

# TimberTrader

news



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**KEEPING UP WITH CHANGES TO GLT**



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**COVER CREDIT:** Photo courtesy IHG

Timber Trader acknowledges the Cammeraygal 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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# ASSOCIATION NEWS



**TTIA**  
*Brian Beecroft*

## PLANNED REVIEWS VS ADDRESSING ISSUES AS THEY ARISE

From TTIA's experience, performance issues and misconduct may be reported to management from a variety of sources, including clients/customers, other colleagues, managers or members of the public. Performance and conduct issues may also be investigated prior to any planned performance appraisal, such as an annual review or probation review.

### Planned reviews

Planned performance reviews, such as annual reviews and probation reviews are beneficial particularly for uncovering performance or conduct issues that have not otherwise been brought to the employer's attention, and for tracking the employee's progress over time.

Poor behaviour that isn't addressed is likely to continue, with negative consequences.

### Addressing issues as they arise

It can be worthwhile to address performance and conduct issues as they arise. Stockpiling performance and conduct issues can be disadvantageous for employers for a number of reasons.

Unsurprisingly, unacceptable behaviour that is not addressed is likely to continue and escalate. Also, any negative consequences of the unacceptable behaviour can escalate. For example, if bullying in the workplace continues without reprimand, the workplace culture and the

employer's liability under work health and safety legislation may worsen.

Stockpiling issues rather than addressing them as they arise may also give the false impression to workers that the conduct is acceptable, and/or result in suspicion about potential ulterior motives when the behaviour is finally addressed. Addressing performance and conduct issues as they arise can also minimise surprises during planned reviews (such as annual reviews or probation reviews).

If the performance issues are not yet serious enough to warrant a formal warning, employers can consider alternative tools for managing poor performance; contact us for further information and assistance.

**For further information or assistance with managing performance and conduct issues, feel free to contact TTIA on (02) 9264 0011.**

## FAIR WORK INFORMATION STATEMENT

The Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth) requires employers to give new employees a Fair Work Information Statement as soon as practicable after they start work.

This is a fact sheet that sets out an employee's rights and entitlements at work, including the NES, modern awards, agreement making, right to join a union and the role of the Fair Work Commission. Its purpose is to give employees advice about minimum entitlements, where to go for information and help, as well as providing contact details for the Fair Work Commission.

*Employers cannot amend the Fair Work Information Statement.*

The Fair Work Information Statement is updated from time to time, however employers don't have to give the information sheet to an employee more than once in any 12 month period where they employ an employee more than once in that 12 month period (e.g. a casual employee).

Please ensure you are using the most up-to-date version for your new employees. You can access a copy of both the Fair Work Employment Information Statements for full time and casual employees by **contacting the TTIA office by email at [ttia@ttia.asn.au](mailto:ttia@ttia.asn.au) or by phoning (02) 9264 0011.**

**MGA TMA***Marie-Claire McKiernan***COVID LEAVE OPTIONS**

Unfortunately, 2022 hasn't got off to the start that we were all hoping for. As the Omicron wave of Covid-19 spreads across Australia, case numbers are rapidly increasing, and more employees are being exposed to Covid. Employees may have to request time off work to isolate, either because they have contracted Covid or because they are waiting for the results of a test. Under the *Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth)* and the *Timber Industry Award 2020*, you and your employees may have a number of leave options available during this time.

You should also seek independent legal advice, as each business will have unique circumstances.

**Unpaid pandemic leave**

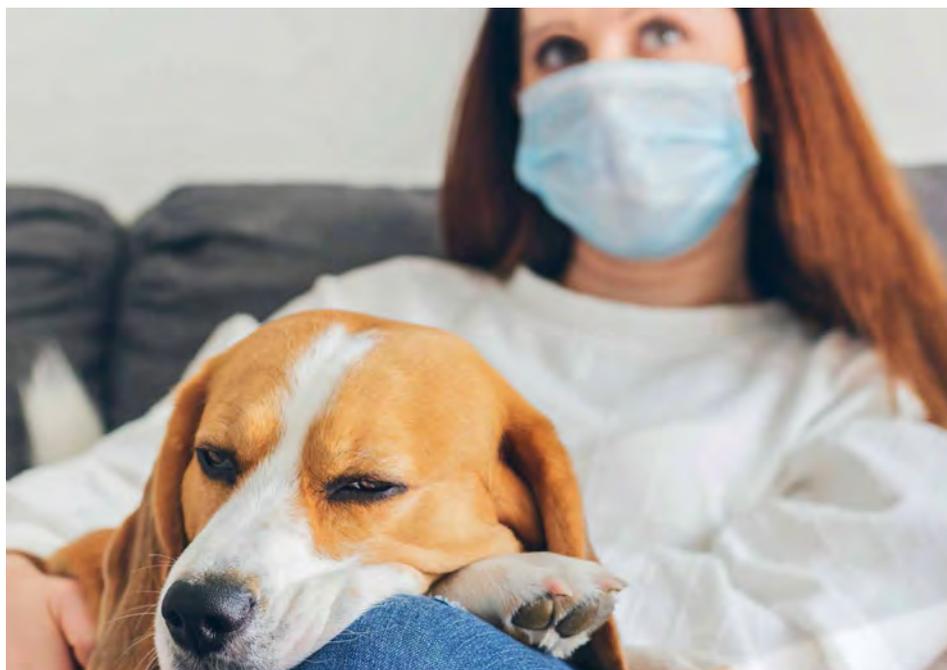
Any employee, whether full-time, part-time or casual, may access unpaid pandemic leave under the Award for the duration of their isolation (up to two weeks, and more by agreement). Employees do not have to accrue this leave, and it is available to them immediately. They are able to request this leave because they have been prevented from working by measures taken by the government in response to Covid (e.g., being asked to self-isolate).

Please note that employees who merely do not want to work due to a fear of Covid will not be able to access unpaid pandemic leave.

**Annual leave**

A full-time or part-time employee with accrued annual leave may request to take their annual leave. You may not direct your employees to take this leave, and it must be by agreement.

Last year, employees were able to access annual leave at half pay. As of 31 December 2021, this is no longer available.



Employees may require time off work because they have Covid or are waiting for test results.

**Personal/carer's (sick) leave**

As mentioned above, full-time and part-time employees will not be able to access their personal/carer's (sick) leave if they are merely isolating after becoming a close contact or taking a test. Personal/sick leave is only available if the employee is not fit for work due to personal illness or injury. If the employee is diagnosed with Covid, they may access their sick leave. If the employee is suffering from symptoms of Covid, they may access their sick leave.

You may request reasonable evidence from the employee, such as a medical certificate, that satisfies you that they are unwell.

**Government payments**

Employees may be eligible for various government payments depending on their employment type and what leave arrangements they have made with you. It is the employee's responsibility to check their eligibility for any government payments, and you should avoid promising an employee >>

**Unpaid leave**

An employee may also take a period of unpaid leave. This is available to full-time, part-time and casual employees.

On unpaid leave, the employee will not continue to accrue annual leave or personal/carer's (sick) leave, and the period will not be counted towards their length of service. An employee may take an unlimited amount of unpaid leave depending on their agreement with their employer.

Unpaid leave must also be by agreement.

PHOTO: VICTOR LAFUENTE ALONSO/SHUTTERSTOCK

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Marie-Claire McKiernan M: 0411 886 716

1800 888 479 [www.mgatma.com.au](http://www.mgatma.com.au)

Legal and IR



Advocacy



Timber Advisory Service



Training



Member Benefits

that they will be eligible for a payment if they accept a certain leave-related arrangement.

**Keep records of leave arrangements**

An agreement with any employee to take a period of leave described above should be recorded in writing and kept for your records.

**Seek independent legal advice**

For more information, and in order to get the best results for your business, you should seek independent legal advice.

After considering your options, you and your employee may come to an agreement on the most appropriate leave arrangements during this time.

MGA TMA members should contact our Legal and IR team on **1800 888 479** for further queries in relation to leave entitlements.



Collaborative, and Kersten Gentle in continuing to support both domestic and imported structural softwood supply issues. Kersten's efforts in supporting frame and truss manufacturers and timber supply were justifiably acknowledged by her induction into the Association Forum's 2021 Hall of Fame last December.

costs and charges collectively contributed to serious difficulties across the whole supply chain and for building and construction industries.

It is fair to say, however, that supply shortages applied to almost all categories of building products during a period of amazingly strong demand.

Ongoing Covid-related issues continued to cause problems for importers and wholesalers, not least of which were difficulties in effectively communicating with or meeting relevant government officials to advance supply chain transport and logistics issues, quarantine and other matters relevant to the timber supply chain.

**ATIF**

*John Halkett*

**STRONG COLLABORATION**

ATIF was pleased to report a strong level of collaboration between the various sectors of the timber supply chain in 2021. This was an encouraging feature of last year. Notably, ATIF was pleased to be invited to participate in the timber framing advocacy campaign and other advocacy and research initiatives.

In this regard ATIF appreciated the outstanding efforts of people like Christine Briggs from AKD Softwoods in providing some of the intellectual firepower and energy behind the Timber Framing

**SUPPLY CHAIN CHALLENGES**

Despite strenuous efforts on the part of timber importers and wholesalers, ongoing significant difficulties across the supply chain were a disappointing feature of 2021 and are likely to continue into this year.

It wasn't that timber wholesalers have seen increased margins, rather issues around sourcing additional supplies, the acquisition of containers, shipping space availability and delays, port congestion, and industrial action all overlaid by ballooning

**PLANNED BOARD MEETING**

Along with many trade associations, ATIF has had a second year of predominantly remote communications with the Board. A face-to-face Board meeting is scheduled to be held in Melbourne in February. This will provide an opportunity to review a number of issues central to the importing and wholesaling sector into the industry. More broadly this year should also provide an opportunity to interact with others to advance mutually beneficial issues.

This year ATIF will also continue to explore further avenues of supply, particularly of structural softwoods, including interaction with trade associations. The trade consultation country list includes Indonesia, Canada and Russia.

The timber supply chain and building and construction industries can be assured that importers and wholesalers will employ their best endeavours to supply the timber needs during the year, and to work with others to improve supply chain issues that were a major feature of concern during 2021.

**For further ATIF-related information contact John Halkett at: [john.halkett@bigpond.com](mailto:john.halkett@bigpond.com) or 0417 421 187. T**

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# INDUSTRY NEWS

## Bell Bay expansion

Timberlink makes a major investment in Tasmanian timber.

Tasmanian – and Australian – timber production are both receiving a much-needed boost with the announcement of a \$63 million capital investment by Timberlink at its Bell Bay facilities.

Commencing this year and with a three-year expected build time, the expansion project installation and construction is in two stages, with 25 contractor jobs through this period. On completion in 2025, at full output it will see an increase of more than 50% in on-island sovereign timber manufactured from sustainability managed pine plantations and create 18 new full-time permanent jobs.

The project will include

- Offline Log Debarking and Sorting;
- Saw mill expansion;
- Residue and Energy optimisation;
- Additional continuous kiln for drying of timber;
- Planer infeed systems, and

- Site infrastructure improvements at the existing Bell Bay facilities.

Timberlink CEO Ian Tyson said, “At the completion of this project, the combined output of Timberlink’s Bell Bay Tasmania and Tarpeena South Australia manufacturing facilities will position Timberlink to increase supply of manufacture of structural timber for use in the construction of homes in Australia.”

Acknowledging that the supply issues that plagued 2021 won’t be fully resolved any time soon (and that the heightened demand for structural timber is very unlikely to lessen), Tyson added, “The project has been brought forward by over two years in order to support additional supply into the Australian market.”

Federal Member for Bass Bridget Archer was on hand for the announcement and noted the investment is yet another example



Above: The existing Timberlink Bell Bay facility.

of Timberlink committing to the region. She said, “As an elected representative, I’ve had a long-standing relationship with Timberlink since they began production in Bell Bay in 2008 and I appreciate the ongoing economic and social benefits the company provides to our local area.”

**For more on this and other mill upgrades, visit [www.timberlinkaustralia.com.au](http://www.timberlinkaustralia.com.au)**

## Vale David Efron

The well-respected industry stalwart died at Christmas.



