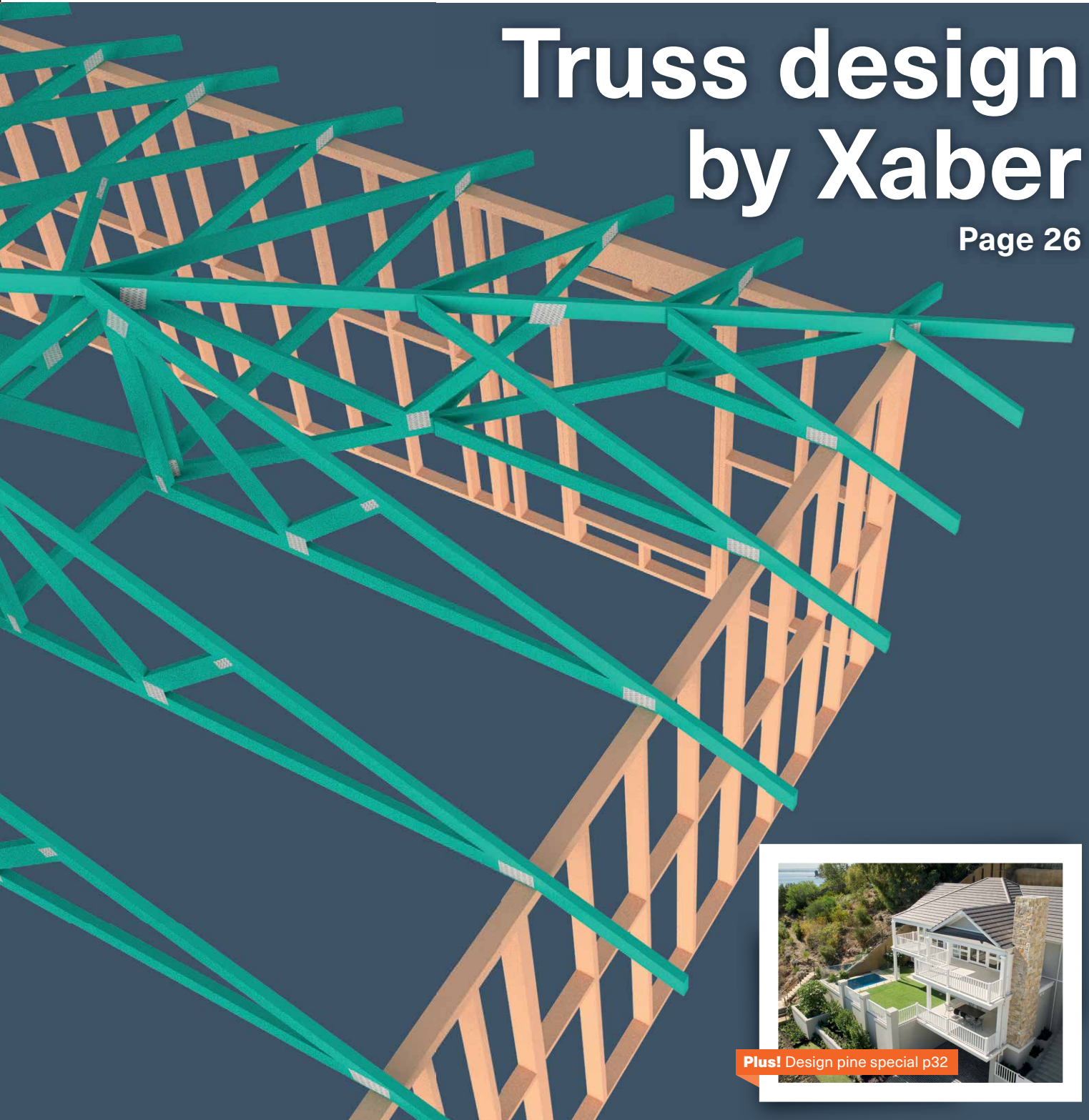


TimberTrader

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A NEW ZEALAND UPDATE**

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NOT BORN, THEY'RE MADE**

PAGE 46
**PREVENTION AND REPAIR
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PUBLISHING DATA

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Timber Media
AUSTRALASIA

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ABN: 50 626 345 088
PO Box 3001, Maraylya NSW 2765

Circulation: proprietors, managers and executives in all sectors of the timber and building materials industries including merchants, building material centres, hardware stores, timber window and door manufacturers, truss and frame manufacturers, timber flooring retailers, stair, balustrade and solid timber furniture manufacturers and their associated suppliers and industry associations throughout Australia.

Established October 1985

ISSN 1035/4298

Print Post Approved: 100002694

Email: query@timbertradernews.com

Website: www.timbertradernews.com

Subscriptions for 6 editions:

Australia: \$72 (incl GST) within Australia

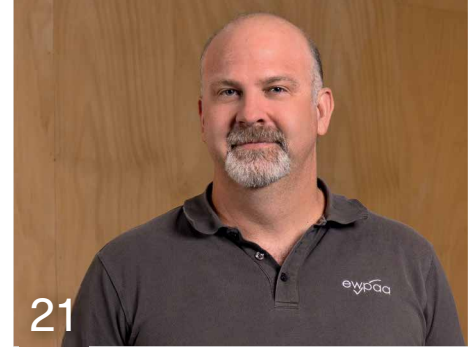


Proudly Printed
In Australia



Printer

IVE Group
Unit 1/83 Derby Street,
Silverwater, NSW 2128



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COVER CREDIT: Courtesy VUETRADE. Insert: Courtesy ITI Australia.

Timber Trader acknowledges the Darug people, Traditional Custodians of the land on which this publication is produced, and pay our respects to their Elders past and present. We extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples today.

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Publisher's note

We are delighted to showcase the Australian made and owned logo.

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Timber Trader News was

established back in 1985 and has a long and successful history as the premier media partner to the timber industry. It wasn't difficult to establish our credentials during the audit process.

Our front cover story sees the launch of a VueTrade's (Bellevue Group Australasia) new software product - Xaber for the frame & Truss fabricating segment. This has been a product in development for 5 years and we are excited to be chosen for the launch of this exciting new product. In true VueTrade fashion, the team of VUETRADE Engineered Building Systems (VEBS) have looked at how their product could better the building industry and have created an innovative product looking at how they can work with building in the future in a safer, smarter way which has the potential to also reduce costs!

With logging of native forests being ceased in some states, reducing the availability of some hardwoods for the Australian marketplace, imported hardwood timbers are starting to be further sort, with some importers seeing an increase of



enquiries. Merbau / Kwila timber has been used in the Australian marketplace for decades. We talk to Meyer Timber about the increase in enquiry and where potential opportunities may lie

for this versatile species. Pre-oiled Merbau is one of the areas Meyer Timber has seen growth and an increase in interest.

Design Pine, ITI Australia's treated and primed product reaches 20 years in the market – Happy Birthday. This editorial delves into the making of this product and we learn why it has been such a successful story. With its distinct blue primer, Design Pine is widely recognized in Australia and has become a go to outdoor timber product for many builders and Do-it-yourself projects.

This issue also explores the collaborations and partnership between Vekta Automation and SMC with Vekta's Razer5 saw. Working together to resolve industry challenges and investing in R&D and innovation to develop solutions for customers individual needs.

Programmed timber share how they can assist customers maximize efficiency with truss manufacturing. Utilizing pre-cut components in truss production can significantly reduce costs and enhance

productivity. By incorporating ready-made components, manufacturers can achieve substantial cost savings, increased output, and a stronger market position.

Congratulations to Red Stag (*special feature on timber trends Mar/Apr 2024 issue*). Red Stag are part of 2 winning teams in the NZ Architecture awards. Don't miss the article written by Michael Smith in this issue for all the information and great images.

Thank you to all the businesses who have recently reached out with important information to share. If you have something to contribute, announce or share with our readers, please email us: editor@timbertradernews.com and we will be in touch. Thank you to our numerous associations for your contributions and for sharing your work across a broad platform to everyone, it is appreciated. Special recognition to our talented Web designer and social media officer, Jessica Hockridge for your significant efforts, patiently working behind the scenes keeping the plethora of information available and flowing in a structured way.



Timber Media
AUSTRALASIA

News in brief

Steve Fife's career so far

From hardware to timber purchasing, executive sales, managing his own Baker's delight and now back to his true passion.

"Guess Who's Back: Steve Fife Returns to the Timber Industry!"

After a successful stint in the world of franchising, we are happy to announce Steve Fife's return to the timber industry, bringing with him a wealth of experience and a proven track record of success. Steve started his career as a TABMA trainee at Godfreys Mitre 10. He then honed his skills in timber product procurement and sales at Montague L. Meyer in Homebush Bay, where he recalls, "You would be selling timber one day and helping out in the mill the next." From 1995 to 2001, Steve excelled at Simmonds Lumber as a Wholesale Timber Commodity Buyer and

Sales Executive.

After taking a break from the timber industry, Steve owned and operated a successful multi-site Bakers Delight franchise from 2001 to 2022, managing teams, providing mentorship, and implementing strategies that improved sales, efficiency, and customer satisfaction. Now, Steve returns to timber with renewed expertise, stating, "I am excited to be back in the timber industry. In some ways, I knew I would be back because I loved every minute of it the first time around." Steve looks forward to making a significant impact at Meyer Timber and being part of their continued success."



Steve Fife

PHOTO: LUKE WEBSTER MEYER TIMBER



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Special feature:

WH&S and human resources in the spotlight

Workplace health and safety specialist, NTHA. **By Graham Burchall**

Wood dust is a significant concern in the timber and hardware sector, posing serious health risks to employees and business owners alike. Whether you are working with timber or manufactured products like MDF, understanding and mitigating dust is essential to maintaining a safe workplace. The National Timber and Hardware Association's (NTHA) Workplace Health and Safety Specialist, Graeme Burchall firstly introduces the hazards associated with wood dust, and provides practical tips for managing and minimising exposure. In Part 2, Vicki Stableford, Member WHS/HR Manager then talks about the new regulatory framework that you need consider for employees with regards to the 'right to disconnect' outside of work hours.

PART 1: THE DIRT ON DUST

Wood dust, generated from machining operations such as sawing, routing, and sanding, can lead to various health issues. The potential health effects include:

Skin disorders: Certain woods can cause allergic dermatitis and other skin conditions.

Respiratory problems: Exposure to wood dust can lead to asthma, impaired lung function, nose irritation, rhinitis, sneezing, blocked nose, nose bleeds, throat irritation, and sore and watering eyes.

Cancer risk: Prolonged exposure to wood dust in very dusty environments with poor dust control can increase the risk of a rare type of nasal cancer.

Tips for managing and preventing wood dust exposure:

1. Use alternative timbers

Opt for timbers that are less hazardous. Suppliers should provide Safety Data Sheets (SDS) detailing any potential health effects. By selecting safer materials, you can reduce the health risks to your workers.

2. Control wood dust build-up

Total elimination of wood dust is impractical, but minimising its production is achievable. Employ work processes that produce less dust, such as using planes instead of sanders. Ensure all dust-generating

processes are equipped with Local Exhaust Ventilation (LEV).

3. Implement Local Exhaust Ventilation (LEV) Systems

LEV systems are essential for capturing wood dust from the source. To maximise effectiveness:

- Avoid long lengths of flexible ducting.
- Cap or close any unused openings.
- Keep ducting short and simple, avoiding right-angle bends.
- Regularly check and maintain the system to ensure it functions correctly.

4. Monitor dust levels

Regular air monitoring can help assess exposure levels. If in doubt, conduct personal air monitoring to ensure compliance with national exposure standards for hardwoods and softwoods.

5. Preventative maintenance

Regularly inspect and maintain equipment and LEV systems. This includes:

- Checking ducting and dust collectors for damage.
- Replacing or emptying waste collection bags.
- Inspecting ductwork and fans for dust build-up.
- Conducting annual overhauls by a competent person.
- Keeping detailed records of inspections, repairs, and maintenance activities.

6. Housekeeping practices

Maintain a clean workspace by:

- Regularly cleaning dust collection equipment.
- Using industrial vacuum cleaners with HEPA filters.
- Implementing a 'clean up as you go' policy.
- Avoiding the use of compressed air for cleaning workbenches or removing dust from skin or clothing.

7. Provide Respiratory Protective Equipment (RPE)

When other control measures are insufficient, provide appropriate RPE. Ensure respirators meet Australian standards (AS/NZS 1715 and AS/NZS 1716) and train

workers in their correct use.

To support those in the timber and hardware industry navigate dust management and WHS practices more broadly, NTHA have launched a new education program: the WHS Masterclass. This 12-month program breaks down essential topics into manageable sessions – with each state and territory hosting an initial 1-2 day workshop, followed by monthly 2-3 hour Zoom sessions.

This program is designed for business owners and safety officers to ensure businesses are compliant and efficient, right down to the basics.

To find out more about NTHA's WHS services, scan the QR code.



PART 2: NAVIGATING 'RIGHT TO DISCONNECT'

Brought to you by Vicki Stableford, Member WHS/HR Manager, NTHA

Vicki Stableford brings over 20 years of diverse leadership and management experience to her role as Member WHS/HR Manager at NTHA. She is dedicated to enhancing employee well-being and organisational efficiency through effective workforce development and optimized customer experiences. Vicki has a proven track record of leading successful, collaborative teams across multiple regions, focusing on people performance, continuous improvement, revenue growth, and profitability. Vicki's goal is to provide NTHA Members with information about current legislative changes and guide them in understanding the changes and when they need to be implemented into their businesses.

With the Fair Work Legislation Amendment (Closing Loopholes No. 2) Act 2024 receiving Royal Assent on 26 February 2024, Australian employees are set to have a codified 'right to disconnect' within the Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth) (FW Act). The right to disconnect grants employees the ability to

refuse work-related contact outside of their ordinary working hours. This includes not responding to emails, calls, texts, or any work-related messaging platforms from both employers and clients.

These amendments come into effect for businesses on 26 August 2024. To navigate this new legal requirement effectively, timber and hardware businesses should begin preparations now.

Some steps employers can take include:

1. Review contracts and job descriptions

Ensure that any clauses regarding after-hours availability and remuneration reflect the new right to disconnect.

2. Update policies

Develop clear policies on work-related communication outside of normal working hours.

3. Train managers and employees

Provide comprehensive training on the new regulations to avoid any potential disputes and ensure compliance.

4. Communicate changes

Inform employees about their new rights and the company's updated policies to foster a supportive work environment.

5. Model Good Behaviour

If you are in a leadership position, model the behaviour you wish to see by respecting others' right to disconnect and setting an example for your team.

The new 'right to disconnect' laws will affect your business – though how much is entirely dependent on your preparedness.

By implementing the above steps, employees can effectively exercise their right

to disconnect, promoting a healthier work-life balance and improving overall well-being.

To support those in the timber and hardware industry navigate these new workplace laws and HR more broadly, NTHA have launched a new education program: the HR Masterclass. This 12-month program breaks down essential topics into manageable sessions – with each state and territory hosting an initial 1-2 day workshop, followed by monthly 2-3 hour Zoom sessions. Topics cover employment contracts, onboarding, and new psychosocial laws -just to name a few.

To help keep on top of important legislation matters that impact your business, become a member of NTHA today at www.ntha.com.au.

*This should be read in conjunction with the article published in Timber Trader News in Mar/Apr 2024. **T***



Brought to you by **Graeme Burchall**, Workplace Health and Safety Specialist. NTHA Graeme Burchall has a wealth of experience in safety coordination and incident investigation with a particular focus on fostering secure work environments. His professional journey includes roles as a WHS Coordinator, reflecting a diverse skill set in analytical skills, safety risk management, and strong leadership abilities. Graeme's role at NTHA supports members with their WHS health checks, hazard identification and training.

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Left: The FluX Multidirectional Counterbalance Forklift, ideal for handling standard pallets and long loads.

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The MaxX Multi-Directional Sideloader is available in three models and offers an eco-friendly alternative to diesel and LPG machines. Britton Timbers was the first timber company in Australia to purchase the MaxX, which led to reduced damage, noise and air pollution.

Anthony Long, NSW Manager at Britton Timbers commented - "Our initial concern was whether electric trucks would cope with the workload, but after seeing the MaxX in operation, they have certainly exceeded our expectations."

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Tailored materials handling solutions for the timber industry.

By Bruce Peatman

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HUBTEX Australia is a wholly owned subsidiary of HUBTEX GmbH, a world leader in the development of bespoke Long Load and Order Picking Solutions. With a state-of-the-art manufacturing and parts facility in Fulda, Germany, HUBTEX products are known for their technical superiority, build quality, and reliability—hallmarks of German manufacturing.

Our extensive experience in the timber industry has given us a deep understanding of the specific requirements for handling products across various applications.

TAILORED SOLUTIONS FOR THE TIMBER INDUSTRY

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Load solutions are custom-built to meet the specific needs of our customers.

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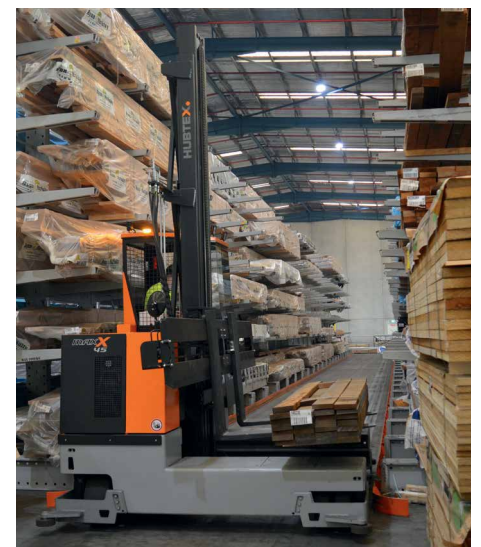
With a wide range of solutions available, including Sideloaders, Multi-directional Forklifts, and Order Picking Systems, we have invested significantly in new stock to minimise lead times. As a result, customers can immediately reap the benefits of our high-quality, space-saving equipment.

In addition to new stock, we provide a comprehensive selection of quality-approved Refurbished machines, offering a cost-effective alternative.

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Above: The MaxX 45 Electric Multidirectional Sideloader working in narrow aisles at Britton Timbers.

PHOTO: COURTESY HUBTEX

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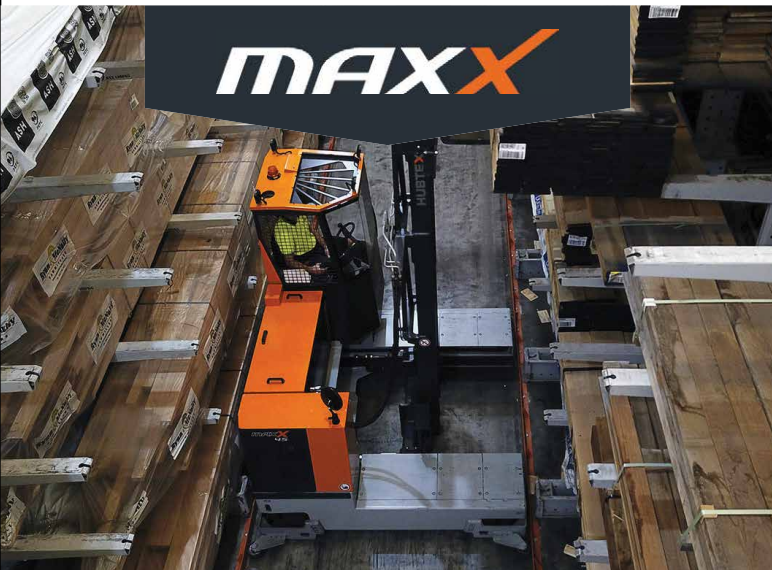
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Kaipātiki Project EcoHub: its modest form “believes the complexity of thought underpinning its design and construction” (citation).

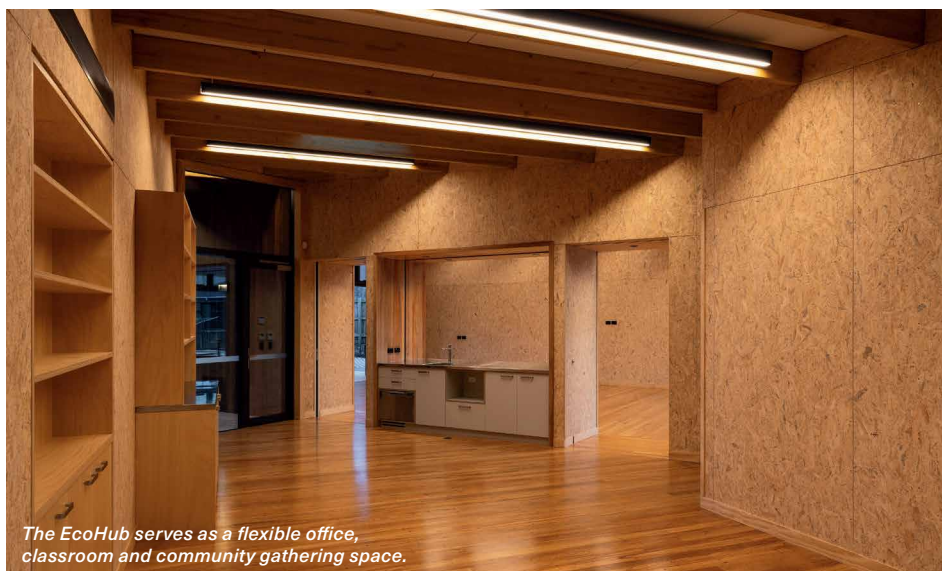
2024 NZIA Local Architecture Awards

Four winners that highlight the advantages of wood. **By Michael Smith**

The Kāhui Whaihanga New Zealand Institute of Architects (NZIA) represents more than 90 per cent of the country’s registered architectural community. Its objectives include the acquisition and

dissemination of knowledge relating to the profession and promoting excellence in architecture – in part through the annual Local Architecture Awards. This year’s awards were held across the

NZIA’s eight constituent branches in May and June – and were run in association with Resene and Architectural Profiles Limited. *Timber Trader News* took the opportunity to profile four of the outstanding winning projects that emphasise the structural advantages and decorative qualities of wood.



