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Passivhaus Open Days give build insights

COVER STORY P 3

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Responsible Wood AGM marks the end of an era

Acting CEO Matt de Jongh thanks Simon Dorries for his contribution.

THE recent Responsible Wood Annual General Meeting was held in Canberra, adjacent to the Forestry Australia Symposium.

Beyond exploring the achievements of the preceding 12 months and launching the organisation's 2025/26 Annual Report ([click here to download](#)), the meeting was significant in marking the recent resignation of former Responsible Wood CEO Simon Dorries, with Acting CEO Matt de Jongh, Chair Dr Tony Bartlett and former Chair Dr Hans Drielsma AM all speaking to Simon's extensive and well-regarded contributions.

"Over the past 11 years, Simon has played a major role in advancing sustainable forest management and chain of custody certification as technically robust and commercially relevant," said de Jongh. "His contributions leave a lasting legacy for not just Responsible Wood, but the broader sector."

Throughout his career, Dorries has played an important role in strengthening the technical foundations and recognition of forest management and chain of custody certification. In a conversation with the Responsible Wood team, he



1/ Responsible Wood Acting CEO, Matt de Jongh.



2/ Responsible Wood Former CEO, Simon Dorries All images: Responsible Wood

noted one of his earliest career highlights, achieved at the ripe age of 25, while working as a technical officer with the Engineered Wood Products Association of Australasia. His efforts helped develop standards, auditing processes and testing systems that could demonstrate, through objective evidence, whether products complied with relevant standards.

That early work put him at the forefront of his field, with industry professionals from around the world seeking his technical advice – a practice that continues today.

At Responsible Wood, Dorries identified the revision of AS/NZS 4708 (the joint Australian and New Zealand

Standard for Sustainable Forest Management), and its subsequent recognition by the Green Building Council of Australia as among his proudest achievements.

Each revision, including the latest which is nearing completion and on track to seek re-endorsement from PEFC in early 2027, has strengthened the Standard's performance requirements, balancing practical implementation with robust and demonstrable sustainability outcomes.

Securing its recognition under Green Star was a significant milestone, supporting the continued acceptance of Responsible Wood-certified timber in Australia's commercial building sector.

"On behalf of Responsible Wood and the forest and wood products sector, I'd like to thank Simon for his leadership and technical expertise throughout his tenure," said de Jongh.

"He's leaving the organisation in a strong position, and his contribution will benefit the sector for years to come."

Read our interview with Simon Dorries about his future at ATIF from page 14.

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Passivhaus Open Days

Projects under construction as well as finished builds will open next month.

ONE niche part of the building sector has been both thriving – even during market downturns – and making very clever use of timber products to achieve its goals in the past few years.

Passivhaus has moved from being the subject of the occasional *Grand Designs* episode to a popular building methodology in Australia over that time, with its clear standard and certification process helping designers, builders and fabricators to navigate the complexities of each build.

Certified Passivhaus projects in Australia have grown from 48 at the end of 2022 to 201 as at October 2026, more than quadrupling in under four years.

The Passivhaus standard is designed to deliver high energy efficiency and thermal comfort while lowering the carbon footprint of the build and the building. With its high stored carbon and ability to be prefabricated into precise units, timber is a perfect material for Passivhaus builds, and there are designers, builders and prefabricators who are specialising in delivering certified timber buildings to the market around Australia.

Next month, more than 40 Passivhaus buildings will open to the public for free for over 95 guided sessions, as part of International Passivhaus Open Days 2026.

From 13 to 15 November, homes, schools, offices and community facilities across the ACT, New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania,



1/ The exposed timber roof structure is an important part of the design at Glenroy Community Hub, which will open on 15 November.

2/ Prefabricated timber-based cassettes make achieving the Passivhaus standard simpler, while also reducing the time spent on site and working at height at Coogee Passiv. It will also open 15 November.

All images: courtesy Australian Passivhaus Association



plasterboard before anyone moves in.

“For too long the conversation about Australian housing has been about how many homes we build, not how well they perform,” said Stalin Chakrabarty, CEO of the Australian Passivhaus Association. “We spend most of our lives indoors, yet we rarely consider how much our buildings shape our health. Poor air quality, moisture, mould and extreme indoor temperatures hit children, older Australians and

people with respiratory conditions hardest.

“You can read about energy efficiency and compare ratings, but there is nothing like standing in a finished Passivhaus home on a hot afternoon and realising how comfortable it is without the air conditioning running,” Chakrabarty added. “Then walk through one mid-construction and you see exactly why. Finished buildings show you the result. Construction sites show you how it’s done.”

Tours are free, but places are limited. Registrations close Monday 9 November. Explore participating projects, view tour times and secure a spot at www.passivhausassociation.com.au/open-days

Victoria and Western Australia will welcome visitors to see the results and talk to the owners, residents and users about life in the building and the process of design and construction.

They include EnerPHit retrofit projects (the Passivhaus standard for reuse projects) and commercial projects like the Glenroy Community Hub in Victoria, Eclipse Factory in New South Wales and the Bob Marshman Building in Queensland.

Most are completed, occupied buildings where you can feel the stable indoor temperature, notice the quiet, and ask the owners directly what it cost, how it was built and what their energy bills look like now.

Particularly pertinent for materials suppliers and designers, and for the first time at this scale, the program also includes buildings still under construction. Visitors can gain unique insights into the insulation, airtightness detailing, windows and ventilation systems that are normally sealed behind

On the cover: Some of the buildings open this year are projects under construction, including Coogee Passiv in Sydney. Visitors can see the high level of insulation, finish and glazing that meet the standard. Image: courtesy Australian Passivhaus Association

Canfor and Vida emphasise responsible forestry

The major importers are working to keep their commitment to certified renewable and sustainable supply front of mind with their partners.