David Efron passed away at the Cabrini Hospital, surrounded by his family on 25/12/21.

David Efron commenced in the timber

industry in the mid 1960s when he responded to an ad in the paper that read “Learn to be a manager.” His application was successful and he started with a local timber merchant, WK Witt, supplying plywood.

David owned a number of timber businesses over the years, including Writton Timber, based in Cheltenham in the late ‘60s, and Lorimer Timber in the ‘70s, which was based at No. 3 South Wharf in Lorimer Street, Port Melbourne, before moving to Southey Street, Williamstown. This business mainly sold Philippine Mahogany and Radiata Pine. He also had a part ownership of Otago Timber exports (NZ) and a sawmill in Milton (NZ) during the late ‘70s and early ‘80s.

David sold Lorimer Timber to Wills Timber in 1981. He then started again with Ascot Timber, commencing in 1983 in Mount Alexander Road, Ascot Vale, supplying retail and trade customers. He sold this business

and had a temporary career change into pubs. In 1990, he rejoined the timber industry when Maurice, his son, joined David and purchased a business called The Fencing Place.

This business was located in Frankston-Dandenong Road, Dandenong. It was soon renamed Davids Timber, and the direction was set in the early ‘90s to specialise in treated pine. The company’s first timber treatment plant was set up in Red Gum Drive, Dandenong South in 1994.

Davids Timber moved to 410 Princess Highway, Noble Park in 1997 and traded there till 2004, when they moved again to their current premises at 29 Princes Highway, Dandenong South.

David was a committee member of the TMA in the 1990s, a long-standing member of the Hoo-Hoo club and attended a number of international conventions.

He had ownership and part-ownership of sawmills in NZ, Wodonga and, most recently, Broadford Sawmills for the last 11 years.

David developed many close friends in the industry over the years and was passionate about the industry right to the end.

**NEW PRODUCT ON THE MARKET? BIG NEWS? DON'T KEEP IT TO YOURSELF!** If you are launching a product or your business has an announcement, send it to [news@timbertradernews.com](mailto:news@timbertradernews.com) for the chance to be featured here.



## Export award

This kit home builder turned to VR to survive Covid and has now won a prestigious award.

The 2021 Small Business category award winner at the Australian Export Awards is Victoria's iBuild Kit Homes. Announced late last year, the prefab building business, which offers timber and steel-framed options, won on the basis of growth and innovation.

The Australian Trade and Investment Commission and the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry partner with the states and territories to present these coveted awards, now in their 59th year.

Jackson Yin, managing director of iBuild, described how the pandemic had forced the company to change its business model, which had previously relied on prospective clients visiting display homes but changed to an online/virtual reality walkthrough model.

"We were a really small business," Yin told the awards ceremony. "Building display homes is quite an expensive exercise. Covid forced us to close down all our display and walkthrough activities and our team thought

'we have to find other ways to reach our customers'. The VR/digital showroom gave us the edge and we're now on the same level playing field as the big boys."

The savings in costs and expansion in audience led to the company achieving a compound annual revenue growth rate of 816% and landing a contract for a German foreign aid project in Senegal, West Africa. **For more, visit [www.i-build.com.au](http://www.i-build.com.au) and [www.exportawards.gov.au/about](http://www.exportawards.gov.au/about)**

## Sustainable development

Frasers Property achieves Passive House Plus certification, a first for major Aussie developers.

Private companies are continuing to take the lead when it comes to lowering the environmental impacts of Australian

construction. Frasers Property have now had their trial construction at the Life, Point Cook development achieve Passive House Plus certification, meaning it is energy neutral or positive over a year.

The pilot build is the first for a large-scale developer in Australia and was built by Creation Homes with shingled cell solar panels donated by GI Energy. "Now we've executed the application of Passive House design and construction techniques, we can look at influencing our systems and supply chains to provide a more energy efficient, sustainable standard to all our customers," says Sarah Bloom, general

manager development Vic at Frasers Property Australia.

The pilot home relied heavily on imported products, many from Germany where the Passive House standard is widely used. Bloom says Frasers are looking for local options that will fit the low-energy use requirements of the scheme and hopes to roll out more in the future, while also adopting many of the passive energy saving technologies used in the standard more broadly. "If we can create these specialised products and source this expertise locally in a cost-effective way, we can work toward making these technologies part of standard home design in Australia," she says.

**For more on the project, visit [www.frasersproperty.com.au/vic/point-cook](http://www.frasersproperty.com.au/vic/point-cook)**



## Does your fund **pass**?

First Super was one of the top 10 funds to pass the APRA performance test.

This year, superannuation funds were required to pass a new test. It's called the APRA performance test, and it's part of the Government's Your Future, Your Super laws.

Wondering what this has to do with you? As an employer, you're required to choose a default super fund for your workplace. Choosing a fund that passed the APRA test means choosing a fund that's delivered strong retirement outcomes for members.

So, if you're in the market for a new default fund heading into 2022, keep reading.

### HOW THE PERFORMANCE TEST WORKS

APRA is the Australian Prudential Regulation Authority, an independent authority that supervises financial institutions (including super funds) to make sure they can meet the promises they make to members.

This year for the first time it gave funds with a MySuper product a pass or fail

grade according to how they managed members' super. (MySuper funds are low-cost, simple products – First Super's is the Balanced option.)

### SO, WHO PASSED OR FAILED?

If you're curious, APRA's website lists the failing products. Super funds that failed the test had to write to their members and suggest they consider switching to a new super fund.

At First Super, we're pleased to report we passed the test, coming in the top 10 funds – demonstrating our commitment to quality products and strong returns for members over the long term.

### WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS?

People who are members of failing funds generally paid more in fees and received less in investment returns. While some of the figures may not seem like much in one year, even small differences have a large impact over the course of a career.

The goal of the changed legislation is greater transparency for members to help you see whether or not your fund is performing in a way that will help to support you through retirement. Funds that fail for two consecutive years will not be allowed to accept new members.

If you're concerned about your superannuation fund, remember that an underperformance in one year may be atypical, but it may also be a sign of an underperforming fund. Talk with your fund about your concerns, or feel free to call us at First Super to discuss your options.

### WHAT TO CONSIDER FOR A DEFAULT FUND

Passing the test is great – but what really matters is a fund that works hard for members and employers. Here's some of the factors to consider when choosing a default fund:

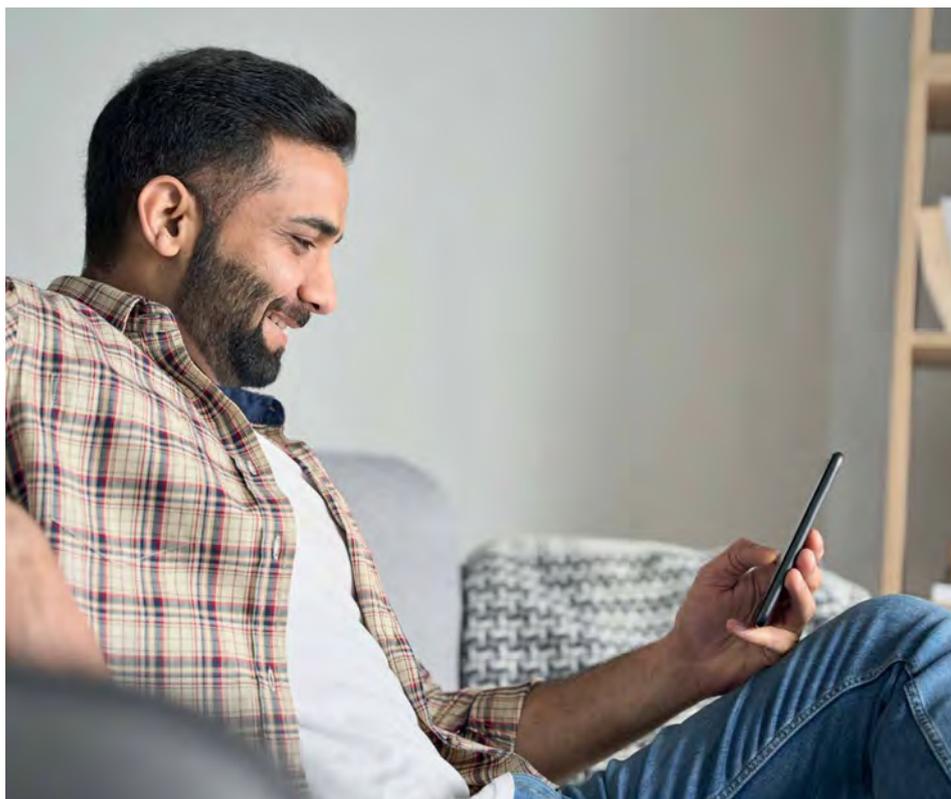
- Lower fees and strong returns
- Service that is accessible and supports your needs
- Whether to choose an industry fund that returns profits to members or a fund that pays shareholders
- Industry understanding and knowledge

### WANT TO FIND OUT MORE?

If First Super's not already your default super fund, why not consider us for your business today? We're the industry fund of choice for the timber industry, so we understand your specific needs. Go to [firstsuper.com.au/default-fund](https://firstsuper.com.au/default-fund) to learn more or call our Employer Services Team today on **1300 943 171**.

*First Super Pty Limited (ABN 42 053 498 472, AFSL 223988) as trustee of First Super (ABN 56 286 625 181). This article contains general advice which has been prepared without taking into account your objectives, financial situation or needs. You should consider whether the advice is appropriate to your personal circumstances and consult the Product Disclosure Statement before making any investment decision. \*Past investment returns are not a reliable indicator of future returns.*

Remember that an underperformance in one year may be atypical, but it may also be a sign of an underperforming fund.



# UPCOMING EVENTS



**Note: Covid is still changing events at short notice, please check with event organisers before making plans.**

## APRIL

### ADTW – DATE CHANGE

The Australian Timber Design Workshop is being sponsored by WoodSolutions and is a two-day intensive professional workshop made for building design professionals interested in timber-rich construction to develop skills, confidence and networks.

Running online, participants will design solutions with large-scale, industry provided timber components, assemble them in our workshop and test items to failure. On 20-21 April, \$250-1100, facilitated by Prof Gregory Nolan. **For more, visit <https://short-courses.utas.edu.au/courses/australian-timber-design-workshop-2022>**

## JUNE

### FRAME 2022

The Timber Offsite Construction conference

and exhibition will run 21–22 June at the Crown Promenade Melbourne. Experts in the field will talk about advances in building design and construction through the lens of existing projects. The format will combine in-person and live streaming of local and international speakers with a mix of live and online delegates, including single-session tickets. **Details and registration available at [www.timberoffsiteconstruction.com](http://www.timberoffsiteconstruction.com)**

## SEPTEMBER

### PREFABAUS 2022 CONFERENCE

Set for the Brisbane Conference and Exhibition Centre, on 5–7 September, the conference will once again see prefabAUS bring together industry leaders and innovators to share their expertise and insights. **Details at [www.prefabaus.org.au/conference-2022](http://www.prefabaus.org.au/conference-2022)**

Want the full story? Subscribe to the *TimberTrader News* fortnightly e-newsletter at [www.timbertradernews.com/subscribe/newsletters](http://www.timbertradernews.com/subscribe/newsletters)

PHOTO: OPOLJA/SHUTTERSTOCK

# TimberTrader news

## STAY ON THE PULSE

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AUSTRALIA'S MOST RELEVANT AND WELL-LOVED TIMBER INDUSTRY MAGAZINE



# Giving a RATs

Rapid antigen tests are here to stay: here's what you should know.

Writing this in early January, I'm not going to hazard a guess about what government policy on the supply of rapid antigen tests will be by the time this magazine comes out, because it's been clear as mud so far. What we do know is that they're a very useful tool for people self-managing Covid risk and exposure.

RATs take roughly 20 minutes from unsealing the packet to delivering a result, and so offer both prophylactic reassurance for those about to go out and mix with large groups or vulnerable people, as well as diagnostic value for people who may have been exposed to Covid (which is most of us right now). When they are available at low prices (or free as in the UK), they can be used widely and regularly as part of a person or business's Covid-combatting kit.