The EcoHub serves as a flexible office, classroom and community gathering space.

KAIPĀTIKI PROJECT ECOHUB
Among the winners in the Auckland region (Public Architecture category) is Kaipātiki Project EcoHub by Athfield Architects – described by the regional judges as being evocative “of the welcoming and democratic refuge of a sophisticated tramping hut”.
Serving as a flexible office, classroom and community gathering space, the EcoHub’s modest form “believes the complexity of thought underpinning its design and construction, which incorporates five of the seven Living Building Challenge Petals”.
The hub features a 16-panel 6.2 kWp photovoltaic system (with any surplus electricity sent to the grid); a 9,000-litre water tank, which collects non-potable ‘grey’ water

PHOTOS: (TOP) DAVID ST GEORGE; (BOTTOM) MARK SCOWEN

to supply the external taps that service the hub and the onsite native plant nursery; and, where achievable, elements that have been screwed and bolted together for ease of deconstruction and reuse.

The primary structure consists of glulam portal frames, beams and rafters, with timber-framed infill walls. Recycled rimu flooring and oriented strand board complete the internal picture.

Timber was treated with arsenic- and chrome-free MCA (an environmentally friendlier alternative to other wood treatment products), making it acceptable for reuse if the building is deconstructed.

The judges concluded that this “treasured and thriving space speaks with authenticity to the environmental imperatives of the community it serves”.

TE TIHI – AURECON STAIRS

Also a winner in the Auckland region is Te Tihi – Aurecon Stairs (Interior Architecture category), by Warren & Mahoney Architects. CLT and glulam supplied by Red Stag TimberLab feature prominently in this two-floor office/stairwell refurbishment of Aurecon’s Auckland office.



Above: Aurecon refurbishment: prioritises collaborative spaces and flexible work areas.

A TimberLab case study of the project emphasises the clever use of glulam trusses, which run floor to ceiling over the two levels and support the mid-level stair landing to create a ‘floating’ illusion between the levels.

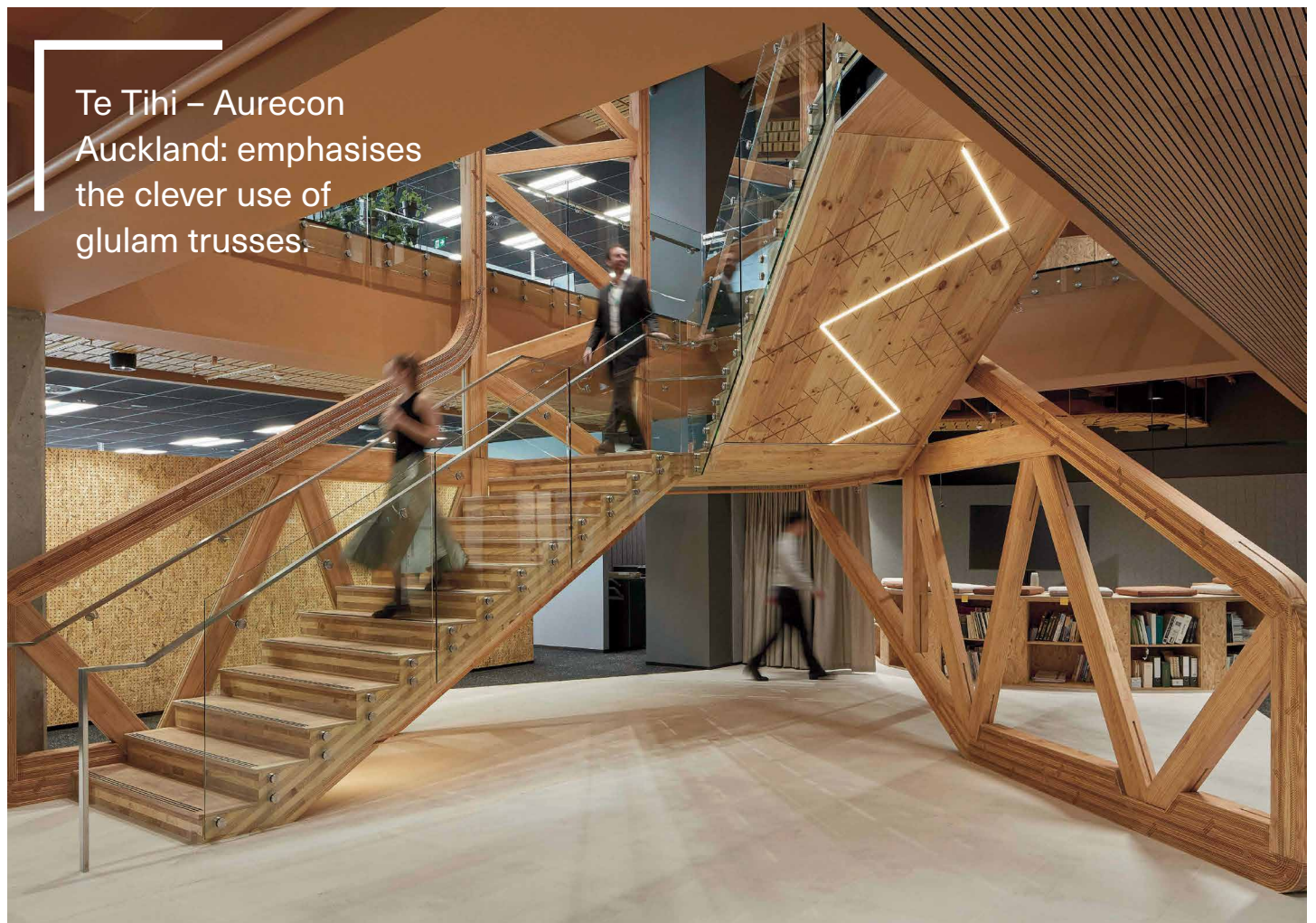
The study adds that CLT was used for the mid-height landing and stair units – with each unit being fabricated from a single billet, which spans seamlessly between floors with no additional support.

“Intricate cultural designs in the glulam trusses were precision cut using a CNC digital fabrication process – the routed profile giving a fine level of detail to the mass timber structure. The CLT stairs also had a precision CNC-cut pattern applied to the underside, complemented by LED lighting which zigzags from top to bottom.

“Beyond its architectural and structural innovations, this project stands as a compelling evidence of the successful fusion of indigenous cultural values and sustainability principles.”

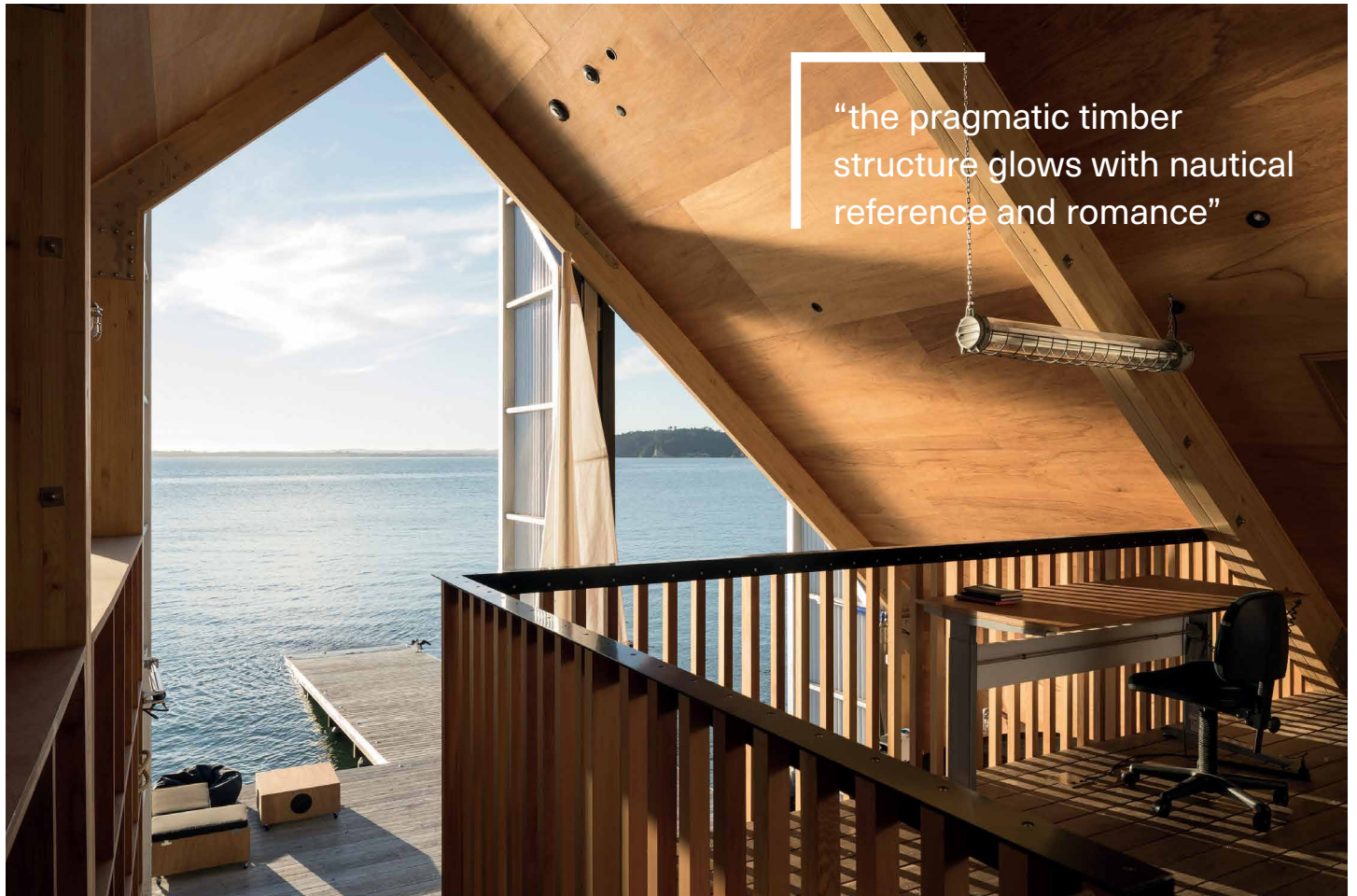
The judges appreciated the priority given to collaborative spaces, the flexible desk-based work areas, and the diverse meeting/ congregating spaces.

And they applauded the strong cultural narrative woven into the design (from local iwi Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei) – thus “creating a sense of place and providing connections to the neighbouring community and key [Auckland] isthmus landmarks”. »



Te Tihi – Aurecon
Auckland: emphasises
the clever use of
glulam trusses.

PHOTOS: HAMISH MELVILLE



“the pragmatic timber structure glows with nautical reference and romance”



The Boat House: a delicate and smooth descent to the water.

THE BOAT HOUSE

One of several winners in the Small Project Architecture category is the Boat House by Michael Cooper Architects.

Sitting at the base of a pōhutukawa-lined cliff in the central Auckland suburb of Herne Bay, the Boat House takes its cue from the traditional form of a gable house. Its asymmetrical design allows the owners to comfortably accommodate a small

powerboat and a fully rigged Laser dinghy.

The architects talk of a refined material palette of dark corrugate cladding, which “allows the building to respectfully integrate into the cliff edge, while the purpleheart hardwood decking effortlessly descends to the water’s edge”.

The Boat House’s interior is lined with meranti ply and custom shelving – “while the laminated timber portal frames, reminiscent

of typical boat construction, visually define the ground floor boat storage from the mezzanine workspace”.

Further, the judges emphasised that the constraints of the marine environment and regulatory processes spoke “to the dedication of both client and architect, resulting in a delicate and delightful intervention in the harbour”.

THE PĀ

Architect Matt Grant, jury convenor for the Waikato and Bay of Plenty Awards, says the judges were impressed by the deep sense of Māori culture and design imbued in a number of projects across several categories.

“From simple fitouts to major commercial work, it’s clear that in our region, iwi consultation is taken very seriously and Māori-influenced architecture is thriving. These forms are incredibly innovative and the potential for them to inform resilient, affordable construction is massive.”

Prominent among the region’s winners is The Pā (Education category), by Architectus, Jasmx and Design Tribe Limited – “a new entry point and heart for the University of Waikato” that combines the key functions of wharehau (meeting house), executive leadership, student hub and Faculty of Māori and Indigenous Studies.

The project also won a Resene Colour Award for the way in which colours, both inherent and applied, “consistently supported and expressed the design narrative”.

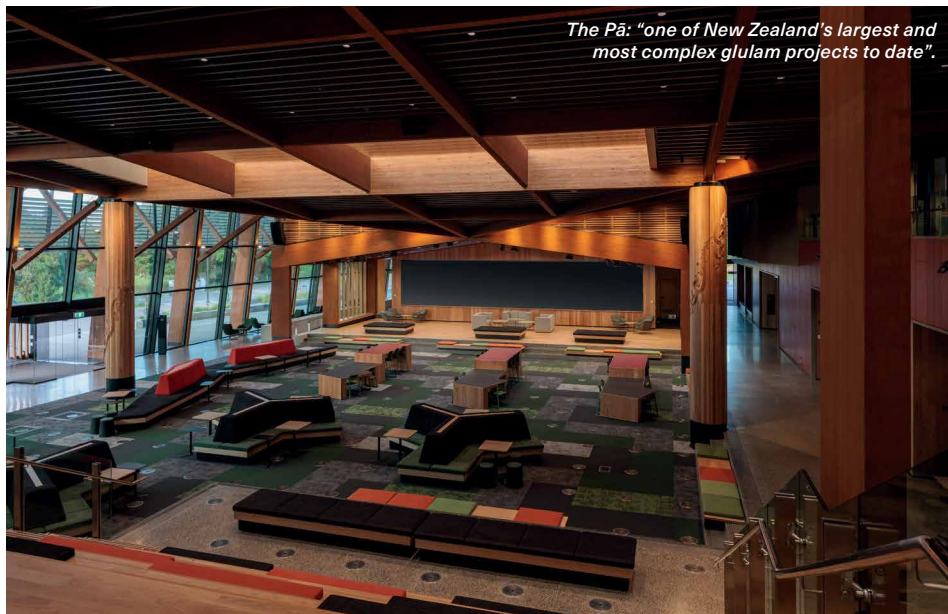
Red Stag TimberLab’s manufacturing team were involved in the laminating and CNC processing of prefabricated components for The Pā – “one of New Zealand’s largest and most complex glulam projects to date”.

TimberLab’s case study notes that the structure is inspired by the form of a traditional whareniui – and includes glulam portal frames, roof rafters and columns. “Mass timber elements combined with concrete and structural steel components to provide a hybrid structure for the various spaces surrounding the whareniui.”

The firm was initially engaged by the project team to work with the designers in an early contractor involvement (ECI) capacity – and to help develop an efficient structural solution.

“Our ability to not only accurately model, but also CNC process and prefabricate hundreds of large components to consistent tolerances is essential for efficiently built mass timber structures.”

Given the variety of complex component shapes also manufactured for this project (e.g. cranked beams, tapered columns and



The Pā: “one of New Zealand’s largest and most complex glulam projects to date”.

various cambers to components), the knowledge and experience of TimberLab’s manufacturing team became vital to the successful completion of the build.

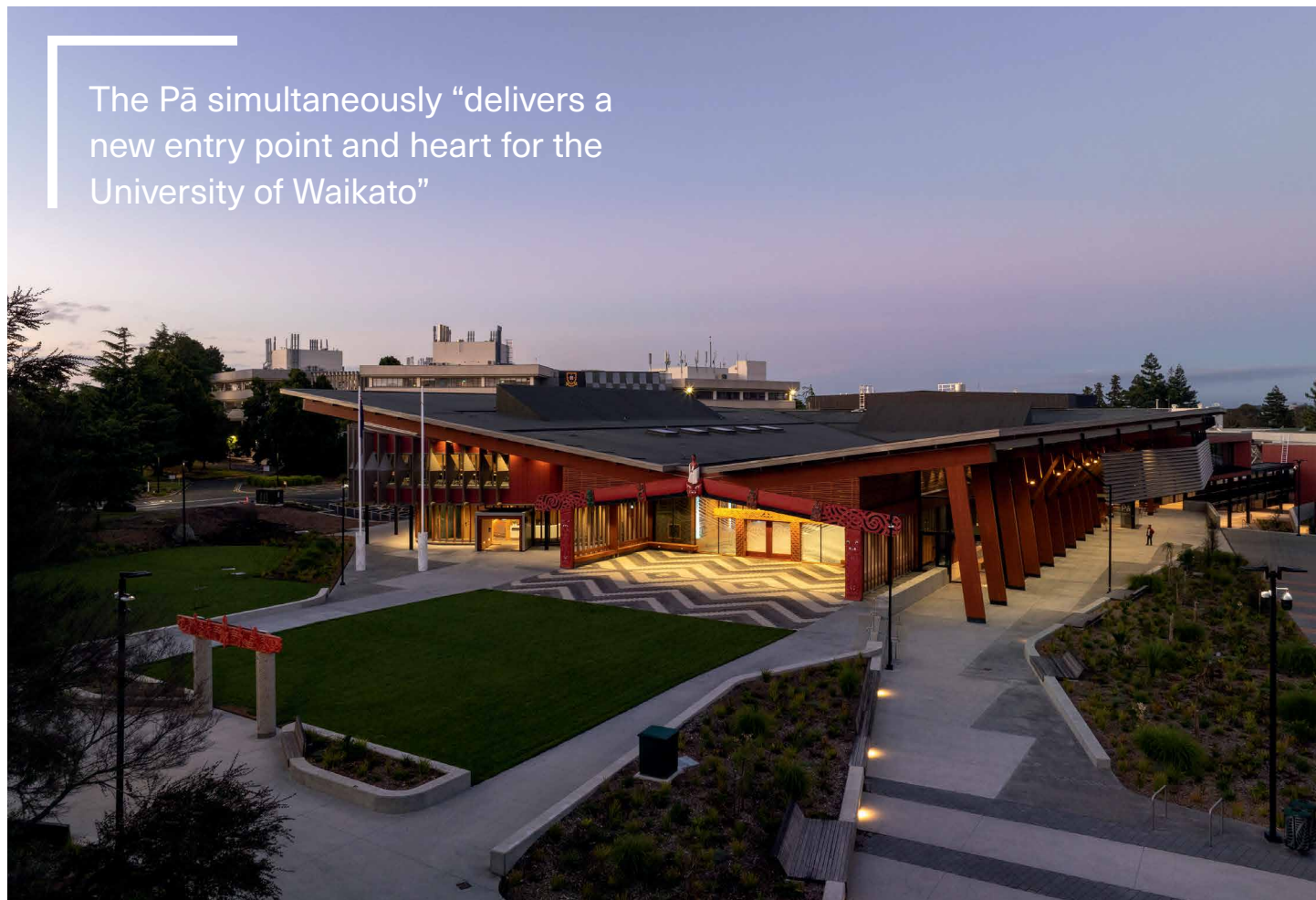
“All glulam was finished to a sanded ‘A Grade’ appearance and coated with a penetrating oil stain. And feature struts were supplied in saligna (Sydney blue gum), an imported durable Australian timber species.”

The judges recognised the project’s

organisation and design, including “the development and extension of traditional Māori construction into new manifestations and metaphors such as the crossing, rather than the termination, of the heke (rafters) at the tāhuhu (ridge beam)”. **T**

Note: the NZIA’s national awards will be held later in the year – with the date and venue yet to be announced.

The Pā simultaneously “delivers a new entry point and heart for the University of Waikato”



PHOTOS: SIMON DEVITT

UPCOMING EVENTS

JULY

GOTTSTEIN UNDERSTANDING FOREST SCIENCE COURSE, SUNSHINE COAST, QLD.

JULY 28 – AUGUST 2

The course is open to everyone associated with the timber and forestry products sector in some way. For full details, visit <https://gottsteintrust.org/grants-courses/understanding-forest-science-course>

AUGUST

TIMBER CONSTRUCT CONFERENCE – RYDGES, MELBOURNE.

AUGUST 12-13

The Timber Offsite Construction Conference and Exhibition has been rebranded as the Timber Construct Conference to encompass the full spectrum of timber building. The conference provides an invaluable forum to address pressing challenges and opportunities influencing timber's role across the built landscape. Technical sessions will cover research updates,



emerging products, building code enhancements, and best practice case studies. For more information, visit <https://timberoffsiteconstruction.com>

SEPTEMBER

WOOD PRODUCTS & TECHNOLOGY GOTHENBURG

SEPTEMBER 3-6

Bi-annual trade fair for Wood Products and Technology, located in the Swedish Exhibition and Congress Centre of Gothenburg is the most extensive wood fair with the largest assortment in the

Scandinavian world. As the range of products comprises everything from raw materials and material processing machinery to the finished products, the event is an interesting meeting place for all visitor and exhibitor groups of the wood industry.