AUSTRALIA'S timber industry depends on a balanced combination of locally produced and responsibly sourced imported wood products to meet the demands of a growing construction, manufacturing, and housing sector.

As expectations around supply chain transparency continue to increase, it has never been more important for importers, distributors, and end-users to understand where their timber comes from and the standards that support its journey from forest to market. Companies such as Canfor and Vida demonstrate that imported timber can play a critical role in Australia's supply chain while providing confidence through internationally recognised certification, traceability systems, and responsible forest management practices. Australia's Illegal Logging Prohibition Act (ILPA) requires importers to undertake due diligence and assess the risk of illegally harvested timber entering the market, reinforcing the importance of sourcing from trusted suppliers with robust governance and verification processes.

With this in mind, the companies have produced a letter that is being sent out to industry partners, as well as reproduced on their social media platforms. It reads:

“

Dear Valued Partner,

When you choose wood products from Canfor and Vida, you are choosing more than a high-quality product. You are choosing a renewable raw material sourced from some of the world's most productive and responsibly managed forests.



Vida Wood Australia's warehousing, treatment, and port operations form a critical part of the company's commitment to the Australian timber market. All images: supplied

“IMPORTED TIMBER CAN PLAY A CRITICAL ROLE IN AUSTRALIA'S SUPPLY CHAIN

Across Canada, the US South and Sweden, the forests that supply our operations are diverse, as are the ways they are owned and managed. What connects them is a long-term commitment to healthy, productive forests and responsible forestry.

In Canada, the large majority of forests are publicly owned and managed under provincial regulatory frameworks. Our forest tenures carry responsibilities for planning, harvesting, regeneration and environmental stewardship, and are certified to internationally recognised standards. Chain of Custody programs provide traceability from our mills back to the forest of origin.

In the United States, much of the timberland is privately owned, the majority by families who have managed their forests across generations.

Favourable growing conditions support productive forests and a continuous cycle of growing, harvesting and replanting. Through our Fibre Sourcing program, we work with landowners and suppliers to promote responsible forestry.

In Sweden, forestry has shaped communities and livelihoods for generations. Vida works closely with private forest owners across southern Sweden to support long-term forest management and regeneration. International certifications provide traceability from responsibly managed forests through to finished wood products.

Across all three regions, our approach is rooted in the same principle: forests are a long-term resource. Responsible forestry means supporting regeneration, protecting water and soil, considering biodiversity and working with the people and communities who rely on forests.

For our customers, this means confidence in both the product and its source:

From P 4

- High-quality wood
- A diverse and reliable supply network
- Renewable products backed by responsible forestry and globally recognised certification standards

We are proud of the forests we depend on, the people who care for them and the products they make possible. Thank you for your trust and partnership.

”

Jacinta Colley, sales director at Vida Wood Australia, said, “Australia will continue to rely on imported timber products to complement domestic supply and support the ongoing needs of the housing, construction and manufacturing sectors. The critical consideration for customers is having confidence not only in the quality of the product they purchase, but also in the integrity of the supply chain behind it.

“At Vida Wood Australia, supported by Canfor’s global forestry operations, we have made a long-term commitment to the Australian market. Through our extensive network of warehousing, treatment facilities, port infrastructure, and distribution capabilities across the country, we have invested in ensuring our customers have reliable access to consistent, high-quality timber products



Vida and Canfor’s commitment to responsible forest management helps preserve forest resources for future generations while providing a renewable source of quality timber products. All images: supplied

when and where they need them.”

Colley pointed out that these assurances of sustainability and high quality were all backed up by Australia’s stringent systems around transparent and trusted supply chains, adherence to Australian Standards and other third-party certifiers.

“Our customers can be confident that the products we supply are supported by robust due diligence processes, internationally recognised certification

systems, and comprehensive traceability throughout the supply chain. We believe responsible sourcing, transparency and accountability are fundamental to maintaining trust in our industry and meeting the expectations of Australian businesses,” she said.

“As a supplier to the Australian market, our commitment extends beyond simply importing timber. We are investing in the infrastructure, people and systems that provide long-term supply security and confidence for our customers. By combining global scale with local expertise and capability, Vida Wood Australia and Canfor remain committed to being a trusted and dependable partner to the Australian timber industry for years to come.”

“WE HAVE MADE A LONG-TERM COMMITMENT TO THE AUSTRALIAN MARKET

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11.00 pm, on Thursday
November 12 2026.**

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RW/1-10-1

AKD plantation assets to New Forests

AN ACCC filing last week will see AKD's plantation assets sold to New Forests, with Allianz as a minority co-investor. Subject to regulator approval, the sale will see forestry assets held by Associated Kiln Driers Pty Limited (AKD) and Heywood Plantations Pty Ltd, which are spread across the Green Triangle, central and north-east Victoria and southern New South Wales and the Central Tablelands, change hands.

New Forests managing director, Australia and New Zealand, David Shelton, said that AKD was a high-quality business. It employs more than 900 people across Australia and produces more than 1 million m³ of timber products per annum.

AKD's sawmills are not included in the sale and will continue to be owned and operated by AKD

"The acquisition of AKD's plantation



Planting seedlings at AKD's plantations. Image: courtesy AKD

estate provides our investors with exposure to high quality, sustainably managed plantations across key forestry regions in Australia," Shelton said.

"We see strong long-term fundamentals for sustainably produced timber, supported by Australia's growing demand for housing and renewable

building materials."

