

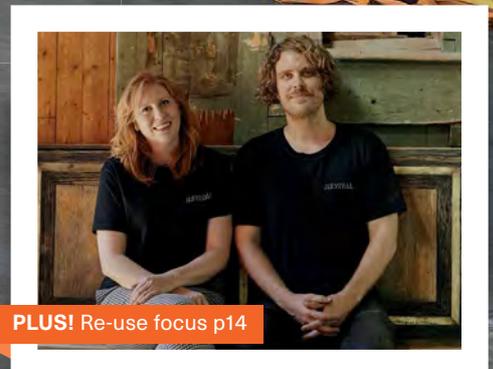
# TimberTrader

news



## Treated strength

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**MULTINAIL'S MAJOR  
EXPANSION PLANS**

PAGE 30  
**STAIR CASSETTES BRING  
MULTIPLE SAVINGS**

PAGE 34  
**PLAN TO SUCCEED WITH  
DESIGN DOCUMENTATION**



Auto Framer



Raked Wall Extruder



Mini 10

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outputs, increased accuracy, labour saving automation and maximum optimisation of timber.

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## PUBLISHING DATA

**Publisher:** Ian Brooks  
(02) 9126 9705  
ianb@paragonmedia.com.au

**Editor:** Donyale Harrison  
0417 487 497  
donyale.harrison@paragonmedia.com.au

**Advertising:** Julie McConachy  
0409 381 813  
juliem@paragonmedia.com.au

**Subscription Manager:**  
Julie Hughes (02) 9439 1955  
subs@timbertradernews.com

**Art Director:** Julitta Overdijk

Published 12 times per year by:

**Paragon Media Pty Limited**

ABN: 49 097 087 860

Suite 14, Level 2/174 Willoughby Road  
Crows Nest NSW 2065

PO Box 81, St Leonards, NSW 1590, Australia

Tel: 02 9439 1955

Email: query@timbertradernews.com

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

Established October 1985

ISSN 1035/4298

Print Post Approved: 100002694

**Email:** query@timbertradernews.com

**Website:** www.timbertradernews.com

### Subscriptions for 12 editions:

Australia: \$120 (incl GST)

New Zealand: A\$120

International: call (02) 9439 1955

## PERSONNEL



### EDITOR

Donyale Harrison  
Phone: 0417 487 497  
donyale.harrison@paragonmedia.com.au



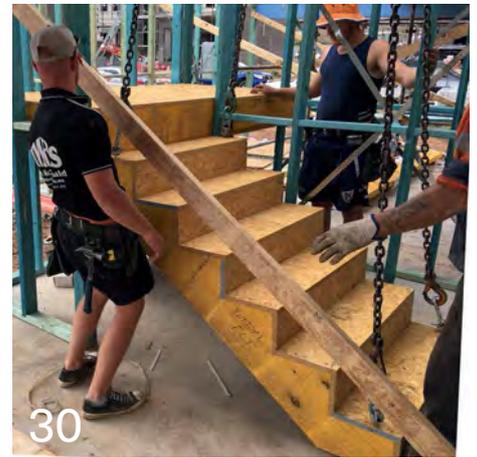
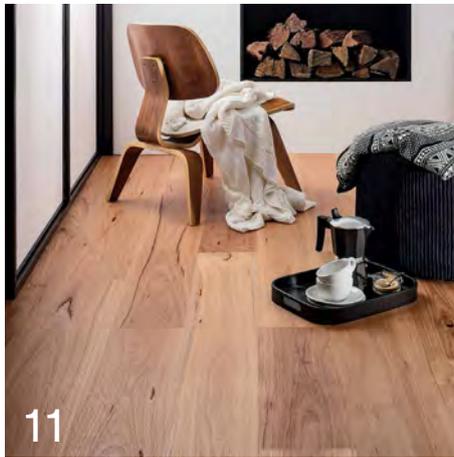
### SALES DIRECTOR

Julie McConachy  
Phone: 0409 381 813  
juliem@paragonmedia.com.au



### PUBLISHER

Ian Brooks  
Phone: 02 9126 9705  
ianb@paragonmedia.com.au



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**COVER CREDIT:** Courtesy Australian Sustainable Hardwoods, shot at Fisher's Timber Treatment.  
Inset: courtesy Revival.

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.



Proudly Printed  
In Australia

Average Net Distribution: 1599  
Period ending September 2016

Source: Audited Media Association of Australia; CAB Total Distribution Audit. For further information visit [www.auditedmedia.org.au](http://www.auditedmedia.org.au)



E-newsletter subscribers: **3697**



# Association news

## TTIA

*Brian Beecroft*

### PANDEMIC LEAVE PAYMENT

The Federal Government has temporarily reinstated the pandemic leave payment for workers who have to isolate and are unable to work but do not have sick leave.

The leave payment had originally expired on 30 June, however due to an escalating Covid wave, the decision has been made to extend the payment to 30 September, 2022.

Application for the payment can be made from Wednesday 20 July, and eligibility will be backdated to 1 July.

At this stage there has been no extension of mandated mask wearing, although social distancing and the wearing of masks indoors in crowded areas is strongly encouraged.

### NSW STORM AND FLOOD ASSISTANCE

If your business is recovering from the recent storms and flooding disaster in NSW, find out about the financial packages and support available to businesses by visiting the following links:

<https://www.service.nsw.gov.au/transaction/june-and-july-2022-storm-and-flood-business-support>

<https://www.raa.nsw.gov.au/disaster-assistance/storm-and-flood-programs/sdg-june-2022>

### INDUCTION GUIDE FOR NEW EMPLOYEES

Employee induction is important in preparing the employee for their new role and is the most effective way to:

- introduce employees to the organisation's structure, values, policies and procedures;
- ensure the new employee contributes as quickly and effectively as possible;
- avoid problems and dissatisfaction which could cause the new employee to leave prematurely;
- clearly set out expectations; and
- assist in evaluating the employee's performance during their probationary period.

A formal induction guide can assist managers and supervisors understand the importance of induction and their responsibilities in this process. An example guide and checklist are available.

Remember that it is a requirement to supply any new employee with a Fair Work

Information Statement. **Contact TTIA if you need a copy on (02) 9264 0011.** TTIA can assist you with any aspects of an induction process for new employees.

## **MGA TMA**

*MGA TMA Employment Law team*

### **ADVERSE ACTION, WORKPLACE RIGHTS AND PROTECTED ATTRIBUTES**

Employers need to be aware of the protected workplace rights workers are entitled to in their employment.

#### **Protected workplace rights**

Understanding protected workplace rights and how they exist is important when conducting your business. These rights are outlined in the *Fair Work Act 2009* (the Act) and in anti-discrimination legislation.

Every Australian employee has the right to:

- engage in industrial activities
- be free from unlawful discrimination
- be free from undue influence or pressure in negotiating individual arrangements.

In the workplace, such rights are protected from unlawful acts such as adverse action. There are also prohibitions against misrepresentations, undue influence or pressure in relation to individual flexibility arrangements under modern awards and enterprise agreements and deductions from wages.

#### **Protected attributes, adverse action and prohibited member conduct**

An employee may possess particular protected attributes. These are personal characteristics for which an employee has the right to non-discrimination. Protected attributes include race, colour, sex, sexual orientation, age, physical or mental disability, marital status, family or carer's responsibilities, pregnancy, religion, political opinion, national extraction and social origin.

The Act prevents members from taking adverse action against employees or prospective employees based on these characteristics.

Adverse action includes the doing, threatening or organising of any of these actions based on protected characteristics:

- dismissal;
- injuring the employee in the form of refusing to give leave or pay;
- changing a job to disadvantage an employee;
- treating an employee differently than any

**An employee who believes they have been subjected to a breach of general protection, can take steps to address such claims.**

other employee based on a protected characteristic;

- not hiring someone because of a protected characteristic; and
- offering prospective employees different and unfair terms and conditions compared to other employees that do not possess the same protected characteristic(s).

Examples of prohibited adverse action based on protected characteristics include:

- deciding not to offer a role to an older employee purely based upon their age whilst offering roles to younger employees who may be entitled to junior rates of pay, or
- preventing a pregnant person from working because of concerns about appearances.

#### **Steps employees can take to address breaches of general protections and/or discrimination provisions**

An employee who believes they have been subjected to a breach of general protection, can take steps to address such claims.

An employee may request assistance from the Fair Work Ombudsman (FWO) to resolve a dispute or may apply to the Fair Work Commission (FWC) to address an alleged breach. Penalties in excess of \$13,000 can be brought for individuals, whilst penalties of \$66,000 or more for companies can be issued if a general protection has been breached.

The main types of applications made by an employee who believes they have been subjected to a breach of general protection are:

- **Disputes:** If an employee has not been dismissed but alleges that there has been some other contravention of the general protections provisions, they may make an application to the FWC to assess and deal with the dispute; or
- **Dismissals:** If an employee believes they have been dismissed and alleges that their dismissal was in contravention of the general protections provisions, they may make an application to the FWC to deal with the dismissal in the first instance. A general protections dismissal application must be lodged within 21 days of the dismissal taking effect.

#### **Discrimination complaints at the Australian Human Rights Commission**

Employees can file a discrimination complaint through the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC). The AHRC is an independent body focused on investigating complaints about discrimination breaches.

The AHRC does not act as an advocate or legal representative for a party to a complaint. Employees may file a written complaint about a perceived experience of discrimination online and the AHRC will investigate the circumstances surrounding the complaint. The AHRC will provide members with a copy of the complaint and outline what is being alleged, requesting additional information as required.

If the AHRC elects to continue the investigation, they may enter into conciliation with members and the employee to determine how best to resolve the complaint. This may take the form of an apology, a change of policy or compensation. If the complaint is not discontinued following this, the AHRC will analyse or investigate the circumstances and execute relevant proceedings, which may include legal proceedings.

#### **Tips to reduce general protection risks in the workplace**

The following practical steps can assist members to reduce legal risk:

- Utilise a fair and unbiased employment process;
- Emphasise open dialogue between employees and managerial staff;
- Treat all employees fairly and in the same manner;
- Implement an equal opportunity and anti-discrimination policy;
- Encourage workers to respect each other's differences;
- Respond to any evidence or complaints of inappropriate behaviour rather than ignoring it, including engaging in appropriate investigations and disciplinary action;
- Deal with any complaints or allegations of discrimination promptly and confidentially;
- Develop workplace culture that resists discrimination;
- Train supervisors and managers on what types of conduct are discriminatory and how to respond to discrimination in the >>

workplace; and

- Ensure any workplace policies are properly enforced and regularly reviewed and updated.

MGA TMA members can contact our Employment Law team on 1800 888 479 for more information on adverse action and workplace rights, and if a general protections claim has been made by an employee.

**If you are interested in learning about the benefits of MGA TMA membership, please contact us on (03) 9824 4111 to discuss.**

### TIMBER PRODUCT KNOWLEDGE

If you are a timber/wood product salesperson who needs to provide comprehensive advice to customers on the correct timber to use for their applications, FWPCOT3302 Access and Provide Timber and Wood Product Information is the course for you.

MGA TMA in association with Timber Training Creswick (RTOid #4168), are excited to offer this 2-day short course in Victoria on 8-9 September.

**Register today via <https://www.mgatma.com.au/training/creswick-timber-training-access-and-provide-timber-and-wood-product-information>**

### TABMA

*David Little*

It's this time of year that our recruitment team at TABMA Apprentices & Trainees begins thinking about school leavers.