The Wood Products & Technology will take place on 4 days from Tuesday, 03. September to Friday, 06. September 2024 in Gothenburg. e:infomaster@svenskamassan.se

NTHA NSW/ACT STATE AWARDS SEPTEMBER 13

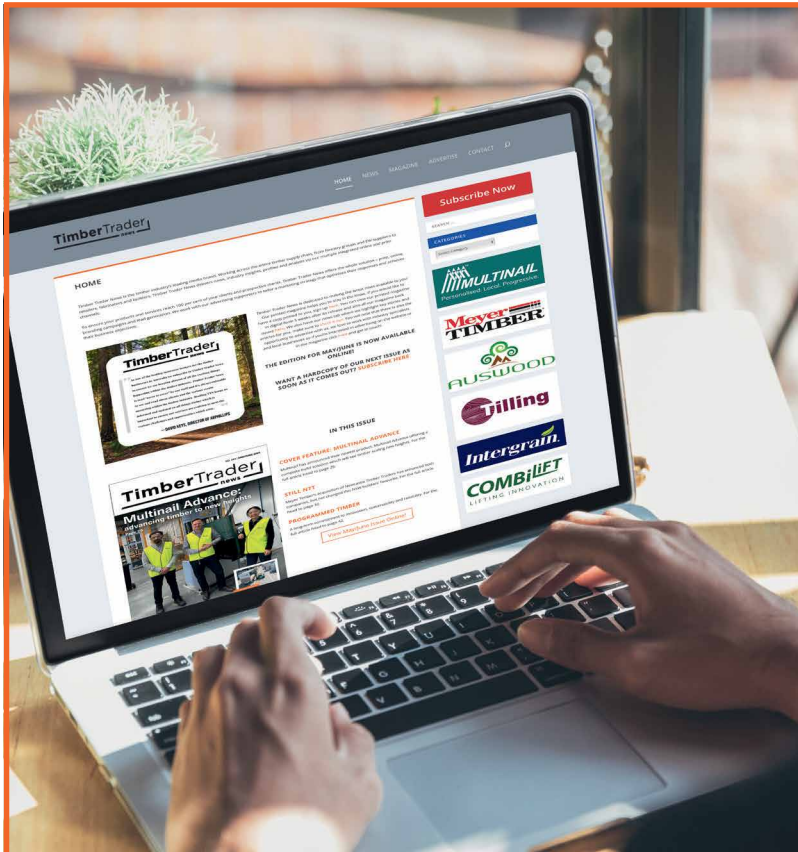
Join us in celebrating the New South Wales & ACT Timber and Hardware Industry. Nominations open at <https://www.ntha.com.au/events/2024-nswact-state-awards-nominations/> Contact Tahlia at events@ntha.com.au

Note: NTHA STATE AWARDS FOR SA, NT, WA and QLD will now be held in 2025. Details to come

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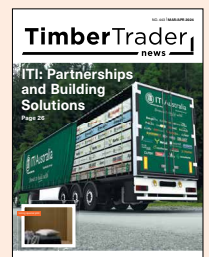
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AUSTRALIA'S MOST RELEVANT AND INSIGHTFUL TIMBER INDUSTRY MAGAZINE

Fortruss Frame & Truss' Game-Changing Investment in Multinail's PieceGiver



How Fortruss is revolutionising Timber Prefabrication with Multinail's PieceGiver

Ashley Young, the owner of Fortruss Frame & Truss, a leading timber prefabrication company in SE Queensland, recently made a strategic decision to enhance his production line by investing in Multinail's PieceGiver Automated Timber feed system.

Fortruss' experience with Multinail's PieceGiver highlights the profound impact of advanced machinery on production efficiency, workplace safety, and business competitiveness in the timber prefabrication industry.

"The cutting output has doubled...We've halved the staff numbers, and now the pressing shed can't keep up with the saws."

"With fewer staff, we are seeing about 20% more production. The machine doesn't call in sick."

"The PieceGiver reduces the OH&S risks and speeds up the PieceMaker."

"I'm getting excited about the next evolution of the PieceGiver...feeding two PieceMaker's because that'll mean I have one man where there had been four in the past."

Ashley Young
Fortruss Frame & Truss



PieceGiver can be retrofitted to suit any PieceMaker Saw



Tasmanian Oak gains contract security until 2040

Australia's most loved and affordable hardwood is here to stay.

Eucalypts are quintessentially Australian. They have quite literally built our nation. With the closure of the Victorian timber industry there has understandably been fear that other states would follow, but Australia's most loved hardwood, Tasmanian Oak is here to stay. Our supply chain is secure, and Tasmanian timber suppliers are eager to work with architects, joiners, stair-makers, merchants, builders and wholesalers to fill the gaps left by Vic Ash. We can't solve the whole problem, but engage early, communicate your needs and we'll help find a local solution. We need to work together to keep Australian timber in Australian homes.

TASMANIAN HARDWOOD SUPPLY OBTAINS BIPARTISAN SUPPORT

The future supply of Tasmanian hardwood is secure. The Tasmanian government recognise the value of a sustainable forest industry. Both the Tasmanian Liberal government¹ and Labor opposition² have provided assurances that timber contracts will be extended out to 2040. This bipartisan support provides certainty to the whole timber supply chain. In addition to resource security from the public estate, Tasmania's world-leading private forest estate continues to flourish.

It is however important that Australian manufacturers continue to support their local timber industry and where possible, not fill the gap with imports. Here's why.

ECONOMICS

The Tasmanian Government have announced that they will increase the weight they place on 'buying local' in procurement from 25% to 30% under its Buy Local policy, to support local business. Why? Buying local builds our economy.

Australia needs sovereign manufacturing to maintain national resilience. The ABC reported this week that "Australia is importing more than it is exporting, which is a negative for economic growth." The trade deficit in timber in Australia is already over 3.7 billion annually³. We should produce as

much as we can at home and support our local industries to continue to do so.

The Australian Made campaign says, "It just makes sense to buy things that are made or grown in Australia."⁴ When you buy Australian products, the money stays in Australia. You are supporting Australian jobs [and skills retention] because the company that produces that product can employ more Australians. If more Australians have jobs, it means families are more likely to have more money to buy more things. Companies and employees then pay more tax to the Government to spend on things like schools and hospitals.⁴

EVER-PRESENT IMPORT RISK

Relying on imports is inherently risky. Foreign exchange rate fluctuations, highly volatile prices stemming from supply and demand fluctuations in other countries, and uncertain lead times that fluctuate due to international shipping, can make relying on imports problematic. Buying locally eradicates these issues. You have direct access to your supplier and local accountability. If there is an issue with the timber you have purchased, you can access support and replacement timber quickly. Tasmanian Timber has an expert helpline for free technical support offered by the Centre for Sustainable Architecture with Wood (CSAW) at the University of Tasmania - Phone 1300 041 766.

BUYING LOCAL IS GOOD FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

About 50% of the dry weight of wood is carbon.⁵ In a world where supply chains are battling carbon footprints and carbon miles, why let any of that stored carbon go to waste by shipping it across the world? We have beautiful Tasmanian timber here at home.

Tasmanian Timber is certified sustainable by a global body, PEFC, and governed by a two-tier independent world-leading regulatory framework, which is unique in Australia. Our timber is also independently audited to ensure it meets the Australian standard and has full chain of custody from

the end-product right back to the forest practices plan that governed the sustainable harvesting at the coupe. Some imports are not certified as being sustainably produced, and illegal logging is still an issue with imported timber. Due diligence must be done to ensure the provenance of the timber is trustworthy and meets both our high standards of sustainability and quality. Tasmanian timber is a timber you can trust.

CONSUMER PREFERENCE

Another great reason to buy local is that consumers prefer it. Research shows that end users love Tasmanian Oak (Pollinate 2021). It is beautiful, sustainable, available and local.

To find out more about the Tasmanian timber supply chain, tune in to our current podcast series, the Original Thinkers Podcast at www.originalthinkers.com.au. We speak with representatives from each part of the supply chain from the growers to the processors, designers to builders, problem solvers to real-estate agents. And – speak to your local mill. Tasmanian Timber processors want to work with you to keep Australian timber in Australian homes. **T**

FAST FACTS – TASMANIAN OAK

- Tasmanian Oak supply is secure until 2040.
- Tasmania has bi-partisan support for sawmill contracts extended to 2040 from the public estate.
- There is a significant, high quality private native forestry estate in addition to the public estate.
- Both the public and private estate is governed by a world-leading forest practices code.
- Buying Tasmanian Oak has no exposure to import risk.
- Tasmanian Oak is certified sustainable and keeps more carbon stored.
- Research shows consumers love their local timber – Tasmanian Oak.

For more information, visit tasmaniantimber.com.au

(1) <https://tas.liberal.org.au/sites/default/files/2024%20100%20Day%20Plan.pdf> (2) <https://www.timberbiz.com.au/labors-election-plans-for-tasmanian-forestry/>

(3) Australian Forest Products Association. (4) <https://australianmade.com.au/media/1142327/ausmade-facts-important.pdf> (5) <https://makeitwood.org/benefits>

Stay true

Tasmanian Oak is the preferred choice for those who demand the most beautiful, workable hardwood timber. It's the environmentally conscious choice as well. Every one of our 800,000 hectares of production forest is sustainably managed, of which only 1% is harvested (and regenerated) annually. While some regions have ended native forestry, our industry and sustainably managed forests continue to thrive. Good news for discerning clients who want to stay true to their roots, quite literally.

ORIGINAL

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TIMBER™

Photo: Tari C Peterson



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Association news



NTHA PROMOTING CAREERS IN THE TIMBER AND HARDWARE INDUSTRY

The National Timber & Hardware Association (NTHA) recently embarked on a Careers Expo Roadshow meeting many passionate individuals eager to explore their future in the industry. By connecting with job



Above: Alicia Langfield – General Manager Membership.



Above: (L) Vicki Stableford, Member WHS/HR Manager, NTHA and (R) Kim Jones, Training Operations Manager, NTHA at Brisbane Careers & Employment Expo 2024.

seekers and participating in these vital events nationwide, NTHA aims to promote job opportunities within the industry and attracts top talent for its members, while also showcasing the sector's diverse careers and the strength of our timber and hardware businesses.

The recent Expos in Brisbane, Sydney and Adelaide were resounding successes, marked by enthusiastic participation from both job seekers and employers.

Heading up the GTO Trainees and Apprentices, NTHA's Alicia Langfield, General Manager for Membership, said: "The Expos are a fantastic platform for us to showcase member businesses and attract the next generation of talent.

"We are seeing a lot of positive engagement from the next generation of employees and it's great to support the industry by showcasing the many career pathways young people can take."

Find out more about taking on an NTHA Trainees or Apprentices at www.ntha.com.au.

NEW: NTHA Masterclasses: Navigate HR and WHS with confidence

In the ever-evolving world of timber and hardware, staying ahead requires more than just industry knowledge; it demands continuous learning and adaptation. To support our members in this journey, the National Timber & Hardware Association (NTHA) is thrilled to announce the launch of our new Masterclass Series. Two brand new education programs: Human Resources (HR) Masterclass and Workplace Health and Safety (WHS) Masterclass are each designed to equip NTHA members with the latest skills and insights, ensuring their business remains agile and compliant.

The 12-month programs break down essential topics into manageable sessions – with each state and territory hosting an initial 1-2 day workshop, followed by monthly 2-3 hour Zoom sessions.

For more details on upcoming Masterclasses sessions, visit our website at www.ntha.com.au or contact us at info@ntha.com.au. To join NTHA and attend a Masterclass, visit www.ntha.com.au/events/events/

Contact NTHA for more on Apprenticeships, Masterclasses, HR, WHS and member support.



Timber Trade Industrial Association

ANNUAL WAGE REVIEW

The Fair Work Commission (FWC) has increased the national minimum wage and modern award wage rates by **3.75%**, effective from the **first full pay period on or after 1 July 2024**.

Consequently, the new national minimum wage will be \$915.90 per week for a 38-hour week, \$24.10 per hour and \$30.13 for a casual employee. The national minimum wage order applies only to award and/or enterprise agreement-free employees.

In the Decision, the FWC considered the position of various parties, including the ACTU's claim of 5%, and submissions of the Federal Government and employer groups. The FWC indicated that its role was not to adjudicate such claims but to determine the increases taking into a range of factors including current inflation, stage three tax cuts and cost of living measures, national productivity, and the further 0.5% increase in superannuation, bringing the new SGC rate to 11.5%, effective 1 July 2024.

Modern award minimum wages for juniors and training employees

Under most modern awards junior employees receive a percentage of a relevant award rate of pay. Therefore, these employees will also receive a proportion of the increase in minimum rates.

Employees to whom a training arrangement applies and who are covered by the National Training Wage Schedule (NTWS) will have their rates adjusted by the FWC as set out in the national minimum wage order.

Award/agreement free juniors and trainees

Minimum wages for juniors who are award/agreement free are to be based on the junior wage percentages in the Miscellaneous Award 2020 applied to the national minimum wage.

For trainees who are award/agreement free, the NTWS in the Miscellaneous Award 2020 as adjusted will apply for these employees. The apprentice provisions in that award and the provisions of the NTWS will be incorporated into the national minimum wage order. The order will also provide that adult apprentices should not receive less than the national minimum wage.

Allowances

In modern awards, **work related allowances** are linked to a percentage of the standard rate as defined in the modern award. Accordingly, the increase to wage rates (including the standard rate in the award) will flow on to work related allowances.

Modern awards provide that an increase to **expense related allowances** must be considered at the time of an adjustment to the standard rate in the award. To determine

July 1st update on awards, minimum wages, casuals, juniors, traineeships, allowances and loadings with member information sessions.

the extent of any increase, the relevant adjustment factor is the percentage movement in the applicable index figure most recently published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics since the allowance was last adjusted. The FWC will publish draft determinations concerning increases to expense related allowances shortly.

Casual loading for award/agreement free employees

The national minimum wage order will contain a casual loading of 25% for award/agreement free employees.

Award Summary Sheets

Updated Award summary sheets for 2024 will have been received by TTIA Members. If you are not already a TTIA Member and are interested in knowing more about all the benefits that membership can bring to your business, please contact us on **(02) 9264 or by email: ttia@ttia.asn.au**

MEMBER IR BRIEFING SESSIONS

TTIA face to face Member briefing sessions are scheduled to be held in various venues in NSW, Victoria, Queensland and South Australia in July/August:

- Wollongong – 29 July
- Sydney – 30 July
- Bathurst – 31 July
- Tumut – 1 August
- Eden – 2 August
- Newcastle – 5 August
- Port Macquarie – 6 August
- Coffs Harbour - 7 August
- Ballina – 8 August
- Brisbane – 9 August
- Mt Gambier – 13 August
- Melbourne – 14 August

This seminar will, in particular, provide invaluable insights into the recent changes >>

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in workplace and industrial relations laws following the passing of the “Closing Loopholes” Bill. The meetings are particularly relevant to HR/IR staff, senior management or business owners. **For further details please contact TTIA on (02) 9264 0011 or by email: ttia@ttia.asn.au**

*Brian Beecroft
CEO*



THE FORESTRY INDUSTRY IS A KEY PART OF THE TASMANIAN STORY NOW, AND INTO THE FUTURE

Forestry has been integral throughout Tasmania’s history. Today, it remains a key economic, social and environmental piece in the Tasmanian puzzle. And our respected, responsible and renewable industry will continue to play a part in the Tasmanian story for generations to come.

Our industry is certainly diverse, encompassing both softwood and hardwood plantations, as well as responsibly sourced native forestry, either from private or public land. And despite our diverse industry, some believe a one size fits all approach is the way of the future. But that can’t be further from the truth.

We need all types of forestry to meet our insatiable desire for wood. Our softwood and hardwood plantations are great for house building, to make paper and cardboard products, and to for the pallets that we need to transport our goods around the world.

But rightly, consumers want their furniture made out of the highest quality wood, and boat builders need specialist timbers to make and repair our ocean-going vessels.

That’s why native regrowth forestry is an essential mix in forest products and why it needs to remain a key part of our future.

It’s forestry’s inherent diversity which makes it such an important ingredient in the success of Tasmania – and we’re working with other sectors to further grow the wealth of Tasmania.

There are more than 3,000 direct jobs in the forest industry (primary and secondary processing), and over 2,600 indirect jobs generated in other industries as a result of demand from the forest industry.

Recent figures show the direct value of output by the Tasmanian forest industry at the point of sale of primary processed products was \$712 million. This figure rises to more than \$1.2 billion when considering

The captured carbon is not released back into the atmosphere when a tree is responsibly harvested.

the flow-on-effects generated in other industries as a result of spending by the forest industry.

The impact of forestry extends beyond the sector itself, providing raw materials that support a multitude of industries.

Wood serves as a primary resource for the construction industry, and with a lack of housing across our state, wood is vital in solving the problems. All housing requires wood, and lots of it.

Environmentally friendly homes require radiata pine framing and plywood for the substrates, hardwoods for the floors, windows, doors, benchtops and stairs, MDF and chipboard for kitchen/laundry cabinets and wardrobes; and treated pine for the fences and landscaping.

Again, it takes a broad mix of forestry species and a combination of processes to create the products that are required to achieve our housing targets and importantly turn that housing into homes.

The captured carbon is not released back into the atmosphere when a tree is responsibly harvested

Timber is also natural, renewable and biodegradable. Regrowth forests and timber plantations are net absorbers of greenhouse gases, and timber and wooden products store this carbon and lock it away for the life of the product.

That’s right. Despite what our detractors say, the captured carbon is not released back into the atmosphere when a tree is responsibly harvested. That carbon is locked away in the products timber makes. And what’s even better? It’s renewable.

In Tasmania, every single tree harvested, both plantation and native, is replaced by either regenerating forests or through the cycle of plantation harvesting. And that tree captures more carbon as it grows again.

Tasmania leads the world in sustainable forest practices, with 59 percent of the state’s forests protected, 87 percent of the state’s old-growth forest. And, Tasmania’s forests will play a vital role in climate change – both now and into the future.

In fact, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), in its Fourth Assessment, states “A sustainable forest

management strategy aimed at maintaining or increasing forest carbon stocks, while producing an annual sustained yield of timber, fibre or energy from the forest, will generate the largest sustained mitigation benefit.”

Forestry is providing real solutions to reduce our carbon footprint, and we welcome the support from both major parties – ensuring Tasmania remains at the forefront of the fight against climate change.

Forestry has a great future in Tasmania and, as we grow, our industry will be there to build our homes, to employ our young people and to ensure we meet our lofty climate change ambitions.

Nick Steel is Chief Executive Officer of the Tasmanian Forest Products Association



Timber & Hardware Australia

MGA Independent Businesses Australia

THA & TTC COME TOGETHER TO HOLD TIMBER TRAINING COURSE

Timber and Hardware Australia are hosting an essential timber training course in partnership with Timber Training Creswick, tailored for timber and wood product sales professionals. This comprehensive two-day course covers critical topics like timber properties, classification, treatment processes, and innovative wood products. Participants will gain valuable insights to provide expert advice to customers.

Two sessions are available in 2024: 9-10 July and 3-4 September.

Day one will be held in Malvern, VIC, with a field trip on Day two.

Successful completion awards a Statement of Attainment in FWPCOT3302



Above: Mikaela McKenzie

PHOTO: COURTESY MGA-THA

To register, visit <https://www.mgaiba.org.au/learning-events/timber-training-creswick/>

Don't miss this opportunity to enhance your timber expertise!



NON-CONFORMING TIMBER PRODUCTS UPDATE 2024 REPORT

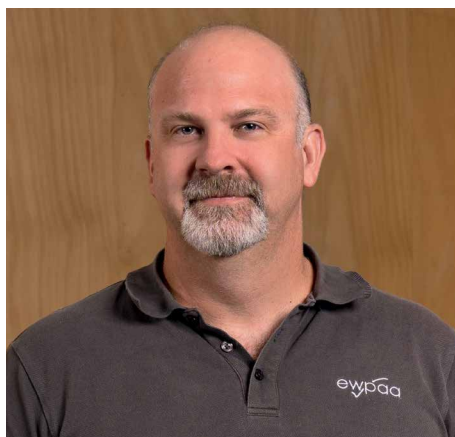
We all know timber products provide renewable, versatile, innovative and fit-for purpose solutions across many essential building applications, and their use in the built environment continues to increase. However, with this increased popularity, comes ongoing concerns over the impacts of non-conforming and incorrectly branded timber products being imported into Australia.

It is widely acknowledged that imported timber products are necessary for a significant number of building applications and to meet market demand. While the majority of industry and the market is doing the right thing, an amount of timber products that do not meet the requirements set out in standards and the National Construction Code continue to enter the Australian supply chain.

All buildings must comply with the requirements of the NCC by meeting the stated performance requirements of the appropriate volume – dependent on building class. This can be achieved by following deemed-to-satisfy solutions, a performance solution, or a combination of both. Most residential and commercial buildings utilise the NCC deemed-to-satisfy compliance pathways by conforming to recognised product and design standards. For timber structures, design is conducted in accordance with *AS 1720 Timber Structures – Design Methods series* and/or *AS 1684 Residential Timber Framed Construction series*.

The Australian Building Codes Board (ABCB) and relevant State building industry regulators (e.g., the Queensland Building and Construction Commission) have reporting pathways for instances of NCBPs, and a clear focus on alerting everyone in the building product supply chain, that they are responsible for ensuring that all building products used are fit for their intended purpose and are not NCBPs.

EWPA recently released a report that details the potential risks posed by use of non-conforming building products (NCBPs), with a focus on laminated veneer lumber (LVL), in residential, multi-residential and commercial building applications.



Above: Gavin Matthew – EWPA CEO.

Non-Conforming Timber Products

The 'Non-Conforming Timber Products Update 2024' report calls for builders, retailers, and consumers to remain vigilant, ask the right questions, and undertake due diligence on product claims, branding and product information, citing possible safety risks, poor product performance and potential reputational damage as negative outcomes for using NCBPs. The 'Non-Conforming Timber Products Update 2024' report is available for download at https://ewp.asn.au/technical_resource/non-conforming-timber-products-update-2024-why-non-conforming-timber-products-should-concern-the-building-industry/

A reputable product certification mark is a great way to have confidence that the manufacturing facility, the timber building product, and associated claims have been inspected, audited, tested, and reviewed against the product standards by independent experts. EWPA has you covered! See www.ewp.asn.au and EWPA's technical notes.



AFPA WELCOMES NEWLY APPOINTED VFPA CEO ANDREW WHITE

The Australian Forest Products Association (AFPA) is pleased to welcome new Victorian Forest Products Association (VFPA) CEO, Andrew White to the role ahead of his commencement in late August 2024, AFPA Chief Executive Officer, Diana Hallam said today.

"On behalf of AFPA and the broader industry I welcome Andrew's appointment as VFPA CEO and look forward to his advocacy for Victoria's forest products sector as it seeks to meet numerous challenges and

EWPA latest report on non-conforming timber products is now available for free download.

opportunities," Diana Hallam said.