Shelton added Australia had "strong fundamentals" in plantation forestry, particularly for softwood, due to housing-related demand.

"At the moment, the markets are somewhat subdued simply because of global uncertainty and interest rates," he said. "Everyone is aware that housing hasn't necessarily kept up with demand, but underlying fundamentals are extremely strong."

Shane Vicary, CEO of AKD, said, "This investment marks an exciting new chapter for AKD's plantation estate. We look forward to working with New Forests to maintain a

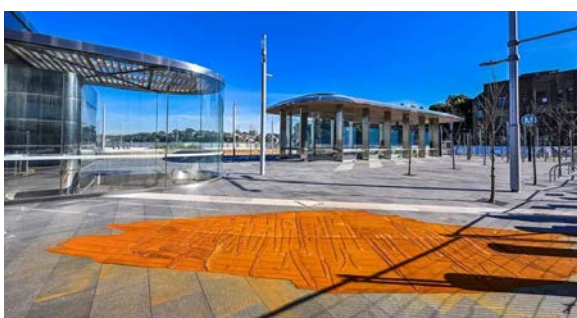
long-term connection with the estate through agreements for the supply of sawlogs and pulp log. In the meantime, we continue to invest in our people, operations and regional communities and supply high-quality Australian-grown timber to our customers."

Cockle Bay boat

In *Enews* #899, we brought you the story of the then-called Barangaroo Boat, Australia's oldest surviving boat (estimated to be about 200 years old), which had been found during excavations for Barangaroo Metro Station.

The nine-metre boat, made from Sydney Blue Gum, Stringybark and Spotted Gum sourced in the Sydney basin, was then making its way home to the Australian National Maritime Museum after a long period of careful conservation.

The Museum's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Committee expressed concern about naming a colonial vessel after Barangaroo, an important Aboriginal woman in Sydney's pre-contact and early colonial history, in the absence of any direct link between her life and the boat. The vessel will now



The outline of the boat's resting place for over 150 years is commemorated near the Barangaroo Metro Station entrance. Image: courtesy Sydney Metro

be referred to as the Cockle Bay Boat, a name that draws on the early European name of the bay where it was found and is closely connected to place and the boat's known history.

Matt Poll, the Museum's Head of Indigenous Programs said, "The new name geographically locates this vessel in its true historical place, allowing the

museum to celebrate the technical achievements of early Australian shipbuilding without culturally misattributing the vessel to Barangaroo, a Cammeraygal woman to whom this colonial boat has no connection."

The Museum is partnering with Business Sydney to build support for the next phase of the project, including reconstruction, interpretation and permanent display. The partnership will seek donors from across the business and philanthropic community who recognise the importance of preserving one of the earliest material links to Sydney's commercial and maritime beginnings.

For more, [click here](#).

OCTOBER

28: NTHA's MOVE SMART: Safe Manual Handling Workshop – ONLINE EVENT, 1.00pm- 3.00pm AEDT.

Cost: \$250 (members can use training vouchers). For an industry where lifting, carrying and moving timber and other products. The workshop covers how to identify risks and hazards, prevent workplace injuries, follow safe work procedures and risk assessments, and use safer techniques when lifting and handling awkward or heavy pieces. To register email: info@ntha.edu.au or call 1800 822 621

30: SA, NT & WA Timber & Hardware Industry Awards – National Wine Centre, Adelaide, 6.30pm - 11.30pm.

Join us in celebrating the SA, NT & WA Timber and Hardware Industry. For more information, visit <https://www.ntha.com.au/events/2026-industry-awards/> or contact tahlia@ntha.com.au

[ntha.com.au/events/2026-industry-awards/](https://www.ntha.com.au/events/2026-industry-awards/) or contact tahlia@ntha.com.au

NOVEMBER

8-13: The Gottstein Trust's Understanding Forest Science Course – The Country Club, Launceston, Tasmania.

For those working in, or with an interest or association with the timber and forestry products sector, this unique course will provide an update on core aspects of forest science and aspects of management of the nation's public and private estates. Participants will also gain a better understanding of the national and international forces impacting upon forests. Bookings are now open. For more information, visit <https://gottsteintrust.org/> or phone Helen Murray on 0419 991 424

12: Forestry Australia Webinar – ONLINE EVENT, 12.30pm - 1.30pm

AEDT. Topic: Forest Recreation & Tourism. Registrations close 11 Nov at 10am. Registration cost: (inc. GST) Forestry Australia Member: \$15 | Non-Member: \$70 | Student Members: Free. The webinar link and joining instructions 24 hours will be sent 24 hours prior. A recording will be available should you be unable to attend live. To book, visit <https://forestry.memnet.com.au/MemberSelfService/EventBooking.aspx>

18: 2026 SIM-PAC Sustainability Awards – Castlereagh Boutique Hotel, Sydney. The Awards recognise practical leadership in decarbonisation, circular economy, and sustainable industrial practice across the Asia-Pacific region. Further information will be available soon on the Awards website <https://www.sim-pac.live/2026-awards>



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Bushfire risk heats up as Australian businesses face growing insurance gap

As temperatures rise across Australia, the country is entering another bushfire season – with fire authorities warning of heightened risk across several parts of the country.

The Australian and New Zealand Council for fire and emergency services (AFAC) has released its national Seasonal Bushfire Outlook for Spring 2026, identifying increased fire risk across northern and southeastern New South Wales, south-east Queensland, northeastern Tasmania, parts of Western Australia, South Australia and Victoria, and large parts of the Northern Territory.

For businesses operating in fire-prone areas, the challenge is not simply preparing for the possibility of a fire. It is ensuring adequate financial protection is available when traditional insurance markets may be increasingly constrained.

