring memory of those who served. In this way, the industry honours the Anzac spirit—not through grand gestures, but through the steady, sustainable growth of Australia's forests, ensuring a legacy that flourishes for generations to come.

New review reveals true impact of forests' carbon capturing potential

A NEW, independent report by a former CSIRO Chief Scientist proves once and for all that sustainable native forestry is key for Australia to meet its climate change obligations, writes Nick Steel, CEO of the Tasmanian Forest Products Association.

Whenever Tasmania's sustainable forest industry is discussed, one of the biggest challenges for our industry is countering the bad science, incorrect assumptions and misleading accusations made by those who want to shut down our sustainable businesses.

That's why it was pleasing to read the recently published paper by Dr John Raison, a former CSIRO Chief Research Scientist with extensive experience in carbon accounting in forests. When Dr Raison, who has 40 years' experience studying the ecology and management of Australia's native forests talks, you can be sure he knows what he is saying.

In his paper, *A review of the impacts of sustainable harvesting, non-harvest*

management and wildfire on net carbon emissions from Australian native forests, Dr Raison examined many of the claims surrounding forestry and our forest's ability to capture carbon made by the usual bad actors and scientifically debunks each of them.

In his paper, Dr Raison examines the Tasmanian forest estate which, as we know, has more than 50 per cent of the total estate locked up in parks and reserves, and discovers the astonishing ability our production forests have to capture carbon now and into the future.

Dr Raison's research reveals that each cubic metre of harvested wood contains approximately one tonne of carbon dioxide equivalent,



Nick Steel, CEO of the Tasmanian Forest Products Association.

Image: TFPA

which is then locked up either in production of wood products or in landfall after the products are used.

Publicly available data shows that in 2022-23, 935,000 cubic metres of log was produced from the State's native forests, capturing almost a million tonnes of carbon dioxide

equivalent.

According to the figures in the paper, the total carbon in the felled trees in public forests that produced about 735,000 m3 of logs annually is estimated to be 1.05 Mt of carbon dioxide equivalent stored in timber, which is then used to build our homes, create our furniture or help us transport the goods we use every day.

Dr Raison also correctly states that "wood is also used in

construction to substitute for high emission alternative materials (steel, concrete and aluminium) and for creating wood products that might otherwise be sourced from overseas where production emissions are much higher than in Australia."

Cont P 6

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From P 5

The reality is that sustainably harvesting production forests in Tasmania are a much better option for the environment than the use of concrete, steel, aluminium or petrochemicals.

In another blow to the usual complainers, Dr Raison's review shows that: approximately 70 per cent of felled biomass is removed off-site in harvested logs (which is considerably more than the 40 per cent claimed by anti-logging advocates); while the remaining 30 per cent is left in the forest to be either burnt or to decay over time.

"When all the factors above are properly assessed

in a lifecycle analysis it has been shown that sustainable harvesting does not cause net carbon emissions and that harvesting leads to greater mitigation of carbon emissions than an alternative no-harvesting forest management option," Dr Raison said.

Dr Raison also points out that data used by many different papers on Tasmanian forestry is notoriously difficult to quantify.

As he says: "...The effects of timber harvesting on carbon emissions is complicated by the diversity of forest types involved, the different timber harvesting systems used, and the relic effects of past logging and wildfire. Despite

the claims of anti-logging advocates, clear-felling and burning is used only in certain forest types, and selective harvesting is now the most common harvesting system employed."

Forestry in Tasmania has changed dramatically over the past two decades. Unfortunately, the metrics used by those wishing to disparage our industry are often ridiculously out-of-date.

“SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY CAPTURES ONE MILLION TONNES OF CARBON ANNUALLY

He also points out that: "The sustainable management of Tasmania's native forests is underpinned by a world-class forest practices system that includes a legislated Forest Practices Code and an independent Forest Practices Authority that monitors compliance with that Code."