**This year, the scramble to attract young people is going to be intense.**

From September onwards, there's a mad scramble across all industries to promote career options to the young people that are planning to leave school. The careers expos that are held by schools, industry associations, governments and private companies have all been leading up to this

time. School students who are planning to leave school, either early at the end of years 10 or 11, or matriculating from year 12, will be making big decisions about their first full-time job. For some it is an important, career-starting decision. For others, it will be a short-term proposition, as their 'gap' year before going into higher education.

This year, the scramble to attract these people is going to be the most intense for many years. With the nation in the midst of record unemployment and extreme worker shortages across most industries, the school-leaving job seekers will have more choice and opportunity than has been the case for generations.

What this means to us in the Timber industry is that we need to consider carefully how we advertise job opportunities and promote careers in our industry. Careful consideration of wage levels is paramount as so many other industries have lifted their wage offerings dramatically. Opportunities within workplaces for additional training, lifestyle related perks and workplace culture are really important. These are the factors young people are considering when they look to accept a job offer. And, if expectations are not met, they are having no hesitation in changing jobs to seek a workplace that does meet their expectations.

If you are looking to employ school leavers this year, a great move is to contact the TABMA recruitment team. Not only do they understand young people, they have been working hard all year in promoting the Timber industry as an amazing career opportunity, so they have leads into schools and individuals already. **You can contact the team on 1800 822 621. T**

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# News in brief

## Multinail expands

Production capacity and speed to market will benefit from a multi-million-dollar investment.

Multinail is strengthening its long-term commitment to the timber F&T industry with a comprehensive upgrade of its structural building products and machinery manufacturing capabilities.

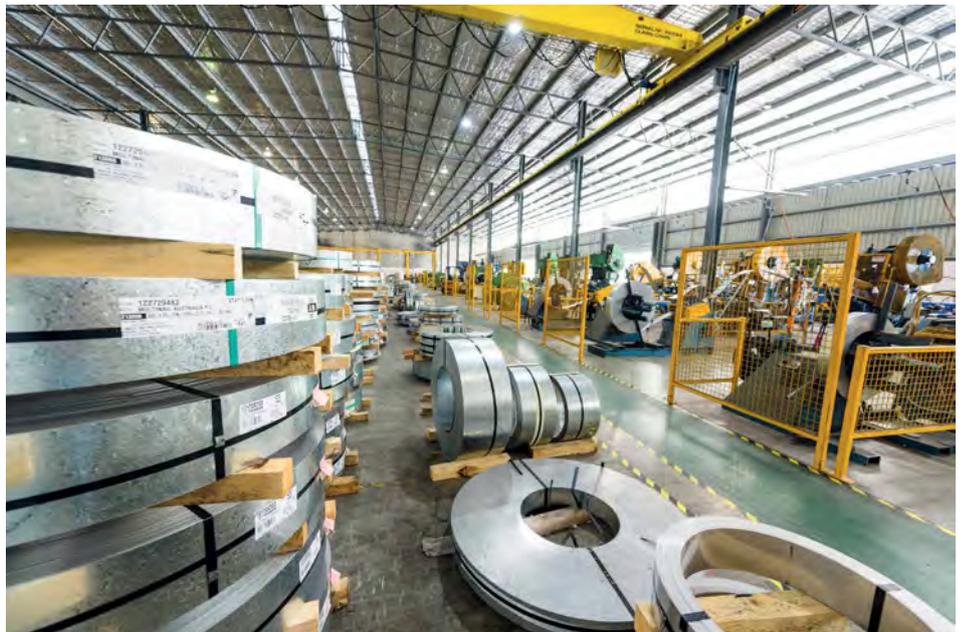
Chief operating officer Trent Taylor says the significant, multi-stage investment is aimed at “transforming existing manufacturing facilities into a centre of innovative excellence for our industry.

“This will enable us to increase our production capacity and speed to market as new opportunities are realised in both local and overseas markets,” Trent adds.

Growth in demand for structural building products and truss and frame building machinery has grown significantly over recent years. Trent says, “The expansion is to ensure we continue to meet the demand and maintain the highest possible standard of quality service to our customers.”

The ambitious project is expected to create more local jobs with new positions to be filled in production, engineering and technology. At the heart of the expansion is a 1500m<sup>2</sup> extension to the metal connectors factory in Stapylton, on Queensland’s Gold Coast, allowing the installation of new presses and tools to upscale production and enable diversification into bespoke connectors for commercial and industrial construction.

This extension will include increased warehouse space, enabling Multinail to carry a wider range of products and deliver a faster turnaround of customer orders.



Recognising that timber construction is becoming more diverse in application and design, Multinail will also be establishing a new high-level engineering research and testing laboratory.

The purpose-built laboratory will enable the company to undertake more extensive product development and analysis with the capability to test the ultimate limits of new products through extreme strength and load testing of full size trusses.

Alongside the local projects, a significant expansion of Multinail’s global machinery operations is scheduled to begin in coming

months. This investment will be ranged across all the company’s machinery businesses in Australia, New Zealand and the US.

It’s been nearly 10 years since Multinail took the bold step to make simultaneous acquisitions of specialist machinery production companies in the US and NZ. Although the original companies were family businesses like Multinail, it wasn’t a seamless transition. As Trent says, “We weren’t prepared for the many challenges that can arise when merging totally different enterprises into one organisation.

“However, the payback has been the specialist expertise they brought to Multinail and together we have driven a progressive transformation of our machine manufacturing. Now, machine design and engineering is undergoing a revolution with automated technology and robotic engineering driving frame and truss production into a new era of hands-free operations. Multinail is determined to be at the leading edge of that transformation. These investments will position us to be world leading in machinery design and automation, while having the depth of expertise to provide local support and service,” Trent promises.

**For more, visit [www.multinail.com.au](http://www.multinail.com.au)**





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[www.egger.com/osbrace](http://www.egger.com/osbrace)



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## In brief

David Chandler's 7 July resignation letter from his role as NSW Building Commissioner has revealed his concerns about links between Eleni Petinos (who was sacked from her role as fair trading minister on 31 July for allegedly providing an 'unsafe workplace') and Coronation Property Group, which at that time counted former NSW Deputy Premier John Barilaro among its directors.

Chandler's letter, recently released to the NSW parliament, spoke about 'problematic' dealings with Petinos' office, which 'crystalised' around the time of a Stop Work Order on one of Coronation's developments. Barilaro admitted contacting Chandler and arranging a meeting around the time of the order, but denied the ban had been discussed. Previously, Petinos had launched an internal inquiry into claims Chandler had misled parliament. That inquiry recently concluded with the claims found to be unsubstantiated. **For the full story, visit [www.abc.net.au/news/2022-08-11/nsw-building-commissioners-resignation-letter-released/101321688](http://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-08-11/nsw-building-commissioners-resignation-letter-released/101321688)**

Victoria's Sustainable Forests Timber Amendment (Timber Harvesting Safety Zones) Bill 2022 passed through the state's upper house in early August; the final hurdle before its remaining steps into law. The bill raises the maximum jail sentence and fines for hindering, obstructing or interfering with timber harvesting operations to 12 months and more than \$21,000 and strengthens existing rules within timber harvesting safety zones.

Three major unions wrote in protest of the bill, saying: "The bill wrongly locates workplace risk in the democratic right to protest." However Premier Andrews says the new laws strike the right balance. **To read more, visit [www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2022/aug/04/victorian-bill-targeting-environmental-protesters-moves-closer-to-a-vote](http://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2022/aug/04/victorian-bill-targeting-environmental-protesters-moves-closer-to-a-vote)**

Senators David Pocock and Jacqui Lambie have signalled they will vote against the proposed climate change bill in the Senate unless carbon credits for plantation timbers are stopped. **Read the full story at [www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/pocock-wants-forestry-carbon-credits-scrapped-in-support-for-climate-bill-20220807-p5b7xn.html](http://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/pocock-wants-forestry-carbon-credits-scrapped-in-support-for-climate-bill-20220807-p5b7xn.html)**



Above: Co-CEO of CollectiveCrunch, Rolf Schmitz.



Above: Petri Itkonen, recently named sales director.

## Finnish AI firm eyes growth

CollectiveCrunch is taking its analysis worldwide.

Finnish-German startup CollectiveCrunch uses artificial intelligence to refine and improve the accuracy of satellite imagery, geology and other terrestrial data, producing information with 80% fewer errors.

The company's forest analysis delivers significant efficiency gains to their sawmill and wood pulp clients, as well as helping foresters to monitor their holdings and insurance risks and track carbon.

Petri Itkonen has recently been appointed sales director. "Our service will bring many key values in forestry such as sustainability,

responsibility and reliability to a whole new level," he says. "Also, from a data-accuracy and cost-effectiveness perspective, our service will have a profound global impact on how we effectively, sustainably and responsibly manage our forests."

Co-CEO Rolf Schmitz described Itkonen as a vital part of both the company's future success and also that of clients who "increasingly rely on eco-investments to satisfy mandated carbon offset requirements and internal sustainability goals".

**For more, visit [www.CollectiveCrunch.com](http://www.CollectiveCrunch.com)**



## PEFC suspension

Russia has been suspended from PEFC International.

The Russian National Voluntary Forest Certification System (FCR) has been suspended by the PEFC International Board, in mutual agreement with PEFC Russia.

The suspension is intended to preserve the conditions for a successful long-term cooperation with PEFC Russia in order to support sustainable forest management in the Russian Federation in light of the current

political situation. The suspension is effective as of 11 August 2022 and suspension is initially valid until 31 December 2022.

Certificates issued against the Russian National Voluntary Forest Certification System (FCR) are no longer PEFC recognised as of 11 August 2022. This applies to both forest management and chain of custody certificates. Certified organisations are therefore prohibited from using PEFC claims and the PEFC label and cannot sell material as PEFC certified.

Look for updates on the suspension at **[www.pefc.org](http://www.pefc.org)** and PEFC Australia's **[www.responsiblewood.org.au](http://www.responsiblewood.org.au)**



## Hello Pentarch

After acquiring Boral Timber last year, Pentarch Forestry is powering ahead.

Any name change is a gamble, but Pentarch Forestry has emerged as a strong and trusted brand in the timber and flooring market after acquiring the Boral Timber portfolio of building products and materials in 2021.

Pentarch's established background in wood products and forestry has helped with the smooth transition, coupled with a series of investments across the whole business.

Leon Travis, Pentarch Forestry general manager sales and distribution, lists some of the changes underway: "We have a softwood joint venture with AKD, known as Highland Pine," he says. "There's significant investment about to take place on the Oberon sawmill site. Both parties are investing millions of dollars on upgrading facilities and technology to improve the capacity and capabilities. That will be starting in the next few months.

"On the hardwood side, we've moved a lot of our heat sources to gas-fired kilns, to gain a cleaner, more efficient drying process. Over the longer term, it's a much better alternative to the old technology.

"We're investing in finger jointing capabilities, with two more machines to add to our one at Murwillumbah. That's about utilising the resource as best we can. We're really trying to maximise recovery and yield. We've traditionally been known as a solid producer and wholesaler. So this is a little bit of a step change for us, but one that's in line with the appetite for and acceptance of finger-jointed products in the market, which



**Above:** Pentarch Forestry's hardwood flooring; 95% of the company's products are Australian made.

**"There's significant investment about to take place on the Oberon sawmill site. Both parties are investing millions of dollars upgrading facilities."**

is growing. So this gives us optimisation and value add.

"There's a lot more going on," Travis adds. "We're looking to automate our oiling machine so we can increase volumes and, on the Pentarch Forestry and Services side, there's been significant investment at the Eden site with the recommissioning of the sawmill and building the pallet plant, plus the new briquette

plant, which is again all about value-adding."

As to how the acquisition has been received, Travis says: "I think our customers have seen that it's been a positive step for our business and that the company's willingness to reinvest is delivering an exciting future. So onward and upward!"