A GROWING RISK – IN AUSTRALIA AND AROUND THE WORLD

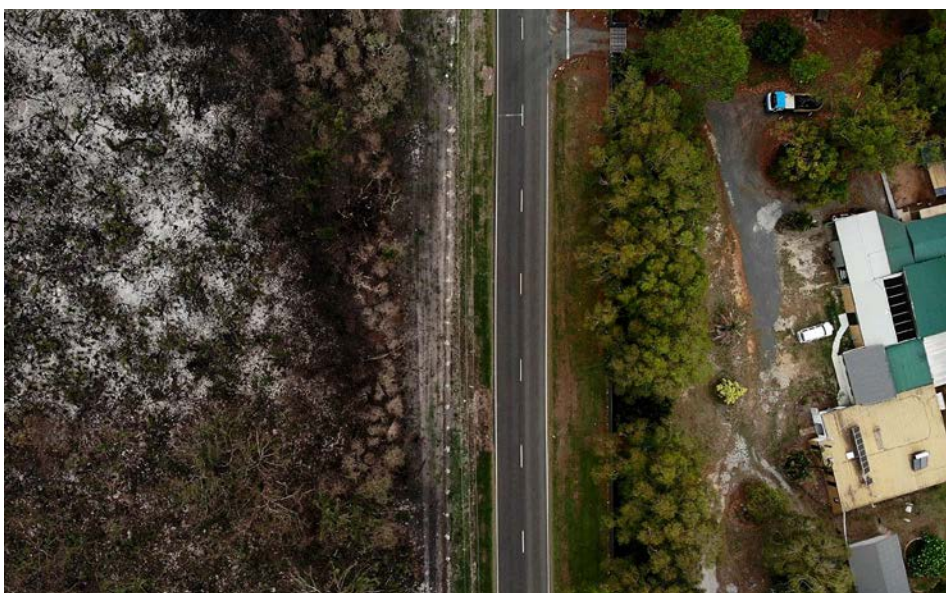
Bushfire is a significant natural hazard for Australia, with the timing and severity of fire seasons varying considerably by region.

In New South Wales and southern Queensland, peak fire risk typically occurs during spring and early summer, while the Northern Territory experiences much of its fire activity during winter and spring. Across southern Australia, the traditional danger period generally extends through summer and autumn.

The 2019–20 Black Summer bushfires demonstrated the scale of the potential impact. The fires burned more than 24 million hectares and generated around \$2.32 billion in insured losses.

Bushfire risk is also becoming an increasingly significant issue internationally – already this year, 2047 wildfires have claimed 669,118 hectares across Europe*, including France, Greece and Spain.

For businesses, the consequences extend well beyond physical damage. Fires can disrupt supply chains, interrupt operations, damage critical infrastructure and result in significant business



Bushfire damage doesn't just include property but can also include other assets such as those linked to carbon credits. All images: supplied

interruption and recovery costs.

INDUSTRIES IN THE LINE OF FIRE

As bushfire exposure increases, some businesses are finding traditional insurance increasingly difficult to secure at adequate limits.

High-risk locations can attract larger deductibles, sub-limits and exclusions, while some assets may struggle to secure meaningful capacity altogether.

"We're not strangers to wildfire and bushfire risk in Australia. Coming into an El Niño forecasted season at the moment, it's definitely something that clients and brokers are conscious about," Lynn Roehrig, Descartes Underwriting's Head of Business Development, Australia & New Zealand, said.

"They're coming to us with plantations and nurseries, property risks in high-risk zones, and they may have to carry large deductibles or sub-limits. They're wanting to get more capacity."

TIMBER AND FORESTRY

Australia's forestry and timber industry makes a significant contribution to the national economy, but businesses across the sector remain highly exposed to extreme weather and bushfire.

For plantation owners and investors,

a major fire can result in physical losses, suppression and land management costs, replanting expenses and lost future revenue. For assets linked to carbon credits, wildfire can also threaten the underlying investment and the value associated with future carbon generation.

"The increasing scale and complexity of wildfires across Australia and New Zealand are threatening more than just the land – they're impacting critical carbon credit investments and leaving plantation assets dangerously exposed," Roehrig said.

Descartes' parametric bushfire insurance uses high-resolution satellite imagery and computer vision to provide coverage for a range of forest assets, including timber plantations and forests supporting carbon credit investments.

The Burnt Area product is scalable across large geographic areas and does not require an on-site loss assessment to determine whether the predefined trigger has been met.

SAWMILLS

Plantations may be the most obvious bushfire exposure, but sawmills are another critical part of the timber value chain.

Cont P 9

From P 8

Their location can make them particularly challenging to insure. Sawmills are often situated close to plantations and forests to minimise transport costs and maintain access to timber supply – placing them directly in areas where wildfire risk can be elevated.

“It’s a tough market for sawmills because they’re considered high risk,” Roehrig said.

“Depending on the location of the mill, many property underwriters effectively treat mills as a no-go zone.”

For operators facing limited conventional capacity, parametric insurance can provide an additional layer of protection alongside existing property insurance.

SKI RESORTS AND ALPINE ASSETS

Bushfire is not traditionally the first risk associated with Australia’s alpine resorts, but changing weather conditions are creating a more complex risk environment for businesses operating in bushfire-prone areas.

For ski resorts and other alpine businesses, the combination of seasonal weather volatility, surrounding vegetation and exposure to wildfire can create significant risks to property and business continuity.

“Things like alpine risks and ski resorts – anything that sits in those bushfire zones – is something that we can take a look at,” Roehrig said.