Dr Raison is an independent forest expert, whose paper is not tainted by personal opinions of our sustainable forestry businesses. As he says: "The Tasmanian public deserves better than to be repeatedly deceived by false claims that native forest timber harvesting is a major source of carbon emissions."

Source: Timber Trader News

Proposed NSW Primary Industries Workforce Strategy 2025-2030 open for comments

THE NSW Government is seeking your feedback on the proposed NSW Primary Industries Workforce Strategy 2025-2030.

The proposed strategy aims to generate outcomes that support and build the workforce necessary for delivering profitable, sustainable and innovative agriculture, forestry and fishing industries in NSW, now and in the future.

The proposed strategy recommends:

- A shared vision for government, industry and stakeholders to work towards
- Three key priority areas for government and industry to concentrate their actions:
 1. Improving business management, adaptability and innovation

2. Fostering a diverse workforce accessible across NSW
3. Careers and capabilities in primary industries

- A pathway to delivering NSW primary industries workforce outcomes by clearly articulating key actions to guide prioritisation, decision-making and investment by government and stakeholders.

Submit your feedback on the proposed strategy via the Have Your Say website or by emailing agri.policy@dpird.nsw.gov.au. Submissions close on 30 April 2025.

Read the Proposed NSW Primary Industries Workforce Strategy 2025-2030

Source: Department of Primary Industries

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13: EUDR Insights Workshop – FWPA office, VIC and online. Lunch - 12.00pm. Workshop 12.30-4.30pm. To register, please email info@responsiblewood.org.au

14: AFCA Mid-Year Forum & Dinner – Gold Coast, QLD. The Forum will feature a tailored workshop on Chain of Responsibility for forest services businesses as well as a session on operator training and assessment requirements. To register, visit <https://afcaevents.zohobackstage.com.au/events/>

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://www.woodsolutions.com.au/events/woodsolutions-sponsors-tda-japan-study-tour?>

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. For more information visit <https://www.wcte2025.org/event/df0d5655-c16d-47df-b4a6-457a7dc63d96/wcte-2025>

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. To register your interest, visit <https://timberconstruct.org/>

20-22: International Woodchip and Biomass Seminar and Networking Event – Singapore. For more information visit <https://danaevents.co.nz/2024singapore/home>

20-23: Forestry Australia 2025 Conference

– Adelaide Convention Centre, Adelaide. The conference theme is 'Restoring forests and landscapes to secure Australia's future' and aims to develop both local and national collaboration. For more details visit <https://www.forestry.org.au/2025-conference/>

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. (Follows on from the woodchip and biomass seminar in Singapore.) For more information visit <https://danaevents.co.nz/2024singapore/fieldtrip>

24: GTTIA – The Barn, Mt Gambier, SA. Nominations are now open for 2025 Green Triangle Timber Industry Awards. Nominate online: <https://gttia.com/nomination-form/> For full details on award categories and submission guidelines, visit: <https://gttia.com/2025-award-categories/>



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AFPA welcomes Labor's Boyer Mill commitment

THE Australian Forest Products Association (AFPA) welcomes Federal Labor's \$24 million election commitment for the Boyer Paper Mill in Tasmania. This funding will help the facility transition the energy source for its boiler infrastructure from coal to electricity along with other essential measures. The commitment also highlights the extreme pressures the forest products sector's manufacturing operations are under nationally, Chief Executive Officer of AFPA, Diana Hallam, said.

"We welcome Federal Labor's commitment to the Boyer Mill announced— \$9 million in upfront support over the next two years and \$15 million to deliver mill upgrades over the longer term. The facility is a critical forest

industry employer in southern Tasmania and Australia's last local supplier of many publication paper products. We must, however, stress that forestry and forest products is a \$24 billion industry, Australia's sixth largest manufacturing sector and our timber and wood-fibre manufacturing facilities across the country are struggling with rising energy costs. Major national solutions are required from the next Federal Government to address the problem," Diana Hallam said.