Not all tests have the same accuracy or ease of use. At the time of writing, the TGA has approved 18 RATs for use in Australia. Check their website for updates: [www.tga.gov.au/covid-19-rapid-antigen-self-tests-are-approved-australia](http://www.tga.gov.au/covid-19-rapid-antigen-self-tests-are-approved-australia)

These tests have been rated according to their PPA levels: the positive per cent agreement, which is the percentage of positives detected by the RAT compared to a 'gold-standard' PCR test on the same

cases. There are three categories::

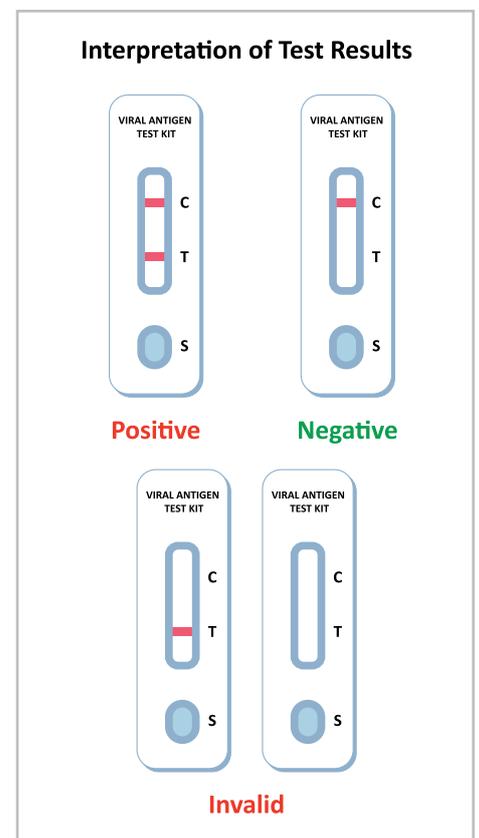
- Acceptable sensitivity: clinical sensitivity greater than 80% PPA
- High sensitivity: clinical sensitivity greater than 90% PPA
- Very high sensitivity: clinical sensitivity greater than 95% PPA

See the table (opposite) for how each brand of test is rated. While there is a substantial difference between 80% and 95%, this is per test. Ideally, RATs would be used regularly and multiple negatives or positives, even on the lowest-rated tests, are highly likely to be accurate.

## TAXING AND TESTING

Businesses supplying RATs for workplace health and safety are able to claim them as a tax-deductible expense, however at the time of writing, it is unclear whether or not the supply of free RATs to staff is a fringe benefit and thus subject to the Fringe Benefit Tax.

Also at this time, most individuals purchasing RATs, even for workplace use, are not able to claim them on tax. While I feel I have a higher likelihood of winning the lottery than correctly guessing governmental Covid policy, I would strongly recommend holding onto receipts as policy changes to



Above: The basic responses on a RAT. Note that a positive line may be faint, which is still positive.

## Policy changes and clarifications on RATs and tax look like very popular moves in an election year.

allow individuals to claim them and clarifying they are not subject to FBT look like very popular moves in an election year.

The actual tests are easy for most people to use. Each comes with detailed instructions, which are also available as PDF links at [www.tga.gov.au/covid-19-rapid-antigen-self-tests-are-approved-australia](http://www.tga.gov.au/covid-19-rapid-antigen-self-tests-are-approved-australia) if you would like to check before you buy.

In general, a sample is collected from your nose or mouth via swabs or spit and then added to a reagent before being applied to a testing strip. There is some evidence to suggest nasal swabs are more accurate for Delta and saliva/oral tests are better for Omicron. In some kits, the sample collector, reagent and testing strip are all-in-one. There is a development period for the test, usually 10-15 minutes, then the test can be read (some require UV light, which is supplied).

Each test has two positions for a possible line to develop, one marked C, one marked T. The **C is the control line** and will tell you that your test is effective. If there is no C line, the test is invalid and should be retaken. Showing **ONLY** a C line indicates a negative test. **T is the test line:** a weak or strong T line indicates a positive test and you should follow this up with whatever health directives are in place in your state around further testing, medical contacts or reporting. Some also have an **S** marked where the sample is added.

For people with limited hand dexterity, look for all-in-one tests like the OraWell or Ecotest, or tests that come with stands or boxes adapted for holding specimen collection tubes. Oral/saliva tests are generally easier to manage.

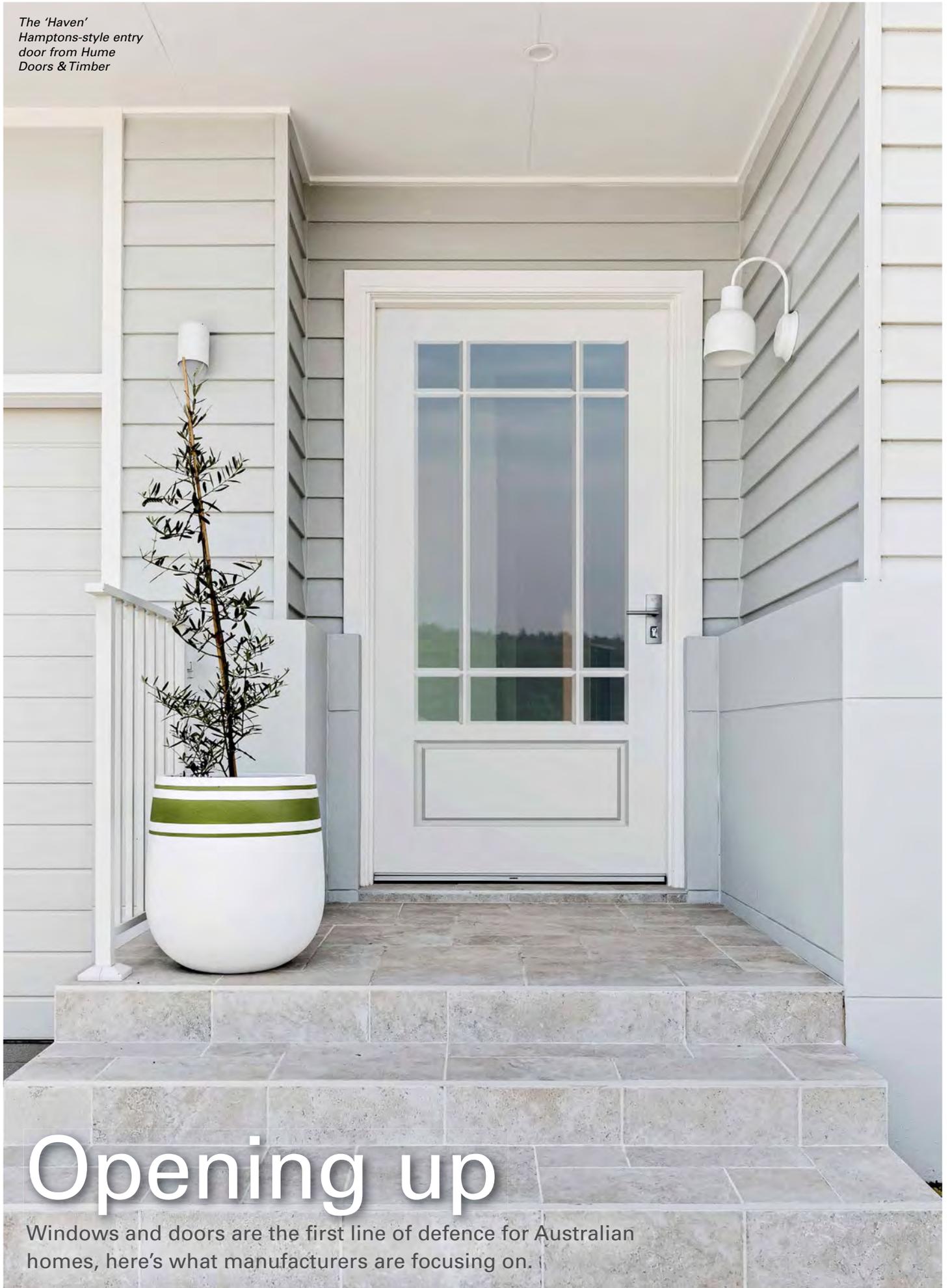
Do follow the instructions closely, including hand washing before testing. Many tests require you to check the results within a specific time window for greatest accuracy, which may be as short as five minutes after the development period. Make sure that you have a timer set and won't be interrupted through this period.

This magazine won't reach you for about three weeks, by which time I sincerely hope the current shortages and policy confusions have resolved. And also that pharmacy staff across the country have all been given big boxes of chocs by their employers as thanks for getting through this wild time. **T**

Source: [www.tga.gov.au/covid-19-rapid-antigen-self-tests-are-approved-australia](http://www.tga.gov.au/covid-19-rapid-antigen-self-tests-are-approved-australia)

Name and type	Australian supplier	Manufacturer	TGA Clinical Sensitivity rating
All Test SARS-CoV-2 Antigen Rapid Test (Nasal Swab) (ICOV-502H) Self-Test <b>Nasal swab</b>	AM Diagnostics	Hangzhou Alltest Biotech Co Ltd (China)	Very high sensitivity
LYHER Novel Coronavirus (Covid-19) Antigen Test Kit (colloidal Gold) Self-Test <b>Nasal swab</b>	2San Pty Ltd	Hangzhou Laihe Biotech Co Ltd (China)	Very high sensitivity
OnSite COVID-19 Ag Self Test <b>Nasal swab</b>	MD Solutions Australasia Pty Ltd	CTK Biotech Inc (USA)	Very high sensitivity
Panbio COVID-19 Antigen Self-Test <b>Nasal swab</b>	Abbott Rapid Diagnostics Pty Ltd	Abbott Rapid Diagnostics Jena GmbH (Germany)	Very high sensitivity
Rapid SARS-COV-2 Antigen Test Card Self-test <b>Nasal swab</b>	MP Biomedicals Australasia Pty Ltd	MP Biomedicals Asia Pacific Pte Ltd (Singapore)	Very high sensitivity
V-Chek COVID-19 Antigen Saliva Test <b>Saliva</b>	Cole Workwear PL	Guangzhou Decheng Biotechnology Co Ltd (China)	Very high sensitivity
All Test COVID-19 Antigen Rapid Test (Oral Fluid) Self-Test (ICOV-802H) <b>Oral fluid</b>	AM Diagnostics	Hangzhou Alltest Biotech Co Ltd (China)	High sensitivity
Hough COVID-19 Home Test <b>Nasal swab</b>	Hough Pharma Pty Ltd	BIOHIT HealthCare (Hefei) Co Ltd (China)	High sensitivity
JusChek SARS-CoV-2 Antigen Rapid Test (Nasal Swab) INCP-502H Self Test <b>Nasal swab</b>	Compliance Management Solutions	Hangzhou Alltest Biotech Co Ltd	High sensitivity
JusChek COVID-19 Antigen Rapid Test (Oral Fluid) ICOV-802H Self Test <b>Oral fluid</b>	Compliance Management Solutions	Hangzhou Alltest Biotech Co Ltd	High sensitivity
My Covid Test Antigen Rapid Test (Oral Fluid) (ICOV-802H) Self-Test <b>Oral fluid</b>	AM Diagnostics	Hangzhou Alltest Biotech Co Ltd China	High sensitivity
OraWell COVID-19 Ag Rapid saliva test device (Self-test) <b>Saliva</b>	Motion One Pty Ltd	Jiangsu Well Biotech Co Ltd (China)	High sensitivity
RightSign COVID-19 Antigen Rapid Test Cassette (Nasal Swab) <b>Nasal swab</b>	Medsupply Australia Pty Ltd	Hangzhou Biotest Biotech Co Ltd (China)	High sensitivity
TESTSEALABS COVID-19 Antigen Test Cassette <b>Nasal swab</b>	Pharma Soul Pty Ltd	Hangzhou Testsea Biotechnology Co Ltd (China)	High sensitivity
CareStart COVID-19 Antigen Home Test <b>Nasal swab</b>	Pantonic Pty Ltd	Access Bio Inc (United States of America)	Acceptable sensitivity
Ecotest COVID-19 Antigen Saliva Test kit (COV-S35Pen) <b>Saliva</b>	Emergence Technology Pty Ltd	Assure Tech (Hangzhou) Co Ltd (China)	Acceptable sensitivity
InnoScreen COVID-19 Antigen Rapid Test Device (Self Test) <b>Nasal swab</b>	Innovation Scientific Pty Ltd	Innovation Scientific Pty Ltd (Australia)	Acceptable sensitivity
SARS-CoV-2 Antigen Self Test Nasal <b>Nasal swab</b>	Roche Diagnostics Australia Pty Limited	SD Biosensor Inc (Korea - Republic of)	Acceptable sensitivity