**For more, visit [www.pentarch.com.au/timberproducts.html](http://www.pentarch.com.au/timberproducts.html)**



Above: Warringtonfire's fire testing facility at High Wycombe, including 1972 shots (top), tests in progress and the refurbished facility (bottom left)

## Happy 50th

Warringtonfire is celebrating 50 years since its first commercial fire test.

Here, we know Warringtonfire as the testing agency that has played a crucial role in delivering building products tested to ensure they meet the ratings that help us and our homes survive our fire-prone climate, among other invaluable contributions to the Australian building sector.

But in the summer of 1972, it was a much smaller venture, only a few years into its mission to improve materials safety. In one of the coldest British summers in living memory, Warringtonfire held its first commercial fire test at its newly completed fire testing laboratory in High Wycombe, Bucks, UK. Fifty years later, what is believed to be the UK's oldest existing fire resistance testing laboratory continues to operate. Today, it is one of Warringtonfire's main sites and is a centre of excellence for the testing of timber fire doors, though more unusual products include the front end of a train and an eco-development's straw bale house.

Since then, Warringtonfire has been at the forefront of fire safety services, along with fire engineering and inspection services,

certification and training. It has continued to invest heavily in building a world-class team of technical experts and has one of the largest global teams in the industry providing the know-how to go with its now worldwide testing facilities (including Brisbane, Canberra, Melbourne, Perth and Sydney).

Mark Cummings, technical director at Warringtonfire, says, "Since 1972, we've conducted tens of thousands of fire tests at our High Wycombe laboratory, all designed to ensure that the products our customers develop are safe, compliant and fit for purpose. It never ceases to amaze me that many of the products that we all walk past every day, in offices, airports, schools or hospitals, will have been developed and tested at our facility at High Wycombe and we're extremely proud of our work."

The company's goal is 'making tomorrow safer than today'. To that end, Cummings says, "Our focus for the future is to continue working with key trade associations and standards committees using the deep

technical expertise we possess, particularly of those colleagues in our Scope and Governance team, to constantly raise industry standards. Alongside this, our people are critical to our success. We will continue to invest in our people, developing the careers of our existing colleagues through initiatives such as our Ignite programme as well as bringing in new talent through our Graduate Intake Scheme."

This year also marks two further significant milestones for the company: 25 years since the introduction of sister company BM TRADA's Q-Mark third party certification scheme and 30 years since the inception of the Warringtonfire Certifire scheme. Both have played a critical role in raising standards of fire protection in the built environment.

As part of the anniversary celebrations, Peter Barker, technical manager at Warringtonfire, will be hosting a free two-hour 'Introduction to Fire Doors' webinar on Wednesday 12 October. **For full details, visit [www.warringtonfire.com](http://www.warringtonfire.com)**

"We've conducted tens of thousands of fire tests, all designed to ensure that the products our customers develop are safe, compliant and fit for purpose."

## Forest scholarship

FWPA's latest WoodChat looks at forest-related PhDs.

The latest episode of FWPA's WoodChat podcast series discusses how new research into priority areas identified by Australian forest growers will be addressed, thanks to the co-funding of six PhD research scholarships at the University of Tasmania from FWPA grower members, matched by the Australian Government.

The research projects were selected for funding by a working group of FWPA and forest grower members, known as the Grower Research Advisory Committee (GRAC). Successful PhD students will work to address a wide range of challenges, from the risks that browsing herbivorous mammals pose to plantations, to traits in genetic material that affect resistance to drought, heat, diseases and pests. Also covered will be management approaches to help maximise tree survival under various conditions.

For each of the six projects, GRAC members and companies with a particular interest in each specific research area will become project partners and/or advisors, meeting regularly with supervisors and students in either a formal or informal capacity, to allow industry direct input into the projects.



"One of the objectives of the GRAC has been to help to rebuild research capacity in forestry, and that was one of the key drivers in creating this PhD scholarship initiative," said Jodie Mason, Forest Research Manager at FWPA, who is interviewed in the episode. "The major benefit of having growers work directly

with students during the research projects is the ability to guide the research to best align with industry needs, learn alongside the students, and discover and implement findings before the projects have even finished."

**Find WoodChat on Soundcloud, iTunes and Spotify.**

## UPCOMING EVENTS



### SEPTEMBER

#### PREFABAUS 2022 CONFERENCE

Leading voices on prefabrication methods and technology as well as those excelling in the field will speak at the Brisbane Conference and Exhibition Centre, on 5–7 September. **Details at [www.prefabaus.org.au/conference-2022](http://www.prefabaus.org.au/conference-2022)**

#### WOOD SOLUTIONS WEBINARS

Every second Tuesday morning or lunch,

free webinars on Timber topics. **For more or to find past webinars, visit [www.woodsolutions.com.au/events/calendar](http://www.woodsolutions.com.au/events/calendar)**

#### AUSTRALIAN BUSHFIRE BUILDING CONFERENCE

After two years of virtual-only events, the only national event on building for bushfires is back on 14–16 September at Fairmont Resort & Spa Blue Mountains, Leura NSW. From \$495 (or \$275 for those who still prefer virtual events), it's two days of the country's best professionals

talking planning, designing, building, landscaping, consulting, regulating and certifying buildings in bushfire-prone areas.

**Full details at [www.bushfireconference.com.au](http://www.bushfireconference.com.au)**

### OCTOBER

#### FORESTRY AUSTRALIA 2022 SYMPOSIUM

With a theme of Leading, adapting and reimagining – the future of forestry, the Forestry Australia 2022 Symposium will be held in Albury-Wodonga and simultaneously online from 20–22 October. Keynote speakers include Dr Lyndall Bull and A/Prof Michael-Shawn Fletcher. Registration costs from \$650 for in-person attendance and \$250 for virtual and hefty student discounts are also available. **Details at [www.forestryconference.com.au](http://www.forestryconference.com.au)**

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# Reuse rewarded

Revival, a Melbourne-based sustainable building practice, has been shortlisted for a 2022 Premier's Sustainability Award, thanks to their zero waste, zero footprint goals. **By Donyale Harrison**

Robbie Neville's business has just been named a finalist for a highly prestigious award, but he wants to talk about timber and brick. "They get me super excited because they're one degree of separation from being raw material again," he says. "Melbourne was built on them and, once we deconstruct a roof or a brick wall, it just needs to be cleaned and it's a raw material again."

As a man who has spent 22 years building structures, plus many of those also 'un-building' them for rebuild or reuse, Neville is an authority on what he calls "zero footprint repurposing". His company, Revival, is a sustainable building practice with a full-service approach from registered builders to licensed structural engineers, joinery and furniture manufacture. They offer an existing materials consultancy service, coming in at the start of developments to show the commercial feasibility of deconstruction rather than demolition, and their own workshop uses exclusively recycled materials.

While their own practice is rigorous about reuse, the Revival team's goal with clients is simply to take them as far down that road as they're comfortable, making the case on cost,

quality, carbon and sustainability benefits. "On larger scale commercial projects, we do a commercial feasibility on understanding what's there and what's its commercial value," Neville says. "What will be the cost associated



**Above:** Hip v Hype's Ferrars & York development. **Top:** Reused doesn't mean rustic, as in the slick interiors of the rebuilt Industry Beans cafe, Fitzroy.

with deconstructing it rather than destroying it? What's physically going to be involved in handling and transportation, in storage and machining it so that it's ready and presents as a raw material again? And then the client can make decisions about how that case stacks up against other building methods."

Whether the client commits 100% to reuse, or just 10%, the result is more material saved from landfill. But just as important is the fact the client has made a series of decisions about waste and the carbon cost of their project. "We're not here to judge or critique anyone," says Neville. "By having these conversations, we're getting the ideas out there and increasing the scope and the circle of potential friends, partners, collaborators and allies."

Now, this combination of high-quality production and accessible advocacy has been recognised with Revival named a finalist in Victoria's 2022 Premier's Sustainability Award, which recognises best-practice sustainability in Victoria.

Finding time to enter was the first hurdle. "With such a small team, I couldn't delegate it," Neville says. "But the award is really credible and gave us the opportunity to increase



**Above:** Robbie Neville machining down a plank for reuse in a project.

exposure and awareness around what we're doing and what we're trying to change in the industry. We saw a great opportunity to increase our momentum."

In news that will be familiar to many of us, Neville submitted the entry in the last couple of hours of the deadline. "We were lucky," he says. "The Awards interface was set up well and we have a lot of good content, whether it's images, initiatives we've facilitated, or projects we've delivered. So it was just a matter of compiling all that in the required format and telling the story about what we're doing."

Hearing Revival named a finalist was a boost, particularly as the other finalists and past winners in the category tend to be big community spaces and councils. "Here we are, on a mission to change the way the building industry approaches existing materials," Neville says. "So it was really validating and inspiring. You know what it's like sometimes when you're worn out from running the race. This was like someone giving you a cup of water and telling you you're on the right track."

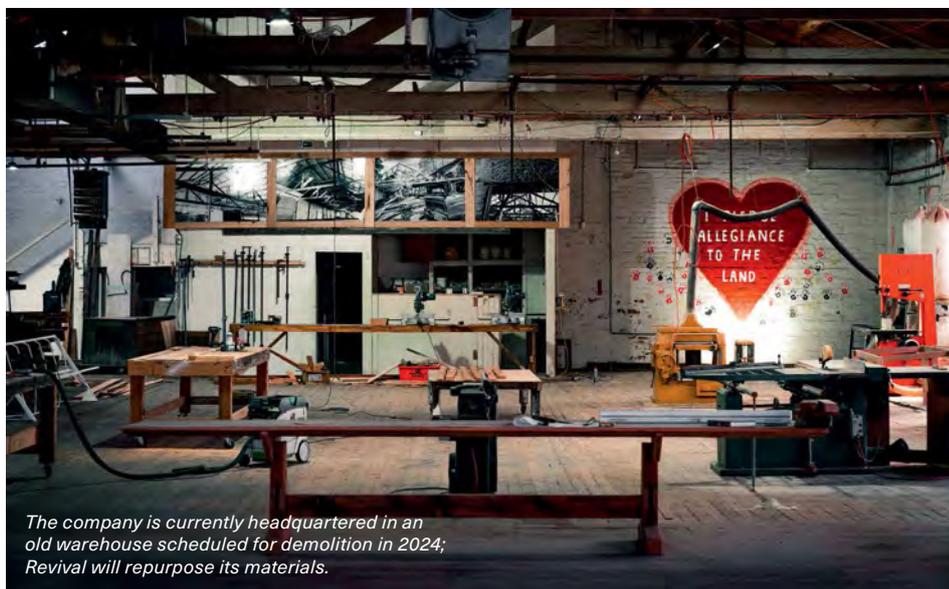
### ROAD TO REUSE

A third-generation builder, Neville describes his family as "really resourceful". So when he started his career as a registered builder in Melbourne, he was keen to channel existing materials into his own projects. "I found that there were no systems or infrastructure that supported reuse," he says. "And in our traditions and practices as an industry, people aren't familiar or necessarily comfortable with the idea of embracing existing materials. I felt there were a few key reasons. One was structural engineering: the engineers I was >>

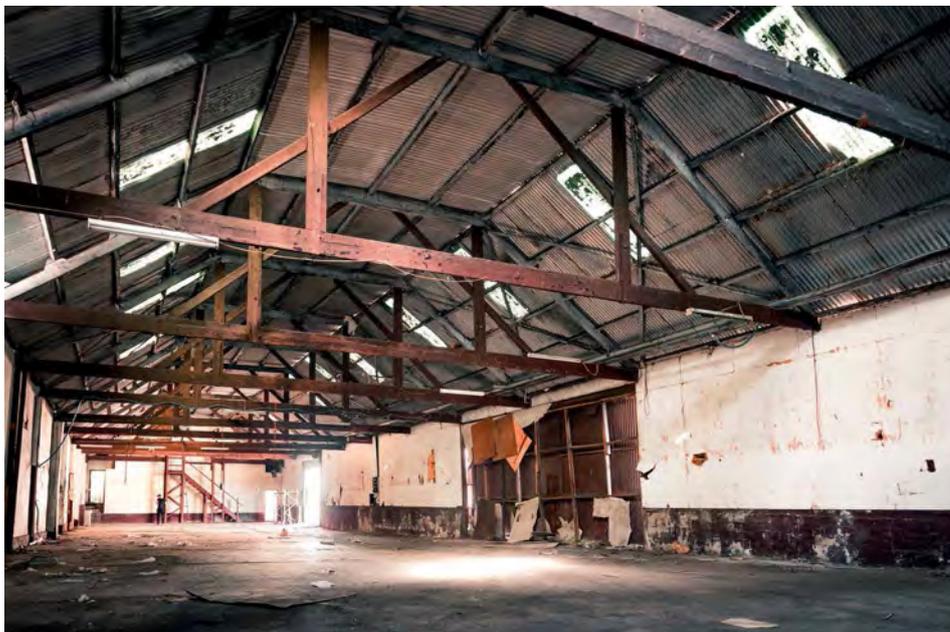


**Above:** Robbie with Revival's commercial director Stephy Neville and timbers waiting on refinishing.

"There were no systems or infrastructure that supported reuse. And as an industry, people aren't familiar with the idea of embracing existing materials."