"Andrew has spent his career working with peak bodies in the NFP sector, including as Deputy CEO of AUSVEG and he brings considerable expertise in government and media relations, corporate strategy, crisis management and business development. We are delighted to have Andrew on board," VFPA Chair Rob Hescoock said.

"I'm very much looking forward to joining VFPA and working with what is one of Victoria's most important primary industry sectors. From growers through to processors and right across the supply chain, VFPA has an important role representing forestry industries that will only become more critical in the future," Andrew White said.

"I also thank outgoing VFPA CEO Deb Kerr for her commitment to bettering the Victorian sector through some very challenging times for industry over the past few years. Deb has worked tirelessly on behalf of industry," Diana Hallam concluded. **T**



Above: Andrew White will commence as VFPA CEO on 26 August 2024.

More swings and roundabouts for employers

Closing loopholes and new definitions. **By Peter Maguire**

The second phase of the Albanese Government's "Closing loopholes" amendments to the *Fair Work Act 2009* bring a raft of significant changes, many of which go to fundamentals of the relationships between businesses and the people who they engage to work for them.

In this article, we are focusing on a set of changes that come into effect on 26 August 2024 and relate to definitions of employees, casual employment and independent contractors and new or amended rights for different categories of worker.

NEW DEFINITIONS OF "EMPLOYER" AND "EMPLOYEE"

Under the new rules, the terms "employer" and "employee" will be decided by assessing "the real substance, practical reality and true nature of the working relationship" based on the "totality" of the relationship.

This effectively means that we are returning to the multi-factorial test that applied at common law before a High Court decision in 2022 shifted the test to primarily what the contract said ie if the contract said the employee was an employee, they were an employee or, if the contract said they were a contractor, they were a contractor, etc.

That means that we again need to consider factors such as the degree of control that the worker has over how and when the work is performed, whether payment is made by the hour or for a result, how they are paid (e.g. via payroll or invoice), whether the worker has freedom to take on other work, whether the worker bears commercial responsibility for the quality of their work and a number of others.

NEW DEFINITION OF CASUAL EMPLOYMENT

Similarly, the new definition of casual employment reverts to that of considering "the practical reality of the employment relationship" rather than just what the employment contract said when the worker was hired. A casual employee also receives payment of a casual loading or a casual rate of pay.

As previously, a casual employee is one



who has "no firm advance commitment to continuing and indefinite work" based on the following considerations:

- Whether the employee can choose to offer or not offer work to the employee and whether the employee can choose to accept or not accept an offer of work;
- Whether continuing work is reasonably likely to be available given the nature of the business;
- Whether part-time or full-time employees are undertaking similar roles in the workplace;
- Whether the employee has a regular pattern of work.

Importantly, the existence of a regular pattern of work does not itself indicate a firm advance commitment to continuing and indefinite work. In fact, it is recognised that a casual employee could be engaged on a fixed term contract e.g. for the duration of a project or to fill a position whose occupant is on long-term leave or for seasonal engagement.

NEW RULES ON CASUAL CONVERSION

Employers will no longer have to offer employees conversion to full-time or part-time employment.

Casual employees can also elect to remain casual if that is their preference.

Casual employees will be able to apply for conversion if they believe that they no longer fit the definition of casual employment:

- For small employers (with less than 15 employees), after 12 months of employment; and
- For larger employers, after 6 months of employment.

Employers will have 21 days to respond in writing as to whether they accept or reject the application to convert, citing the reasons for rejection if that is the decision that they make.

Disputes can then be taken to the Fair Work Commission for mediation, conciliation and, if necessary, arbitration.

Please note that such disputes could already be taken to the Fair Work Commission under award provisions including under the *Timber Industry Award 2020*.

NEW CASUAL EMPLOYMENT INFORMATION STATEMENT

The requirement to provide this statement to new casual employees already applies under National Employment Standards.

Under the new rules, employers will have to reissue the statement to casual employees:

- For small business employers (with less than 15 employees) – after 12 months of employment;
- For larger employers, after 6 and 12 months of employment and then after every 12 months of employment.

A new Casual Employment Information Statement will be made available on or before the date of effect of these changes i.e. 26 August 2024.

CHANGES FOR "EMPLOYEE-LIKE WORKERS", ROAD TRANSPORT CONTRACTORS AND INDEPENDENT CONTRACTORS

The Fair Work Commission will have new powers in respect of:

- “employee-like workers” who work for or via a digital labour platform and who satisfy at least 2 of the following characteristics:
 - Low bargaining power
 - Low authority over the performance of work
 - Receives remuneration at or below the rate of employees performing comparable work
- the road transport industry which includes road transport contractors and businesses that hire them plus persons in road transport contractual chains such as:
 - The persons or businesses who make an initial contract or arrangement for the delivery of goods
 - The driver who performs the delivery and
 - The persons or businesses who are party to the series of contracts or arrangements sitting between them.

or unfair termination of a road transport contract

- Registration of collective agreements covering multiple business entities who engage “employee-like workers” or road transport contractors

The Commission also has another new jurisdiction to deal with disputes on unfair contract terms where an independent contractor can ask the Commission to vary a contract or set aside provisions that it determines to be unfair. A high-income threshold will be set and independent contractors with earnings above that will be excluded from the jurisdiction.

CONCLUSION

The bottom line here is that, regardless of

how you engage people to work for you, there will probably be a way that they can take you to the Fair Work Commission (or some other jurisdiction) if they believe that they have been treated unfairly.

With all of these and the unprecedented number of other changes that are coming in via Fair Work, modern awards and other legislation, it is very important that businesses review their contracts with employees and independent contractors and their HR policies and procedures to assure currency of compliance. **T**

Note: much of the content of this article has been sourced from fact sheets published by the federal Department of Workplace Relations and please note that it does not constitute legal advice.

The Commission’s powers will include:

- Setting minimum standards for employee-like workers and the road transport industry
- Dealing with disputes over unfair deactivation from an electronic platform

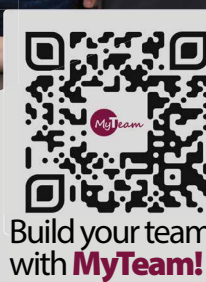
Peter Maguire is the owner and practice leader of Ridgeline HR, an award winning HRM consulting practice which he founded in 2000. Peter is an acknowledged expert in workplace relations compliance and also a high-performance leadership coach with over 40 years’ experience in HRM. Ridgeline HR’s byline is Helping PEOPLE in BUSINESS and that is essentially what Peter does – help business people with their people business.



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The Blackwood tree and the stunning wood found inside.

The magnificent Blackwood tree, part of the Acacia family (*Botanical name: Acacia Melanoxydon*) prefers a cool, moist valley and is a slow growing, medium sized hardwood. Typically found in South Australia and across the Eastern states. It is also grown commercially in large volumes in the wetter areas of Tasmania.

Blackwood is a locational surname with a Scottish origin and was discovered in Argyshire, with the first record linked to the family name of William de Blackwood in 1327. However, the Australian Blackwood tree is said to be most closely related to the original tree located on the island of Hawaii.

CHARACTERISTICS

Despite the name, this wood isn't black, yet it has a simply stunning deep rich golden-brown appearance, sometimes with reddish streaks or a narrow band of darker colour indicative of growth rings. The sapwood is much paler in appearance and Blackwood has a medium to even texture. The uniformity

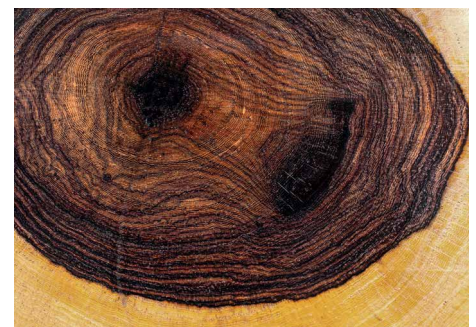
is listed as fine to medium. Blackwood is rated as being moderately rot resistant but is susceptible to insect attack. An interesting point is the Australian Blackwood is listed as having a straighter grain with slightly better machining characteristics!

Blackwood is known for its superior finishes and is terrific for in-door use but has a low in ground durability and is listed as 'not ideal' for external applications. Blackwood does not have any Odor characteristics and toxicity, or allergic reactions are listed as low to rare.

PRIMARY USE

Australian Blackwood is sort after for its high-end finish and is regularly used for flooring, furniture, panelling, decorative veneers, kitchen joinery and boat interiors (the expensive kind). Blackwood is easy to nail and bonds well with glue and is good for steaming and then bending with good impact resistance, which is essential in marine applications.

Whilst researching this article i came across this picture of a Blackwood tree from Burma (*country now known as Myanmar*) with the cross section clearly showing the growth rings, amazing lines and natural dark beauty of this timber. Enjoy **T**



Further information:

With thanks to Wood Solutions www.woodsolutions.com.au and The Wood database: www.wood-database.com

PHOTOS: (TOP) DAMSEA/SHUTTERSTOCK; (INSET) THICHAA/SHUTTERSTOCK

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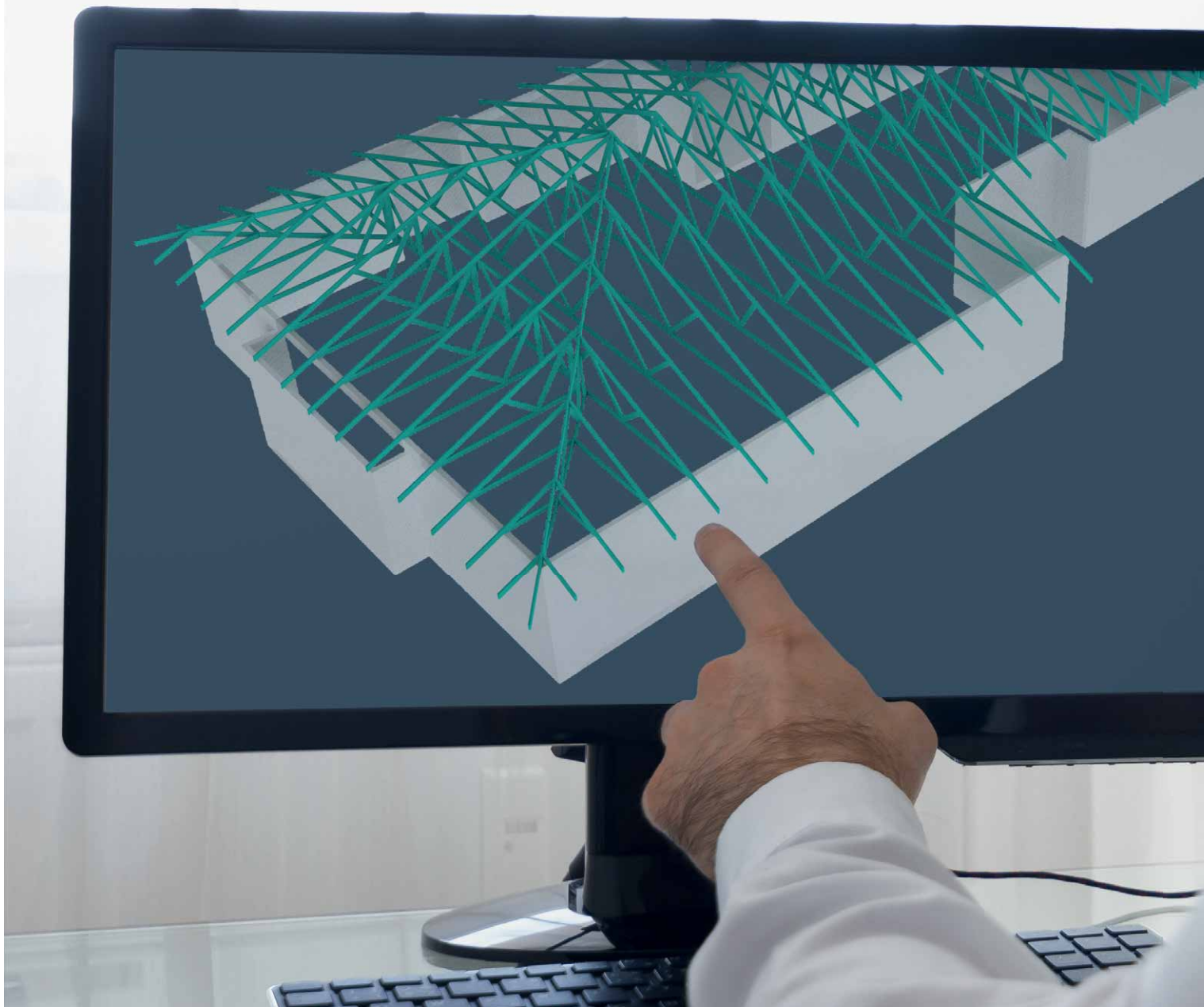


Check out some of our partners...



Future-proofing fabrication

A new CAD-based frame and truss software system from the trusted team behind VUETRADE is set to disrupt fabrication and make F&T plants future ready. **By Donyale Harrison**



The business proposition behind VUETRADE has always been simple: find reliable ways of building better and then share them with the market.

Since 1988, parent company Bellevue Group Australasia has successfully manufactured and supplied materials for timber construction – most famously the VUETRADE range of steel brackets and

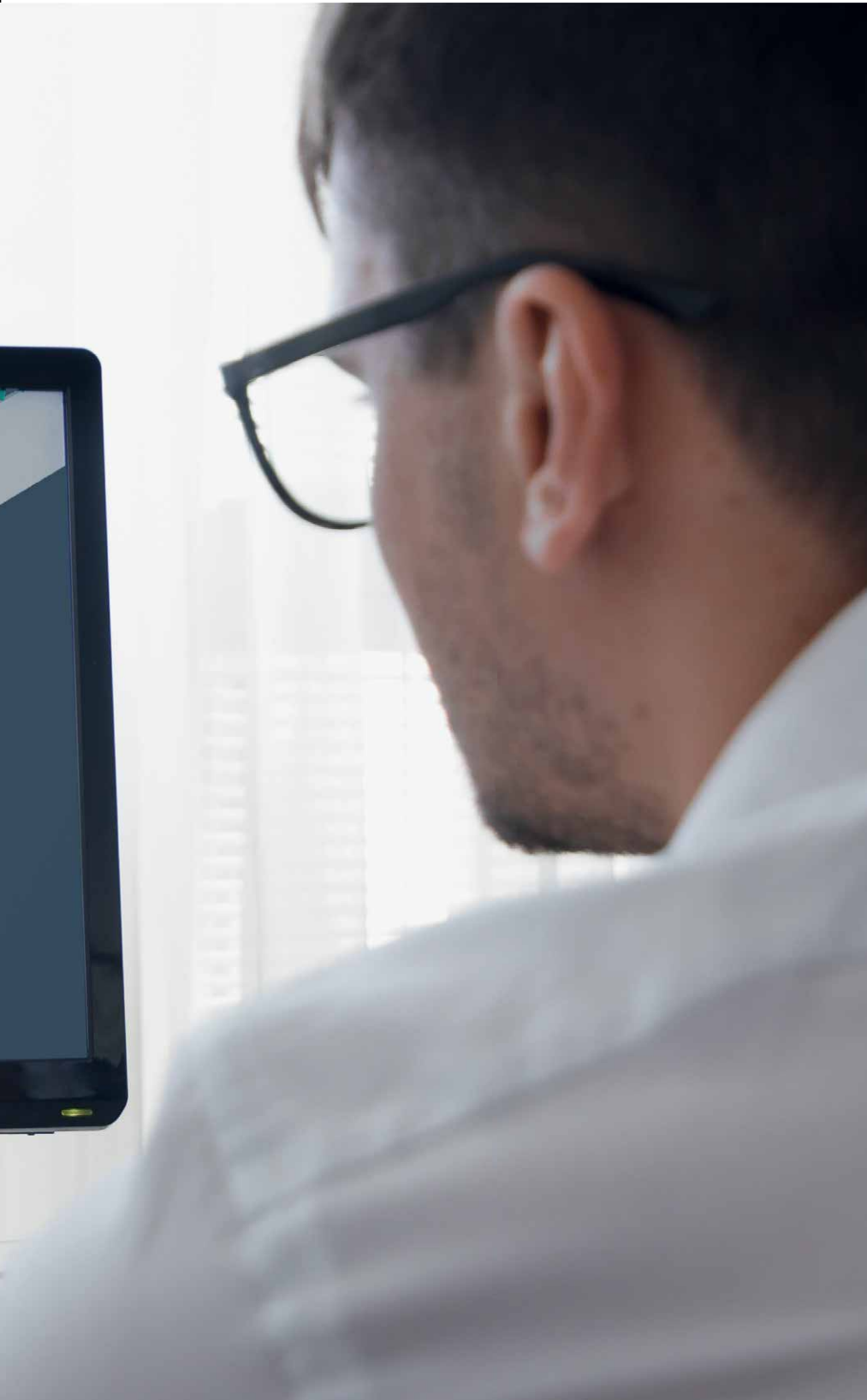
fasteners – as well as worked to educate builders on which materials are right for various applications.

“It’s a simple paradigm,” says Frank Lourie, VUETRADE’s chief software engineer. “Our CEO told me when I joined the company: we look at what builders need, then improve on what’s available.”

Now, with the launch of VUETRADE

Engineered Building Systems (VEBS) and its accompanying Australian-made nailplates and Xaber software, the team is expanding that paradigm into frame and truss fabrication.

“The timber building sector has been well served by the three major nail plate companies,” says Craig Armstrong, VEBS general manager frame and truss. “But



“We designed Xaber to be fit for purpose for your business needs now and in the future.”

to, but the beauty is that if, in the future, something that is better than a nailplate or better than the current timber material or whatever comes along, the software is designed from first principles to move with it. We're not locked into one way of doing things, we can and will do whatever our customers need.”

Armstrong – like the rest of the team – comes from a long background in timber construction. With over 30 years in the timber industry and on the boards of FTMA and the Building Designers Association of Australia, he's spent most of his career listening to the challenges facing Architects, engineers, fabricators and builders alike.

“Businesses today need to be innovative, lean and agile,” Armstrong says. “So we designed Xaber to be fit for purpose for your business needs now and in the future.

“Having immediate access to information about your business is key. That includes designing the most effective and efficient way to do a particular job, being able to quickly adapt to changes in supply availability, being able to do all your takeoffs – not just our product and timber but all the sheeting flooring fitout and so on – from the building model and then having a live accounting of where your money is at any time; all these are tools that will make life easier, better and more productive for our customers and their customers.”

So how does it work?

ADAPTABLE SOFTWARE

Unlike the existing engineering software generally used in the sector, Xaber is based on a CAD platform. All parts of the business are connected through the one software package, rather than needing to integrate data from several separate programs.

CAD is at the heart of every popular design program used by architects, engineers and building designers. The underlying concepts used in Xaber will be of comfort to anyone experienced in the industry including new users familiar or experienced in the use of CAD based systems.

“That's important,” says Lourie, “because we're always hearing about the skills shortage, but young people have a lot of skills; we just need to be delivering information in a format they understand. >>

building is changing. So, we've looked at the way fabrication and supply work now, compared to the way they were 30 years ago. Rather than adapt what worked well in the past, we decided: let's reimagine nailplates and design software so they work for the future of timber building construction.”

Lourie explains: “The VEBS nailplates themselves are a practical design evolution

that is innovative and different. We thought about how people work in F&T plants and we started there, so they're optimised for the way people actually put frames and trusses together rather than the way you might do it on paper. You can see those differences from the moment you pick them up.

“The Xaber software is similar in that it's noticeably different to what people are used

“Xaber is tailored to meet each customer’s unique needs via a close relationship with the VEBS team.”

By way of comparison, for any existing software, extensive training will be required for anyone new to the industry or fresh out of education. However, if you give them a reason to use a program because they’re interested in what it’s showing them, or uses a familiar platform, suddenly you’ve got a workforce that’s invested in upskilling to use those tools.

“The beauty of Xaber is that you can immediately visualise the data. So, whether you’re talking about how people work in factories or you’re coming at it from the technical analysis and accounting side, this is a massive, innovative tool set that can be set up in the most beneficial way that works for you.”

Importantly, Xaber is not a one-size-fits-all solution. Instead, it’s tailored to meet each customer’s unique needs via a close relationship with the VEBS team, with the one program capable of being used very differently by different businesses or by different people within the one business. “By building key relationships and understanding what is important to our partners and understanding their needs and frustrations, we can adapt the software to address these issues and improve their process,” says Armstrong.

As Lourie says, “If you’re a business owner who wants to analyse everything to the nth degree, the reports are there for you. If you’re a very meticulous detailer or estimator and you want to get everything 100% correct, all the tools are there. And of course, being CAD, you can immediately open up the drawing from the architect and start working on it. There’s no conversion. You can give it back to the architect or give it to the engineer with no worry about file formats because it’s generic to the system. It’s all transferrable and extensible.”

That ability to seamlessly integrate with other systems is as useful within a fabricator’s plant as it is in communicating with their partners.

“I hear from a lot of people who have issues with turning quotes into production and manoeuvring designs through their facilities,” says Armstrong. “The communication between the software and the machinery in the factories can be cumbersome, especially for smaller family-owned businesses. Xaber makes that world a whole lot simpler, and at the same time it has high-end solutions that will support larger businesses in terms of the level of detail available.

“It allows you to pull up a design that is more than millimetre perfect and then walk through it using a 3D viewer. You can look at the wall frames, trusses, lintels, doorways, the whole lot, and see all of the connections and spot any that could be improved or may create conflicts later.”

Fabricators can share these ‘virtual jobs’ with builders and clients, allowing everyone to sign off with confidence on all parts of the design before it’s built.

“And it’s not just about having the best services placement,” Armstrong adds. “In my time with FTMA, we worked alongside the Board on lowering risk and identifying the dangerous things we do on construction sites that arise out of the way we assemble frames and trusses.

“Xaber lets us look at this and reduce risk prior to manufacturing.”

It’s not just a theoretical claim: VEBS and Xaber have been rigorously tested by independent external engineers, fabricators and detailers.