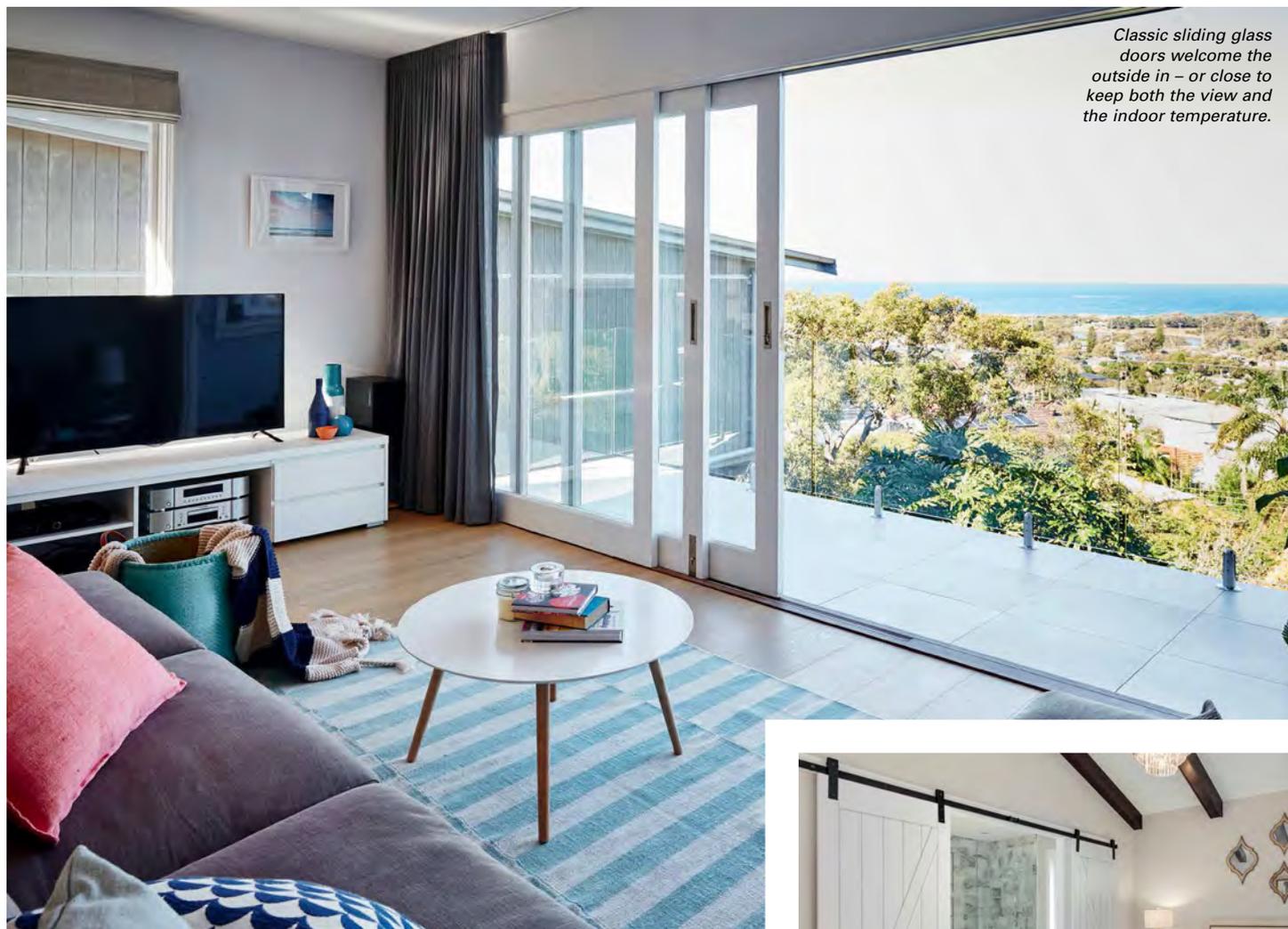
*The 'Haven'  
Hamptons-style entry  
door from Hume  
Doors & Timber*



# Opening up

Windows and doors are the first line of defence for Australian homes, here's what manufacturers are focusing on.

PHOTO: COURTESY OAK & ORANGE



Classic sliding glass doors welcome the outside in – or close to keep both the view and the indoor temperature.

It's hard to imagine a better display of why we need quality windows and doors in our homes than most of Australia over the past two-and-a-half years. Waves of choking smoke have swept over many towns and cities. Then, at different times with Covid, we've wanted to keep out threatening germs, while avidly ventilating at others, all while maintaining safety and security as many of us worked from home, with all the expensive equipment that entails.

At my house, we quickly worked out our front door wasn't up to the job in 2019 when bushfire smoke poured through gaps we'd previously been able to dismiss as 'not that bad' thanks to Sydney's idea of cold being 17°C. It was not the best time to realise how much door seals matter.

On top of all this, add in aesthetics. Most of us tend to think of doors and windows as being simply functional, but they can dramatically improve the looks, amenity and value of a house, as well as strongly impact the energy costs of running a home.

All these issues have long been at the forefront of door and window manufacturers' thinking, so as consumers become more savvy, there is a wealth of product on the market for builders and retailers.

"How we use our homes has changed a lot."

### JUGGLING SPACES

"How we use our homes has changed a lot recently," says Ian Sengstock, marketing manager at Hume Doors & Timber.

While our love for big open plan spaces is still going strong, years of living with them has revealed a few hard truths. The first is that they're a pain to heat, the second that they quickly lose their charm when you're on a work Zoom meeting at one end of the room and the kids are playing at the other.

"We've seen a big take-up of barn doors and other sliding systems," Senstock says.

"Part of that has come from people realising, 'Oh, hang on, we've got to condition this massive space...' They don't want to be chewing up the environmental resources needed to heat or cool the whole area, so they look for a way to block off that space but still have the open plan when they want it."



Above: Barn doors open up to expand a room, or close to hide areas away.

Juggling work and school from home has seen people looking for fast, attractive ways to change the way their homes work.

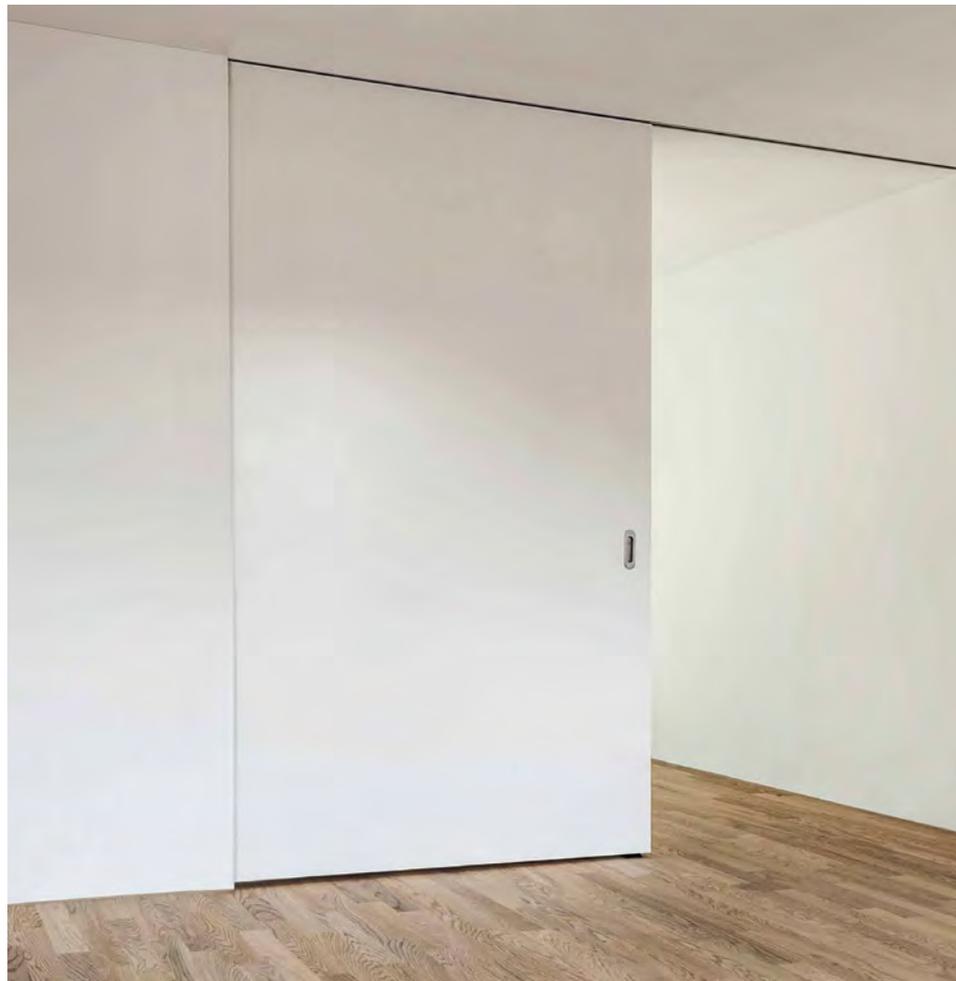
"That's where we've seen these systems really come to the fore," says Sengstock.

"They look brilliant, you can put them in reasonably easily and you wholly block off that space, whether it be a study room at one end of the living space or a workplace.

"For home offices, it also helps the adults when they've clocked off for the day. You need to have that separation, because if you don't close the door, you will be back in there answering emails once the kids are asleep, or you've done the washing up."

Fire risk continues to play a role in door and window designs, with major





*The Evolution Complete cavity door slides into a wall frame, taking up no floor space.*



*Above: Soft close and one-touch operating options for Evolution Complete systems are ideal for parents wrangling kids and older people.*

**“We see differences as significant as going from one water performance rating to the next, just from the way the seals are cut and jointed.”**



*Above: A simple but dramatic combination of door, window and colour choices.*

manufacturers putting out ranges with high BAL ratings. In addition to passing building approvals in BAL-rated areas, there are strong flow-on benefits. Sengstock says, “Obviously these products are also useful in lowering the risk of fire from neighbouring properties in urban situations, but the technology used means the same door will be highly insulating when it comes to keeping heat out in summer, or in during winter and will also help with issues like bushfire smoke or external noise.”

**SEAL IT UP**

The key technologies behind the advances in doors and windows are mostly down to better cores and more efficient seals.

Cores are in general specialised to their end uses (budget, security, BAL-rating, etc), but seals are the unsung heroes – and an area where precise installation really matters. “We see differences as significant as going from one water performance rating

to the next, just because of the way the seals are cut and jointed at the corners,” says Andrew Stewart, technical support manager at SchlegelGeisse.

Specialising in window and door components, the English/Italian firm sells a comprehensive range of seals that are widely used in the industry, but equally as important is the testing side of the business.

“We used to take mobile rigs out and provide a service for anyone who needed it,” Stewart says, “even if they weren’t using our seals. Now we offer an in-house testing facility to the industry instead, which manages the larger sizes of doors and windows and lets companies trial different seals, hardware and systems.”

Many of the customers are joiners and fabricators trialling new production methods or elements, and the test services include pressure testing for wind and water, air leakage for energy ratings and operating force – how hard it is to close windows and >>



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**Above:** Technical aspects aside, the aesthetics of windows and doors can make or break a room and house, dramatically changing the sale and resale value. For renovators, they're an obvious focus.

doors – as well as verifying seals and hardware on drawings.

“It’s all about making sure the products meet the BCC and AS criteria, as well as matching what the homeowner wants as their priority, be that price, energy efficiency or another focus,” Stewart says.

“The installer still needs to do their job well, which is why a lot of manufacturers are moving to delivering complete systems, so the installer puts in a full unit that includes the seals and so on already in place and checked.”

Seals are also a key part of the newest Hume product range, the Insulator, which will be released this year.