"Energy is a major input cost for manufacturing in our sector and has been identified by



Boyer Mill in Tasmania transitions to sustainable energy with Labor's support. Image: Shutterstock

industry as the biggest single factor that increases wholesale and retail costs for the essential products our sector creates. Like other industries, if we want a sustainable future for climate-friendly timber and wood-fibre manufacturing— the price of energy needs to be addressed."

The Boyer Mill is located within the key forestry electorate of Lyons— where

Labor candidate Rebecca White holds a slim lead over the Liberals' Susie Bower according to AFPA-commissioned opinion polling (see issue #846, page 11). The polling also showed residents overwhelmingly wanted a Federal Government that would support forestry and the supply chain going forward.

"AFPA looks forward to Labor's broader forestry policies which will be critical for key electorates – including Lyons – and we will continue to work with all sides of politics to ensure the next Parliament delivers the best possible outcomes for the country's sustainable forestry and forest products sector. We are essential for the economy, jobs, communities, the environment and for fighting climate change," Diana Hallam concluded.

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Image: AKD

Technical Training Colleges important step to boost tradie numbers

"THE Housing Industry Association (HIA) welcomes [the] announcement by the Coalition to commit \$260 million to build a new national network of Australian Technical Colleges to target boosting our industry's critical trade shortages," HIA Managing Director, Jocelyn Martin, said.

"HIA recently undertook a skills mapping assessment and found that Australia is staring down the barrel of a shortfall in excess of 83,000 trade workers to build the government's 1.2 million new homes target.

"This equates to over 22,000 more chippies, 17,000 more sparkies, 12,000 more plumbers, 5,000 more brickies, and 3,000 more concreters, to get these much-needed homes

out of the ground and to lock up.

"Put simply, if we don't have the tradies coming through, the 1.2 million homes target will be a pipe dream.

"Creating career opportunities and promoting trades as a first-choice career is key to growing our local workforce and boosting apprentice numbers.

"For too long, our schooling system has [preferred] university over trades and has resulted in too many young people seen going into trade as being a second-choice option.

"This investment of \$260



Training future tradies with hands-on skills in technical colleges will help to tackle shortages. Image: Shutterstock

shortages are even more pronounced. The pressures in these regions and access to appropriate training are currently a significant barrier to a young person undertaking a trade.

"These technical colleges can provide a new pathway of choice for ambitious

young Australians, fast tracking them into high-skilled and well-paying jobs. HIA is calling on all major parties to match this commitment to address our industry's current and growing chronic skills shortages," concluded Ms Martin.

million to deliver 12 new specialist trade skills schools for years 10-12 or 11-12 is an important step in changing that stigma and supporting more high school students to enter into a trade.

"It is also pleasing to see that these new centres will look to regional areas where skill

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Young timber talent rise through national cadetship program

A BOLD new initiative aimed at future proofing the timber industry's workforce was recently kicked off by ITI Australia in partnership with the NTHA Trainees & Apprentices Group Training Organisation (GTO).

Seven standout young Australians were selected to join the NTHA/ITI Cadetship Program – an 18-month, hands-on training journey designed to fast-track supply chain careers.

Launched on February 3, the program combines real-world experience with formal education, as cadets work toward a Certificate III in Supply Chain Operations through NTHA's Registered Training Organisation (RTO). From warehouse logistics to internal sales, cadets will rotate through key areas of ITI's operations and gain a comprehensive understanding of the industry.

The cadetship program will train up the next generation of skilled workers – helping ITI Australia reduce skill shortages and ensure they have qualified, productive staff, GTO General Manager Melissa Clark said.

"Supporting this program is an investment that will ultimately strengthen their



The cadetship program is tailored to reflect the actual needs of the timber industry. Image: ITI Australia

workforce and provide an amazing career path for the cadets which is exciting," Melissa said.