Descartes’ parametric wildfire solutions can provide coverage of up to \$80 million per contract, helping businesses access additional insurance capacity where conventional markets may be constrained.

“We’re providing capacity to an industry that often struggles to access



With fires more common and often burning hotter and faster in extreme conditions, a trusted insurance partner is essential.

– for the cover for the wildfire property risk.

“And the idea is generally because it’s predefined radius, we’re talking about physical damage impact to properties along with associated business interruption costs.”

For forestry and plantation risks, satellite imagery can also be used to monitor the impact of fire over time.

“We might run the satellite a

couple of times – maybe straight after the event, and then a couple of times post that – just to keep an eye on the trees,” Roehrig said.

“They may still be alive at the time, but as the season progresses, they deteriorate and die. We want to make sure we capture all those trees that have been impacted throughout that season and then total it up.”

Parametric structures can also be tailored to individual risk profiles, including the use of deductibles and sub-limits.

“We can apply a sub-limit deductible to manage costs. It’s quite flexible,” Roehrig said. “Clients might have multiple plantations around the country or overseas as well.”

As bushfire risk continues to evolve, parametric insurance can provide an additional risk-transfer option for businesses across exposed sectors – including forestry, timber, renewable energy, hospitality, viticulture, asset management and carbon credit investments.

For organisations operating in the line of fire, the question is no longer simply whether they can insure the risk. It is whether they have the right combination of protection and capacity when they need it most.

descartesunderwriting.com/solutions/bushfire

* European Commission Joint Research Centre

DESCARTES

GLOBAL PARAMETRIC (RE)INSURANCE SPECIALIST

adequate insurance capacity through conventional channels,” Roehrig said.

INNOVATIVE APPROACH TO PROTECTION

Parametric insurance works differently from traditional indemnity insurance. Rather than assessing the precise financial loss after an event, a parametric policy responds when a predefined trigger is met. For wildfire, that trigger can be based on independently verified data, such as satellite imagery confirming that a fire has reached an agreed area around an insured asset.

This can provide greater certainty around the conditions that will result in a payout, while removing the need for a lengthy traditional loss-adjustment process once the trigger has been met.

For property risks, Descartes can establish a defined radius around an insured asset and use satellite imagery to determine whether a wildfire has entered the agreed trigger zone.

“Generally, for property risk, we’re talking about a 100-metre radius around the asset,” Roehrig said.

“We use satellite imagery to drill down and say, ‘OK, did that wildfire enter within that predefined zone that we’ve all agreed on?’ And that’s the basis – the trigger

Aussie Bird Count

The annual survey is underway, with plenty of time left to join in.

ONE great thing about living near forests is the abundance of bird life. This week, BirdLife Australia is asking all of us to get involved with the Aussie Bird Count to take a national snapshot of the nation's winged inhabitants.

From grandparents to schoolkids, experienced birders to those who are hard-pressed to identify more than a pigeon, the app or web-based forms make it super easy to get involved. Just set aside a 20-minute window where you can either sit still or walk around a limited area and log all the birds you see (for the sake of accuracy, they ask you don't count while on a long walk).

Don't worry if you struggle to tell a magpie from a currawong: there's an attached bird finder tool that will help you work out what you're looking at. You can search by colour, size, shape or name, and clear photos and a distribution map will help you identify your bird. Helpfully, the Find a Bird tool works year-round, even when the count isn't on, so you can turn to it the next time you spot a cool bird you've never seen before.

You can submit as many counts as you would like during the week, at whatever time suits you. If you've never gone bird spotting before, the website has an FAQ and features a handy guide to ethical birdwatching in the Resources tab.

The app allows you to select your level of expertise from beginner up to expert. Don't worry about making mistakes if you're a newbie, all the information is pooled, so any errors balance out across multiple counts.

The count runs in mid-October every year, which is the ideal time to spot Australian birds going about their nesting and breeding periods. The weather is also helpful, with pleasant temperatures and ample flowers, fruits and seeds for bird



- 1/ Australian ravens have successfully adapted to life in the cities as well as the forests.
- 2/ This white-faced heron had found a convenient bin to snap a feast of flies above, making it easy for bird counters to spot it.
- 3/ More than just a nursery song, the laughing kookaburra is one of Australia's most successful predator birds.
- 4/ King parrots are common on the east coast: males have red heads and bodies with green backs and wings, while females have only a red belly. All photos: courtesy Donyale Harrison

food (plus bogong moths this year!)

If you enjoy the experience, you don't have to wait a whole year to count again. The website includes links for registering with BirdLife Australia's Birddata app, its online bird monitoring platform. This incorporates BirdLife Australia's nationwide survey, Birds in Backyards, Birds on Farms, Aussie Bird Count, as

well as targeted threatened species surveys. It also comes with a free eLearning course, so you don't need scientific experience to be confident in your data collection.

Last year's count saw the Australian magpie emerge as the most-counted species of the more than 5 million birds and 621 species counted, ahead of the rainbow lorikeet and noisy miner.

The count answers questions that are useful for science, including 'Which birds are Australians most likely to see?' and 'Which species are part of everyday life in our suburbs, parks and gardens?' Over time, the data gathered helps scientists to see changes in bird populations and ranges and to connect those with other impacts, such as habitat loss from development or

climate change, or the severe droughts that sent ibises into Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne.

This year's count ends on Sunday at midnight, and whether you submit one or 100 counts, you'll be helping scientists understand more about how bird life is changing across Australia.

Plus, if you register your details, you can go into the draw to win one of five sets of binoculars, which will really help you get serious about birding!