“It’s one of several of our technical products that actively help improve the energy rating of a home,” says Sengstock. “In this case, it’s designed for internal doorways that move between unconditioned and conditioned spaces, for example, the internal access between your garage and your home.”

In the past internal doors didn’t have insulation requirements, which meant most homes had poor heat-transfer management through doors leading to less-insulated spaces. New construction requirements have changed this. “The Insulator system works with any of our internal doors, but it provides that system barrier that allows your air conditioning or heating not to transfer between the two areas,” Sengstock says.

“It relies on highly effective intumescent fire and smoke perimeter seals around the frame, an energy efficient bottom seal and a hardwood bottom sill. Usually, these are designed for external doors. We had to redesign the whole thing to use it internally. I think this will be a very successful product very quickly once it’s launched.”

**UP NEXT**

When it comes to market drivers, aesthetics and costs are still high on the list, but environmental concerns are now extending beyond energy efficiency.

“There is a focus on materials,” says Sengstock. “Customers are increasingly aware of the whole of life of a product, and that means they are increasingly looking at manufacturers to see what we’re building with, what happens to our waste and what we do with the product when it reaches its end of life.”

Sengstock says that, like Hume, many major Australian manufacturers get a tick when it comes to sourcing materials, with a strong focus on certified materials and chain of custody for imported timbers, but the rest of the process could do with improvement.

“Over the next five years, our agenda is focused on recycling and lowering waste,” he says. “Consumers are very aware they have a part to play when it comes to reforming the building industry and while the younger Millennials, those in their 20s and early 30s, may not be quite ready to buy a house in Australia, but we can see their focus is solidly on environmentally responsible decisions. If we don’t have products available that have genuinely green credentials, we’re going to be left behind.”

Other major trends are targeting wider age groups. Soft close and easy opening doors and windows are appearing in multiple iterations, perfect for situations as diverse as keeping family spaces quiet and helping older residents with less arm strength.

Wider doors and entranceways throughout homes have a similar breadth of audience: yes they mean the home will tick the new accessibility requirements of the NCC (which NSW, SA and WA have sadly opted out of, but which an enormous sector of the market will require), but they also make life better for parents with prams, kids with bikes and anyone who ends up on crutches.

“People like things that give them ease,” Sengstock says. “Our sliding systems have gone very well over the last 24 months, including all that soft touch technology and easy release technology. All those types of things are very well perceived in the marketplace, as are the pivot systems. You

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**Above from left:** Hume's Insulator system can use any of their internal doors but adds a hardwood bottom sill and rubber seal at the bottom of the door, plus a perimeter seal that stops smoke and heat transfer.

PHOTOS: COURTESY HUME DOORS & TIMBER

can open the front door without needing to put your groceries down. These are simple things that get rid of the little stresses in life."

New design ideas may take several paths to manufacturers. Builders are the most obvious, as well as architects, stylists and international trends – mostly from Europe. "And our customers," says Sengstock. "We

have great relationships with them and they come up with clever ideas. Though when we're looking for feedback on new products, it can be hard to get specifics. We're still working on ways to improve that, which we'll be rolling out over the next couple of years.

"It's easy when we trial things like the Insulator with builders, we get very detailed feedback, often on installation time frames."

The Insulator was trialed for 12 months with a builder specially chosen by Hume. "They were extremely blunt," Sengstock says. "They'd tell us things like 'this bit is great, but this bit sucks.' But that helped us

adjust the product. So we know the end result is practical for builders as well as hitting the mark for homeowners."

Hume runs its own testing facility as well as an R&D department, which helps the company innovate internally. "That team loves to experiment," Sengstock says. "Sometimes they'll even muck something up according to their initial plan, but then we'll look at it and say, 'hey, you know what?...' and a new idea is born. We find innovation in all sorts of places." **T**

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# PEOPLE BUSINESS

with Peter Maguire



## Time to say goodbye?

Is 'the Great Resignation' fact or fiction in Australian workplaces?

**W**e have been hearing a lot about 'the Great Resignation' from the US, where people are reported to be leaving their employers in droves and businesses are having to up the ante with their employment offerings.

This is perfectly understandable in the US for a number of reasons, but is it going to be true of Australia too?

### THE DIFFERENCES

Firstly, people in the US did not get the sort of support over the past two years that we got here in Australia with JobKeeper and other government grants and subsidies. We also have a host of employment protections

that Americans do not have because their workforce is much more casualised than ours and they also have fewer legislated employment conditions. And they had much higher Covid infection rates. The CDC estimated over 44% of the US population had been infected by September 2021, versus less than 1% in Australia pre-Omicron.

Those factors mean that the experience of American workers through the pandemic has been very different to ours. But there are some commonalities.

### REASONS FOR LEAVING

One thing that workers worldwide will have been doing through the pandemic is having a

hard look at their working life from a couple of perspectives – what sort of employer they work for and what place work should take in their lives.

This is happening in Australia, too, and we are seeing people leaving employers for five main reasons:

1. They want greater flexibility in the way they work;
2. They have moved away from cities to get out of and minimise future potential for lockdowns or sickness;
3. They have the opportunity to move to more secure work or a different industry where they see career opportunities;
4. They were unhappy with their treatment

- by their employer during the pandemic and have the opportunity to do better;
5. They have opted to retire or just opt out of the workforce.

Of course, there are also the minority who have chosen not to get vaccinated and must now leave roles with mandatory vaccinations.

### THE CHALLENGE FOR EMPLOYERS

The labour market is the tightest that it has been for decades – it is really hard to attract any applicants let alone good ones.

A significant factor in this is the national border closure and the impact that has had with no international students, migrant workers or backpackers available, especially for industries like hospitality and agriculture/horticulture, which have been reliant on these workers for decades.

The border closures also impact seriously on occupations where we have skills shortages – like engineers, tradespeople and accountants to name a few.

Other industries have seen industry-specific challenges arise, for example:

- Because of lockdowns in industries like retail and hospitality, people went looking for work in other industries and many decided not to return when those industries opened up again
- Because of the high workload and stresses involved in fighting Covid and

## Most employers and employees have tried to do the right thing by each other during the pandemic.

looking after the ill and injured on top of their normal load, many frontline workers are opting out due to burnout and concerns for their own health and that of their families

- Where people have been able to work from home, there is a wish for many of them to continue to enjoy that flexibility rather than return to the office. That is resulting in new hybrid working arrangements and employers who don't adapt to that are likely to lose good people.

So will this current labour crisis be further exacerbated by the predicted "Great Resignation" hitting our shores?

### ARE WE SEEING THAT?

We recently advertised a job for one of our clients that attracted just 14 applications,

while a similar role advertised a year earlier attracted over 100 applications. This is consistent with there being a skills shortage but is hardly indicative of a great resignation.

In fact, we think that one of the reasons that we are struggling to find candidates for good jobs is that people are staying put.

Most employers and employees have tried to do the right thing by each other during the pandemic and lockdowns and work restrictions. There is a bit of loyalty that goes with that experience. Plus, given the still insecure environment that we are in as a nation, why would you leave the security of your current job where you know what it is like, you have established relationships, you know what the rules are and you have your leave entitlements etc as an insurance policy if things do go downhill with the pandemic?

So the better question is "how do you get that person you need to see better opportunity and security with you?"

### THE TAKEAWAY

The lesson we can take from the US is that, while our labour market situation has different causes, it is time to get proactive with your employee value proposition and your labour marketing strategy.

You need to be able to answer one question with confidence – that's whenever someone asks "why would I want to work for you?" **T**

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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Above: Responsible Wood CEO Simon Dorries (centre) with Jason Ross Marketing and Communications Officer (right)

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# IN THE FRAME



By Craig Kay, national product engineer, Tilling

## The changing face of GLT

Smarter engineering solutions and responses to fibre shortages equal changes to traditional Australian GLT/glulam products. Here's a brief rundown of where we're at.

One of the most important design qualities of timber framing is its resilience under load. Timber's unique stiffness makes timber-framed floors comfortable to walk, work and stand on. These qualities also contribute greatly to timber's excellent damping characteristics, thus giving timber-framed structures the ability to absorb impact loadings.

The size and span capabilities of sawn timber beams are generally limited by the physical characteristics of the timber supply. Consequently, stiffness, or deflection under load, at the relatively short spans commonly used with sawn timber beams is seldom a governing factor in the design of these wood structural elements. With the availability of glued laminated timber (GLT or glulam), it is possible for architects and engineers to design wood members in large sizes and long spans.

Design professionals recognise that for long spans, design is often controlled by deflection limits rather than by beam strength. One way to reduce the adverse aesthetic effect and structural significance of beam deflection is through the use of camber. Camber is an initial curvature built into a fabricated member, such as a GLT beam, which is opposite in direction to the calculated deflection, which will occur under gravity loads. The use of camber in glulam beams also gives the designer the ability to

negate the possible adverse effects of long-term deflection or creep, which may occur with wood members.

The deflection limits listed in Australian standards for structural elements are always measured from the level of its supports, so in the case of an element affected by gravity loads such as floor beams, a deflection limit of span/300 or 15mm maximum is measured below the support line. Therefore, a cambered beam with its centre point elevated, for example, 6mm above the support line when unloaded, is going to deflect below the support 6mm less for the same load compared to a non-cambered (straight) beam. The camber in affect is giving the same result as if the beam had increased stiffness. To exhibit the same deflection under load, a non-cambered beam would therefore need to be a larger section.

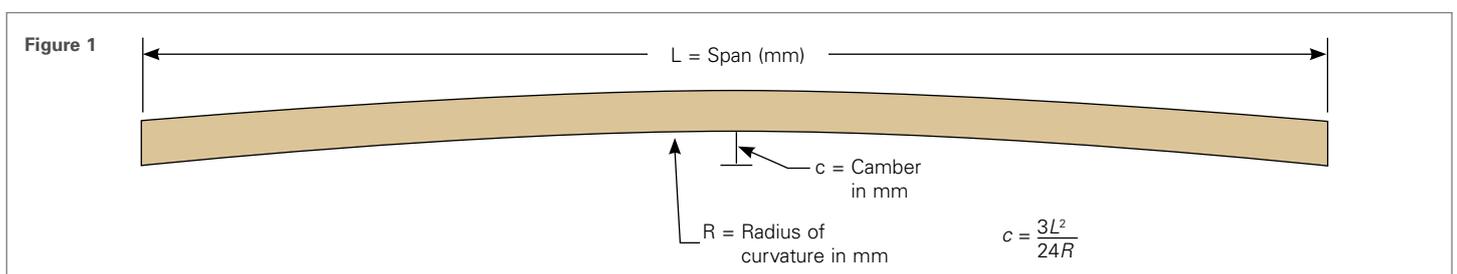
GLT beams are highly engineered timber products that are used in a variety of structural and architectural applications. Structural uses range from 150mm-deep members used in trusses and window and door headers to 2500mm-deep members used in long span structures. To produce GLT, individual timber pieces ranging in width from 45–300mm are finger jointed together into long laminations that are then bonded together with waterproof adhesives.

GLT has the following advantages over large-section sawn timber:

- Deeper, wider and longer members can be produced;
- Cambered, curved and tapered configurations can be easily fabricated;
- Lower-grade timber can be used in lower-stressed zones of the member, resulting in more efficient use and, therefore, conservation of the timber resource;
- Pre-drying the laminations leads to less member deformation and, therefore, less distress in the structure;
- Naturally occurring, strength-reducing defects (e.g. knots) are randomised throughout the beam volume.

Careful design using a cambered GLT beam can result in a reduced section size, and in some cases may mean the primary support element may fit within the floor space. Notwithstanding this, in some situations, especially in construction applications where the framing elements are rarely subjected to specified design live loads and the deflection due to dead loads is minimal, camber may not be necessary. In such applications, camber designed into a beam may never relax. In floor construction this can cause a permanent, unwanted crown and, in multi-storey applications, it may increase the difficulty of framing successive floors during construction.

Unless otherwise noted, GLT beams designated as cambered e.g., GL17C, in



Australia will have a 600m (600,000mm) radius camber. The approximate camber in the beam at midspan can be calculated by using the equation in Figure 1 (location). This calculation may be necessary to determine whether the dead load deflection is sufficient to remove all the camber.