*The company is currently headquartered in an old warehouse scheduled for demolition in 2024; Revival will repurpose its materials.*



Above: Revival salvaged all the materials from this West Melbourne structure owned by Perri Projects.

working with were really gun shy about certifying existing materials, because they haven't come off the shelf with nicely calculated documentation. And then when it came to joinery and furniture, people don't like using old materials with their machines because they might hit a nail or blunt a blade.

"Critically, on bigger sites, people were overwhelmed by the idea of planning for the logistical aspects of incorporating reuse, especially on scale. It's easy when it's a token: 'We built a skyscraper and here's a dining table out of the previous building's timber!' But when you're trying to make it more foundational, people shy away from it."

Having identified the fundamental areas that were making reuse difficult, Neville set up his own company to tackle them. "My business partner at Revival is a structural engineer," he

says. "I'm a commercial and domestic builder. We have a workshop where we exclusively use recycled materials, nothing new comes in the door. And so we went to the industry and said, 'if you've got a vision, using existing materials, we can bring it to life in-house. It's going to be cheaper, there'll be fewer businesses involved, and it's going to be easy and fun.'"

### RE-IMAGINING BUILDING

That was six years ago. Three years ago, Revival started targeting developers and designers. "It's a strategy where we feel we're going to make the biggest impact in terms of changing perceptions around existing materials, how relevant they are to new design and the inherent value of them," says Neville. "On a development site, if there are existing buildings scheduled for demolition, we work

with those partners to help incorporate the materials straight back into that new design.

"We call it 'zero footprint repurposing'. That's the crux of our submission for the awards. It's really simple: it's just breaking down those perceived barriers to entry, whether structural engineering or seeing the relevance of existing materials. Often people think that existing materials means rustic, so we try to showcase how refined they can be.

"And when we can't bring the footprint down to zero, we can get close. We worked on a Hip v Hype development where we had a pop-up workshop beside the structure we were demolishing. We refinished materials as they came down and used them in our fit out at Casa de Vinos, 500m away, which itself is designed to be disassembled at end of life."

Revival partners with the client as early in the process as possible and assesses what's already available on site, including options for repurposing; costs for time, transport and readying those materials for reuse; plus documenting them as a kit of parts in the language of architects and designers.

"They work through our kit of parts similarly to working through a catalogue of new materials," Neville says. "It provides all the detail at a really granular level, so there's no surprises. We capture all characteristics of those existing materials in that document so the design can be confident."

As part of the process, Revival calculates sequestered carbon and reports on the savings from reuse as compared to the cost of manufacturing and transporting new materials. While carbon accounting isn't yet mandated, Neville says clients are increasingly focused on this information in their decision making. In later stages, Revival also takes responsibility for prototyping and shop drawings and works with other stakeholders or contractors to bring the project to life.

"We're the only existing materials consultants of this kind in Australia, if not the world," Neville says, "and we're unique in the way we can straddle a project from pre-concept design right through to occupied use. We take accountability for what we do in that entire process."

Revival is one of only two builders in the country with B Corp accreditation (which measures a company's entire social and environmental impact) and has seen the positive impact of the reports it prepares for clients when they are included in the planning permission application.

Ironically, planning is a key area where Neville and his team would like to see legislative change around the responsible handling of existing materials. "We need policies and controls in the planning permission schemes our local councils have



Above: Casa de Vinos in South Melbourne was built using the materials from the Hip v Hype site, 500m away.

in place, so that as part of that application, there's a legal framework you need to follow when it comes to handling existing materials.

"It's mind-blowing to me that doesn't yet exist. There's a complete absence of accountability. The builder's not responsible for how much they send to landfill, nor is the developer and the councils don't have any controls. Councils can control what colour paint you use, but not whether you knock the whole thing down and put it into landfill."

In the projects Revival has worked on, the team has introduced mechanisms and processes that show such policies are feasible and possible. They hope to be able to hand these over as tested systems once legislative bodies decide to regulate this area.

The company has its biggest impact when working in a multi-dimensional capacity on a building project: as a structural engineer and existing materials consultant, then principal contractor/builder, as well as manufacturing the joinery and the furniture. Materials come off-site for a clean-up or repurpose in the workshop then go straight back onto the same site. On large-scale developments, Revival might facilitate the salvage, then manufacture a joinery package or be the principal contractor for the fit out element.

"On the jobs where we do the whole package, being a single business keeps the cost down," Neville says. "And we're not at the mercy of perceived barriers to entry that other builders or joiners might have, when it comes to using existing materials."

At the same time, if the client wants, say, re-used timber framing but new joinery, Revival will subcontract the job. Or for the reverse, the team will buy in MGPI0 for the walls and concentrate on the joinery and



**Above and below:** *The exterior and interior at 1280 Ceramics gallery and co-making space.*



furniture package in their workshop.

"We're black and white about what we do in our own workshop, but we have a better chance of making change by working within the comfort zones of our clients," says Neville.

The current big project is in Collingwood, on Easey Street. "It's the poster child for adaptive reuse," Neville says. "It's a 1000m<sup>2</sup>

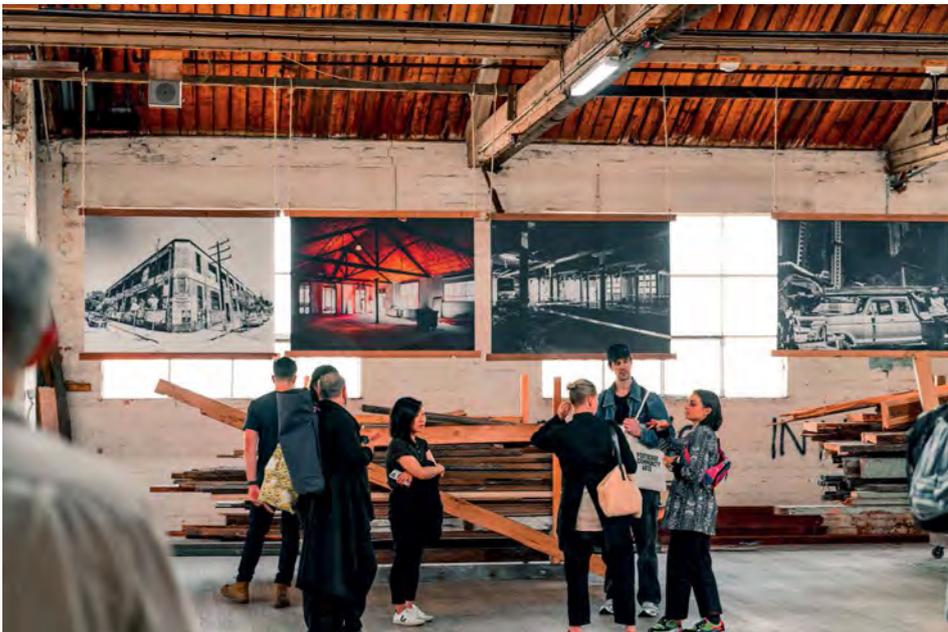
footprint and two storeys. We're making significant structural modifications: a new concrete deck on the first floor and structural steel throughout that we've had to introduce to meet seismic standards. We're ripping off the roof and putting in solar and a Tesla lift.

"It's a massive commercial project but throughout the demolition we've salvaged every last scrap of timber and brick. And they're all going straight back into the building. We had to replace the structural columns, which turned out to be 200x200mm Jarrah. There's 25 of them and we'll be machining those for various features throughout the design. If we were to exclusively operate using only existing materials and not be involved in projects like this that would be impossible to do that way, that would really bring limitations to where we can make an impact."

Revival looks to make impacts elsewhere, too, running workshops for women and providing a safe work experience program on the company's sites. "Gender inequality in construction is worse than any other industry," says Neville. "I believe that's the heart of a lot of the issues we have with our industry culture. With more of a balance, we might have a healthier industry for everyone." Similar programs for teens are coming soon.

For Neville, it's all about planning for a better future. "Working with people like Sustainability Victoria, Development Victoria and local councils means the discussion about reuse is predicated on tangible, delivered results. It's not a theory," he says. "At some point soon, the whole industry will recognise that we need to be minimising our waste and maximising our reuse. Things like this award are only going to help in getting ready for that." **T**

**See more at [www.revivalprojects.com.au](http://www.revivalprojects.com.au)  
Winners to be announced 20 September,  
see [www.sustainability.vic.gov.au](http://www.sustainability.vic.gov.au)**



**Above:** *Workshops and open days at Revival keep the community engaged and spread the message.*



# You can do better than that

Meeting your legal obligations as an employer is a minimum requirement. Doing more is what makes you and your business stand out. **By Peter Maguire**

Under our Fair Work system of minimum wages and employment standards, we spend a lot of time talking about the importance of compliance with those standards – to ensure that employees are receiving at least the minima that they are legally entitled to and to ensure that employers are not vulnerable to costly underpayment claims, damaging prosecution and embarrassing publicity.

Yes, of course, compliance is important but is that the be all and end all?

Does compliance with legal minimum standards constitute a real value proposition for employees or does it say: “We are doing as little as we legally have to as an employer”?

Not much of an Employer Value Proposition, is it?

And do those minimum standards really address all of the things that they need to if we really do believe that ‘People are our greatest asset’?

## THE IMMEDIATE CHALLENGE

The events of the past couple of years have shone a real spotlight on the value

proposition that employers offer as individual businesses or within specific industry sectors.

The insecurities of the hospitality industry with high levels of casualisation of labour were exacerbated by lockdowns and business closures and a continued lack of access to migrant student/backpacker labour. That caused locals in the industry to look for alternative more secure employment and many have found that alternative and are not going back.

Conversely, many frontline workers who have had to lift a very heavy load during the pandemic have sought alternative employment that is less stressful and they are not going back.

Added to that we have had the problems of not having access to migrant workers in both of those sectors and the lowest unemployment rate that Australia has had for decades. These are affecting businesses across all sectors.

That raises the question of how you are going to attract and retain the people that you need; i.e. how you can offer an attractive

value proposition if you just comply with your legal obligations? Why would someone choose to work for you rather than for other employers or in other sectors?