To find the app and web form, or learn more, [click here](#).

“THE ANNUAL BIRD COUNT ANSWERS QUESTIONS THAT ARE USEFUL FOR SCIENCE”

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2003 - 2023



2026 SA, NT & WA Timber & Hardware Industry Awards



The 2026 Timber and Hardware Industry Awards celebrate the people and businesses shaping the future of SA, NT & WA timber and hardware industry.

Award Categories

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- NTHA Student of the Year
- Outstanding Employee Award
- 30+ Years Industry Service
- Safety Champion Award
- Industry Icon
- Workplace Equity Award
- Trade Store of the Year
- Retail Store of the Year Under 2500sqm
- Retail Store of the Year Over 2500sqm
- Best Off-Site Manufacturing Award
- Building Materials Supplier of the Year
- Hardware Retail Supplier of the Year
- Timber Supplier of the Year
- Supplier Sales Representative of the Year



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- Join industry leaders, merchants, suppliers, manufacturers and emerging talent on **Friday, 30 October 2026**.
- Held at the prestigious National Wine Centre in the heart of Adelaide.
- Celebrate the outstanding businesses and individuals helping shape the future of the timber and hardware industry across SA, NT & WA.
- With strong interest expected again this year, early ticket purchases are encouraged to secure your place at this premier industry celebration.



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info@ntha.com.au

Preparing for fire season

AS Australia moves into another fire season, preparation matters for forest growers and managers, regional communities, wildlife, timber supply and the broader economy. Bushfire risk cannot be removed entirely, but it can be better understood, managed and responded to.

Forest & Wood Products

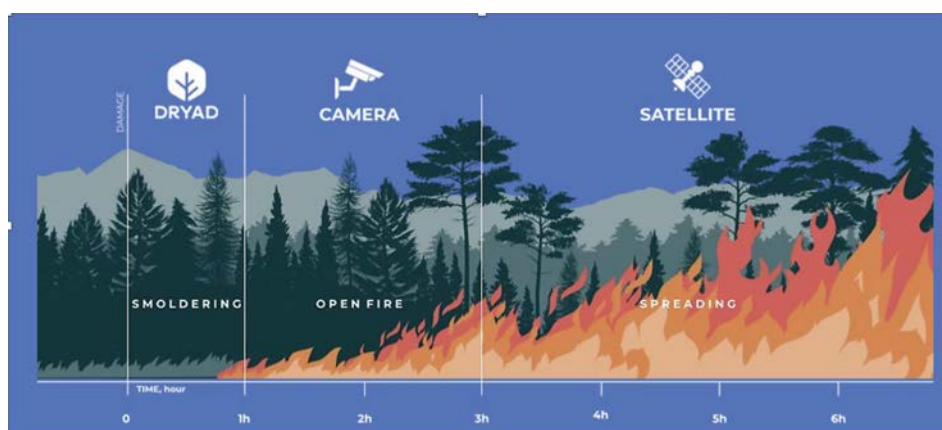
Australia's (FWPA) investment in industry-led research creates significant value by connecting industry priorities with researchers, technology providers and operational expertise to turn evidence into practical tools. This work helps our members make more informed decisions before, during and after fire events, while strengthening the industry's long-term resilience.

FWPA-supported research has improved understanding of how fuel develops in plantations, how fire may behave under different climate conditions and where risk may be greatest. Region-specific modelling and current data can help plantation owners assess risk over multiple growing cycles and target fuel management, detection and suppression planning more effectively.

This evidence also reinforces the importance of rapid suppression, early detection and coordinated preparation.

ACTIVE MANAGEMENT AND NEW TECHNOLOGY

Well-planned forest management is another part of reducing risk. Managing vegetation, weeds and accumulated woody material can help limit the fuel



FWPA has been investigating advanced forest surveillance, like the Dryad Silvanet, a forest fire early warning system, sensing carbon monoxide, hydrogen and other gases emitted by pyrolysis in the early stages of a wildfire and giving firefighters valuable time and a chance to extinguish the fire before it spreads out of control. Image: courtesy Dryad

available to a fire and improve access for monitoring and response. FWPA-supported work examining biological control of blackberry is relevant here: blackberry can restrict access and add to fire-management challenges, so better integrated control options can support safer, more productive forests.

Technology is expanding the options available. A recent FWPA-supported scan assessed more than 300 automation and robotics technologies relevant to Australian forestry ([click here](#) to read). Among the priority opportunities identified were UAV and drone-based fire detection and response systems, advanced data platforms and remote technologies that could improve situational awareness while reducing human exposure to hazardous conditions.

We're also supporting smarter forest health surveillance. A project integrating satellite data with forestry geographic information systems aims to detect unexpected disturbances earlier and enable more targeted on-ground investigation ([click here](#) for more). While forest health surveillance has applications beyond fire, timely information can strengthen awareness, preparedness

and operational decision-making.

LEARNING FROM FIRE AND IMPROVING RECOVERY

Preparation must also include what happens after a fire. Following the 2019–20 bushfires, FWPA supported the development of guidelines for the salvage, storage and processing

of fire-affected plantation logs. Drawing on Australian industry knowledge and international experience, the guidelines help businesses plan for recovery, assess damaged resources and reduce avoidable timber loss.

Historical information on major plantation fires, dating back to the 1920s, has also been collated to strengthen future risk management. Capturing these lessons helps ensure operational knowledge is not lost and gives technical managers a stronger evidence base for planning.

No single project can prevent bushfires. The value of FWPA's role is in building connected capability across the industry: commissioning research around real operational needs, bringing members and experts together, testing emerging approaches and making findings accessible so they can be applied.