The initial response to the program was overwhelming with over 760 potential trainees applying for the program. After a rigorous recruitment program, NTHA Trainees & Apprentices handpicked recruits based on their attitude and appetite to learn.

Sourced from all over Australia the cadets include Declan Brennan from Townsville, QLD, Jaxon Haynes from Bundamba, QLD, Liam Williams from Canning Vale, WA, Mark Myatt from Port Adelaide, SA, Sam Robinson from Cardiff, NSW and Bailey Martin & Joshua Curtis from St Marys, NSW.

Earlier this month the cadets flew into ITI's St Marys facility in Sydney for their official launch – and it was more than just a meet-and-greet. They toured BORG and

Pentarch's HPP sawmill in Oberon, getting a behind-the-scenes look at how logs become house frames, how MDF and particleboard are engineered, and how timber makes its journey from forest to floorboard.

"It is crazy how much technology is involved in making sure everything is precise and efficient. The tours gave me a better understanding of the timber industry as a whole," said Marcus Hallam, one of the cadets.

Cadet Declan said the size of the St Mary's ITI site was an eye opener for him.

"When I arrived, I wondered if I could do the training, but my worries were quickly silenced with laughter and fun. The training went by fast, and it was so much better than doing it alone," he said.

Cadet Sam said, "it was great to see the process behind our timber", while Bailey said visiting Borg's Oberon facilities gave him an incredible insight to how particleboard and how MDF is made.

Cadet Mark said, "all site tours of head office and the sawmills were very interesting as we got to see how timber was cut to size, and how it was packaged", while Joshua said,

"seeing the timber factories made him fully understand the timber processes.

Liam also noted that the training was presented in a way that was very easy to follow, which is exactly what ITI's HR Manager, Tiarnna McNamara hoped would happen.

"This cadetship is about showing young people that they can build long, meaningful careers in this industry. We are not just training warehouse workers – we are developing future leaders who understand the business, the products, and the culture that makes ITI what it is," she said.

The cadets will rotate through warehousing, logistics, customer service and product management, all with the support from trainers like NTHA Senior Trainer's Doug Canell and Brad Mackenzie, who will run education sessions via Zoom/face-to-face sessions.

And the opportunities will continue as the cadets grow and evolve.

"ITI will deliver a range of opportunities as our business continues to grow and evolve. The cadetship program is tailored to reflect the actual needs of our industry. Our goal is for the cadets to then find the area that excites them most, and from there, we will help them build a fulfilling and long-term career," Tiarnna concluded.



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The major parties are overlooking retrofit in the housing crisis debate

FEDERAL policies have focussed on new builds to help ease the housing crisis, but what about existing housing stock? An RMIT expert explains why it's important for the government to provide more support for retrofit solutions.

Dr Trivess Moore, Associate Professor, School of Property, Construction and Project Management said, "We have seen significant discussion by the major parties in this election campaign around how to make housing more affordable and to reduce cost of living, however, this discussion has largely overlooked the urgent need to improve the quality and performance of our existing housing.

"We need to see more

support in this election for retrofit – the process of making a house more sustainable - and for this support to go beyond just funding solar panels and residential battery storage for households.

"This is important given the majority of existing housing will still be here when we need to achieve our 2050 decarbonisation goals.

"The good news is that we know how to deliver this type of retrofit - government support programs that provide

“ MAJOR PARTIES OVERLOOK RETROFIT IN HOUSING CRISIS DEBATE



Dr Trivess Moore, Associate Professor at RMIT University's School of Property, Construction and Project Management. Image: RMIT

this support and often renters and low-income households are overlooked or do not have the upfront resources to participate.

"The recent announcement by the Victorian government to fund ceiling insulation retrofit is a good development, but we need more support from all levels of government to support an equitable retrofit revolution" concluded Dr Moore.