## LET'S TAKE OFF THE COMPLIANCE BLINKERS

One of the problems that looking at anything through the lens of compliance and risk management is that we don't open our eyes to possibilities for something that might better match the needs of our people and our business. We are so focused on not doing the wrong thing that we don't consider what might be the best thing.

That also influences the tone of conversations that we have with our people in relation to things that happen in their lives. If we talk in compliance terms, that can be a disappointment at a time when the employee would value a more supportive approach from their boss, HR Department or employer. And that can make a real difference to how the employee sees their employer and how that impacts on the employment relationship.

Here is a story that illustrates what I am talking about.

This was in the early 1990s before Carer's Leave was introduced. An employee had been with their employer for five years and hadn't had a single sick day off in all of that time. He approached management about whether he could use a few days of sick leave to cover an absence for a short period that was necessary so that he could look after the children while his wife was in hospital having essential surgery.

He was told that he would have to take annual leave because he wasn't sick. From that point on, he took every single day absence as a sickie that he legally could – they lost him for eight days each year.

We do have carer's leave now but there are other minimum standards that are equally problematic such as Compassionate Leave. That provides an entitlement to take up to two days of paid leave per occasion on the death or threat to life of a member of your immediate family or household.

That doesn't provide you with an entitlement to paid leave if a best mate or a good friend or a loved uncle or aunt or cousin or niece or nephew happens to die. It doesn't cover bereavements for a boss or a subordinate or a work colleague. It doesn't cover bereavement for a pet.

### So, rather than just meet the minimum, could you extend a bit of flexibility?

All of those situations are things which cause us grief and which we need to process and that means we are certainly not going to be at our best in doing our job while we work through that.

So, rather than just comply with the minimum standard, could you extend a bit of flexibility by offering either extended compassionate leave or access to personal/carer's leave?

### GET SMART

The Fair Work Act, modern awards and other legislation just provide minimum standards that you have to comply with, but that is all they are – the minimum that you have to do as an employer.

If you want to give people a reason to want to work for you, give them something more than that.

Sit down with your people and work out what you can do to provide an Employer Value Proposition that works better for your business and your people.

If you want to show that you are absolutely committed to that and put it out there as a guaranteed EVP, you might even consider doing an enterprise agreement. These are all published on the Fair Work Commission website for all to see, showing that you are legally committed to your EVP. 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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AUSTRALIA'S MOST RELEVANT AND WELL-LOVED TIMBER INDUSTRY MAGAZINE





# Staying strong

Treatment is an invaluable partner in prolonging the life of structural, outdoor and cladding timbers. But many are still unclear on its benefits – and its limits. **By Donyale Harrison**

By any metric, it's been a hard year for the standard housing frame. Soaking weather across much of Australia and supply difficulties have combined to leave any number of partly built homes waiting for weeks or even months for roofs and walls.

"We've seen a lot of mould on building frames this year," says Craig Kay, national product engineer at Tilling.

He hastens to add that this isn't an issue with the treatment: framing timbers are almost always designed to be protected from the weather and contain H2 preservatives, intended to prevent borer and termite attack.

In the big wet, says Kay, "There have been a lot of mould issues on frames made of all sorts of materials, plus other problems we don't normally get. In a building frame, you

tend to treat against insect attack, not against mould, because these timbers are meant to be protected inside, above ground."

It's a neat encapsulation of the problems for treated timber suppliers. The timber can be performing exactly for what it was designed to do, but if circumstances change, or it's used in the wrong application or not maintained appropriately, it can still have issues.

Timber must be treated and maintained to its conditions: the American Oak cladding here is protected far more than the decking.



“Almost all of the failures that occur happen because the wood isn’t treated properly for the application or it’s not being used properly.”

Australia is lucky when it comes to timber treatment. A comprehensive but practical regulatory framework is paired with a large amount of industry expertise and an active industry organisation – the Timber Preservers Association of Australia (TPAA) – that keeps regularly updated information available to all parts of the industry and public.

Alas, as in so many cases, things often fall down in practice. “Wood is a natural product and it has to be treated with a bit of respect,” says Kay. “If you want it to behave in the way you expect it to, then you can’t leave packs of timber out in the rain for months. You’ll need to get a roof on your frame next week, not in the next three months. That sounds like I’m being critical of builders, but of course most of them don’t want to be doing the wrong thing, they just can’t get trades, or they’re under too much time pressure.”

For F&T fabricators, it’s a particularly notable issue. “Because some of their jobs are being held up; they’ve already made those

frames and trusses and most don’t have enough under cover storage for multiple jobs, so the wood might be outside for months. The preservation is still there and does its job. But it doesn’t mean the timber is bulletproof.”

### EDUCATING THE MARKET

Koppers Performance Chemicals is a leading supplier of timber preservative chemicals. In addition to supplying a wide range of treatment options to timber treaters, the company invests heavily in R&D and works closely with customers to keep them abreast of advances in technology and changes in standards and regulations (often acting as a key industry voice in the latter).

Education and information sharing are a large part of what the team at Koppers do. “We’re happy to provide appropriate training to all different levels along the supply chain,” says Elias Akle, general manager. “It’s to our benefit, and to our customers’ benefit. Almost all of the failures that occur happen because the product isn’t appropriate for the application or it’s not being used properly. You don’t use LOSP-treated timber in ground. You don’t use H2F blue timber in your decking structure outside, or H3 treated timber in ground-contact applications. When wood is used as recommended, the preservatives work.”

One of the most common causes of failure Akle hears about is due to treated timber used outdoors being cut and then not resealed correctly. “This happens in H3 or H4 applications, especially products like sleepers,” he says. “Cutting timber, even partially, may expose some untreated heartwood, which can then make those untreated areas vulnerable to decay. We recommend that any treated timber product used in outdoor applications be resealed with a recommended product such as CN Timber Oil or XJ Clear Timber Protective if cut. Coating the end with a paint is not sufficient.

“These problems tend to occur at a retail level, which is a step or two’s remove from us. Better education of sales staff will help, and we’d also recommend stocking resealing products in the timber section of the retail store rather than in the paint/coating section.”

As to which treatments he recommends, “We provide choice,” says Akle. “There are markets in which it’s appropriate to be using CCA, or MicroPro, or LOSP or ACQ. In terms >>



New American Oak cladding from ASH.



*Preservatives in timber frames will withstand rain without leaching, but long wet periods can cause mould or even decay issues in timber designed for protected applications.*

“Koppers is working on a number of projects looking at the circular economy and how we make treated wood products more sustainable.”

of our product development, we try to respond to what we see happening in the market.

“We do, though, advise our customers who currently only treat with CCA that they should consider building in capacity for an alternative preservative such as MicroPro, so their

customers are aware that they have options.”

This isn't a reflection on CCA, which has been used safely in Australia for over 50 years, but an acknowledgement that the regulatory environment and market perception around treated timber has shifted



Above: Cut treated timber showing the untreated ends. A brush-on preservative product is required.

in recent years. In addition to the wider range of applications in which copper-based treatments are approved, end of life disposal can be easier. For example, since early 2020 Queensland has allowed ACQ-treated timber shavings to be used as a resource in compost or mulch, which can be more economical than the disposal methods other treated timbers are consigned to.

“Increasingly we are seeing consumers and specifiers seek out products which have a better OH&S and environmental profile, Akle adds. “There are concerns around the exposure to chemicals by workers at treatment plants. Safe Work Australia is reviewing the Worker Exposure Standards for airborne contaminants. Wood dust is a part of this review as are some of the components of the CCA timber preservative. The outcome of this review and subsequent legislative action may make using some products such as CCA more difficult for some treatment plant operations.

“Aside from this regulatory review, we're sensing a growing interest in products that are perceived to offer a better safety profile and, importantly, are deemed more sustainable. There is genuine concern in some sectors around the disposal of treated wood at the end of life. Koppers is working on a number of projects, including industry-based ones looking at the circular economy and how we make treated wood products more sustainable.”

Disposal of treated products continues to be a central issue for the timber industry >>

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**Above:** The ASH Iron Ash cladding used on Garden House by Space Agency Architects is H3 treated.

The new standard adds assurance that Australian treated timber suppliers are delivering a high-quality treated product.

however change is slow. “We believe that the disposal of treated wood, especially CCA-treated wood, will continue to become more difficult and expensive,” says Akle. “The industry needs to develop alternate pathways for treated wood at the end of its life rather than simply using landfill. There is a lot of work to do in this area. Koppers will be working with FWPA and The Centre for Timber Durability and Design Life on a project focused on the reuse/recycling of treated timber.

“Both in Australia and globally, Koppers is doing a lot of work around the recovery of treated wood products, especially when it comes to the power poles and railway sleepers it produces and sells. Any outcomes from these initiatives will be made available to the wider timber preservative industry. It

will take time but our commitment to this goal is very strong and a central part of our sustainability strategy.”

One wider regulatory shift has been the 2021 update to the Australian Timber Preservation Standards AS/NZS 1604 series. “We’ve worked with our customers to review the new standards and explain to them what the changes are and how they relate to their businesses,” Akle says. “The treating requirements (penetration and retention) in the standard remain relatively unchanged. It’s the verification aspects that have changed and these are what we’ve spent the most time working on with our customers.

“We’ve already noticed that many of our customers have a better understanding of the new requirements and, working with us, they’re introducing systems to monitor and verify that they are indeed meeting the requirements of the standard. This work is ongoing but we believe the quality of treated timber products will improve even more over time as treatment companies set up quality control systems and procedures.”

### BUILDING RIGHT

The major timber preservation chemical suppliers in Australia all supply a high level of product and information to their customers. Koppers, Arxada and more have teams who will work closely with their customers to help them select the best treatments for their timber products. The new standard adds assurance that those customers are delivering a high-quality treated product.

And yet Kay at Tilling still takes calls from agencies like the QBCC investigating why a treated timber has failed.

“We’ll have someone ring up and ask, ‘What did you have in your design guide back in 2007 for decks?’,” says Kay. “We’ll show them what we had and the investigator will sigh, ‘Oh. They haven’t followed it.’”



**Above:** Once a roof is in place, framing timbers are protected from prolonged rains.

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Above: Termites can cause irreparable structural damage to a home within 12 months.

“The devil is in the detailing. If you don’t get the detailing right, it doesn’t matter how well the timber is treated, it’s not going to perform well.”

“The devil is in the detailing,” Kay insists. “If you don’t get the detailing right, it doesn’t matter how well the timber is treated, it’s not going to perform well. If your timber is detailed properly, it will perform as required.”

The onus is on the designer to be realistic about the conditions the timber will be

exposed to and the expectations on that timber. And while recent rains and floods prove that not everything can be predicted, most of the problems arise from expectations that were always unreasonable.

“The thing about treated timber is that, especially in the H3 environment, it’s not

bulletproof,” says Kay. “People have to be careful in using the right treated timber where it’s seen visually, because some species check and crack more than others when they’re exposed.”

While treatment hazard classes (H1–H6) describe the level of treatment or level of protection that must be applied to the wood, different timber species treated to the same hazard class will still retain the natural characteristics of each species (strength, stiffness, hardness, abrasion resistance, etc.), meaning that, most of the time, selection or substitution requires much more than simply looking for a timber with a particular treatment level.

Add to that some of the less-common treatments on the market, such as thermal modification and resin impregnation, which do affect some characteristics and the situation becomes even less straightforward.

“If it’s an inappropriate choice or the wrong position, as the moisture rises and falls and the sun gets on it, it will crack and it will check,” Kay says.

“Usually, it hasn’t failed, it just looks weathered. The preservative is still working, and the timber is still doing its job, but you might not have the look you want anymore. You’ll need a different timber, or a less exposed position.”