This means collaborative investment delivers knowledge and tools that would be difficult to develop individually. For Australia, it supports a forest and wood products sector that is better prepared to protect people, assets and resources, respond effectively when fires occur and recover with greater confidence.

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Dorries takes the helm at ATIF

Australian timber importers stand to benefit from Simon Dorries' experience and passion for all things timber.

By **DONYALE HARRISON**

FOR Simon Dorries, moving from a long-term tenure as CEO of Responsible Wood to his new role as general manager of the Australian Timber Importers Federation (ATIF) comes with a lot of continuity, plus some enjoyable changes.

Some things have barely changed at all: "A major issue for ATIF members is ensuring the integrity of their imported materials," Dorries says.

It's an issue that ties directly to his long experience of timber certification, and one that the Federation has also been extremely serious about for a long time.

"ATIF's got a strict code of practice," says Dorries. "Additionally, it costs to become a member, so both of those things really separate less credible importers from those who are genuinely doing their very best to do the right thing."

But that message has been clouded in media reporting that often tars all imported timbers with the same brush when it comes to questions of sustainability and being free of conflict timbers. Dorries has some understanding of how the confusions have arisen and also plans to help solve them.

"For the vast majority of timber importers, especially your larger companies, their supply chains have clear integrity and there is a lot of time and money spent on assurance so that



1/ After a successful tenure as CEO at Responsible Wood, Simon Dorries has taken on the role of general manager at ATIF.

2/ Dorries talking about project certification at the Queensland Timber Trajectory event held at the University of Queensland in June. Images: courtesy Responsible Wood



were significant supply disruptions and Australia was crying out for timber and this was one of the solutions available.

"After 2022, that changed quickly. It was something that ATIF members did a lot of work on, and it was achievable for them to be sure of the origin thanks to their intense level of dedicated work with their suppliers. The data on Russia as a source of conflict timbers took a long time to become public, which may have led to some

people thinking it was still arriving here, when testing was completed two years ago and supply chains did respond to exclude Russian fibre rapidly. From reputable importers, it's very easy to say with confidence that it isn't the case that their products are contaminated with conflict timber."

ILLEGAL LOGGING LAWS

Recent changes to Australia's Illegal Logging Laws have also had an impact. "The intent of the new legislation is overall good, and the government should be commended," Dorries emphasises, "but the actual requirements for due diligence and the reporting system are clunky."

Much of the data collection is the same information collected and recorded time and again, sometimes on a daily basis. Dorries describes the process as

consumers can be certain of that. That's a fact that we will be sharing more loudly," he says.

"But there are also stories out there – some inaccurate, others distorted – that we need to correct."

One story that has had significant media coverage in recent years is Russian timbers avoiding boycotts and making it into the Australian market. "Some of the claims in Australian media about Russian wood fibre being imported have come from outdated data," says Dorries. "Australia did source material there in the building boom of 2021, before the invasion of Ukraine. There

“FOR THE VAST MAJORITY OF TIMBER IMPORTERS, SUPPLY CHAINS HAVE CLEAR INTEGRITY

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"bureaucratic", adding: "Our complaints are only about the way the due diligence and recording system is designed. There are fines even if you've done the right thing but you forget something or tick the wrong box in error."

"We don't think there was enough consultation with the people who would actually use the system when it was being designed: the thinking behind the legislation is very reasonable and sound, it's just the implementation. Ideally, the government should put some serious thought into streamlining or simplifying it, or somehow helping by providing improved solutions."

He notes that there have been tweaks already, however, there are concerns about the new portal for uploading import information. Dorries says, "Some members say they're going to have to take on extra staff specifically for the job of uploading the information on orders and purchases to the government portal."



(From left) Simon Dorries, Shona Heading and Responsible Wood Chair, Dr Tony Bartlett on stage at the Forestry Australia Symposium in 2025, presenting Shona with the Richard Stanton Memorial Leadership Award. Image: courtesy Responsible Wood

"Making this system easier would be another high priority. We'll continue working closely with government, keep close to any changes and when we're given the opportunity, we'll provide feedback."

"But it also ties into our first priority: making it very clear that materials imported by ATIF members are compliant with standards. They're free of illegal timber, but also free of controversial timber."

Dorries is quite open that there are

potentially some poor-performing importers in Australia. "They're not ATIF members, but in media reporting on them, all importers get tarred with the same brush. One thing I'm looking at will be a way of making it easier for people to identify trusted timber importers."

"The ATIF membership list, which is public, is a great place to start, but we are also looking at other ideas including a trustmark that would identify timbers as being compliant to standards, plus meeting our code of practice for being sustainable and free of illegal and conflict timbers."

CONNECTED EFFORT

Dorries has been warned by the

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welcome he's already received at ATIF. "No one's complaining I've started there!" he jokes, then admits he has had one or two colleagues from other parts of the sector tease him about joining the 'dark side'.

"That's a thing I would really like to change," Dorries says. "When I first started back in the industry, around 1985, we were siloed along state lines. That's almost entirely broken down now: when it comes to collaboration, we're really comfortable working at a national level, but there's still a bit of work to do when it comes to making that international."

He points to the great work done in the domestic market on projects such as The Ultimate Renewable and other timber framing campaigns, including partnerships with TV renovation programs to encourage the use of timber in their builds. This positive portrayal of timber's attributes is key for the whole market, whether Australian or international.

"We're all fighting against steel, which is a very well-resourced sector that has grown over the past two years," says Dorries.

"The most important thing is that builders are choosing and continue to choose timber. And that we can supply timber products in the quantities and pricing that the market needs. That means we will always need both domestic and imported supply. We're not the biggest country when it comes to forestry, and there's a huge number of extremely well managed forests overseas."