“As an example, we can identify projects where we would show significant savings or manufacturing efficiencies or installation benefits,” says Armstrong, “just by choosing a different way to frame a roof; these changes identify cost savings on site in terms of assembly. Our 3D modelling will show a better way to assemble, with less bracing and fewer one-off trusses being up on site before the rest could be quickly put together. This will improve assembly times, improve safety; it’s a smarter, safer way of installation and improves labour costs.”

Like existing design software, Xaber allows for materials to be turned off and on as available and is rigorous in ensuring atypical materials are fit for an application. “It’s a little simpler to use than its competitors,” Armstrong says, “but the real difference is at a deeper level. Because it’s a CAD-based solution, customers can do all of their other timber takeoff options within the software. They can measure sheeting boards, architraves and more. All those other elements can be added into the software and quantified in the form of a quoting system.

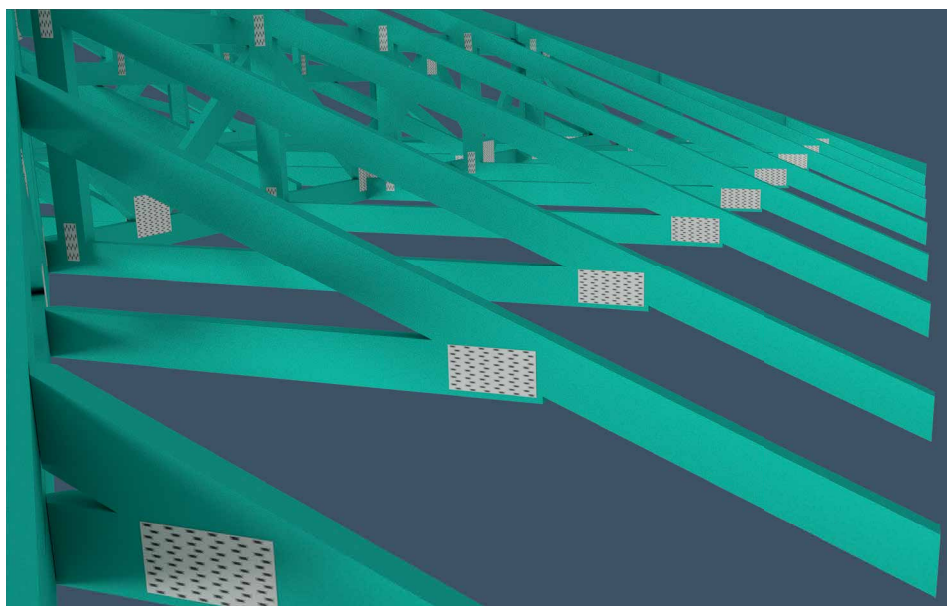
“For customers who are selling material as well as fabricating, this gives them the advantage of being a lot more accurate with their quotes, giving their customers a clearer picture and more accurate costings.

“And for all our customers, Xaber lets them understand their true costs of goods sold pretty much immediately. We’ve found that this can be a challenge and Xaber facilitates a clear understanding and control of costs at any point in time. A true understanding of live manufacturing costs allows for informed decisions to be made and expensive mistakes to be avoided.”

FUTURE READY

We know the building industry has been going through challenging time – building in 2024 isn’t what it was in 2021 and it’s hard to predict what it will be in 2027. But that’s a situation where the VEBS team sees opportunity for improvement in timber construction.

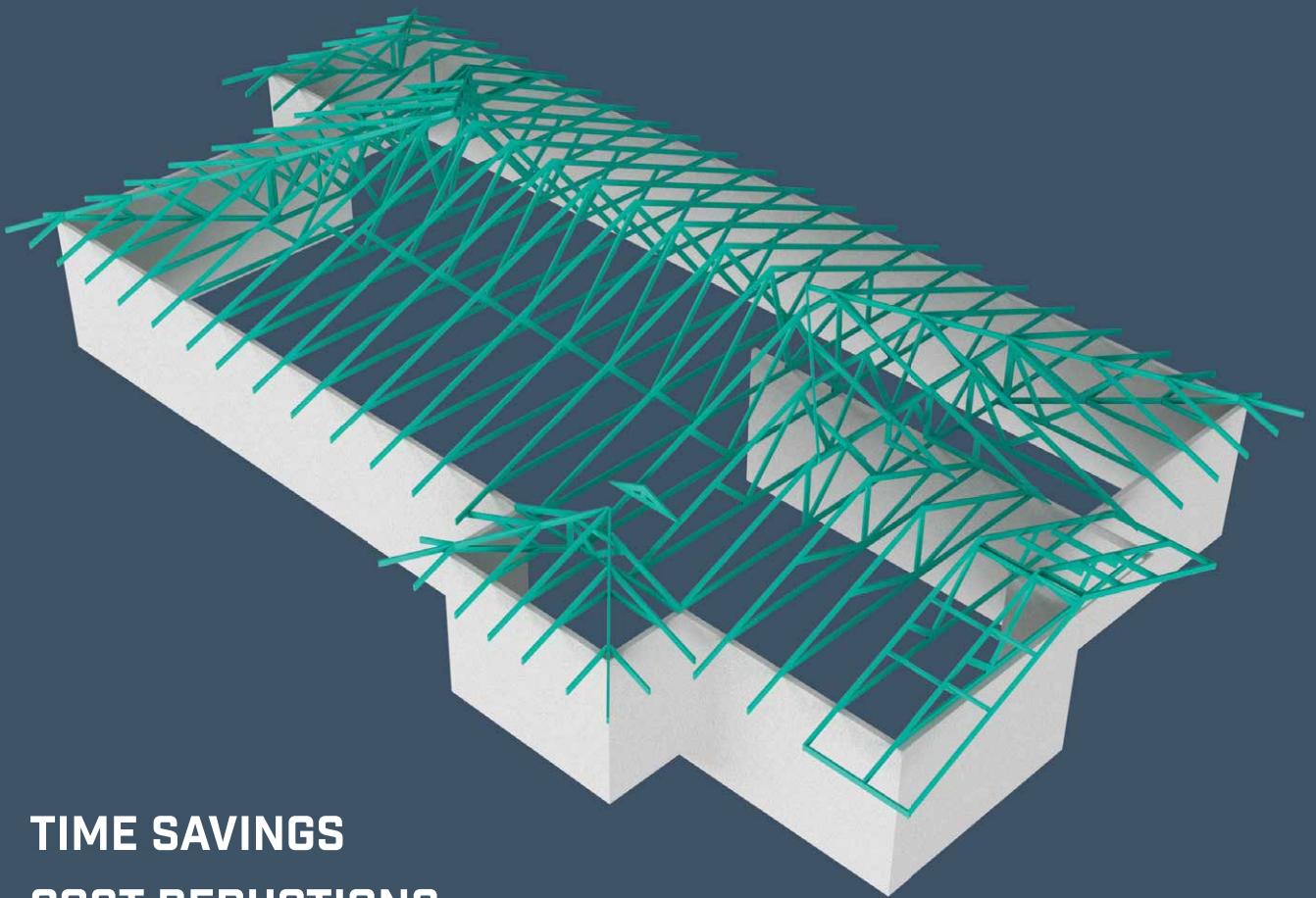
“Our intention is to challenge the industry through bodies like the FTMA, the Building >>



Above: Familiar CAD based functionality makes it easy to navigate through the Xaber software when creating the design and making changes.



CAD BASED ENGINEERED ROOF, WALL & FLOOR SOFTWARE

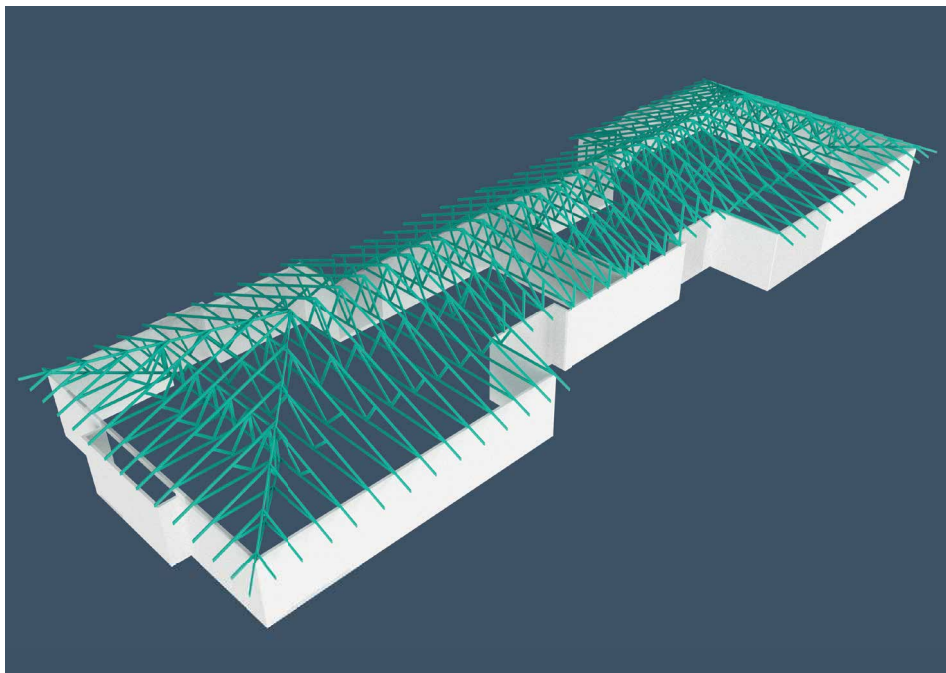


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Above: Quickly and efficiently produce designs to speed up the quoting process and reduce overall project timelines.

Designers Association of Australia BDA, Master Builders, HIA and more to push for a better way of fabricating & installation,” Armstrong says.

“If we can show our customers how to look at ways to take out waste in the elements of labour, materials, safety and more – from quoting right through to assembly on site – while still being millimetre perfect in the design, then not only do we improve their businesses, we improve the perception of timber-framed construction.”

At the heart of the model is the marriage of Xaber’s adaptability and VEBS’s service responsiveness. “We know every business is unique and so our customers are all going to have different requirements and priorities,” says Armstrong. “People in Reynella build differently to people in Cairns. So, we’ll optimise Xaber for each customer to get their jobs done faster and more efficiently, allowing more quotes to be started at the same time and jobs to be worked through more quickly.”

The VEBS team isn’t expecting a mass migration from other nailplate companies, “For many people, they’ve got a good relationship there that is working for them,” says Armstrong. “But for businesses who are looking for something more and want to work closely with the team to tailor Xaber to their needs, they’ll get a new system that’s open to new materials and new methodologies as well as ensuring the traditional ones drive profitability through efficiency.”

That individualisation of relationships, and loyalty between both parties, has been at the heart of VUETRADE’s success since its inception.

“What we’re offering the market is a partner who will not only be delivering best practice, but who cares about their P&L.”

“It’s funny because we’ve got decades of experience *and* we’re a newcomer,” says CEO Jamie Shedden. “My grandfather was a design engineer and architect, then my father, Tim, started Bellevue in Hobart in the eighties and was all about building houses. I started VUETRADE and have been all about the connectors that put them together. Our head office is still based in Hobart and we now have manufacturing in Victoria and locations in Melbourne and Queensland. VEBS is the next stage of this, so the relationship with the construction industry continues!

“One of the first things we realised was that we needed the right people in place to make VEBS and Xaber a reality. There’s a wealth of experience and knowledge in the company, so when people come to us with problems their business is having, we know what they’re talking about and can work with them to find solutions and then show them how they can build on those.”

VEBS began as an idea on paper in 2019. “It was as result of assessing common pain points across the industry and has been our

development priority since,” Shedden says. “Every up and down in the industry over the past five years has only reinforced the industry’s need for this sort of system.

“We started with conceptualising our software platform, and then into the design and engineering of the nailplates and ancillary products. This formed the basis of our strategy to move into the frame and truss space which has also included testing facilities, software framework, and building a world-class team. The time and effort engaged has been extensive and no stone has been left unturned in our development path to comply with certification protocol. It is truly inspirational to reach this point after such a long time in the making and huge credit should be given to the team and everyone who has helped us get to this point.”

The launch has come at a particularly helpful time from a market perspective.

“Times are tough this year,” says Shedden. “So, what are you doing to drive profitability on the bottom line in financial year 25, and 26 and 27? What are you doing to future-proof your business and generate increases in revenue and profitability?”

“What we’re offering the market is a partner who will not only be delivering best practice, but who cares about their P&L, whether they’re small teams wanting efficiencies or larger ones wanting to expand their capabilities.

“Craig, Frank and the team have designed a product that doesn’t insist you do anything in a particular way. They listen to how you do things and then work out how to accommodate that and improve your business without adding challenges – we know everyone has more than enough of those already.”

As VEBS grows, additional functionalities that already exist within the Xaber package will come into play and benefit the timber construction industry as a whole, says Shedden: “In the future, we could be sharing 3D models of existing jobs with clients as part of a pitch to get more builds done in timber and fewer in steel. Our customers could use them to relieve client anxieties and help win more jobs.

“Or if VR glasses become commonplace, we could share files with the build crew and they could look at them on site to make sure they understand a job then check they got it right. The possibilities are huge.” **T**

For more information on the VEBS rollout, call VUETRADE on 1300 850 520 or email customercare@bellevuegroup.com.au

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ITI Australia's Design Pine marks 20 year milestone

Overcoming early challenges and forging a path to success.

By Nicky Ainley

Now in its 20th year, Design Pine continues to forge its way as a market leader in the Australian timber industry. A concept that came to members of ITI Australia following the discontinued use of a popular exterior timber, Design Pine has stood the test of time, not only in its range but also in its brand name and associated reliability. Overcoming a series of challenges and setbacks the ITI Australia team share a pride in a product that has become, and continues to be, one of the most trusted by Australians.

IN THE BEGINNING

The development of Design Pine started more than 20 years ago as Sydney was gearing up to welcome the world for the Sydney 2000 Olympics.

"It all started in 1998 when I could see an opportunity in the market for a quality outdoor building product for exterior entertaining areas," Craig Davies from ITI Australia, creator of Design Pine said.

The idea came to Davies following a ban on the use of Oregon timber, a Class four timber. Oregon was incredibly popular, particularly in Sydney and Adelaide and reached its prime use in the mid 90's. It was particularly popular for external use including patios and cantilever joists among many other things,

"They were having a lot of problems with cantilever decks falling off the sides of houses because they were rotting at the brickwork, so they banned the use of Oregon for external applications," Davies said.

"Following that, all the market was left with was hardwood or treated pine and treated

pine never used to perform particularly well, it used to twist a lot. So, I saw an opportunity for a high-grade external structural product."

It was from there Davies began work with Pacific Timber (now known as Niagara Timber New Zealand), to develop a new product for external use.

"We created some initial products in various sizes, and we got them structurally tested at the University of Canterbury in Christchurch in New Zealand as there were no standards in Australia for structural finger joint products."

Following the testing in NZ, Craig engaged Charlie Herbert, formally the chief timber inspector for NSW Forestry Commission, to assist with the structural standards locally.

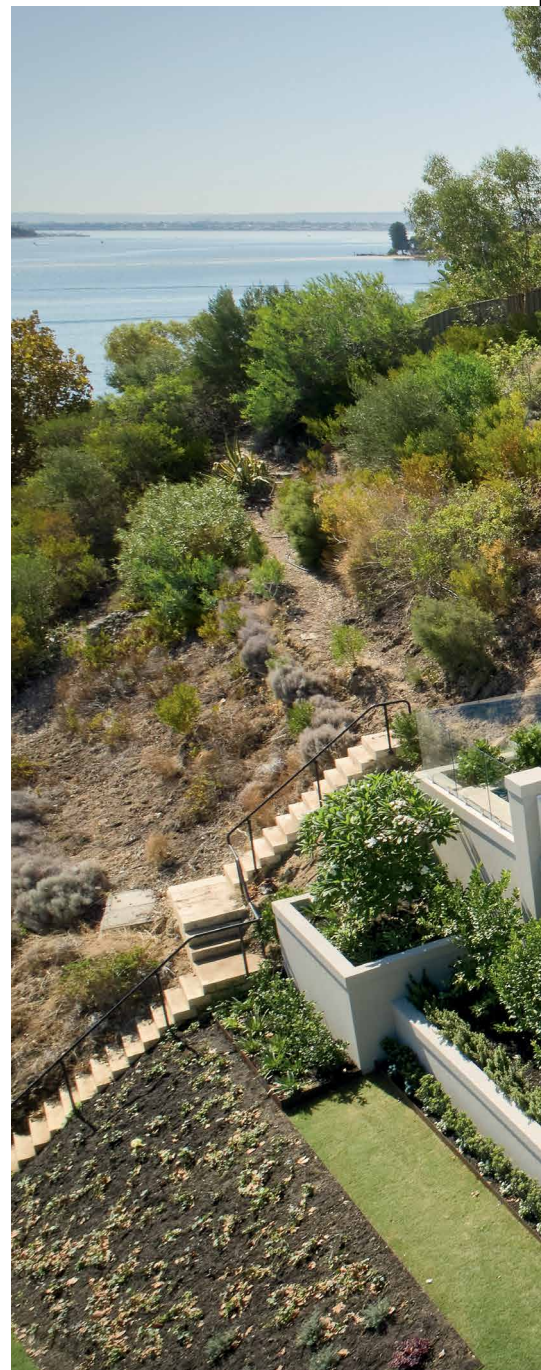
"He supported what we had done so we brought a lot of pink primed in," Davies said.

THE OLYMPIC TEST

An opportunity arose in 1999 for ITI Australia to supply the structural pink primed timber to the athlete's Olympic Village for the Sydney 2000 games. The product was to be used for the demountable structures, the athlete's accommodation, all of which were to have pergolas constructed out the front for a small outdoor area. The product was supplied through Harper Timbers and construction was carried out.

"Ian Halliday contacted me after we had supplied the product and said they were having a problem with the paint peeling off," Davies continued, "So I met him at the Olympic Village and oh my goodness!"

"In these pergolas which they had erected out of the pink primed, large blisters had



Above: The premium exterior timber product in modern and traditional housing, an example of a luxury build using Design Pine in Perth, WA.

developed. You could pop these blisters and you could peel the paint off like strips of wallpaper!

"There was a big panic as the Olympics were coming and we needed a solution."

After discussions with the paint suppliers, Davies was alerted to the fact that the primer was not a genuine primer, it was a 'holding or transport primer', a coat that was put over the timber to keep it in good condition while it was transported and delivered to site. From the paint suppliers' point of view the product would still require sanding, priming and painting, not what ITI Australia was looking for with their primed product.



“That was completely mad!” Davies said.

According to the paint suppliers, Davies was told the treatment on the wood made it impossible to put a pre-primed paint on it that would stick, however Davies and the ITI Australia team were determined not to give up.

BACK TO THE DRAWING BOARD

Following the incident at the Olympic Village, Davies and his team then spend the best of the next four years working on their product. This included resolving the paint issue which saw Davies working alongside John Kilby from Resene Paints in New Zealand who spent time developing a paint exclusively for ITI which would be a genuine primer.

At the time there were a number of similar complaints in New Zealand regarding

“We knew we had a successful product because we did it properly”

weather board, so the timing was opportune.

“There were some failures along the way but once we got it all right, then we decided that, ok, if we are going to do this, we are going to launch it properly,” Davies continued.

At that point, Davies along with Paul Shadbolt, Justin Newman and the ITI team decided on the branding ‘Design Pine’. They

knew they had what could be a market leading product on their hands.

“That’s when we dramatically broadened the range of product, that was really the inception, and it has grown further from there.”

DESIGN PINE ‘BLUE’

At the point of launch for Design Pine, primed timber in the existing market was distinctly pink. The same colour that ITI had presented the product to the Olympic Village which had not ended the way they had hoped. So as part of the official product launch, ITI made a bold decision to change the colour to blue.

“We wanted to differentiate ourselves from the bad, bad days of the pink primed,” Davies said. >>



Above: The combination of structural and non-structural sizes make Design Pine perfect for any application.

“There were a lot of failures in the market with the product.”

“The change of colour did cause some issues with some people. Some criticised us for having a different colour.”

However, the team stuck to their blue colour, which was chosen as a pigment derived from white which would be easy enough to cover but would also require two coats to be completely covered which would drive people to paint it properly and get the desired finish.

And that, according to Davies, is where it all really started. With their distinct blue, four years after ITI went back to square one following their pink Olympic failure, Design Pine was launched and took on the market with nothing but success.

“Four years it took to get not only the primer, but the application, the branding the packaging and everything right,” Davies said.

We wanted to make sure before we rushed into the market, we had everything covered.

“We even had the product specification which was 30 pages long for people to adhere to.”

GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

For over 20 years now, Design Pine has expanded its range and become iconic with its signature blue primed product and with the expansion it has also become more streamlined.

There were originally more than 12 producers in New Zealand which has now been reduced to three in New Zealand and ITI Chile.

Over its first 20 years, ITI have put nearly one million cubes into the market, some into the US, and consumed about five million litres of paint without failure.

“It’s awesome,” Davies said as he reflected on the achievement over the past two decades.

“We knew we had a successful product because we did it properly. We never knew

where the market would go with it, we just continued to broaden the range and respond to the market and now it’s a really well-known brand.

“We worked a lot with Australian standards and with the industry associations to build the product and the specifications. We did it properly all the way along.

“For example,” Davies continued, “we worked with TABMA and we made our profile drawings to TABMA specifications while others were doing their own things, we made sure everything was industry standards. And we continue to change and develop to the market and the industries requirements,”

“It has been very successful.”

ITI maintained their path when it came to Design Pine, overcoming battles around the use of LOSP treated timber externally and the initial judgment of the now iconic ‘blue colour’.

“There were a lot of things over the years, but the success has been remarkable.

“We continue to work on it, making it better. We continue to audit the product; we make sure it always meets a standard. We never say, ‘there it is’ we continue to monitor and develop the product.

TODAY

Design Pine remains a market-leading diverse product that is used in a range of applications across Australia and the world. From residential to commercial construction the versatility of Design Pine means it is used for a wide number of building projects.