Unfortunately, a combination of time-poor builders and clients who are pushing for completion (often in the face of rising costs) means that mistakes can still be made. Couple this with a loss of timber expertise within parts of the construction industry and the timber suppliers and design/engineering teams can be left to do a lot of the heavy lifting when it comes to determining suitability – and they’re frequently not in a position to insist that advice is adhered to.

“The good news,” says Kay, “is that we’ve got a lot of things pretty much right with the National Construction Code and the standard. We need to make sure our product meets the requirements for durability, which guides what we treat and how we treat it, so we supply what the market wants.

“We do have some products that treat more easily than others. And so we’ve had to develop new ways of treating some of the harder-to-treat species, which has been a challenge for the industry. But if something is treated properly, in its right occasion, it appears to be working quite well.”

Tilling’s treatment range includes a range of different chemicals and processes. “We do some LOSP, but the trend is more to water-based,” Kay says. “So you’re not exposing your staff and others to solvents, and you haven’t got solvents flashing off into the atmosphere. Most of our H3 treatment is



Above: Tilling’s H3 treated LVL with the treatment details incorporated into its product stamp.

PHOTO: (TOP) CANDICE O’NEILL/GETTY IMAGES; (BELOW) COURTESY TILLING



H3 treated IronAsh cladding from ASH

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Above: Masslam from ASH at the Fisher's Timber Treatment pressurisation tank.

“For our normal section sizes, we get full penetration in hardwood, so you can cut, drill, dock, mortice or flute the timber without affecting the warranty.”

water-based azoles, for example.

“And the other advantage of that is that all our solvents are imported, so add the cost of shipping, and the price of petroleum has gone shooting right up. The cost of water, on the other hand, is fairly stable. It’s about the only thing we’ve got a lot of at the moment.”

**STRONG PARTNERS**

Daniel Wright, national business development manager at Australian Sustainable Hardwoods (ASH), points out that while preservation treatment is important, it’s just one part of a broader system around durability.

“Our treatment partners do a superb job, but that’s not the end point,” Wright says. “When you’re looking at a 25- or 50-year

design life, more is needed. That might be capping the fully exposed elements. It’s almost always maintaining the coating and the efficacy of the coating – which falls on the client for upkeep. But also, it’s taking care with the connection and design and detailing and making sure everything is done properly.

“If some of these steps are omitted, then weathering can start to degrade the timber and that can speed up the ageing process. For structural timber, that’s obviously a concern, but the visual impacts will show up faster and for architectural designs that rely on a lot of visually expressed timber, that will impact the final building and can impact that client’s willingness to use timber on their future projects.”

Accordingly, Wright works to assist and

educate the company’s clients, to help them get the best out of ASH’s hardwood and mass timber products.

ASH has long partnered with Fisher’s Timber Treatment and commissions a range of mostly H3 and H2 treatments on their cladding and structural F17 products. They’ve treated a handful of orders of H3 MASSLAM (ASH’s mass timber systems), which requires the clients flash or clad members to conform with Service Class 2.

Fisher’s uses Tru-Core Wood For Life from Kop-Coat, which combines vacuum impregnation with a non-volatile carrier. This sees the treatment (mostly permethrin, azole or a combination) penetrate deep into the core of the timber, while maintaining the wood product’s natural appearance, dimensional stability and mechanical properties – characteristics that are particularly important for structural and engineered timbers.

“For our normal section sizes, we get full penetration in hardwood, which is really unusual,” says Wright. “That means you can cut, drill, dock, mortice or flute the timber without affecting the warranty. All the things you’d expect to do for a cladding or a batten aren’t going to impact it.”

There are limitations, of course. For the special-order H3 treated Masslam, ASH CNC the members first, which allows a deep penetration and protection on all the cuts and drillings. For window profiles and similar products, however, it’s more complex again, even with Tru-Core.

“Treatment comes with a warranty,” Wright says. “Timbers don’t come with a warranty. We talk about durability classes 1, 2, 3 and 4, which come with an expectation, but it’s not a guarantee. H3 treatment has a guarantee. And so that really is an extra benefit.

“But if we’re doing, say, a really thick piece of timber with a deep penetrative treatment; if you were to mould that into, say, a window profile after treatment, it voids the warranty, because you’re taking most of the treatment

PHOTO: COURTESY ASH

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off. There's still treatment left in that timber, so it's going to be more durable than the natural timber that we would have sold otherwise, but you need to ask yourself a question if you're going to mould the timber. What's your objective? Do you want a 25 year warranty, or do you just want something that's going to be a bit more durable?"

ASH's wide range of products means that Fisher's has had to come up with multiple specific approaches. There is no basic 'H3 treatment' out there, but rather an enormous range of options from chemical selection (which may be by the name of the active product, such as copper azoles, or a brand name for the compound) to treatment methods (how the chemicals are taken in by the sapwood, ranging from envelope treatments and brush-on products that form an outer 'skin' (as seen at the bottom of page 22) to pressure and vacuum applications that use the same cellular pathways that once carried the tree's sap).

Getting these approaches right takes effort, particularly for timbers and products that are new to the market. Some products are more difficult than others, whether that be sawn timbers with a high percentage of

**"With our new American Oak, it's not a case of simply using the same H3 treatment we use on other species. There's a lot of R&D that goes into it."**

heartwood (which treatment chemicals find harder to penetrate) or engineered timbers. With CLT and glulam production on the rise in Australia, the major preservative chemical companies are researching approaches that will make their treatment easier.

Overall, it's all about having a trusted partner. "We've had a long relationship with Fisher's, going back way before they were using Tru-Core and before my time," Wright says. "It's a really good relationship: we're both in a similar pocket of Gippsland and we have similar approaches, particularly with new products.

"For example, we're focusing on increasing our mix of timber species. One of our new focuses is American Oak, and it's not a case of simply using the same H3 treatment we use on other species. There's a lot of R&D that goes into it. You have to get the mix and

the formulation right. And there's a bit of trial and error, a bit of testing, some back and forth. It really does require a collaborative effort. And they're brilliant. We've dealt with each other a lot, so we both know what to expect and what's required – and we're both prepared to do the work."

As to how others can replicate that success, Wright quips that they should just be buying from ASH. "But if you're a supplier, I can only advise developing that sort of collaborative relationship with your treatment company, so that you can get that best result for each product." **T**

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Various stair cassettes under construction at Meyer Timber.

# Stairs that save

Staircase cassettes go in fast, give following trades easy access, and can be fancied up to fit any style. Not bad for an idea dreamed up in a ski lodge.

**By Donyale Harrison**

Thomas Horsfall, project engineer at Meyer Timber, was on holiday in Jindabyne when he came up with the concept for the company's staircase cassettes. "I was looking underneath the stairs in our lodge, digging out some snow gear, and I looked up and saw a staircase that was constructed from LVL and particleboard," he says. "And I thought, 'Oh, we've got a whole shed full of this. And a saw that can cut it!'"

Horsfall has been one of the driving forces in the company's cassette offering and saw stairs as a natural addition to the existing floor and roof cassettes.

"We're not talking about high-end, perfectly finished staircases," he says. "The materials we use are generally LVL stringers with either OSB/4 or particleboard flooring



Above: Winders are built as separate cassettes.

over the top. They're the same materials that you'd generally use for your structural floor system, because it is basically a floor system, with different geometry."

As with the floor systems Meyer supplies, the raw finishes are tough and durable, ready for the workboots of tradies on site to stomp over them and able to cope with a large amount of wear and tear. Horsfall says, "And then you can cover it with carpet or strip

flooring, or whatever your floor finishes are, once you get to the finishing stage. Or if you're into the industrial look, sand it back to clean timber then add a polish/sealant. We've seen that in cafés and it adds a nice bit of texture."

Cassettes that cover all the basic stair geometry are available. "A straight run would be one module," says Horsfall, "whereas if you've got some winders and landings, you might end up with two to four modules in your stair structure. It doesn't even need to be a timber-framed building, they slot just as well into a steel frame."

Even better, they don't add complexity to the logistics. "They fit well on trucks, in fact, they're fairly compact compared to some of our other cassette offerings that can take up a lot of room or require some pretty big trucks," Horsfall says. "And it's easy to pack floor joists or other timbers needed for stick jobs around them, which makes the transport very economical."

"They work well in conjunction with a floor cassette, because you've already got the crane there on site. But there's no reason why you can't do them with a standard stick floor. A lot of the time there'll be a small

crane on site regardless, say, to lift up packs of flooring or to lift up packs of frames and that can drop the staircase in."

But that's not even the best part...

## EASY ACCESS

The key advantage of stair cassettes is that they are in at a much earlier stage. "We can put stairs in at framing stage, as soon as the next floor is in," Horsfall says.

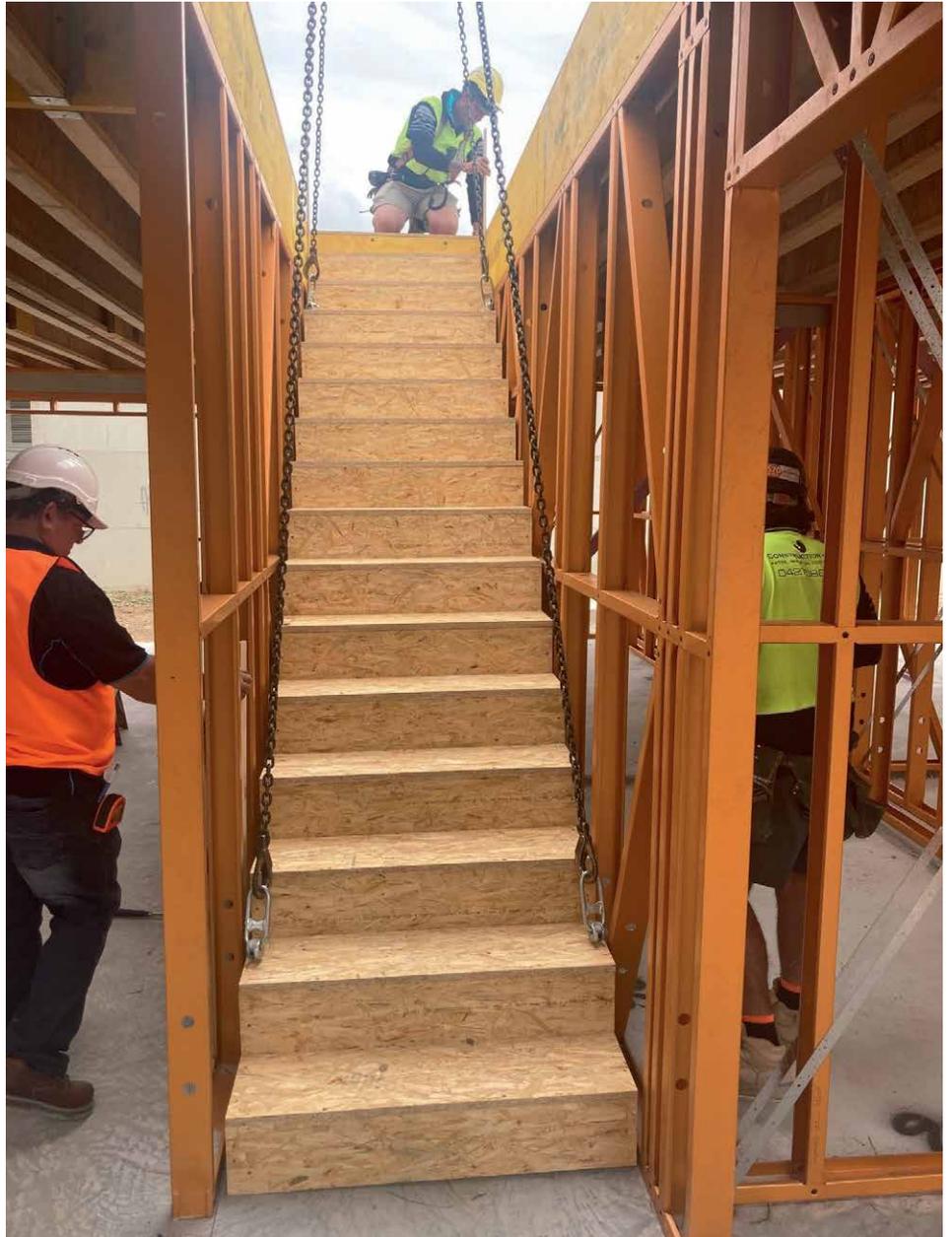
"What that does is allows access for all the subsequent trades. All of the following jobs get much faster, because they've got much better access through the staircase rather than using a ladder to access the higher floor. So you save time on your staircase installation, but then that just compounds for the rest of the job."