**WHAT IS CHANGING?**

The wood fibre resource and world market conditions are rapidly changing, and the consequence of this is that some of the traditional GLT grades that most people are familiar with such as GL13 have become less available. Further, one country's largest GLT producers is no longer making GL17, once a staple of their operation and the 'generic' GL grade for NSW and QLD.

Engineers reference codified characteristic strength values for structural design of GL grades from Table 7.1 of AS 1720.1, and most GLT producers issued span tables for one or more of these standard grades. GLT producers who belong to and have their beam products certified by the Glued Laminated Timber Association of Australia (GLTAA) also adopted a unified design criteria for span tables, to make the specification of GLT, irrespective of the manufacturer, as simple and uncomplicated as possible. The high-strength GL21 manufactured by Hyne timber was one exception to that rule, as it was not referenced in AS 1720.1 and thus users were required to use characteristic strength values provided by the manufacturer.

Moving the clock forward to early 2020,

Over the next 12 months the GLT landscape is most likely to look a little different to what industry has been used to.

and softwood wood fibre issues begin to materialise. No longer was there sufficient feedstock of northern Slash Pine to meet the full demand for GL17 production or higher density Radiata Pine to make the traditional GL13 grade. Some GLT manufacturers were forced to become inventive and experiment with:

1. Making a GLT in a lower grade e.g., Changing from GL13 to a GL12 or GL10
2. Hybrid GLT from a mixture of wood species e.g., mixing Tas Oak or Vic Ash lamellas with lower density softwood to try to achieve a GL13.
3. New grades of GLT from alternative sources such as beams with a stiffness around the 15,000 MPa (there is no standard grade between GL13 and GL17) which will most likely be called a GL15 or similar.

In response to the shortage of higher grade GLT especially in Queensland, Tilling Timber has also introduced a hardwood product with a stiffness of 19,000 MPa called a SmartLam GL19 available in thicknesses of 60mm and 75mm.

Over the next 12 months the GLT landscape is most likely to look a little

different to what industry has been used to and it will take a little time for some of these new grades being developed to have their characteristic properties listed as generic grades within the relevant Australian standards. In the short to medium future, engineers and others seeking design properties for these new products will again need to contact the respective manufacturer.

While the specification of GLT may have become less standardised, the structural benefits of pre-cambered beams, the expanding number of section sizes and the aesthetic appeal of GLT make it a compelling proposition in contemporary structures.

In looking back in my 26+ years of being involved in the distribution of EWP, I am reminded of the words of Heraclitus, a Greek philosopher of the late 6th century BCE, who is quoted as saying, "The only thing that is constant is change." T



For more information on this topic, contact Craig Kay and the Tilling engineers via email at [techsupport@tilling.com.au](mailto:techsupport@tilling.com.au)

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# FTMA NEWSLETTER

with Nikita Gentle



## Where does your frame come from?

A simple question to owners and builders forms part of the solution to tackling climate change.

When choosing building materials it is vital to think about where they come from. Almost all buildings are based on either steel and concrete or timber frames. You can't replant the ore and rocks extracted from the planet for steel and concrete but with certified wood you can guarantee a tree is replanted.

Certified forest plantations plant roughly two to three trees for every tree harvested. Even when the huge holes left behind mining iron ore for steel are remediated, which isn't a given, contamination issues for soil and groundwater persist.

As the world attempts to slow down the effects of climate change and reach the targets set out in the Paris Agreement, it is important now more than ever to think about the sustainability of a building and its materials.

Concrete and steel each account for around 8% of global GHG emissions, which is more than what any individual country produces except for the US and China. On average 2 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> are emitted to manufacture one tonne of steel, whereas wood products remove more CO<sub>2</sub> from the atmosphere than they emit during manufacture.

In fact, one cubic metre of wood contains just shy of one tonne of CO<sub>2</sub> (more or less, depending on the species of tree). This is because trees absorb CO<sub>2</sub> from the atmosphere as they grow and store it as carbon.

So, essentially, wood's ability to sequester carbon helps provide a solution to embodied carbon within the built environment.

We're not saying that wood can solve all the problems in the built environment, and materials like steel and concrete do have a place in construction and certain types of buildings, but if we want to



Where does your frame come from?



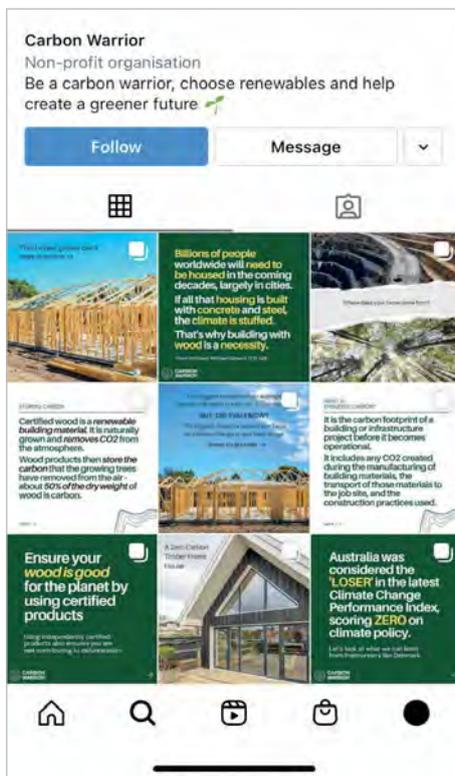
By choosing timber frames and trusses, your customer's house grows back in under 60 seconds.

reach the targets set in the Paris Agreement, we must use timber where possible.

**BECOMING CARBON WARRIORS**

The timber industry has a great story to tell – it is truly a sustainable and renewable industry. Now is the time for everyone to recognise that and share their pride in the role they are playing in creating a greener future. A starting point is to follow the Carbon Warrior project on Instagram (@carbonwarrior) and LinkedIn, and share the great statements, statistics and case studies you'll find there.

It is as easy as letting your customers know that by choosing timber frames and trusses, their house grows back in under 60 seconds. How? Well, with certified wood, more trees are planted than harvested, and with more than one million hectares of Australian softwood farms, approximately 20m<sup>3</sup> of timber is grown per minute. Meaning the average house grows back in



Above: The Carbon Warrior Instagram account includes easy-share messages.

less than 60 seconds! It's simple: wood grows back, steel and concrete don't.

Another message emphasising the urgency of wood use in the built environment is that billions of people worldwide will need to be housed in the next 20 years. If all that housing is built with

concrete and steel, the climate is stuffed. That's why building with wood is a necessity if the world wants to successfully tackle climate change.

When discussing climate change, ask people where their house frame comes from. Is it renewable? Is it sustainable? Is it made from a low embodied energy material? If their frame is made from certified or recycled wood, then it is all these things, and we should be highlighting that point at every opportunity.

Everyone has a duty in the fight against climate change, and it is as simple as choosing the right materials in our lives. Let people know that by choosing certified wood they are storing carbon in their buildings, helping put a stop to deforestation and creating a greener future.

These are easy and simple messages that anyone who cares for the planet and our future will understand. So, let's share them and all be proud Carbon Warriors!

For more on how to be involved in the Carbon Warrior project follow, share and like us on Instagram @carbonwarrior. If you have any questions, please **contact us via nikita@ftma.com.au**

Nikita Gentle

Carbon Warrior project manager



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**Coming up in TimberTrader news**

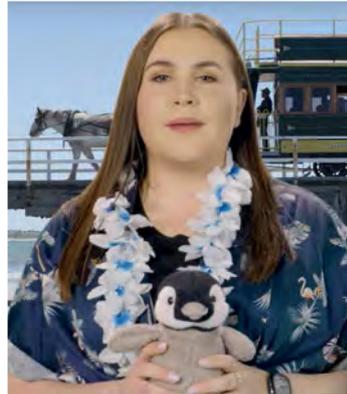
**PAINTS AND COATINGS**

Coming up in the March 2022 issue of *TimberTrader News*, a special feature on:

- Clever coating technologies and consumer-led choices.
- Timber value-adding with paint and coating options.



Does your company want to be a part of this in-depth feature? For advertising your products and services to our 5000+ readers, contact Julie McConachy on 0409 381 813 or email [juliem@paragonmedia.com.au](mailto:juliem@paragonmedia.com.au) For editorial opportunities, contact Donyale Harrison on 0417 487 497 or email [donyale.harrison@paragonmedia.com.au](mailto:donyale.harrison@paragonmedia.com.au) **ADVERTISING AND EDITORIAL DEADLINE: Wednesday 2 February, 2022.**



**Clockwise from top left:** Each IHG state team 'telecast' from an iconic location, encouraging local holidays along the way. Some of the spots included Suncorp Stadium, Mount Panorama, Victor Harbor's Granite Island, the Grampians, Cradle Mountain, the 'G' (or MCG for those not fortunate enough to be Victorians), Uluru and the Pilbara.

# Quality stores

The State winners for IHG's 2021 Awards of Excellence all brought something special.

With so many Australians bitten by the home improvement and building bugs in 2021, it was a huge year for Independent Hardware Group members. These 2021 State winners for the IHG Awards of Excellence more than earned their stripes in a hectic year!

Resurgent Covid waves scuttled the group's plans to hold in-person events, but

in a typically nimble response, the state operations teams pulled together online ceremonies filled with respect, laughter and appreciation for so much hard work.

With a brief thanks from head office and lots of personal input from state teams, the winning store teams had a chance to show some of their individual flavour in each acceptance speech. Green screens gave each

state a chance to showcase its treasures, with IHG staff 'transported' to iconic locations for presentations and local tourism promos.

WA's awards were hosted by Warwick Keenan, who also showcased the Swan River in Perth and the Bungle Bungles, with Michelle Vincent visiting the glamorous Indiana Tea Rooms at Cottesloe Beach and the spectacular Horizontal Falls, while Ron Fuller called in from the red Pilbara, Hancock Gorge in Karijini National Park and soothing Turquoise Bay near Exmouth.

For South Australia and the Northern Territory, Vito Nocera was at the helm and let us into the secrets of the Balfours frog cake, Farmers Union iced coffee, the 2.2L Darwin Stubby and Coopers Pale Ale – roll the bottle before you pour! Mick Russo called in from the Remarkable Rocks on Kangaroo Island, Blue Lake in Mt Gambier and the Murray River Princess. Catherine Violi appeared at Victor Harbor's Granite Island, complete with a Little Penguin friend and the Adelaide Oval. Paul Vartuli sipped wine beside the d'Arenberg Cube in McLaren Vale, fought crocs at Jim Jim Falls in Kakadu and bathed in the power of Uluru.



**Above:** An easy-access timber yard helped Barossa Mitre 10 take out the SA Trade Centre category.



**Above:** The Queensland Small Format winner, Balshaw's Mitre 10. **Right:** The team at Boddington Hardware & Newsagency took out WA's Convenience award, thanks to their "heads down, tails up" work ethic. **Below left:** Dennis and Di Ham were "over the moon" to see Woodgate Beach Hardware win in Qld.

In Queensland, Mike Gow took on hosting duties, reminding everyone that Queensland is the greatest state in the world, before taking a jaunt to the Great Barrier Reef. Julie Maxwell announced awards from Suncorp Stadium and then the Daintree rainforest, Vince Tebb came from the Big Pineapple and the Glasshouse Mountains and then Eddie Jones flew in with his presentation from the Qantas Founders Museum, Longreach, followed by the Dinosaur Museum at Winton.

For Victoria/Tasmania, Jackie Kersting wore the host mantle, joined by Lina Salvalaggio, who presented from the gorgeous Grampians and the art-covered Brim Silos, Nicole Collis cradled a Tassie Devil on Cradle Mountain and fish and chips on Constitution Dock, Rod

**Green screens gave each state a chance to showcase treasures.**

Currie donned a bike helmet (but no lycra) to present from the Great Ocean Road, while Scott Woodward presented from Luna Park and Nathan Stewart shared the beauty of The Apostles. Brendan Roberts came to the presentation from the MCG – the G for those in the know – juggling a Sherrin and looking forward to the AFL returning.