Davies believes the timing in many ways was opportune with the growth of the alfresco and ‘outdoor’ living focus which has grown exponentially in the past 20 years in Australia. It’s the market that Davies and the ITI team could see growing however even they weren’t to know just how large that market would become.

“For residential, the outdoor space has become so critical in any sale, it can now

make or break the look and price of a property,” Davies said.

The versatility of what Design Pine have to offer means everything from outdoor structures, such as pergolas, cladding and fences are constructed offering durability and resistance to the elements, to furniture and joinery. Design Pine’s workability make it a popular choice for outdoor furniture, cabinetry, and other joinery projects.

WHY DESIGN PINE?

Design Pine offers a number of benefits in its choice, more of which have developed as the range and products have over the decades.

Pine is a fast-growing, renewable resource making it highly sustainable. ITI Australia sources its pine from sustainably managed plantations, ensuring environmental responsibility. Additionally, Pine trees absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, and using pine products helps lock away carbon, contributing to lower greenhouse gas emissions. In its production, pine has several environmental benefits primarily its low environmental impact. The production and processing of pine timber require less energy compared to many alternative materials, reducing the overall environmental footprint.

Over the years, Design Pine has proven itself in the areas of versatility and usability.

It is appropriate for a wide use of applications including framing, flooring, decking, cladding, and furniture and has an ease of workability making it easy to cut, shape, and join, making it an ideal material for both DIY projects and professional construction.

ITI Australia offers treated pine products that are resistant to termites, decay, and other environmental factors, enhancing the durability and lifespan of the timber. Plus, Pine has good strength-to-weight ratios, making it suitable for various structural applications while being lighter and easier to handle compared to many hardwoods.

Add on to this the cost-effectiveness of the product. Pine is generally more affordable than many other timber species, providing a cost-effective solution for a wide range of building and design projects. The combination of affordability, durability, and aesthetic appeal offers excellent value over the long term, particularly when properly maintained.

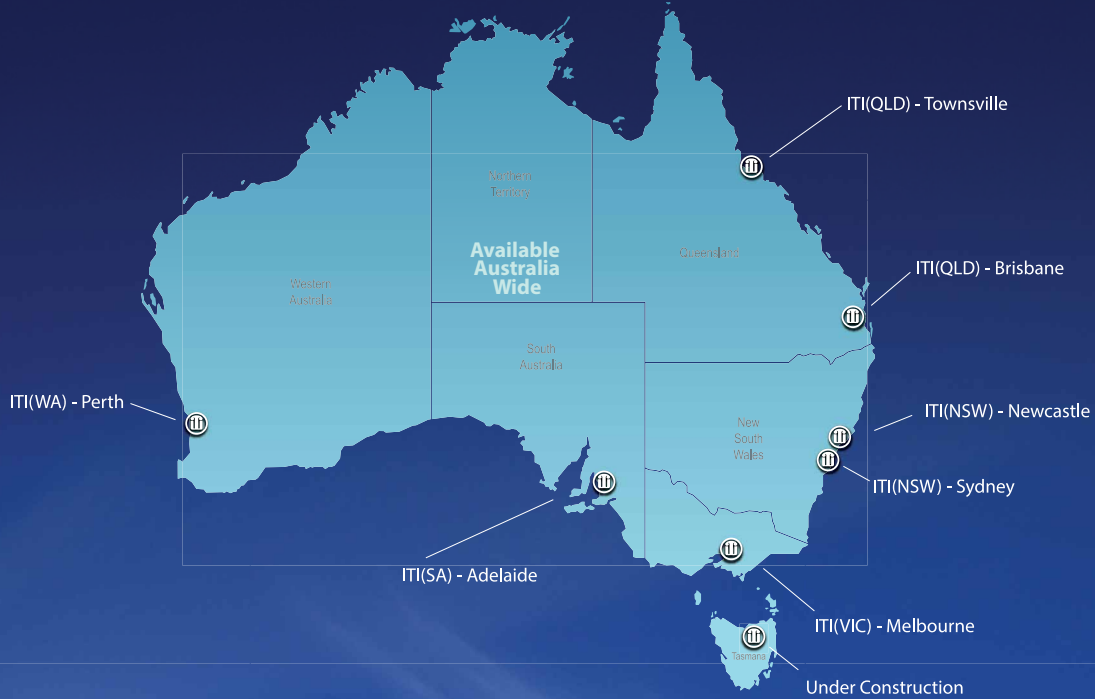
THE FUTURE:

The future is bright for ITI Australia’s Design Pine as it enters its third decade as a market leader in structural and decorative timber. **T**

For more information, visit <https://designpine.com.au/>

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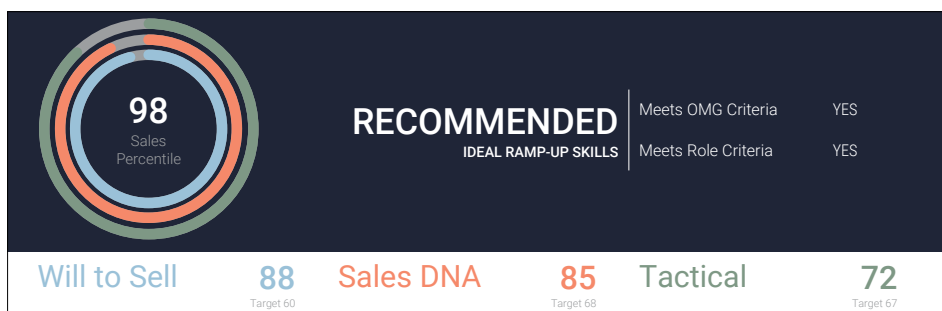
Innovative Strategies and Cutting-Edge Technology Redefine Sales Performance.
By **Campbell McInnes**

In an increasingly competitive business landscape, the traditional methods of recruitment and sales training are proving insufficient. Enter Arrow Executive Sales, an Australian company that has distinguished itself by blending science and technology with strategic analysis and sales enablement to redefine what it means to cultivate a high-performing sales team.

Jason Howes, Owner and Managing Director of Arrow, is a veteran of the sales industry with over three decades of experience. His journey from a novice salesperson in 1989 to the helm of Arrow has been marked by a relentless pursuit of innovation and excellence. This drive is evident in Arrow's unique approach to recruitment and training. Jason explained, "having walked in the shoes of the salesperson, and sales leader gives me a great understanding of what challenges they face. I actively sell every single day, so I know what it's like."

On average, companies invest between 2% and 5% of payroll on sales training. For example, if you pay your salespeople an annual base salary of \$100,000, you should invest between \$2,000 and \$5,000 in yearly sales training per employee. Investing in sales training should be looked at as a ROI (return on investment), not a cost. Howes question to companies is "what if your \$5,000 investment made you \$20,000 or \$50,000, let alone raised the bar within your company?"

Arrow Executive Sales, which has been operational for five and a half years, stands out by using sophisticated tools and technologies that are globally recognized for their efficacy. "The old school methods will only take a salesperson so far," Howes notes. In an industry like timber and forest products, where selling new products presents unique challenges, Arrow's approach offers a significant competitive edge.



Above: The sales percentile is important to compare against the best global practice and 2.4 million salespeople.

THE ARROW EXECUTIVE ADVANTAGE

- Partnership Approach** Arrow Executive collaborates closely with clients, fostering a genuine team effort. This partnership mentality ensures that both parties are fully invested in achieving mutual success.
- Decades of Expertise** With more than thirty years of experience, Arrow Executive brings a wealth of knowledge and proven strategies to the table. This extensive background allows them to tackle a wide range of sales challenges effectively.
- Tailored Solutions** Recognizing that every business is unique, Arrow Executive customizes their programs to meet each customer's specific needs. This personalized approach maximizes the impact of their training and recruitment services.

A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH TO SALES EXCELLENCE

Arrow's methodology can be encapsulated in a four-step "EDGE" process: Evaluate, Develop, Grow, and Execute. This begins with a strategic analysis to evaluate the current state of a sales team, followed by the development of tailored sales strategies. It's critical to uncover what you're working with in systems, process and people.

Next, Arrow focuses on sales enablement, equipping teams with the tools and knowledge they need, and finally, provides ongoing training and coaching to ensure consistent execution.

This holistic approach is designed to address the common pitfalls in sales teams. Howes explained "many businesses still operate with a "hit and hope" mentality, a shotgun approach that lacks focus and strategic direction. Arrow, on the other hand, ensures that every salesperson is aligned with the company's goals and equipped with the right tools and mindset." to create and win more new business opportunities.

HARNESSING TECHNOLOGY AND SCIENCE FOR EXPERT SALES RECRUITMENT

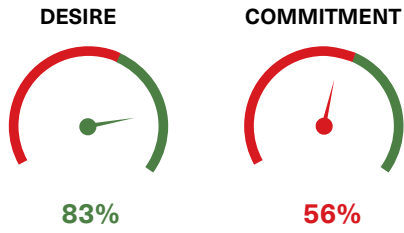
A key differentiator for Arrow is its integration of data and science into the recruitment and training processes. "I wanted more data and more science to be different than traditional recruitment," Howes explains. By partnering with the Objective Management Group, (OMG) Arrow leverages tools that compare salespeople across a wide range of industries globally to predict candidate success with 95% accuracy before you hire someone, not find out later.

This comparative analysis helps pinpoint where a salesperson may be struggling and how best to support their onboarding and development. This is crucial in industries like timber, where the introduction of new products requires a nuanced and skilled approach to sales which many salespeople have never been trained for.

ARROW'S RECRUITMENT SERVICES:

Specialist Recruitment: Arrow Executive has expertise in various sectors, including

The will to sell competencies



Above: Desire (grit) and commitment (doing what it takes to succeed outside comfort zone) are two critical areas we assess.

wholesale, manufacturing and building materials supply, ensuring they understand the specific demands of your industry.

Onboarding Program: A comprehensive 4-week onboarding process that includes functional HR automation, saving valuable time and ensuring new employees are quickly up to speed.

Custom Recruitment Packages: Whether you prefer a DIY approach or a fully managed service, Arrow Executive offers tailored recruitment packages to suit your needs and budget.

BUILDING HIGH-PERFORMANCE SALES TEAMS

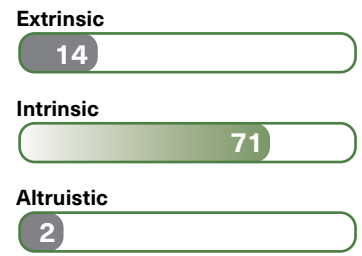
Arrow’s commitment to excellence extends beyond recruitment and training. They are dedicated to building high-performance sales cultures within organizations. We provide tools for business and sales leaders to ensure the right people are in the right roles.

Howes advised “by providing a total package, Arrow ensures that businesses can focus on growth, innovation and technology rather than the day-to-day struggles of managing a sales team. Most people are time poor, with automation and process we focus on getting your team working on the right activities, not just the comfortable ones.”

CONCLUSION

Arrow Executive Sales takes the guesswork out of sales success and is redefining what it means to build and maintain a high-

Motivational style: intrinsic



Above: Only 32% of salespeople have an extrinsic motivation. (Extrinsic salespeople are more suited to BDM and leadership roles for high growth).

performance sales team in Australia and NZ. With Jason Howes at the helm, businesses can trust that they are in capable hands, ready to navigate the challenges of modern sales with confidence and precision. **T**

Jason Howes, Owner and Managing Director of Arrow Executive Sales. To engage their services today to transform your sales team and drive your business forward, please contact Jason Howes on 1300 903 527 or visit their website: www.arrowexec.com.au.



Salespeople are not born, they’re made!

Award winning sales tools & tech to build high performance teams.

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ARROW
executive sales



Meyer's keep a wide range of sizes, profiles and lengths in Merbau giving architects flexibility.

Meyer Timber: embracing Merbau timber

A versatile choice for Australia's construction and design needs.

By **Campbell McInnes**

Australia's rich and diverse ecosystem supports a variety of timber species, each bringing unique characteristics to the construction and design industries. In recent times however, there has been a trend towards locking up and ceasing the renewable logging of Australian Native Forests, which has already occurred in both Western Australia and Victorian states. This has created pressure on hardwood availability in Australia which is creating a trend of customers seeking the supply of hardwood from overseas. I spoke with Todd Beazley from Meyer Timber with regards to one hardwood that has been used in Australia for many years, that being Merbau / Kwila (*Intsia Bijuga*). Merbau and Kwila timber are one and the same and the name relates more to the origin. In Indonesia and Malaysia this timber is referred to as Merbau whereas in Papua New Guinea they refer to this species as Kwila. These days it is predominantly sourced from Indonesia and grows mainly in South East Asia, Papua New

Guinea, the Pacific islands, with some in Northern Queensland. Merbau timber has garnered significant attention for its outstanding properties, making it an exceptional choice for both structural and aesthetic applications. This editorial delves into the attributes of Merbau timber, its fire rating, outdoor resistance, availability and sizes, as well as its varied uses and structural properties.

DESCRIPTION AND CHARACTERISTICS

Merbau is considered a common medium-sized tree, that can grow up to 50 meters in height. Mature trees have large buttresses (wide roots from the trunk, like the fig tree). The bark is grey to light brown in colour. Leaves tend to spread out in groups of two or four are glossy green, generally oval in shape and tend to shed their leaves once a year, remaining bare for a few days. The Tannin is like a brown oily dye and when seasoned timber gets wet, the tannins can

leach out and stain the surrounding surfaces that it makes contact with.

Merbau is resistant to termites and seasons well with kiln or air-drying, exhibiting very little shrinkage (tangential 2.5% and radial 1.2%) or movement (Unit movement tangential 0.30% and unit movement radial 0.19%), which makes this a very stable and attractive timber for the Australian climate and conditions. The grain of Merbau is usually interlocked or wavy, with an even type texture. It will finish well with stain, paint and polish although gum bleed is a possibility.

Merbau is a versatile timber product. It is utilised for larger-scale projects and general construction, along with common use for outdoor settings, barbeque trolleys, for joinery, flooring and fitting purposes. As it turns well it can be applied to more specialised work, such as cabinet making, musical instruments, boat building and carving.

STRENGTH, STRUCTURAL PROPERTIES AND APPLICATIONS

Merbau is renowned for its exceptional strength and durability. Classified as a

hardwood, Merbau boasts a high density, averaging around 850 kg/m³ when seasoned, which translates into impressive structural integrity. This strength makes Merbau suitable for heavy-duty construction projects, where robustness and longevity are paramount. In terms of specific strength metrics, Merbau when seasoned exhibits a Modulus of Rupture (MoR) of around 150 MPa, and a Modulus of Elasticity (MoE) of 18 GPa. These values indicate Merbau's excellent capacity to withstand bending and deformation under load, making it an ideal candidate for beams, joists, and other load-bearing elements in construction. Beazley advised "there is a growing interest in Merbau, in the structural arena."

In residential construction, Merbau has had a place in the outdoors when it is often seen being used in decks and pergolas. However, with the increase in enquiries for more structural sizes, Beazley explained "Meyer's have increased the Merbau range and carry good stock of finger jointed and or laminated Merbau, in GL17 (the 140 and 190mm posts are GL13), which we have span tables available for" Furthermore, he added "since the ceasing of logging of Native forests in Western Australia and Victoria the interest in Merbau has definitely increased

Merbau is renowned for its exceptional strength and durability.

with the main area of interest being in the larger profiles, particularly the F27 range." Meyer's carry a large stock holding of solid F27 in sizes of 90x90, 90x42, 140x42, 190x42, 240x42 and 290x42 up to 6.0 meters in length.

In more industrial applications, Merbau's high strength and load-bearing capacity make it suitable for bridges and heavy-duty frameworks. Where Merbau has been utilized in the construction of timber bridges, its robustness and resistance to the elements ensure long-lasting performance. Merbau is also used in boatbuilding.

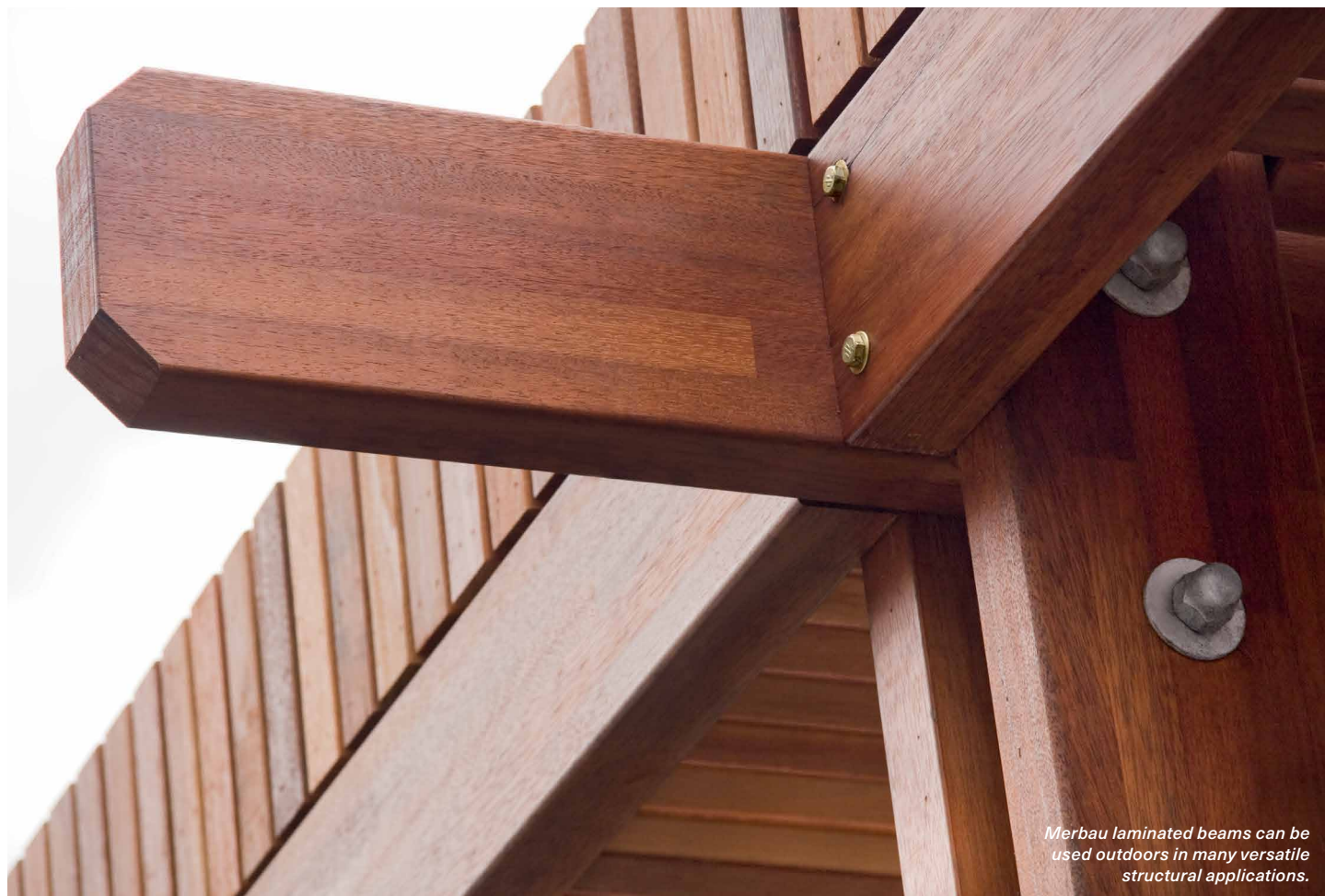
RESISTANCE TO OUTDOOR ELEMENTS

In terms of Durability (reference to heartwood only), Merbau is considered to have a durability rating of a) Moderate (5-15 years) for In-Ground use and b) High (more than 40 years) for above ground use.

One of Merbau's standout features is its exceptional resistance to outdoor elements. The timber's ability to be machined into various profiles allows for creative and functional uses. Its natural oils and high density contribute to excellent resistance to decay and termites. This makes Merbau particularly suited for outdoor applications such as decking, cladding, gazebos and outdoor furniture. When treated and maintained correctly, Merbau structures can withstand harsh weather conditions and retain its structural integrity and aesthetic appeal for decades.

FIRE RATING AND SAFETY

Fire safety is a critical consideration in Australian construction, especially given the country's susceptibility to bushfires. Merbau timber stands out with a commendable fire rating, classified as BAL-29 (Bushfire Attack Level). Beazley said, "this rating signifies that Merbau can endure significant fire exposure without igniting quickly, thereby providing a safer option for buildings in fire-prone areas." The high density and natural oils in Merbau contribute to its fire-resistant properties, offering peace of mind to builders and homeowners alike and is another reason >>



Merbau laminated beams can be used outdoors in many versatile structural applications.

why Merbau is embraced in Australian construction.