In terms of the time saved on the installation itself, a traditional stair install for a simple arrangement takes about a day on site. The stair cassettes, on the other hand, can be lifted into place and secured in about an hour for most jobs.

"Stairs are a pretty specialised area," says Horsfall. "So being able to take that offsite and being able to order them as part of your standard frame and truss order is, I think, a real advantage for the builder."

In addition to the time saved, site access becomes easier and ladder risk is removed. "Instead of trying to climb up and down ladders with buckets and sheets, they're just walking up and down a staircase," Horsfall says. "Obviously, that also has safety benefits for everyone on site."

Because stairs are usually installed when more finishes are complete, the risk of rectifications being needed for, say, damaged plaster on nearby walls is also lessened.



**Above:** A standard crane is all that's needed to lift the stairs into place. Securing is a quick job.



**Above:** Cassettes are usually between two walls.

All of the following jobs get much faster, because they've got much better access through the staircase rather than using a ladder.

Across the whole build, the benefits of the cassettes compound "I can't put a precise figure on it," says Horsfall, "because no one measures these things, but you can imagine the time savings multiplying every day as people just walk up a set of stairs rather than a ladder, and then at the end of the process, you give them a quick clean and are good to go with whatever the finish is, rather than having another install job left to do.

"The fact that we can deliver this at a competitive price, requiring no extra skills on site and no fancy equipment makes the stair cassettes really attractive."

## BUILDING THE MARKET

So far, the main market for the new product has been volume builders. "Typically, we've been selling the stair cassettes as an add-on to a floor cassette system," says Horsfall. "It makes sense for them to expand that offsite buy where they can and make their work faster and easier on site."

In some cases, Meyer is supplying all three of their cassette products: floor, stair and roof. "Not every build is set up for that," Horsfall cautions. "There are some builds where the floor and stairs work fine as cassettes, but the roof makes more sense >>



Above: Each stair run, landing and winder is built and installed as a separate module.

as trusses. Or maybe we're doing the floor and roof but they want an architecturally designed staircase. It's all about choosing what makes sense for the job."

Helping builders to make that decision is the next challenge for the company.

It's one thing to come up with a time- and cost-saving solution for the market, but another to get the information out to designers and convince builders to change their practices to incorporate it.

So far, Meyer has been concentrating on the latter group, in part because they already have strong pre-existing relationships.

"Even for builders who haven't used our other cassette products in the past, they'll have used our design services and they'll know that we're all about making their lives easier and the end product better," Horsfall says. "So when they come to us with a plan and we suggest stair cassettes, we'll develop each specific design in conjunction with the builder, guiding them through it. They'll work out whether it adds up for them in terms of cost and convenience."

While most designs are fairly standard – situated between walls, perhaps a winder or two or a landing – there is a lot of design flexibility possible. Even the storage under the stairs that Horsfall originally saw in Jindabyne can be built in, "though we'd just do the basic stair structure for that, you'd need a joiner to do the shelving and doors,"

**"We develop each design in conjunction with the builder, guiding them through it."**

he says. "But it makes sense as a storage solution, particularly in smaller houses."

Having designers consider stair cassettes at the start of a project is the next step.

Horsfall says, "Generally, we're not influencing architecture at the moment, we're just taking standard architecture and adapting it to modular form. But we will start to get improved benefits when, right from early design stage, they're thinking about prefabrication. It will help the builder finish jobs more quickly, get the best use out of limited timber supply and deliver a better flow of work to fabricators – both F&T companies and businesses like ours – which will produce more time and cost savings."

Although this transition is still in its early stages, the advantages of cassettes have been well received by Meyer's clients and this positive feedback is flowing up the design chain. Especially at a time when clients are concerned about the deliverability and expense of their builds, shifting to products like the stair cassettes will help keep some designs affordable and achievable.

"We're already starting to see that shift," says Horsfall. "We're starting to have a bit more influence on architects. And that will just grow as they see the way that we can optimise their construction."

Horsfall doesn't think he'll be coming up with another product on his next holiday. "We're starting to get to the limit of what we could do," he says. "Our philosophy here is complementing the frame and truss market. Unless we get into walls... but there are a lot of people who already do them well. T

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If wanted, a joiner can come in later and install storage under the stairs.

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# Be prepared

If more building designs and plans adopted a Scouting attitude, fewer rectifications would result.  
**By George Dolezal, Principal Engineer, Meyer Timber.**

It's one of the most famous mottos of any organisation in the world. With so many people involved in the Scouting movement, 'Be Prepared' is a well-known phrase that is also very simple and logical. The more prepared you are, the fewer challenges you will likely face and the better placed you are to succeed. This works for everything in life and is especially true if you are working in construction.

The humble home is often underestimated in terms of planning and preparation. A builder is faced with interpreting a set of drawings, often for a one-off design that will not be repeated, and then co-ordinating multiple trades and products simultaneously – each not aware of what the others are doing – to get an acceptable final handover for the owner. This makes it sound a bit more complex, but with some planning and preparation it becomes easier.

The main thing to consider here is documentation, which ideally flows through the process and is clearly communicated to those who need it. Many of the 'urgent' requests for design or remediation that come through EWP suppliers stem from something being designed/installed without the knowledge of how it fits into the overall build. I will explain what I mean with some common real-life examples.

## OVERHANGS FOR RAFTER ROOF SYSTEMS

Whether it be LVL rafters or I-joint rafters, the way overhangs are handled is rarely documented. Architectural drawings just show an area that is a raked ceiling. They often need to marry in with a trussed roof, so 90mm overhangs are implied. In using LVL, most carpenters will cut back the rafter to 90mm in the overhang region. The problem

is that this notching does not comply with the timber design code (AS 1720.1) and especially in uplift cases can cause failures unless other measures are taken.

For I-joint rafters the problem becomes multiplied as there are various overhang details and you do not know which one the builder wants to use. They normally want to reduce the overhang to suit standard fascia profiles.

As an example of good documentation in response to this, Meyer Timber has developed a set of meyJOIST rafter connection details (Figure 1, below left), which are provided with all jobs and quotes so it is clearly documented what has been designed and what is expected on site. This includes the barge/overhang corner which has been specifically engineered to ensure safety of personnel on the corner of a roof that is cantilevered in both directions.

## Many of the 'urgent' requests for remediation stem from something being designed/installed without knowledge of how it fits into the overall build.

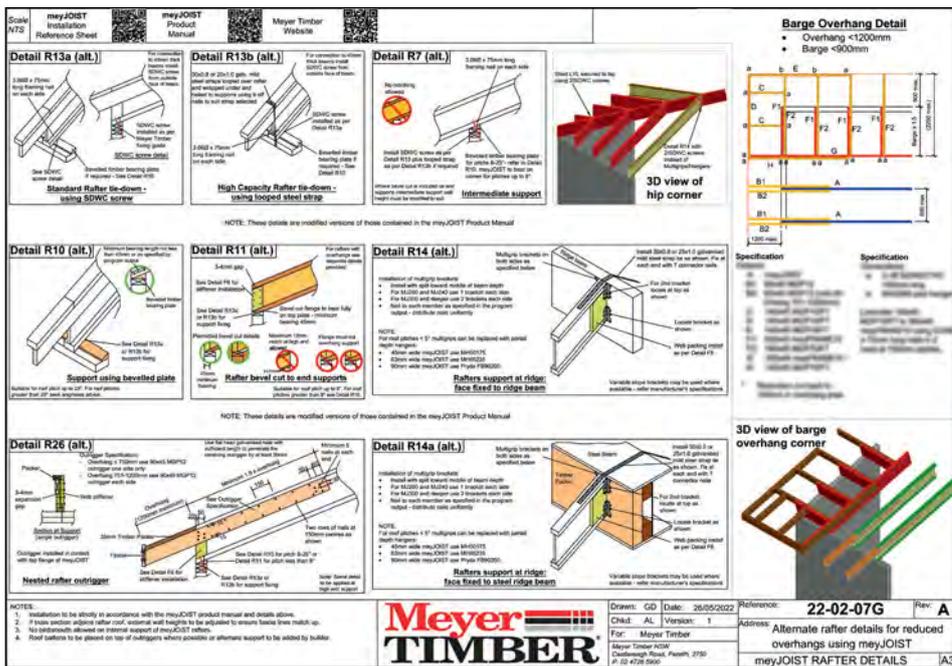


Figure 1: Good documentation like the meyJOIST rafter detail sheet is essential

## PLUMBING AND A/C IN FLOOR SYSTEMS

I-Joint mid floor systems are used extensively in housing construction and have been for many years – so why is it so hard to ensure the penetrations through the web are in line with recommendations? Being prepared here can make the build go much smoother.

Most builders use the same plumbers and a/c installers on all their projects. If they can go through the plans as soon as they win the job and mark the main plumbing and a/c runs in the floor system, this can be designed (See Figure 2, opposite) to make sure they work. Most EWP suppliers have this capacity in their software and some, like Meyer Timber, have the ability to pre-cut the larger holes before delivery to site, making the job easier for follow-on trades and ensuring the holes are in the right spots.

## H3 TREATMENT OF SUBFLOORS

The NCC 2019 states in Section 3.4.1.2 that where the ground or subfloor space is excessively damp or subject to frequent flooding, subfloor framing must be Durability Class 1 or 2 or be preservative treated to H3. This is something that cannot be determined by the designer unless it is clearly noted on the plans. If it does in fact need to be H3 treated, once the building certifier picks this

up at inspection stage the structural framing of the whole house is usually complete so fixing this will be very costly (if at all possible) and time consuming.

**JOB SPECIFIC INFORMATION**

This could be anything that is different from normal and examples that have come across our desk include spa units to be installed on a deck, billiard tables or wine cellars located on mid-floor systems, or even random issues such as interaction of concrete balconies to timber floors. A builder asked us how they should connect the balcony to the timber floor: a result of a small note on the engineering 'Provide 3 x M12 threaded rods fixed to slab and within the timber floor diaphragm.' This was not shown anywhere on the floor framing sheet but located to the side of the balcony concrete detail sheet.

With a bit of back and forth we eventually designed an adequate detail but this delayed the job by more than a week and created extra material and labour. If the note was more prominent and in the right location this could have been sorted out beforehand.