Dr Trivess Moore's research focuses on the technical, social and policy aspects of how households and the housing sector will transition to a low carbon future. His book, A Transition to Sustainable Housing, explores the need to rethink the way we plan, design, construct, use and retrofit housing.

financial assistance, and tools like the Residential Scorecard that provide recommendations for household improvement, already exist.

"The problem is that not everyone can easily access

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Heritage trades trail: rediscovering traditional craftsmanship

By **CAMPBELL McINNES**

ON Saturday, 12 April, I embarked on a two-hour journey from Windsor, NSW, on the outskirts of Sydney, to Bathurst. I had heard that the Traditional Craftsmanship Show was taking place at the Bathurst Showground over the two-day weekend. The event was to feature more than 100 skilled artisans showcasing their expertise in traditional trades and crafts, including a strong presence of woodworking tradespeople.

This year marked the 28th edition of the Bathurst Heritage Trail, which has become a highlight of the Bathurst Region's annual Autumn Colours Heritage Festival, celebrating the cultural significance of the region's rich heritage. April is an ideal time of the year to visit Bathurst, as the autumn foliage adds vibrant colours to the area, enhancing its charm.

The event gave visitors a glimpse into the trades and traditions that helped shape the Bathurst Region, such as blacksmithing, dry-stone walling, and furniture making. It also featured finer crafts like embroidery and lacemaking, along with a special display of traditional Aboriginal tool and weapon making.

The Bathurst Showground is an excellent venue for such an event. The main pavilions, constructed from timber with wooden poles supporting large end sections to create the trusses, give a rustic feel to the venue. The timber cladding on the walls adds to the charm. Free parking was available in the centre of the racecourse, just a short stroll



1/ One of the main pavilion sheds which showcases traditional timber construction.

2/ The restored Cobb & Co coach creating wonderful memories for both passengers and onlookers.

3/ Demonstrations of lathe work and how to create a stool, by some of the Woodies members. All images: Campbell McInnes

from the entrance. For those interested in camping, the showgrounds offered sites for caravans and tents, complete

with toilet and shower facilities.

As with any great event, there was local live music,

food stalls, demonstrations, coffee carts, lawn games for kids, and some gin tasting for the adults, adding to the atmosphere.

Bathurst Mayor Cr Robert Taylor highlighted the growth of the event, noting that it had become the signature heritage-focused event in the NSW Central West. "Rare and lost trades are making a big comeback as people are drawn to the beauty, passion, and health benefits of learning a craft. There's also a trend toward sustainability and handmade items and toys that are made or mended, not discarded," Mayor Taylor said.

The Heritage Trail itself includes a range of heritage venues, such as Abercrombie House, Miss Traill's House and Garden, the Bathurst Rail Museum, Chifley Home, the Bathurst District Historical Society Museum, and Old Government Cottage. Visitors could explore these sites via a self-drive tour or hop on one of the free shuttle buses operating on both days.

One of the highlights for me was discovering the woodworking corner, where members of the Tablelands Wood Club (known as the Woodies) were showcasing their craft. Based in a series of sheds in Kelso, a suburb near Bathurst, this group of men and women create a variety of beautiful wooden items. I spoke with Allan Rintoul, one of the club's members, who shared the history and operations of the club.

"Our club is similar in many

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- 1/ Allan Rintoul, showing and talking about the wooden splays he crafted.
- 2/ One of the Coppers giving a demonstration on the craft of barrel making.
- 3/ Beautifully crafted Ukuleles on display, with violins and other string instruments showcased in the background.
- 4/ The Leura Boger stand which showcased a variety of timber items including stools, serving boards, bowls, paper towel holders and much more.
- 5/ Custom furniture making and restoration.
- 6/ Spoon making with traditional hand tools.
- 7/ Clocks and toys built by some of the Woodies members.

All images: Campbell McInnes

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respects to a Men's Shed, but we are completely separate from that organisation," Allan explained. "It all started when a few guys were chatting one day and one suggested starting a club to share all their woodworking tools. And that was the beginning of the Woodies." Allan added, "I think we have every type of machine or tool imaginable to work with timber."