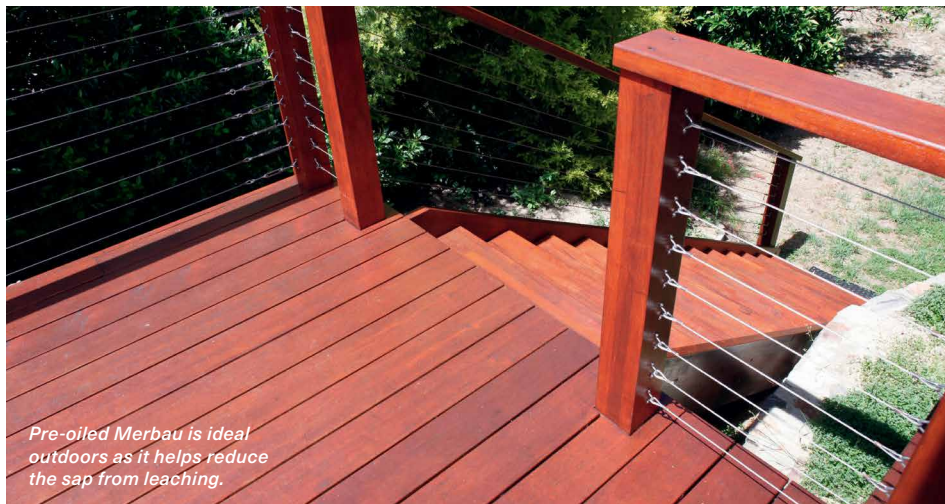
RANGE OF SIZES, LENGTHS, AND PROFILES

The versatility of Merbau timber is further enhanced by its availability in a wide range of sizes, lengths, and profiles. Commonly available dimensions range from small sections used in handrails, and joinery elements to large beams. Lengths can vary significantly, Meyer's keep lengths up to 7.8 meters in some products, catering to both small-scale projects and extensive constructions. Beazley said, "the Merbau range that Meyer's stock includes sizes that can be used for:

- **Decking:** Merbau decking is popular for its aesthetic appeal and robustness, as well as the low shrinkage rate, which makes it ideal for outdoor decking.
- **Posts:** Strong and durable, Merbau posts are used in both structural and decorative applications.
- **Laminated:** Laminated Merbau timber provides enhanced stability and strength, suitable for various construction projects.
- **Finger Jointed:** This technique is used to create longer lengths of timber from shorter pieces, ensuring efficient use of the wood and consistent quality.
- **Cladding:** Merbau cladding is favoured for its rich colour and durability, enhancing the exterior appearance of buildings.
- **Dressed Boards:** These smooth boards are used for interior and exterior applications, providing a refined finish.
- **Handrail Components:** Merbau's strength and aesthetic appeal make it a preferred choice for handrails in both residential and commercial settings.
- **Stairs:** Due to the strength, colour and ability to finish in either stain or paint, staircase can be either for internal or external uses.
- **Flooring:** Merbau is frequently used for flooring, where its rich, reddish-brown adds warmth and elegance to interiors.



Above: Merbau timber used inside in structural applications is both strong and beautiful.



Pre-oiled Merbau is ideal outdoors as it helps reduce the sap from leaching.

The timber's hardness ensures it withstands daily wear and tear, making it an excellent choice for high-traffic areas."

The range of options ensures that Merbau can be tailored to suit specific design aesthetics and functional requirements.

Beazley spoke about the service Meyer's provide, "customer service is a high priority for Meyer's, we offer in-house timber designers and timber engineers to assist with small and large projects. We offer our full range of merbau in job lots, the customer can order a mix of sizes and lengths the builder requires for their order. All orders are packed to reduce the chance of damage in transit and on site. Our laminated Magna range has a 15-year guarantee and is certified by the GLTAA," he added.

PRE-OILED MERBAU

Another part of the Meyer's Merbau range is the pre-oiled range. Beazley advised "the pre-oiled Merbau is also an area of great interest that is growing in popularity. Pre-oiled decking is becoming very popular. Users see the big advantage not only in saving time, but also having the underneath side of a deck pre-oiled is wonderful as this helps to seal the decking timber, which many users simply don't normally do!" Beazley added "the other significant advantage of the pre-oiled Merbau is that it reduces the bleeding/leaching from the timber, which is a huge benefit."

Meyers have increased their pre-oiled range to include:

- A range of solid decking profiles, available in random length packs to 5.7m
- Solid Merbau 90x90 posts up to 6.0m
- Solid Merbau F27 in set lengths up to 6.0m
- Laminated posts 90x90 up to 290x290
- Laminated beams 70x32 up to 320x65
- Finger Jointed screening pre-oiled sizes 18x18, 32x18, 42x18, 70x19, 90x19, 140x19.

COMPLIANCE AND AVAILABILITY

Meyers take compliance and sustainability very seriously. They carry out due diligence on all timber suppliers they use and communicate with them on a regular basis. Beasley said, "Meyer's have a close relationship with their suppliers, and we visit the mills in Indonesia often to ensure the products we are buying are of high quality and sustainably sourced." He added, "Meyer's ensure every container has the correct certification." Currently there seems to be an increase in the availability of FSC Merbau. Due to the ongoing relationships, Beasley believes Meyer's are well positioned to grow with the Australian market as the demand in Merbau increases.

CONCLUSION

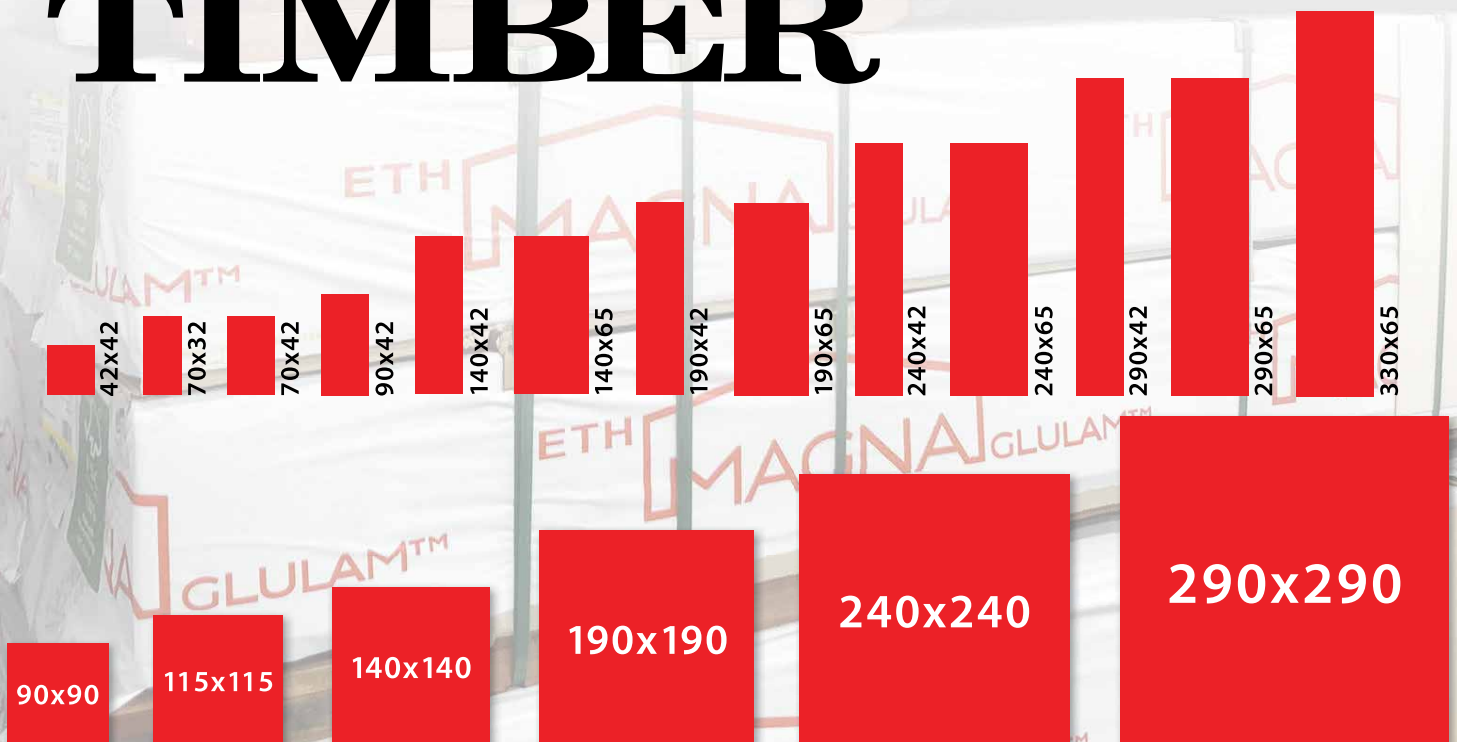
Merbau timber stands out as a premier choice in Australia's timber market, thanks to its superior strength, fire resistance, outdoor durability, and versatile range of sizes and profiles. Its structural properties enable its use in a wide array of applications, from residential flooring and decking to industrial construction and bridges. As the construction industry continues to prioritize sustainable and durable materials, Merbau's natural resilience and aesthetic appeal solidify its position as a preferred timber choice in Australia.

For builders, architects, and designers seeking a reliable, beautiful, and enduring material, Merbau timber offers significant benefits. By leveraging Merbau's unique properties, Australia can continue to build resilient, safe, and visually stunning structures that stand the test of time.

Merbau has been popular in Australia now for many years, however with Australian hardwoods becoming less available through Native Forest lockups, Merbau is one of those species which is likely to further grow in popularity. **T**

For more, visit www.meyertimber.com.au

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ETH MAGNA GLULAM™ MERBAU Now Pre Oiled



The Razer 5 saw housing and control panel, where all the action takes place.



Vekta Automation and SMC sharpen up on the Razer range

Standardisation and simplification of solutions. **By SMC Corporation Australia and New Zealand**

Best described as a customer centric business, Western Australian manufacturing company, Vekta Automation has grown to become one of the most trusted automated machine suppliers for the timber frame and truss industry – both locally and beyond our borders.

In 2007, Mechatronics Engineer (and Vekta Automation Managing Director), Ed Serrano spotted an opportunity in the Razer – a linear saw developed for the timber construction industry. After securing the rights to purchase the Razer and its IP, Ed set up Vekta Automation from an unpowered shed on his Beckenham property. He worked to improve the functionality and performance of the Razer and to reduce the costs associated with its operation. “We were taking on a failed product with a terrible reputation.

Every time one of these machines was built, it was done so at a loss. This was a major challenge for us – to spin that around and change the reputation of our core product, but we did it and it has been a hugely challenging and satisfying process” he says

In addition to the constant innovation of products, Vekta Automation prioritises developments that promote safety. “This is one of our core values – ensuring that everything we do creates safety for the user.”

Today, this family-owned business manufactures a range of automated equipment for the building industry and has over 100 employees around the globe. In addition, the company’s flagship machine, the Razer, enjoys majority market share in Australia and New Zealand. “We are continuously innovating and developing the

Razer, improving the software, and developing the machine’s efficiency and reliability. Our competitors have not been able to replicate this,” explains Ed.

RESOLVING INDUSTRY CHALLENGES WITH THE RAZER

The Razer enables automated, accurate and rapid cutting of timber for roofing and walling, “For our customers who supply prefabricated timber roofs and walls, this machine improves safety and enhances operations, making it possible to deliver ready-made timber products to construction sites, faster,” says Ed.

Chief among the industry challenges that Vekta Automation and the Razer address, is the current labour shortage, and the growing demand for fast turnaround times. “One of

the key issues facing our customers is access to labour. There are fewer people willing to work in the manual labour-intensive construction industry,” explains Ed. This is where the Razer (and Vekta product line) come in, carrying out the material handling jobs that might otherwise require the work of many human hands.

“Another challenge for the industry is material shortages. Timber is becoming harder and harder to get, so being able to optimise the available materials and reduce waste, is a major driving factor for our customers,” elaborates Ed.

INNOVATION AS A CORE VALUE

Ed’s background as a robotics engineer set the foundation for Vekta Automation’s approach to innovation. “We approach industry challenges as an engineering problem, and we set about solving those issues. This is what really keeps bringing our customers back. We’re not stagnant and we’re not replicating what others have done. We invest in R&D and innovation, developing solutions for very specific problems and needs within our industry,” adds Ed.

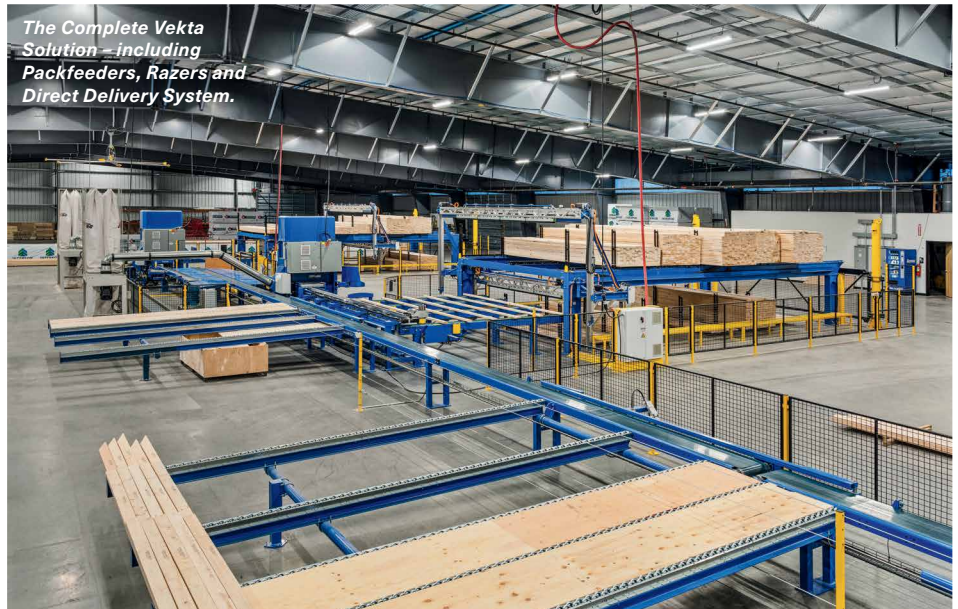
He is very proud of the company culture, pointing out that Vekta Automation is a family-first company, and has built strong relationships with employees as well as suppliers and customers. In spite of the company’s rapid growth, Ed and his team are committed to maintaining this distinct culture that puts people first. “In fact, this is what we really love about SMC – the people.”

A RAZER-SHARP PARTNERSHIP

Key to Vekta Automation’s success has been the company’s partnership with leading global automation specialist, SMC Corporation Australia New Zealand.

Ed explains that Vekta Automation has worked closely with SMC since the beginning. “We view them as a partner. They’ve always assisted us – from the early days of setting up the business, to the development of new products. It’s important for us to partner with experts who can fill the gaps in our expertise. We can rely on SMC to help us engineer solutions – particularly on the pneumatics applications. Their products are clever and innovative. Their approach to customers makes them stand out and has made us a loyal partner of theirs.”

Speaking to the formidable partnership, Murray Hofstee, SMC Regional Sales Manager, adds: “We invest in building long term partnerships, not just buyer relationships. ‘Beyond our comprehensive product range, we pride ourselves on the support that we provide to our customers throughout their automation journey. For us,



The Complete Vekta Solution – including Packfeeders, Razers and Direct Delivery System.

Vekta invest in R&D and innovation, developing solutions for very specific problems and customer needs.

it’s about helping them to solve problems by sharing information and technical insights.”

Murray elaborates, saying: “Our relationship with Vekta Automation has not been based on selling more products or the latest and greatest in our catalogue, but instead, on identifying the solution that’s right for their business, and ensuring that these products are widely available and well-supported in Australia, New Zealand, and the

USA. As a result, Vekta Automation uses a vast suite of products from SMC, and trusts SMC to select the right products for their needs and applications.”

It’s through a focus on standardisation – for example, ensuring a single SMC valve can be used on multiple machines, in multiple applications - that SMC ensures its products deliver simplicity. SMC products are cost effective, readily available, and easy to maintain or repair. “Vekta’s reputation is staked on products that work well and are easy to maintain, and if there’s a problem, they can do a quick turnaround on the repairs and maintenance. We support them, understanding that it’s not about having the latest ‘shiny and new’ tech. It’s about what’s practical for the customer and end user” says Murray.

In addition to supplying standardised solutions, SMC has demonstrated a commitment to customer satisfaction and clear communication, also offering just-in-time delivery of components. “SMC supported Vekta through the COVID-19 period, carefully managing the price and availability of products, by holding stock in Perth and Sydney. At the time, Vekta occupied a smaller floorspace and couldn’t carry more stock. We were able to help, by carrying stock locally and providing fast delivery when needed,” notes Murray. “As manufacturers, Vekta Automation and SMC face the same challenges– logistics, material, staff, price, freight safety. We walk in each other’s shoes.”

This partnership is set to continue to benefit the construction industry. Vekta Automation has a pipeline of products that it plans to develop for the industry. “The only way forward for Vekta Automation is to keep innovating,” concludes Ed. **T**

For more, visit www.vekta.com.au



The Razer V5 articulated saw blade.

Optimising truss production: smart strategies for cost-effective manufacturing



Programmed Timber maximize efficiency and profitability in truss manufacturing. **By Programmed Timber**

Explore how strategic use of pre-cut components can reduce costs and enhance productivity in your truss production line. Discover the benefits of supplementing production with ready-made components and how it can lead to significant cost savings, improved output, and a competitive edge in the market.

MAKE YOUR SAW SING

It takes 703 cuts to make a cubic metre (M3) of truss webs. It is 265 for truss chords.

These numbers come from a truss component study that looked at over 1.1 million truss components from 4 plants.

Simply the reason for the high discrepancy of Cuts/M3 is the average length difference in webs and chords along with some influence by number of cuts per component type.

Each and every job requires a set number of webs and a set number of chords (give or take with detailing differences). Without radical change that doesn't alter.

You can see where this is going. By replacing in-house cut webs with as many cost effective, bought in ones as possible,

the production output cost per unit of the saw (including labour, electricity, WHS risk, equipment lifespan etc.) is reduced.

The capital, or opportunity cost of the saw investment is a fixed cost - the cost remains the same per job whether it is being used to help produce the job or not. The theory of amortisation over a greater output only works if there is more total plant output but not by cutting of individual elements for the same number of jobs.

In the current market where there is underutilised capacity it is arguably a false economy to use the saw unnecessarily where other costs (as above) are incurred to justify a capital cost amortisation.

In the next market where capacity is being stretched, there are considerable advantages by not having to cut the high production cost components and concentrate on pumping the volume through the saw - more jobs invoiced per saw production hour.

In the meantime, it can be a little difficult to get the mind around not using a high-cost piece of equipment especially if it is being used to justify staff banking for an inevitable upturn at some time. The saw is only singing

when it is producing at a low unit cost per M3 output.

Maybe the staff can be held by using them in other areas of the plant to assist output or thinking about what the longer-term labour requirements are if other production streamlining processes can be further implemented.

Programmed Timber is happy to share the report of the truss component study where the data was analysed in more detail. The supplementation of production with pre-cut componentry has many aspects and advantages that go well beyond just those mentioned here.

Please contact us for more information as to how we can make your plant more competitive now and more profitable in the upswing.

UNLEASH YOUR CARBON CONTRIBUTION

Programmed Timber are a mass producer of timber floor truss members - both webs & verticals.

Lock up more carbon in your product and provide a top-quality result for the build by using timber floor truss webs.

With the market very competitive at the moment, price and performance will make your mark.

90x35 F5 0.565's are in stock and ready to roll - contact us and be surprised at what we can do to make you more competitive.

JUNCTION BLOCKS R US

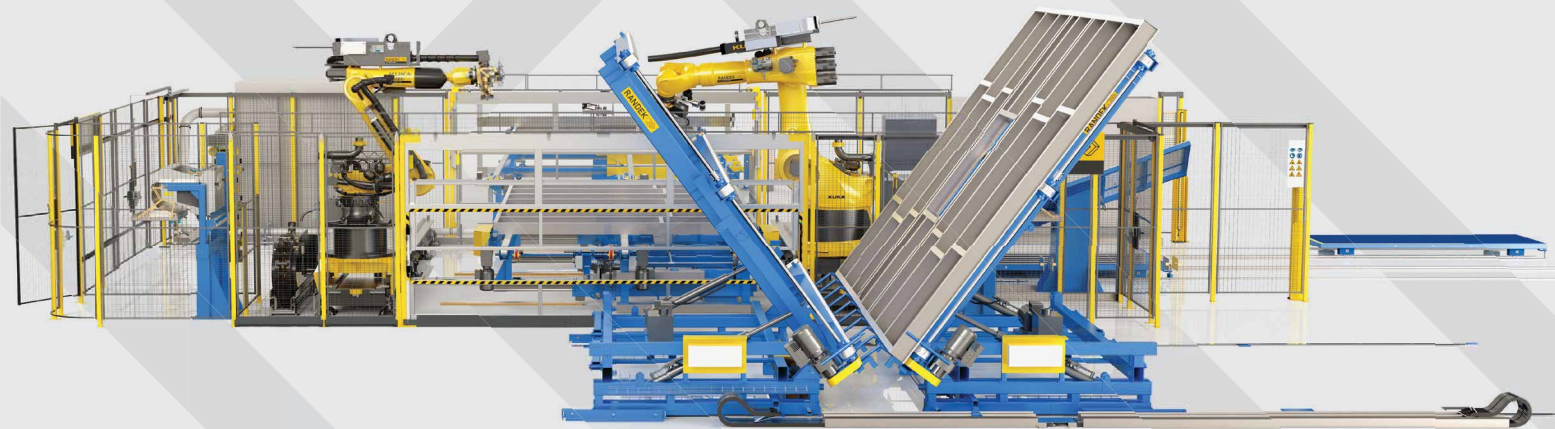
As there are over 1,000 90x45 Junction Blocks to the cubic metre (M3) this most simple of products can be one of the most expensive in a frame if all being cut in-house.

If Programmed Timber was to concentrate all its production to only make Junction Blocks those 1,000 would take less than 90 seconds to make.