As a detailer or specifier, if you come up against a scenario that is not clear or is different to what is normally done, you need to highlight this so that it can be seen by others. A note on the layouts as well

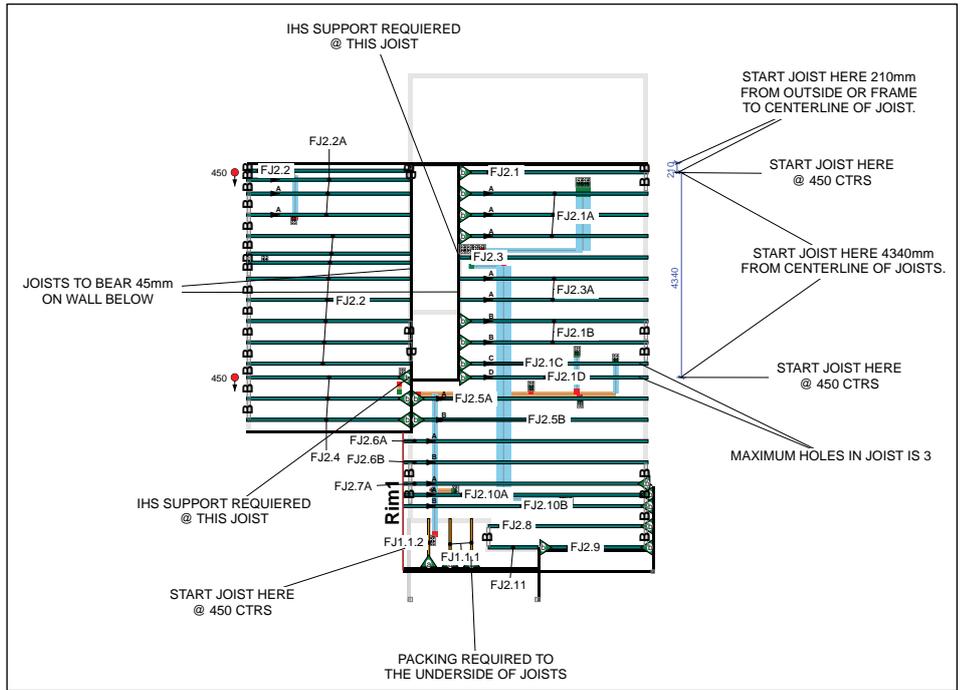


Figure 2: Piping and ductwork included in a floor system – a sign of being well prepared

as notes in the quote and email sent back to the builder are a good start. These should be prominent so as to stand out and minimise others missing the information.

No matter how prepared you are, as mentioned at the beginning, there could be unexpected things that will happen and need to be dealt with. This is another fact of life and brings to mind a good fallback slogan

which is just as valid but not as popular as the motto of the Scouts. If 'Be Prepared' throws a curveball at you, then heed the words of Clint Eastwood in *Heartbreak Ridge* and shift your philosophy to 'Improvise, Adapt and Overcome' – but hopefully you don't need to do that too often. **T**

DIAGRAM: COURTESY MEYER TIMBER



For more information on this topic, contact George Dolezal via email at [GeorgeD@meyertimber.com.au](mailto:GeorgeD@meyertimber.com.au)



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



# Industry actions

With Covid still running rife, FTMA is looking for new ways to help fabricators.

By Kersten Gentle

Lately I've heard from a few plants who unfortunately are going through their second wave of Covid infections and we understand Covid is still causing havoc in the workplace.

We are pleased the rules aren't changing as rapidly as they did in 2020 and 2021, however, the onus has definitely been passed from governments to individual businesses when it comes to controlling Covid in the workplace.

The Federal Government strongly recommends mask wearing in the workplace, and if anyone saw the news with Parliament returning to Canberra, you would have noticed they are leading by example with everyone wearing masks indoors. Multiple state chief health officers agree.

In the latest FTMA Covid-19 in the Workplace Update, FTMA went as far as saying that we highly recommend businesses introduce or retain mask wearing for anyone who deals with the public at a minimum.

FTMA will continue to keep members informed of any changes with regards to the Covid-19 rules in their jurisdiction and are always here to answer your queries.

## PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

It's been 15 years since FTMA Australia went from the Victorian Roof Truss & Wall frame Association to a National Association. Initially we represented approximately 13% of the

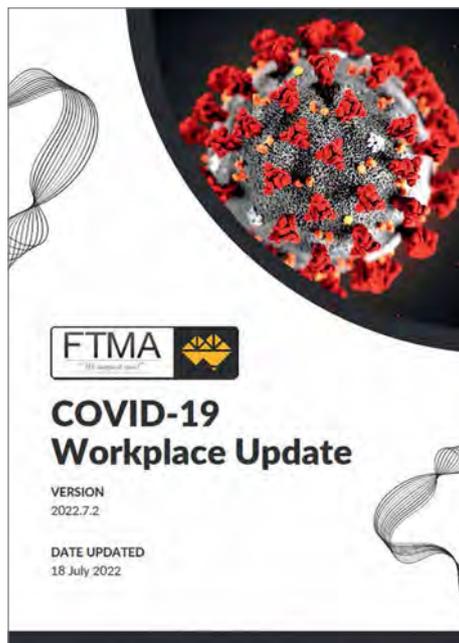
national industry, whereas today 52% of all timber fabricators in Australia are members of the Association.

Over the years, FTMA has continued to increase benefits for members and, more than ever, we are investing in your future by investing in programs that focus on timber waste and the circular economy, developing Safety SOP Videos, timber marketing and product development to name but a few.

We have created our environmental arm, Carbon Warrior, and are lobbying for policy changes around the built environment to ensure we all have a greener future.

In November, the FTMA Board will review our Strategic Plan and as part of this review, we are also reviewing our membership for the 2023/24 financial year as well as our sponsorship, which hasn't changed since our inception in 2007.

FTMA is passionate about supporting fabricators with their day-to-day business needs, such as our comprehensive wage review, which includes a snapshot of the Award for members to use as an easy reference. We also recognise the need to invest in these important projects as they will help grow our industry into the future.



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### STANDARDS REPRESENTATION

We all know the importance of Australian Standards for our industry. It's important for industry to be involved in the Standards Committees and I am proud that FTMA has two seats on two Standards Committees.

Andrew McLaughlin, Engineer at AKD Softwoods is representing FTMA Australia and our sector on the Australian Standards TM010 (Timber Framing & Structures) Committee and FTMA has also been given a seat on the AS-TM011 (Engineered Timber Products) Committee where Afzal Laphir of Meyer Timber will represent FTMA and the sector.

FTMA's involvement with this kind of committee is vital for the future of our sector and FTMA recently hosted our first quarterly Engineers' Zoom with our two Standards representatives, engineers from our three nailplate companies and the two chairs of the Standards committees. One of our aims is to get the AS4440 review back on track as a lot of work has already been done and we believe this review will strengthen our sector.

### NEW MEMBERS

We would like to recognise our newest members in June and July:

- Drew Parker at Redland Bay Roof Trusses in Queensland
- Paul Adams at Assemble Systems Pty Ltd in Victoria
- Will Louw at Brock Frame & Truss in Tasmania
- Clinton Wells at Worldwide Truss & Frames

Over the next few months, FTMA will be touring Western Australia, New South Wales

and Tasmania and look forward to getting back out on the road.

### NEW RESOURCES ON THE WAY

FTMA has partnered with Catie Paterson, an HR specialist who provided the updated wages and conditions for a number of Awards including, of course, the Timber Industry Award.

In the next few months, FTMA members will receive a renewed version of our Employee Contract, which has just been reviewed by lawyers.

It was brilliant to hear the lawyer comment on how good our initial contract was, as it was written like an educational document for employees. This has been updated to include all the relevant legal requirements and, as with all our resources, will be provided to members for free.

On top of this, we will also be providing members a wide range of checklists on recruitment, remuneration and incentives, team communication, working from home, induction and onboarding, just to name a few. Again, these resources are free of charge for members and will help streamline your administration.

FTMA is continuing to work hard to support fabricators, by investing in these kinds of resources, as well as a wide range of other projects we are determined to help grow a stronger industry for all.

**If you are interested in joining the 52% of timber fabricators who are members of FTMA Australia, please call me on 0418 226 242.**

Stay safe everyone,  
Kersten T



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# Let's not twist again

Lateral stability is more complicated than you might expect for free roofs. **By Paul Davis**

Over many years I have investigated damaged structures – something around 2000 of them. I've seen all sorts of damage – ranging from the dramatic to the mundane: the devastation caused from massive chemical explosions, bus impacts, collapsed retaining walls, category 5 cyclones, earthquakes, foundation movement, roof collapses, tree impacts, right through to leaking taps. The structures involved have been houses (lots of), commercial buildings, industrial buildings, retaining walls, roads, dams, brothels, bars, boats, and bridges.

Every job is different, but after a while you begin to see patterns. So, for goodness' sake people, make sure your showers are waterproof, that you don't leave heaters on when you depart the house, and that you are concentrating when reversing your car!

One minor pattern that I have picked up on is lateral movements (failures) or open walled structures – or what in an engineering sense you would call free roofs. These structures can, for instance, be entry roofs, alfresco roofs, carports or free-standing roofs such as picnic shelters, gazebos and cabanas.

So, this is in fact the third in a series of Truss Talks about free roofs. The first article was about wind pressures for free roof trusses. The second article was about fixings and tie downs. This article is again about something that is relevant for a normal building – wall bracing. But with a free roof on some sort of posts the solutions are now radically different.

Let's imagine a not-so-standard engineering problem; an elephant standing on a toothpick that is miraculously strong enough to hold the beast's weight.

The toothpick will still 'fail' because it will rotate at its base and the elephant will slide sideways. This thought experiment teaches us three things: firstly, elephants shouldn't

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stand on toothpicks; secondly, no matter how strong the elephant, the toothpick will still rotate and; thirdly, no matter how strong the toothpick, the elephant will inevitably slide sideways.

Let's now imagine a free-standing carport sitting on timber or steel posts with simple bolted connections top and bottom. Similar principles apply; no matter how strong the roof, the posts will still rotate and no matter how strong the post the roof will still slide sideways. And this is exactly the sort of construction problem pattern that I have picked up on when looking at all those damaged structures.

The same potential mode of failure can happen with a house – the roof slides sideways, and that is why we design and provide bracing walls. A bracing wall provides stability in its long direction because it is fixed to the slab or timber floor. So, what we need for the elephant is a really long toothpick that is embedded in the ground and what we need for the free roof is a post that is fixed against rotation about its top or at its base.

Your standard steel post base or a standard steel 8mm base plate with two bolts doesn't provide this fixity. That 90x90 post (or whatever is used) is in effect a very long lever and it will just bend the post base – easy-as. We need to get more serious – either use a heavy engineered post base or cast the post into the footing.

The other option is a portal frame of some

sort and that may well be the subject of next month's Truss Talk.

Even a brick pier doesn't give that lateral stability. The weight helps a bit but, again, the lateral wind load from the roof structure is applied with such large leverage that it easily rotates each pier about their base. Those brick piers need to be reinforced with starter bars running out of the footings into a reinforced concrete grout core if it is to be stable. Last month's article had a photo of my carport and that is exactly how that was built.

If your free roof projects out of a building (say an alfresco) then it gets some lateral stability via the house walls. But with the projection beyond a certain point, it's possible that the outer edge can slew sideways and in effect it twists the projecting roof off the house.

So, if you are responsible for the design of wall bracing for a structure then you really should consider lateral stability for any free roof portion. More often than not these challenges are not solvable using the standard methodologies in AS1684 and your software. So, we get to a position of needing a bespoke engineering design. And that gets us to the point that this all should be considered early on when you quote a job – who is going to own and solve the problem of lateral stability of the free roof? And, more particularly, who is going to pay for that solution! **T**



**Paul Davis** is an independent structural engineer managing his own consulting firm Project X Solutions Pty Ltd. The views in this column are Paul's and do not reflect the opinions of *TimberTrader News*.  
Phone: 02 4576 1555 | Email: paul@projectxsolutions.com.au

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V.P. of Manufacturing  
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