"Established 35 years ago in 1990, the Woodies now have around 70 members, a strong number for Bathurst," Allan said. However, the club is facing challenges as its membership ages, with fewer younger people joining.

Allan shared his enthusiasm for the trivet machine, a fascinating tool that cuts tight corners in

timber with remarkable speed. "It's like a jigsaw, but set up on a table, and it cuts timber much faster and more precisely," he said. Adrian, another club member, was giving lathe demonstrations, with Allan praising him as "probably the best turner in the Bathurst region."

A wide range of wooden items were on sale, including toy trucks and trains, clocks, coasters, wooden spoons, chopping boards, and bowls. Allan mentioned that many of the items are sold in Bathurst, and several shops in the Blue Mountains also stock these wooden creations for resale. "All the proceeds go back to the club," he added.

Having recently retired, Allan enjoys the social aspect of the Woodies club and staying active. His specialty is crafting wooden spoons and splays, with a passion for using different species of timber to create unique designs. "I think a wooden splay is more practical than a wooden spoon, but I enjoy making both," he said.

The festival also featured several other fascinating



tradespeople. I saw bodgers, traditional craftsmen who live in forests and make chairs and furniture from timber. There were coppers making wine barrels, custom furniture makers and restorers, and even ukulele makers.

In addition to the woodworking exhibits, there were many other traditional trades to explore, including wool spinning, blacksmithing, whip making, hand-dyed items, sewing, knitting, painting, and more. Truly, there was something for everyone!

One of the crowd favourites was the authentic, restored Cobb & Co coach, which visitors could ride, much to the delight of the children.

I thoroughly enjoyed my time at the Traditional Craftsmanship Show, and I'm certain it won't be the last time I attend. Bathurst



is easily accessible from Sydney, and with so much to see and do in the region, it was definitely worth the trip. Whether it's exploring the heritage sites, witnessing traditional crafts in action, or simply soaking up the vibrant autumn atmosphere, Bathurst offers something for everyone. I'm already looking forward to next year's event!

BATHURST HERITAGE TRAIL CELEBRATES TRADITIONAL CRAFTSMANSHIP WITH OVER 100 ARTISANS

LIGNA exhibitors showcase

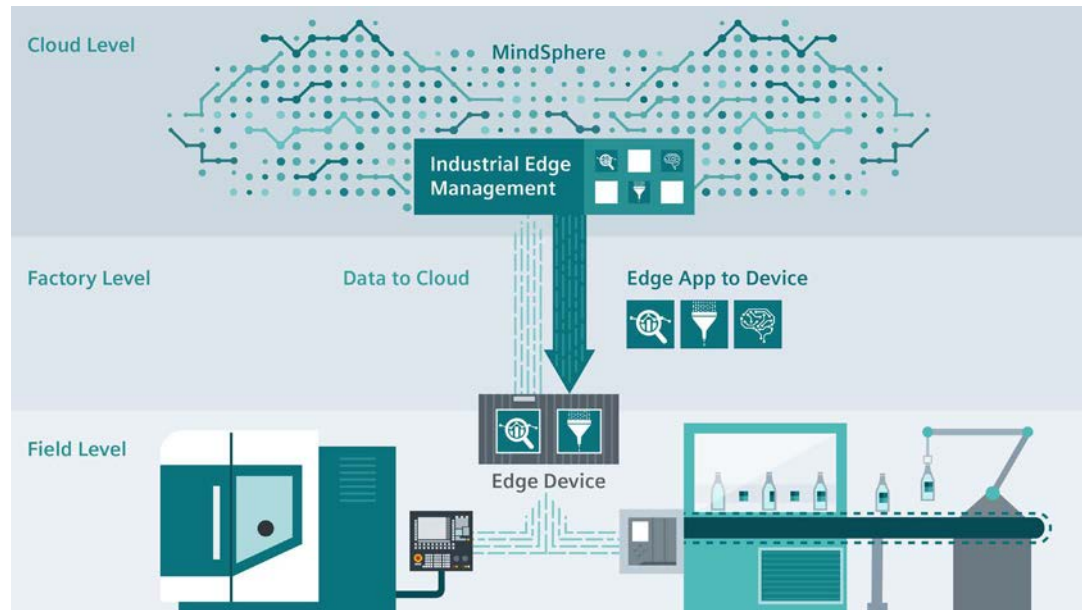
Smart solutions for the focussed topic “Sustainable Production”.