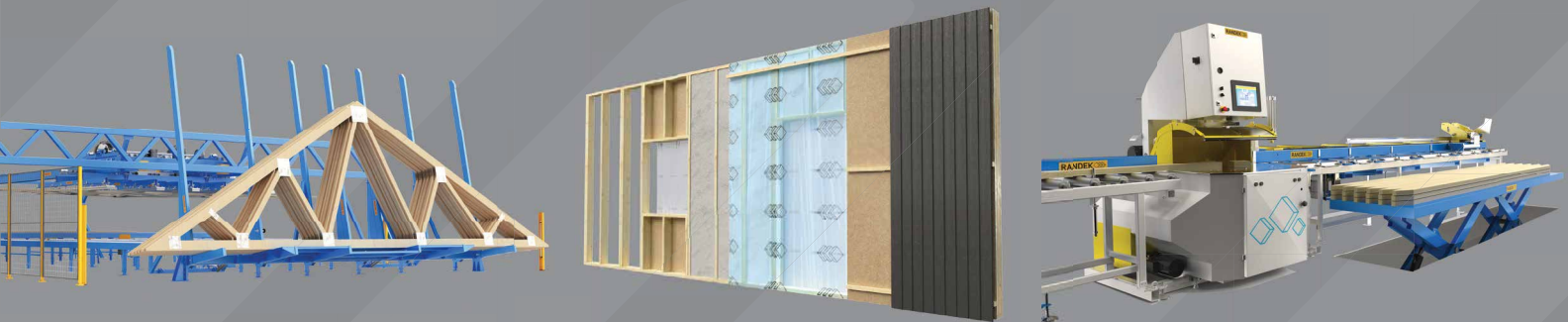
Don't forget we also produce a solid 90x55 as well as undersize dimensions for simpler application into the frame. **T**

For more, visit www.pttimbers.com.au

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Prevention and repair of floor system squeaks – EWP

Looking at 13 real causes and ways to prevent those annoying squeaks that are always noticeable at 3am. **By Craig Kay, national product engineer, Tilling.**

There are many causes of floor noise, such as dimensionally unstable building materials, hangers, nails, and utilities. Proper installation of a floor system is the most effective preventive measure against annoying squeaks. Squeaks can originate wherever floor components meet-between floor sheeting and joists, floor and underlayment, joists and trimmers, fastener and panel, and at hangers, straps and other locations within the system.

Most squeaks can be traced to a few common causes:

1. HIGH MOISTURE CONTENT IN FRAMING TIMBER

Cause: Wet or green timber used in new construction has a moisture content greater than 19%. As the timber dries, the wood can shrink along the shank of the nail, causing the head to protrude or a gap to form between panel and joist. The nail may work loose in the joist as well. The resulting loose connection allows the panel to rub along the nail, or the nail to slide up and down through the panel and joist, generating squeaks.

Prevention: Minimize shrinking by using kiln dried timber or EWP joists where possible, keep the top edge of the joists dry. If the joist become saturated during periods of heavy rainfall, it is recommended that the floor sheeting not be laid on these joists until the moisture content falls below 16%.

2. DEFECTIVE PANEL INSTALLATION

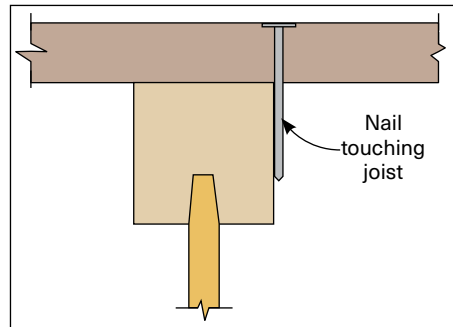
Cause: Clause 9.2.2 of AS 1860.2 – 2006 references the need to consider expansion joints in the particleboard floor layout. Further advice regarding expansion joints is shown in Paragraph B4.2 of Appendix B.

If particleboard flooring becomes wet during the weather exposure period it will expand. If flooring becomes saturated, the resulting expansion from a number of panels laid end to end may, in severe cases, interfere with brickwork, pull internal walls out of plumb and cause separation of roofing members. Buckling of the panels may cause the adhesive to fail and force the fasteners

loose which may cause squeaks especially if the incorrect adhesives/fasteners were used or the incorrect fastener spacing.

Prevention: Proper planning. When installing floor panels, consider the need for expansion joints as described in paragraph B 4.2 of appendix B of AS 1860.2 – 2006.

3. NAILS THAT MISS THE JOIST



Cause: A worker using a pneumatic nail gun may not always tell when the nail has missed the joist. A nail that barely hits the joist (lands close along the side) will not hold the panel down. When this panel deflects, the nail can rub on the joist, causing squeaks.

Prevention: After installing the panel, inspect the nailing from the joist space and replace nails that have missed.

4. IMPROPER GLUING DURING FLOOR CONSTRUCTION

Cause: An inferior adhesive bond can create two (2) problems:

1. The glue will provide little or no holding power between the floor panels and the joists, allowing nail pops to occur.
2. It can cause an uneven bearing surface for the panel, which will allow the panel to move when the panel is walked on.

These problems can also occur when the glue is applied too far in advance; if the glue is applied over wet or dirty surfaces; or if only the panel corners are tacked down before moving on to the next panel. These practices allow the glue to form a skin and start to dry before a proper bond can be

made between the panel and the joist. When this happens, the glue does not have sufficient holding power to prevent pops, and the hardened glue bead may create raised surfaces or lumps under the panel. These gaps may allow the panel to slide up and down on nearby nails, causing squeaks.

Prevention: When applying adhesive to floor joists, apply to clean, dry surfaces and spread only enough glue for one or two panels at a time. Fasten each panel completely before moving on.

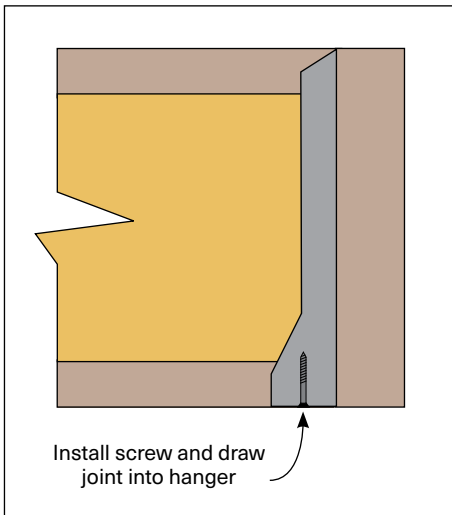
5. IMPROPERLY INSTALLED BLOCKING OR BRIDGING

Cause: Often, blocking or bridging is installed before the subfloor, with only the nailing at the top in place. If the bottom of the blocking or trimming is not securely fastened after the structure is enclosed, it may rotate or slide under load. This may result in floor squeaks as the trimming rubs against the joists as these elements rub together. To determine if any blocking or trimming elements are causing the squeak, use a wooden pole to pry apart the members while someone walks above on the floor to see if the squeak re-occurs.

Prevention: Timber I-Beams do not require blocking and strong backs and therefore this eliminates a number of possible squeak points. When installing blocking or bridging in a timber floor system, provide adequate space between pairs of bridging members, and make sure the bottoms are nailed in place after the rough structure is finished.

6. JOISTS NOT SEATED PROPERLY IN HANGERS

Cause: When joists are properly installed in hangers, they should sit firmly on the bottom of the hanger seats and be nailed through all holes provided. When joists are improperly seated in hangers, a gap may occur between the bottom of the joist and the seat of the hanger. This gap allows movement when a load is applied, resulting in a squeak. Additionally, if a sawn-timber joist is not attached to the hanger or attached only at the top, the timber may shrink away from the



base of the hanger, allowing the joist to move in the hanger, causing a squeak.

Prevention: Use KD timber or EWP to minimize shrinking, and make sure all joists are properly seated in their hangers. Fill all nail holes, top and bottom, with the nails recommended by the hanger manufacturer. Make sure that all nails are set, with the nail heads driven tight to the hanger. In some circumstances, squeaks can be reduced by placing a dab of subfloor adhesive in the hanger seat before installing the joist, and then driving a wood screw (6 g x 30 mm maximum) through the bottom of the seat in the hole provided. Install the hanger seat screw before the glue sets to ensure uniform bearing.

7. DUCTWORK RUBBING AGAINST FRAMING

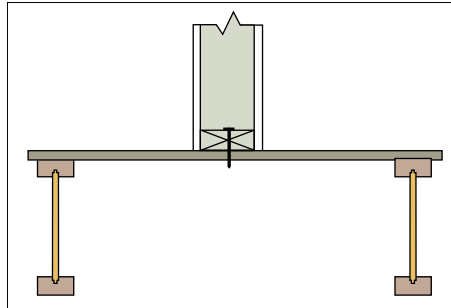
Cause: Floor squeaks can occur when the metal ductwork for forced-air heating systems rubs against the floor panel or joist member it is traveling through. Sometimes items suspended from a joist may rub against the joist. The slight deflection in the panel or joist when walked on may cause squeaks to occur. Also, heat from ductwork may cause increased shrinkage of framing materials near the duct and thus result in a squeak.

8. SQUEAKY T&G JOINTS

Cause: T&G connections are designed to force adjacent panels to move together. This prevents damage that could occur to floor finishes if the panels were allowed to move independently. T&G joints are usually silent and tight-fitting. However, if they are damaged the connection may be loose, which can cause squeaks when the panels experience foot traffic.

Prevention: Do not use damaged floor panels. Apply construction adhesive to T&G joints when installing floor systems to ensure tight joints.

9. IMPROPER NAILING OF INTERIOR PARTITION WALL



Cause: Squeaks commonly occur between the bottom plate of an interior partition wall and the floor when the plate is nailed directly to the panel rather than to the joists. As the floor panels deflect under load, they can rub on the plate nails and cause a squeak. Squeaks at partition walls may also result when studs that are cut too short slide along the connecting nails.

Prevention: Nail the lower plates of partition walls only where they intersect a joist. If the partition runs parallel to the joists and extends over more than half of the joist span, add a joist under the partition. If the only option is to nail directly into the subfloor, run a bead of adhesive along the bottom of the plate and clinch all nails while they are still accessible, use cross nailing, or screw tight from below.

10. FLOOR PANELS THAT BECOME EXCESSIVELY WET DURING CONSTRUCTION

Cause: A floor panel that becomes excessively wet during construction may swell and move the nail head as it expands. When the panel dries and shrinks, it may leave a gap under the head of the nail, allowing the panel to move up and down along the nail shank, causing a squeak.

Prevention: Keep all building materials dry, and properly glue the panel to the joists.

11. INADEQUATE CONNECTION BETWEEN THE SUBFLOOR AND UNDERLAYMENT OR FINISH FLOORING

Cause: Squeaks that occur inconsistently and vary with changes in temperature and humidity can sometimes occur between

subfloor and underlayment if the proper nail type is not used and/or nailing schedules are not followed. A poor connection will allow the underlayment to move up and down on the nail shank, causing a squeak. Squeaks can also develop if the underlayment was placed on top of a dirty or gritty subfloor.

Prevention: Make sure the subfloor is clean before installing underlayment. Use the recommended nails and fastening schedules and consider applying underlayment adhesive. Check with the floor covering manufacturer for a recommended underlayment adhesive.

12. USE OF INADEQUATE FLOOR PANELS

Cause: Using floor panels on joist spacing that exceeds the panels' maximum span rating can lead to excessive deflection. The resulting movement or friction may cause nail pops and squeaks throughout the floor.

Prevention: Take care that the correct floor panel has been chosen based upon the joist spacing and the applied loads. Typically, a 19 mm particleboard is used for joists at 450 mm centres and a 22 mm particleboard is used for joists at 600 mm centres.

13. CLOSE FITTED SUSPENDED CEILING

Cause: The serviceability requirements for domestic floor are tailored to suit, among other criteria, the deflection that a direct fixed plaster board will accommodate without damage. Close fit suspended ceiling that encompasses metal battens supported by hanging metal clips are very susceptible to the presence noise/squeaks as the clips can move along the battens when the floor defects under normal domestic live loads, exhibiting the telltale metal to metal sound.

Prevention: If it is proposed that a close-fitting suspended ceiling is to be installed in a domestic application, the floor joists must be designed to the much-reduced serviceability limits required by these systems. Floor systems with close fitting suspended ceiling may require joists and bearers to be much stiffer than would otherwise be necessary for direct fixed plaster ceilings. **T**

Craig Kay is the national product engineer for Tilling.
For more information on this topic, contact Craig Kay and the Tilling engineers via email at techsupport@tilling.com.au





Kersten with Senator David Pocock discussing the importance of using more timber in the built environment.

Reviewing our success, progress and effort this financial year - now looking ahead.

well, mapping facilities that will take clean timber waste from fabricators and use it for products, heating, or electricity. What may be waste to a fabricator can be a valuable product to others, and this project is all about fostering these connections, potentially saving fabricators tens of thousands of dollars in waste disposal.

Modern Methods of Construction and the role of the Frame & Truss Sector is another report we have commissioned to demonstrate the important role our sector has in the future of MMC. All Governments are talking about MMC, and this report will demonstrate how the elemental approach of using our sector is far more superior than the volumetric approach, which seems to be failing around the world. It's important all levels of Government understand the role of our sector.

Steps Towards A Greener Future is a new report being developed in collaboration with the Gippsland Forestry Hub. Funded by DAFF and authored by Dr. Alastair Woodard of WPV on our behalf, this report aims to outline the necessary policies in the built environment to foster a greener future. Inspired by international standards that mandate the use of timber frames and trusses for their carbon storage benefits this exciting project is nearing completion.

Carbon Warrior serves as FTMA's environmental initiative focused on promoting renewable resources. The program underscores the importance of timber for its ability to store carbon indefinitely, making a case for increased use of timber in reducing emissions in the built environment. Members can join the partner program to apply these principles in their businesses, as demonstrated by one member who successfully transitioned a steel builder to timber.

The 2024 National **Fabricator Census** is in the final stages of preparation and will be distributed to fabricators in September. This census aims to capture trends in employment, industry demographics, and areas of interest among members. Participating fabricators will receive a detailed report, providing valuable insights that will not only aid in future planning but also assist in securing government funding.

FTMA Australia

Progress update, outcomes and strategies. **By Kersten Gentle**

As we approach the end of the financial year, it's crucial to reflect on the significant progress made within our sector. FTMA Australia has been diligently advocating for the offsite timber prefabrication industry. Over the past twelve months, several key projects have emerged that we believe will substantially benefit our members and contribute to the growth of our sector.

FTMA HR Portal continues to assist our members daily. Whether members have questions about HR, WHS, or Workcover, the FTMA HR Portal offers a free PMA Line from 9am - 7pm, five days a week. Brenda and Gaby have helped members with queries about 4-day weeks, Workcover claims, long service leave, absenteeism, and more. Their advice is spot-on, and the quick turnaround has impressed members. This 100% free service for members is one of the best investments we've made, aiding both small and large members daily.

FTMA National Frame & Truss Safety Council has officially started. Led by Paul Deakin, a qualified lawyer, trainer, auditor, mediator, first aider, and mental health first aider, the council aims to improve WHS within the industry. Paul will collaborate with seven fabricator WHS experts who volunteered as part of the council to determine the plan.

FTMA Safety SOP Video has been rolled out to Australian members with positive feedback. This program enables employees to undertake online safety training on industry-specific equipment, including general PPE and lifting. Employees receive a certificate upon completing the training, and employers can track who has completed what. New videos focusing on machinery are nearing completion and will be distributed to all members once they are ready.

Investment in the **Circular Economy** is something FTMA is deeply committed to. The Circular Economy project is progressing



Above: FTMA Chair, Brendan Schneider with Kersten, Jerome Weimer (Jeroen Weimar, Department of Premier and Cabinet's Deputy Secretary Housing Statement Implementation) and Alastair Woodard (Wood Products Victoria).

Frame & Truss Sector Outlook (FATSO) has been well-received by FTMA Members, offering valuable data previously unavailable to our sector. These quarterly reports feature extensive interviews with fabricators and suppliers, reflecting the sector's pulse, and compare timber vs steel markets. An annual report with comprehensive data will also be released, aiding members in future planning.

Machinery For Sale is a highly popular section of our monthly FTMA News, having facilitated over \$3M in equipment sales for members—free of charge. This year, we will continue this section, making it more accessible for members to advertise their goods.

Timber Systems Designer Training is a crucial need for our sector. FTMA initially led

the creation of a short course in 2020, but delivery was delayed due to COVID. In the next twelve months, we aim to make this course available online, eliminating geographical barriers. Additionally, we will create resources for in-house training and work with RTOs to ensure industry-relevant training.

These are but a few of the jobs that FTMA does for members. We are your one stop shop, and if we don't know the answer, you can be guaranteed we get back to you.

We may be a small Association, but we are loud, passionate and kicking goals on your behalf. **If you are interested in joining over 56% of all other fabricators as members, contact me on 0418 226 242 or via email at kersten@ftma.com.au T**



Above: (Left to right) The FTMA Team. Trish Waters (Accounts/finance), Kersten Gentle and Kat Welsh (communications).



For more information contact FTMA on 0418 226 242 or via email at kersten@ftma.com.au



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And they're racing!

That extra half a percent adds up over a year. **By Paul Davis**

The story goes that my father as a young boy used to get up onto the roof of their two-storey terrace house and watch the Kempton Park horse races in what was a grim postwar London. A few years later, and he managed to sneak into the races underage. As we call it in our family, he had "the luck of the Davises". He "backed the card"; betting and winning on first place for every race! It's not surprising that from that day on until the end of his life he was a diehard punter!

Your immediate thought might be that he lost a lot of money, but in fact the opposite is the case. He won over the long term which makes him an absolute unicorn amongst punters. He did it by firstly dedicating himself to vast amounts of time in research. Every weekend he was at the races to make sure he was on top of the latest gossip and horse form – and perhaps even get wind of a "fix". In his retirement he was easily spending 25 hours a week studying the form and applying his "system" for selecting horses. Importantly, he didn't place bets he wasn't comfortable losing, he didn't chase his losses, and he didn't go after the big wins. Rather, he played to average a few percent profit margin across all his betting turnover.

LONG TERM AVERAGE

So, Dad looked to average a few percent return over the long term. It was not uncommon for him to go to a race meeting and not place a single bet if he didn't think

Don't just accept your software's default webbing, with experimentation you might finesse savings.

the odds were in his favour. Dad liked a beer or ten, but he was an absolute teetotaler at the races - it was far too serious a business for that! Personally, I hated the whole thing; as a young lad it took my Dad away from me on the weekends, and the drone of the races on the radio and telly permeated my parents' house full-time.

The truss and frame game is a little bit like Dad's punting. You are never going to make your fortune on a single job, but if you get your offering to the customers right and your pricing right then over long-term there's money to be made.

Since every extra half percent saving in design is all profit, it's worth trying to average a fraction of a percent on every job. Across all your jobs that can add up! One way to try and do that is not to accept your software's default webbing. With a bit of experimentation, you may be able to finesse a few savings here and there.

TRUSS, WEBS, COMPRESSION AND DESIGN

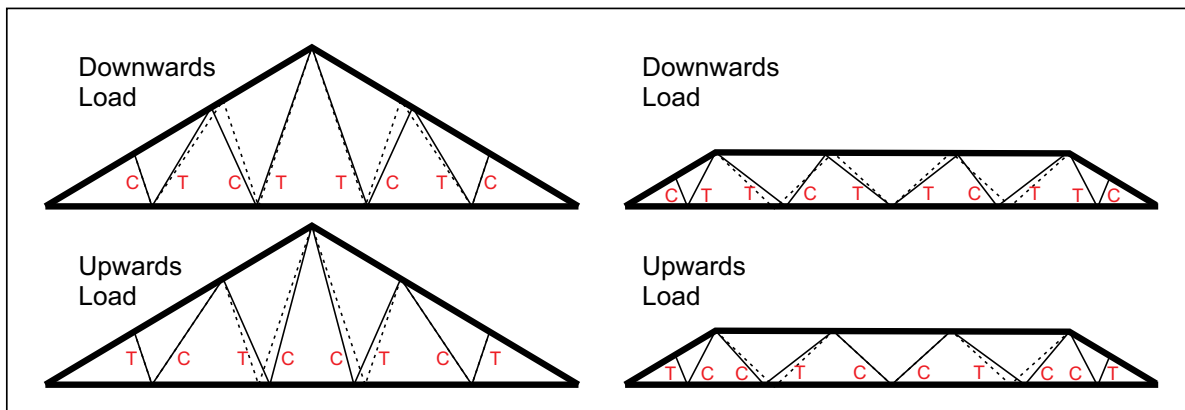
My last Timber Trader News article was about the buckling of members. In the case of webs, their capacity is strongly dominated by the length of the web in compression. For example, a 10% reduction in length can result in a 20% increase in strength. So, if you find a truss, particularly a tall truss with heavy webs, or perhaps a design that flips to a double truss then, it may be worth trying to finesse the web layout. You might get lucky and pass the finishing post a little further ahead!

In the diagram in this article, I've shown which webs are in tension and which are compression - shown C and T. It's given for downward gravity and upwards wind loads for a typical B-type truss and a truncated truss. With more or less webs the same basic T-C patterns repeat themselves.

I've also shown what a typical software default pattern might be as dotted lines where panel lengths are equally spaced out. That's not necessarily the perfect solution. The solid lines are what I recommend you might check as an alternate web configuration. So, the compression webs that have the combination of largest loads and greatest length are shifted and shortened slightly. Doing that might blow out the cord sizes in which case that's a bad idea. Or it might make absolutely no change in which case what's the point. But every so often, you may get a saving. Over the long-term, those

little savings can add up to the equivalent of a good year punting at the races!

Betting is now closed. It's time to race! **T**



Paul Davis is an independent structural engineer managing his own consulting firm Project X Solutions Pty Ltd. The views in this column are Paul's and do not reflect the opinions of *TimberTrader News*.
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DIAGRAM: PAUL DAVIS

DELIVERING INNOVATION TO THE TRUSS AND FRAME INDUSTRY

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Josh Wright
V.P. of Manufacturing
The Truss Company, USA

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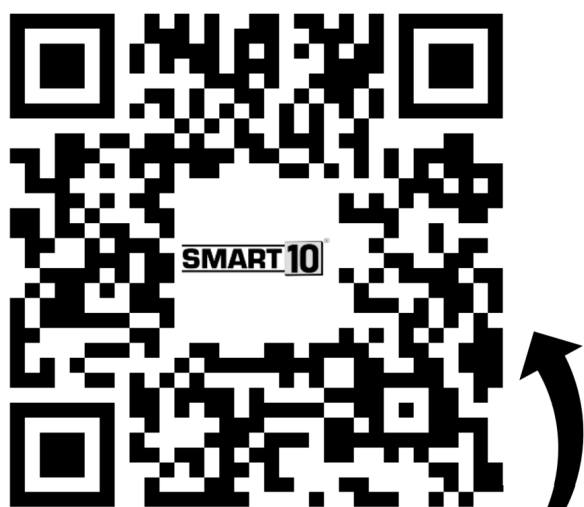
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