Finally, NSW & the ACT had Ian Back at the helm and guest-presenting from the Sydney Harbour Bridge, with Lisa Rochester making crosses from the giraffe enclosure at Taronga Zoo, while Shawn Benson sang the praises of the Sydney Opera House and showed off Parliament House in Canberra. Liam Collier rocked a mullet for his Mount >>



**Above:** Brad Fuss at Strathalbyn Mitre 10 paid his respects to his excellent state competitors.

Panorama cross, before heading to the Hunter Valley. Chantel Jackson wanted to get to Dubbo Zoo, but was stuck at home, so instead we saw her personal Grafton Zoo, including Leroy and Charlie the dogs and Lesley the cat – captivating! – before she donned a bright yellow homage to the Big Banana.

To finish of the ceremonies, a blooper reel of errors showed that even the schmilckest presentations have their moments of tied tongues and prop failures.

Each state fielded a high-quality set of finalists in the multiple categories, with the state winners going on to compete at the national level. The Store of the Year (SotY) categories across the various store formats and the specialist trade centre, garden centre and Home Hardware store awards recognise excellence in trading and living up to the 'best store in town' motto, while the Village awards recognise the member communities who have come together most effectively through the year.

Here are the 2021 state winners in each category, with the national winners to be announced in the next few months.

**SOTY: CONVENIENCE FORMAT**

**WA: Boddington Hardware & Newsagency**

An exciting update and transformation over the past year secured this victory. Neil Batterbee and his crew run a truly local store, with Neil accepting the award, saying they'd made it through the year, "heads down, tails up!" and grateful for the acknowledgement of the team's hard work.

**SA/NT: Shippy's Thrifty-Link Hardware, Moonta**

The epitome of punching above their weight, Shippy's provides an enormous range in a tiny space. John and Merridy Shippard keep everything attractive and accessible and have strong relationships with their customer base. John took the announcement call, which was captured in a cinéma vérité videologue, beginning with, "We've won an



Above: Manager Matt Scorer and owner Trent Wilson from Dunsborough Mitre 10.

award? Surely not! We're too busy – how can we win an award when we're flat-out selling stuff?"; all the while walking around the immaculate store showing the range from barbecues and kitchens to pool noodles and power tools, congratulating his hard-working staff as he went.

**Old: Woodgate Beach Hardware**

With a focus on store standards that allows a large offer to be presented cleverly and clearly in a small space, this store sets the model and is a valued part of its local community. Owners Dennis and Di Ham described themselves as "over the moon" at their second nomination in a row. "It's a huge achievement!" says Dennis, thanking Di and the hardworking team at the store who all work hard and cohesively, and also the IHG team for helping keep stock levels up.

**NSW/ACT: Kootingal True Value Hardware**

Click'n'Collect and Click'n'Deliver have helped Paul Summers and his team to lift their sales over 67% year on year. "I'd like to say a big thank you to all my team

members and my suppliers for all their support throughout the past 12 months," says Paul, giving them much of the credit.

**Vic/Tas: Poole's House & Hardware, Ouyen**

Under new(ish) ownership, the range has been extended to suit the community, including a much-appreciated selection of plants and a reward program. Rodney Poole says, "Working as an employee for the previous owners, I could see the potential ... and like most workers, I often thought to myself 'if this was my store, I'd do that differently.'" So when he had the chance he did! Working with his wife and her good accounting sense, Poole honoured the store that had been part of the community for 47 years while putting his own stamp on it and shifting the tool and trade focus to new brands and products. A new light-filled layout has brought in more customers while retaining the old. "Just two years later, here I am nominated for an industry award: I didn't do it on my own, I had my wonderful family and excellent team of staff!"

**SOTY: MITRE 10 SMALL**

**WA: Dunsborough Mitre 10**

Owners Trent and Kristen Wilson put the last few years into perspective for most of us, first losing their store to an electrical fire in early 2020 and then, while they were rebuilding, their son Blake lost the battle with leukaemia he'd been fighting for years. Trent describes the fire as a blessing in disguise, giving them much more time with Blake in his final months and then letting them update the store. "Being in a small town our customers missed us, but we've seen a 50% increase in sales." He thanks their close-knit team, particularly manager Matt Scorer, "who's been an amazing support to us both personally and professionally."

**SA/NT: Strathalbyn Mitre 10**

The sixth state award in a row for Brad Fuss and his team, thanks to a comprehensive local offer that means people don't need to shop out of town and a new digital platform that's quickly become central to their offer. Brad offers his congratulations to all the finalists, saying he knew what amazing work they'd done and thanked his team, "who've done an outstanding job, and we look forward to a slightly more relaxing 2022!"

**Old: Balshaw's Mitre 10, Mundubbera**

Described as the pinnacle of customer focus, with highly engaged owners, Balshaw's was a popular victor, with the local community valuing their support and commitment. John and Deb Balshaw were caught offguard by their win "Our community only has about 1000 people in the town, so it's a great thing to see the small communities receiving recognition for their efforts," says John. "This year's been a pretty good year for us!" Some of the year's



Above: The Pinks Mitre 10 team in Clare, winners of the SA/NT Medium Format SotY award.

achievements included strategic meetings for their staff and giving them challenges that both helped them meet goals and gave John and Deb some much-needed time off, which supported their wellbeing as well. Deb also talked about the difference it makes having suppliers come out to regional areas to work directly with stores.

**NSW/ACT: Sunlite Mitre 10, Paddington**

In 2020, the store expanded into an adjacent building, allowing them to expand their shopping experience. Online sales grew almost 70% during Sydney's official and casual lockdowns. Steven Czeiger says, "We had to spend a significant amount of capital in a time of so much uncertainty..." The new garden and lifestyle emporium that resulted took six months to complete and has boomed since opening. "Thank you to the exceptional Paddington team," Steven adds. "This would never have happened without you guys!"

**VIC/TAS: Camperdown Mitre 10** A full site review ranging from safety to strong housekeeping standards has helped the



Above: Graeme and Brenda Holt from Holt's Mitre 10 in Sorell, Tasmania.

store lift its presentation and cemented the win. Retail manager Joelene Bailey accepted the award on behalf of the much-appreciated team, saying, "We've worked hard on

creating a loyal customer base that keeps returning to us for our small town, old-fashioned customer service and the commitment our staff are known to deliver." With numerous Victorian lockdowns, the team responded with technological solutions including click 'n' collect and social media promotion to maintain connection to their stressed community and grow sales.

**SOTY: MITRE 10 MEDIUM**

**WA: York Mitre 10** With multiple new initiatives having been put in place recently, >>

"We've worked hard on creating a loyal customer base that keeps returning to us for our small town, old-fashioned customer service."



Above: Porters Mitre 10 in Mackay, winner of the Queensland Large Format award – with everything a trade or retail customer could want in one store.



Above: Two of the Home Hardware category state winners, Pretty Sally Home & Garden from Victoria and SA's Berry Springs Home Hardware.

this store contains much more than its medium footprint suggests. CEO Glen Scott says it was "wonderful to be nominated for an award and even better we won, especially considering how many good Mitre 10s there are in WA!" He thanked everyone involved in the store's major recent growth, which has also been rewarded with increased sales and positive customer feedback.

**SA/NT: Pink's Mitre 10, Clare** Greg and Melanie Pink are the sixth generation of Pinks to run this store, which celebrated 160 years in 2021. After a year of enormous challenges, Greg says that, "To win an award and know you're doing all the right things is fantastic!" He thanked IHG, the store's staff, and most particularly, Melanie.

**Old: Ingham Manufactures Mitre 10** A core part of their local community, Gavin and Debbie Gusmeroli head up a team that Gavin says puts in 110%. He describes it as being difficult to keep up the store's extremely high standard with the volume of sales over the past year – "But we have! Thanks to a great effort by the staff, seven

days a week, full tilt!" The team were all delighted with the nomination, which Gavin described as a "turbocharge" after the past 18 incredibly busy months.

**NSW/ACT: Kincumber Mitre 10** Owners Peter Steele and Steve McCumstie handed over acceptance duties to Matthew Steele and GM Matthew Maclure, who both masked up superbly to share their praise for their wider team, with Matthew Steele flagging that "What our team has gone through, personally and in store, makes this probably the best year to win this award!" and Maclure adding his gratitude to the local community, IHG and suppliers for their support.

**Vic/Tas: Cramer's Mitre 10, Maryborough** Bernie and Stewart Cramer invested in a huge trade re-development this year, to go with their customer-focused store and emphasis on local famers. "We've had a long 12 months... but this just validates we're on the right track," says Stewart, before thanking the IHG team and his and Bernie's families. Bernie was generous in sharing praise with the other nominees, saying, "It's very humbling to receive this award because I know all the members have been doing it tough and worked extremely hard!"

**SOTY: MITRE 10 LARGE**

**WA: Margaret River Mitre 10** With consistently high mystery shopper results, regular new initiatives and a central role in the local Mitre 10 community, it's no surprise Margaret River won this gong for the second year in a row, as well as Trade Centre. Store manager Paul Brown accepted, with owners Lloyd and Anne Shepherdson and Noelene Wilcox. "It's such a privilege," Paul said, describing the team as one big family. "We all say it's the staff, but it really is!" Lloyd added.

**SA/NT: Barossa Mitre 10, Nuriootpa** Famous as a local flagship store, the team



Above: Bec Diprose at Dippers HT&H.

managed to deliver through enormous supply difficulties and keep the locals building. Business manager Craig Dodman said that it was an honour to be nominated in such a strong category and that the win belonged to his suppliers and particularly his team: "If anyone is looking at employing someone out of the supermarket industry, don't hesitate! I would highly recommend it. My retail ops leader has led this team with purpose and passion and they've followed his lead with inspiration."

**Old: Porters Mitre 10, Mackay City** Famous for providing the Mackay locals with something different, this store contains a busy café alongside its garden centre, with comprehensive indoor and outdoor sections, even a specialty barbecue aisle. CEO Travis Cunnane said the nomination itself was a great honour and winning was a well-deserved accolade for the staff. "It's great to get external recognition for the team and how we're performing. It means a lot to the staff, you'll be surprised what something like



Above: One of the Home Hardware Karratha team.



“When it comes to the reasons behind a store’s success, we all say it’s the staff, but it really is!”

Above: Margaret River isn’t just about great wines, it has a great Mitre 10, too, run by owners Lloyd and Anne Shepherdson and their team.

this can do for morale and energy after a challenging year.”

**NSW/ACT: Johnson Bros Mitre 10, Mona Vale** The Johnson family has spent decades helping the Northern Beaches build, garden and renovate, and are hugely popular winners. Ged Johnson says, “Coming off the last 12 months, this means even more to my staff and family. We’ve got through these last 12 months with exceptional support from IHG and from our suppliers.”

**Vic/Tas: Holt’s Mitre 10, Sorell** A consistent 5-paintbrush store, with great mystery shopper and e-learning results, this store is probably the only one in Australia with a working model train travelling around



Above: Smith Bros Mitre 10 in Longreach, Queensland, one of the Trade Centre winners.

its roof, thanks to Graeme’s third great love (after his wife Brenda but possibly tied with hardware). Brenda and Graeme Holt have increased the store size five-fold in their 36 years at the helm “We’ve had fantastic staff who have worked with us and got the store to the current standard,” said Brenda, before thanking IHG for their many valuable programs and support, and the other local members who’ve provided a great sense of regional community.

**SOTY: HOME HARDWARE**

**WA: Home Hardware Karratha** Famed for their collaboration and customer service, a long-serving and loyal team was central to the success of this regional store. Store manager Zana Salta accepted the award with Arielle Deveau. Zana, who has worked in the store for 10 years described a decade of constant improvement, saying they’re looking “upwards and onwards!”

**SA/NT: Berry Springs Home Hardware** Russell and Lindy Willing opened the NT store only a year ago but have been welcomed into their community, meeting local needs including a building supplies drive-through. “The most important thing to us is that our customers are extremely pleased with our new store,” Russell says, giving thanks for the help he has received from IHG with setting the store out and delivering popular programs like the loyalty >>



Above: The huge trade yard at Gubbins Pulbrook Mitre 10 in Moss Vale, NSW.



**Above:** Tradies stay dry in Barossa Mitre 10's capacious covered trade centre and service desk. Regular special events including tradie breakfasts keep the loyal customers close to the store.

cards, online systems and marketing, as well as the store's three excellent staff.