WHEN the global woodworking and wood processing industry gathers at LIGNA 2025 in Hannover from May 26 to 30, it will do so in a challenging environment. New U.S. tariffs and international countermeasures are creating significant risks for numerous industries—and LIGNA is not immune to these developments. Yet in its more than 50-year history, the trade fair has repeatedly proven that it can serve as a driver of innovation and a guide even in difficult times. With the focussed topic “SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTION,” LIGNA offers an ideal platform not only to discuss risks, but above all to actively seize the opportunities of a new era.

“Where global business relations come under pressure, LIGNA focusses on sustainable and resilient perspectives,” says Stephanie Wagner, Head of LIGNA at Deutsche Messe. “This year, our exhibitors will demonstrate under the focussed topic ‘SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTION’ that wood, as a renewable raw material, is the key to an environmentally conscious and competitive future.”

PROVEN MACHINE SOLUTIONS COMBINED WITH FORWARD-LOOKING TECHNOLOGIES

Among the companies ushering in the future of woodworking machinery at LIGNA 2025 is Siemens. “Imagine a world where your machine solutions are not only efficient, but also sustainable,” encourages Sébastien Liénart, Head of Business Development – Production



Industrial Edge from Siemens adds benefits from the cloud at the field level. Image: Siemens AG

Machines for Wood, addressing woodworking professionals attending LIGNA. “At Siemens, we’re turning this vision into reality. Our cutting-edge solutions use open interfaces to combine scalable automation with digital technologies. Whether it’s about quality, flexibility, reliability, or sustainability—Siemens provides customers with the technologies they need to stay competitive and successfully overcome challenges. Visit our stand and experience how we merge proven machine solutions with forward-looking technologies such as AI-based quality inspection and Industrial Edge,” Liénart continues.

A key element of Siemens’ presentation is the Industrial Edge Ecosystem, which brings together the combined expertise of Siemens and other companies. The goal is to develop flexible edge computing solutions for industrial manufacturers and machine builders. Also on display: a model of a

processing machine, used by Siemens to demonstrate how an innovative, PLC-based automation solution can be implemented using their extensive portfolio.

Another highlight is the presentation of Inspekto—a powerful solution for visual quality control, specially designed for the woodworking industry. Siemens will demonstrate Inspekto in action on real components, with visitors able to experience the virtual manufacturing and handling processes live at the machine model as well as through digital twins.

GREATER EFFICIENCY, FUTURE-READINESS, AND APPEAL FOR SAWMILLS

Raphael Burger, Member of the Sales and Executive Management Board at LINCK Holzverarbeitungstechnik GmbH – Europe’s largest manufacturer of sawmill equipment and a global leader in profiling systems – also emphasises that

an ambitious market environment demands new solutions: “Sawmill operators face the dual challenge of a difficult and expensive roundwood supply, as well as intense price pressure on the sales side. The future viability of sawmills relies heavily on enhancing their competitiveness,” says Burger. “At LINCK, we are committed to providing our customers with innovative solutions to meet these demands. For many years, we’ve focussed on maximising value yield – a core competency we are now highlighting even more with new system concepts and technologies. With our new PRO NANO line, we’re introducing a system concept specifically designed for processing small-diameter logs. The PRO NANO is available in three variants, all of which operate entirely without log-turning devices and require minimal space. This concept underscores our

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goal of maintaining the market benchmark for maximum value yield even in the small-diameter segment.”