Much bigger markets overseas also make it easier for international companies to develop innovative new products, which the Australian market can then adapt at a more advanced point



Canadian timber is looking for new markets, and Australia might become the final destination for this New Brunswick harvest. Image: CC Wikimedia/Quintin Soloviev

in development, often then taking them further with innovations or improved standards in the local market.

"LVL is a good example of this," Dorries says. "I was involved with it from 1986, right at the start in Australia. We didn't originally develop it, but we had two strong local producers in Wesbeam and Carter Holt Harvey and we were quite self-sufficient in LVL production, until about 2004–05.

"The marketing, standards and the technical infrastructure and support behind LVL, getting into the building codes, was mostly done by Australian manufacturers, and that led to a high-quality local product."

When Australian LVL production reduced, the door opened for importers to supply the volumes to meet demand.

Needing to meet strict Australian Standards saw international suppliers lift production quality on their manufactured product, which had a positive flow-on effect globally. Additionally, local importers spent time at the overseas operations verifying their supply lines and so saw new ways the product was being used. Combined with their own innovation, this saw LVL offerings shift from structural beams to a wide offer of cassettes and other prefabricated options.

"Everyone, ATIF members and local manufacturers alike, is doing their best when it comes to getting the best timber products into the market, and I think we should applaud that."

GLOBAL CHALLENGES

It's not the easiest year to be out there

advocating for timber importers.

"Right now, everything is about price," says Dorries.

"The building sector's in survival mode and unless something is giving a direct contribution to the bottom line in the short term, it's often put aside until when things improve."

He's seen a lot of innovative environmental systems and designs shifted to the backburner across the Australian market recently as builders and buyers concentrate on price and availability.

"It's all cyclical, but we have a lot of negative factors at play right now. The cost of both local manufacturing and importing products has increased, and I think that will necessitate price adjustments at some point."

Dorries adds: "On the other hand, those same global disruptions mean that countries like Canada are looking at diversifying their markets. They're quite interested in Australia, but the section sizes we use here are different to those in the rest of the world, which means they have to cut specifically for Australia. This can be a challenge."

Dorries has a long history of working on Australian Standards and is currently chair of Standards Australia Committee TM-011 Engineered Wood Products. It's another area where he plans to use his expertise to help the Federation.

"Our members are looking at standards and codes and one of my jobs will be making sure that ATIF members are well represented across product standards, design standards, application and use standards," he says.

In some cases, the work has already been done internationally, with ISO standards available for adoption, giving an easier route for new products to come into the Australian Standard system regardless of whether imported or domestically produced. But innovative products can find it harder.

"There's always a lag between product development and standardisation,"

“ONE OF MY JOBS WILL BE MAKING SURE THAT ATIF MEMBERS ARE WELL REPRESENTED ACROSS STANDARDS

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AFPA Carbon Credits Submission

THE forestry sector has had a mixed year when it comes to the Australian Carbon Credit Units (ACCU) Scheme. While some ACCU methods have been welcomed, much of the industry came out publicly against the Improved Native Forestry Management (INFM) method (see *Enews* issues #909, #911, #914, #916 and #917, among others) and the problems of additionality and leakage associated with it.

This action against a bad method should in no way be interpreted as antipathy to the broader scheme. Accordingly, the Australian Forest Products Association last week made a submission to the Senate Inquiry on the Carbon Credits and Other Legislation Amendment (Integrity and Transparency) Bill 2026 ([click here](#) to download).

Key recommendations in the submission include expanding productive abatement, making



AFPA's submission to the inquiry.
Image: supplied

transparency the default, strengthening technical security and protecting long-term projects.

The report makes clear the risks of ACCUs becoming political tools rather than methods of genuine carbon abatement. Writing in the submission, AFPA said: "AFPA supports the Bill's

objective of strengthening integrity, transparency and public confidence in the ACCU Scheme. These reforms must also enable timely method development, productive investment and additional abatement. Integrity and participation are complementary objectives: a credible scheme must both withstand scrutiny and create practical pathways for emissions reduction.

"Forestry and wood products can make a substantial contribution through carbon sequestration, long-lived harvested wood products, substitution of emissions-intensive materials, manufacturing decarbonisation, biomass utilisation and biochar. The Scheme should better recognise these outcomes rather than favouring approaches that simply remove land from production."

protect it, being a CodeMark is quite a sensible way of doing it."

ATIF in many ways seems like a natural progression for Dorries, with his focuses on processes, sustainability, and assurances. He also appreciates some of the differences in the new role.

"I'm turning 60 in a few weeks, and I still do a lot of

outside work, including with Standards Australia, so it's nice to have a role with fewer hours per week," he says.

"And after a long time in the policy sphere, it's a refreshing change of pace to come and work for a company that's very strongly market-based and commercial. Changes happen much less incrementally and it's nice to use a broader range of my skill set than just sustainability.

"There are a lot of problems, especially insufficient housing, in Australia that timber can help tackle and I'm happy to use my experience to support the companies doing that."

“THERE ARE A LOT OF PROBLEMS IN AUSTRALIA THAT TIMBER CAN HELP TACKLE



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says Dorries. "But there are also other ways of getting those products into the market. For example, there's a process called CodeMark, where a product is certified directly against the National Construction Code. That's becoming increasingly used, especially for wood preservation.

"You're not waiting on the five or six years it takes from development to being codified. Also, when you put something into an Australian Standard, you are effectively giving away your IP. So, for things like wood preservation, where there is a lot of IP, and those who develop it want to

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