**Qld: Home Timber & Hardware Biloela** Owners Tim Kessler and Kent Hutton also took out the award last year and over 2021 have invested in a new trade counter and trade layout to provide improved access for customer service. Kent describes the win as "Amazing... particularly going up against the other great Home stores in our state." The hard work and effort from the staff and family support were very much appreciated and flagged as the key to the store's success. Kent particularly thanked their suppliers, recognising how hard their year had been and what a great job they'd done, particularly sourcing timber.

**NSW/ACT: Dipper's Home Timber & Hardware, Moree** Even in the harshest economic climate, Bec Diprose and her team reinvested in the store to ensure the community has everything they need in town. Bec showed us around the store by video, talking about the team's journey through drought into Covid. "Our team has done an amazing job of adapting so quickly in really adverse conditions," she says, before noting they are looking up. "We were particularly lucky to see a fabulous harvest late in 2020 and might even get a second one!" The team were central to the store's success, Bec highlighted the work of Luke Cubis and Mark Baker and thanked IHG BDM Chantel Jackson for her sterling help.



**Above:** Hume & Iser is one of the oldest family businesses recognised with an award, but you'd never know it from the thoroughly modern store and services including tracked deliveries.

"The team have worked tirelessly over the past 12 months ... we've laughed and we've cried. They've gone above and beyond!"

**Vic/Tas: Pretty Sally Home & Garden, Wallan** Shane and Cathy Hemphill recently added a new trade counter to their store and have embraced other developments including digital sales. Keen participants in their IHG network, Shane was one of the first IHG members to experience Covid-positive cases in store, losing half his senior staff to quarantine at one point, which helped guide other stores in their responses. Surprised but pleased by the win, he says the win is very much thanks to his staff: "The team have worked tirelessly over the past 12 months ... we've laughed and we've cried, but I can't say enough about them. They've gone above and beyond!"

**SOTY: TRADE CENTRE**

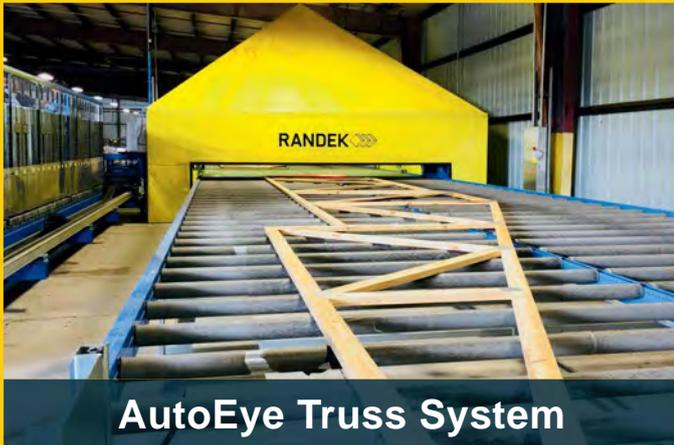
**WA: Margaret River Mitre 10** Lloyd and Ann Shepherdson run a busy and popular store in the famed wine region. Paul Brown, Marcel Leiskalns, Bruce Biddle and Lloyd accepted the award with cheers, with Bruce saying, "These 12 months moved very quickly, as they did for so many people!" and Lloyd thanking his team, saying, "The biggest attribute we've got is how much you guys have communicated with our trade people so they're in the same loop as us – that's been a hell of a bonus!"

**SA/NT: Barossa Mitre 10, Nuriootpa** The high professionalism of all the finalists in a challenging year was noted. Barossa edged ahead with its strong record of deals, tradie breakfasts and growth. Craig Dodman accepted the award on behalf of his team, who he described as the reason for the win, saying, "I'm fortunate to work with a group of people who are committed to not only their jobs but also their colleagues. I don't think it matters if you have the best display, best location or biggest store; it means nothing without having the best team." He went on to praise his competitors who have all delivered remarkable performances through 2021.

**Qld: Smith Bros Mitre 10, Longreach** Marnie Smith and her staff have a dedicated trade team with a trade desk that's always well-staffed, so tradies can get back to their jobs quickly. "We don't do what we do to >>

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Above: Two of the Garden Centre state winners, left is Gubbins Pulbrook Mitre 10, Moss Vale and right is McLaren Vale Mitre 10.

win awards, but it's nice to be recognised for all the hard work we put in," says Marnie, who turned the camera onto her team who described recent improvements from concreting the timber yard and upgrading the storage shed to changing some of the internals to make life easier for customers.

**NSW/ACT: Gubbins Pulbrook Mitre 10, Moss Vale** A destination for trade customers in the booming Southern Highlands, this store has everything they need to get in and out quickly and sorted. Ryan White, Nick 'Gubbo' Gubbins, Steve Pulbrook and Aaron Deegan accepted the award, with Nick saying "trade is a huge part of our business!" Aaron talked about the challenge of integrating the Truck Tracker delivery system, which has been embraced by the team, while Steve flagged the input of each of the trade members in conquering a difficult year. "Like everyone, we haven't had timber, but our timber sales are up by 40%!" Nick joked.

**Vic/Tas: Hume & Iser Mitre 10, Bendigo** Not for the first time, Hume & Iser's multigenerational store took home the gong.

Stephen Iser described it as "another great honour for our family business" and gave thanks to IHG, suppliers and staff for getting everyone through an extraordinary period, which he hoped would soon be past.

**SOTY: GARDEN CENTRE**

**WA: Tuckey's Mitre 10, Pinjarra** Michelle Planken accepted the award on behalf of herself, Peter, John and the team. "It's been a very busy 12 months with lots of customers doing home renovations and gardening," she said, taking the opportunity to sit among the plants for a much-needed rest while she made her video!

**SA/NT: McLaren Vale Mitre 10**

With all the state finalists having solidly 'grown' their efforts, owner Mark and Fiona Loveday, Brian Lawrence and Linda Probiss had to pull out something extra to take home their third award. A new 200m<sup>2</sup> display yard for pots, fountains and advanced trees did the trick. Mark thanked his garden team who do brilliant work, "I'm continually amazed with the audience our

garden centre brings, congratulations to all the staff involved... they do a fantastic job."

**Qld: Emerald Mitre 10** A prior winner, the Emerald store is described as a benchmark store that "consistently delivers excellence." Justin and the team took the honour extremely seriously, with Justin's speech consisting of delighted laughter while he was wheelbarrowed around the carpark to the *Benny Hill* theme tune.

**NSW/ACT: Gubbins Pulbrook Mitre 10, Moss Vale** A sterling reputation for quality plants at the largest garden centre in the Southern Highlands helped owners Nick Gubbins and Steve Pulbrook with manager David Wansey secure the gong, with David sending out his "thanks to the locals who have continued to support us and the team who have worked so hard to bring the garden into this condition." Nick added that he thinks "Everyone in the Southern Highlands has built a vegie garden over Covid, so we've sold a lot of plants!"

**Vic/Tas: Diamond Valley Mitre 10, Diamond Creek** Outstanding customer service put this store over the line once again, with the beautiful merchandising and excellent advice from the team being very well received by the local community. Paige Hastings accepted on behalf of the Diamond Valley team, happily describing them as "floored" by another win in her succinct acceptance speech.

**VILLAGE**

This year's state finalists for Village of the year were more hotly contested than ever.

- WA: Western Warriors**
- SA/NT: Central Diggers**
- Qld: City, Coast & Country**
- NSW/ACT: Northern Independents**
- Vic/Tas: The Apostles**

The national awards ceremony will be held online in mid-March – keep an eye on future issues for the winners, and congratulations to all the finalists! **T**



Above: Some of the Northern Independents store team – a second NSW/ACT Village of the Year win in a row!

# DELIVERING INNOVATION TO THE TRUSS AND FRAME INDUSTRY

**With the right partnership anything is possible**

“ The team at Vekta was instrumental in the design of this system and were able to open our eyes to possibilities we didn't know even existed.

The finished product has not only met, but exceeded our expectations. With the minimal footprint of the PackFeeder, the accuracy, speed and reliability of the Razer V5, the speed and efficiency of the Material Conveyor system, and the overall support by this team we are extremely pleased with the outcome. ”

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

**With 15+ years experience, Vekta specialises in creating automated factory solutions based on your objectives, space requirements and budget. The Truss Company's customised solution focused on flexibility with two Razer V5's and two PackFeeders sharing a common nine KickOff Conveyor System. If the key to business success is selecting the right partner- the key to automation is choosing Vekta**



**VEKTA  
RAZER V5**

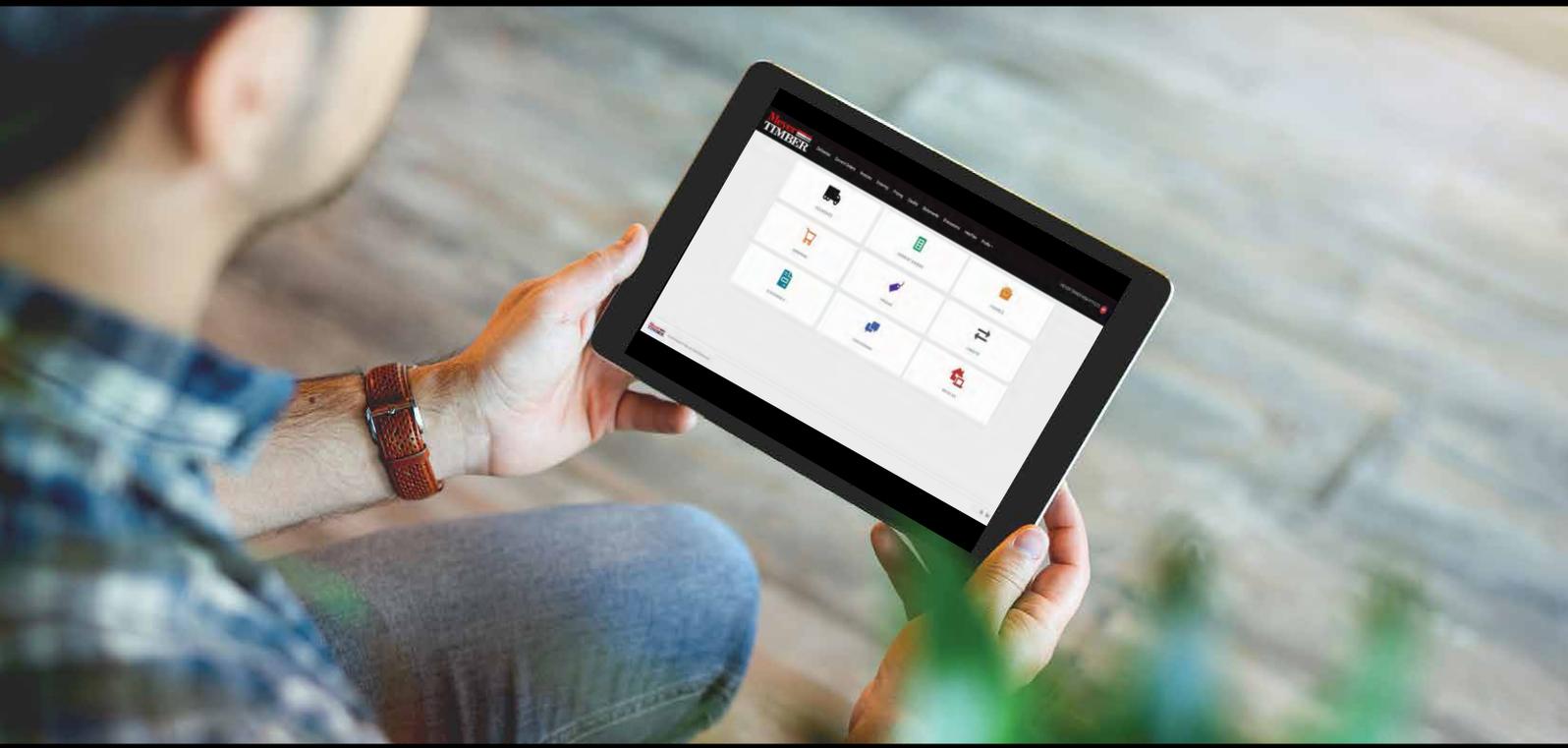


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