For customers with existing LINCK systems, the company also offers a wide range of optimisation and modernisation options. From control systems to structural upgrades, LINCK helps customers make their operations more flexible and productive. “One example is our Log Motion Control system for regulated log rotation. It boosts value yield by 0.5 to 1.5 per cent, with typical payback periods of just one to two years – a real competitive edge in a challenging market,” says Burger. He also presents myLINCK, an industry-first digital platform offering comprehensive functionality for machine condition monitoring, systematic maintenance, and process support.

“This gives us transparency in the sawing process and significantly increases system availability. At the same time, myLINCK makes the work easier for customer personnel, reduces stress, and enhances workplace appeal—a crucial factor in retaining skilled workers over the long term,” Burger explains, highlighting that sustainable production also involves social aspects and fair working conditions. “LIGNA continues to be an inspiring place for dialogue and innovation,” he adds. “We look forward to shaping the future of wood processing with the input of our customers, partners, and visitors.”

SUSTAINABILITY AND DIGITALISATION AS KEY DRIVERS OF PROFITABILITY

When it comes to sustainability, it's worth visiting the Fagus-GreCon

booth in Hall 26 at this year's LIGNA. Their presentation will highlight smart, remote-capable solutions and systems designed to conserve materials and resources—helping companies cut costs and enhance quality.

“Sustainability and digitisation are key drivers in securing long-term profitability. These megatrends are becoming increasingly important to our customers,” says Thomas Brenner, Head of Global Marketing. As a long-standing innovation leader and pioneer in this field, Fagus-GreCon will showcase a forward-looking portfolio of products and solutions. These aim to provide visitors with valuable ideas and tools to grow their business sustainably and successfully – while tapping into the potential of future-oriented industry trends and unlocking new sources of profit. “With our future-proof solutions, our customers can already position themselves today for the business of tomorrow and benefit from future developments,” adds Brenner.

Visitors can receive direct guidance on how to leverage digitalisation to improve production processes. For example, they can experience the EDGEINSPECT laser-based edge inspection system firsthand. Additionally, they will be introduced to other smart solutions in preventive fire protection and industrial measurement technology. “As in previous years, we're excited to welcome numerous trade visitors from around the world. We've not only been exhibiting at LIGNA for the past 50 years – we're also proud to be celebrating both 50 years of GreCon and 50 years of LIGNA,” says Brenner.

MAKING PRODUCTS COMPETITIVE FOR THE LONG TERM

Venjakob, the global player from East Westphalia-Lippe, will be showcasing turnkey coating lines at LIGNA 2025 – offering complete systems that cover all aspects of surface pretreatment, coating, drying technology, and automation.

“This key trade fair is not just a platform to boost our brand awareness – it's also an opportunity to reinforce our position as a leading partner for customised coating solutions,” says Technical Managing Director Rudolf Eickhoff. “As a general contractor, we develop tailor-made systems that meet our customers' specific needs. Sustainability and resource conservation are core priorities, and this is clearly reflected in our innovative products and processes.”

Eickhoff continues: “LIGNA 2025 is of central importance to us, as it's the world's leading trade fair for the wood and furniture industry. At a time when the industry is shifting its focus more and more towards digital and sustainable solutions, face-to-face interaction with our customers and partners is more crucial than ever. We are currently facing strong competitive pressure in the industry, with some sectors experiencing declining sales. That makes it all the more important to share knowledge on sustainable production methods to ensure our customers' products remain competitive in the long term. We firmly believe that direct contact at LIGNA builds trust – and that trust forms the foundation for successful projects. We look forward to presenting our latest developments and solutions, and to working together with users to tackle the challenges facing our industry,” says Eickhoff.

Discover more about LIGNA here.



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