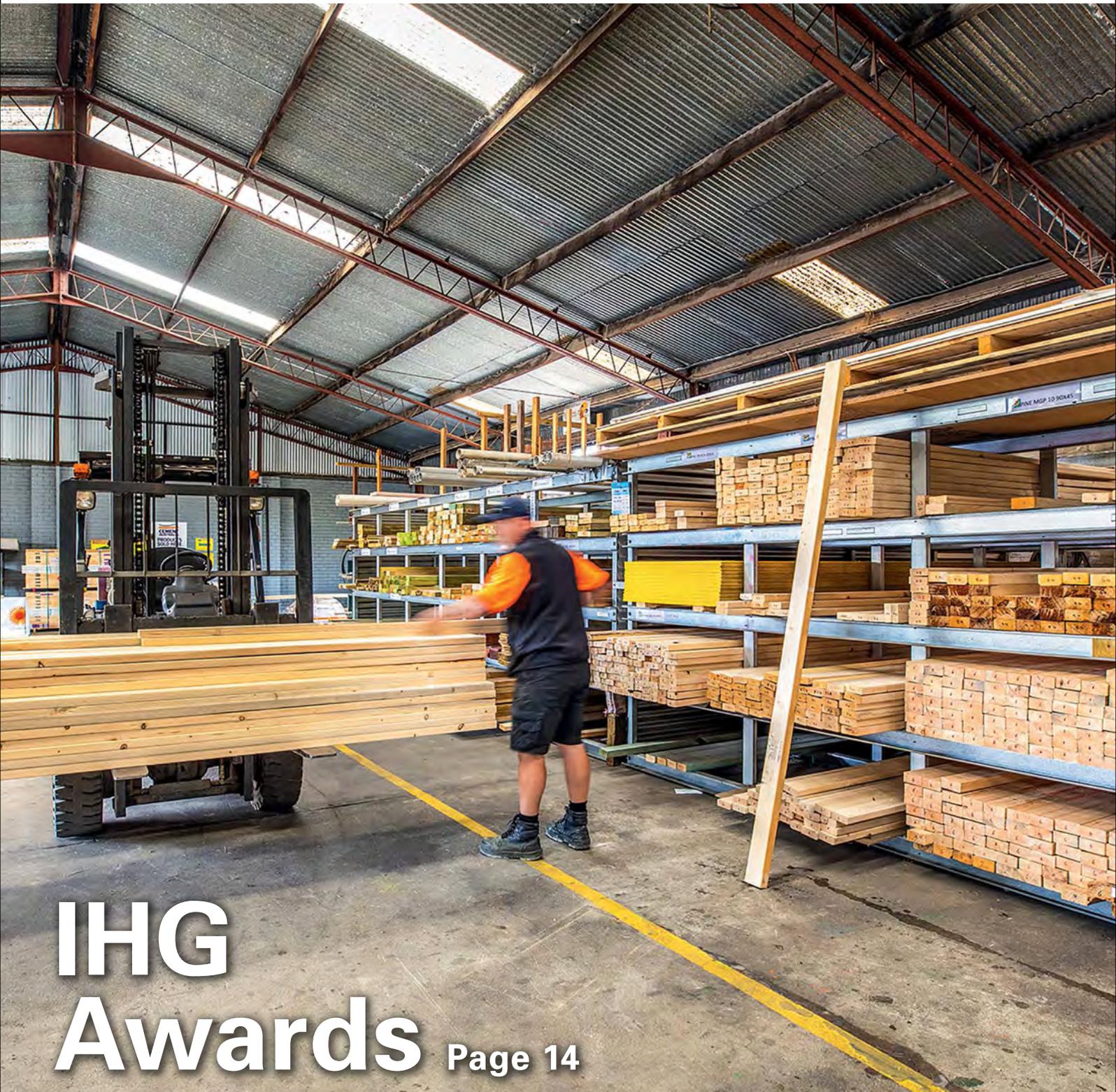


TimberTrader

news



IHG Awards

Page 14

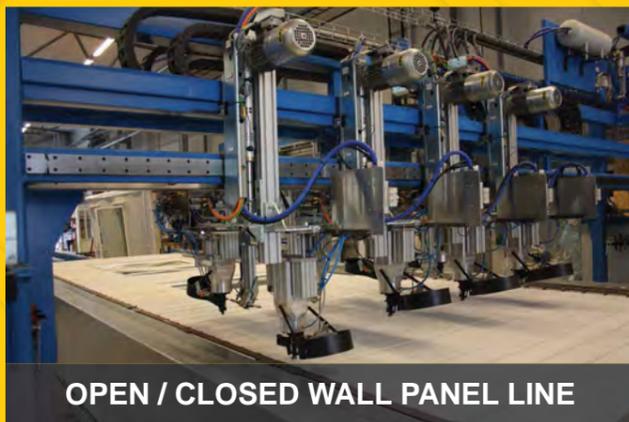
PAGE 9
**CONSTRUCT NSW COURSES
FOR THE TIMBER INDUSTRY**

PAGE 20
**WINDOWS AND DOORS
SPECIAL FEATURE**

PAGE 34
**NEW TIMBER TREATMENT
STANDARDS EXPLAINED**

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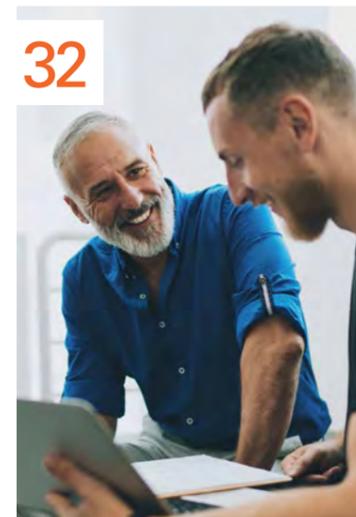
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14

20

32

CONTENTS

Association update 4
News 8

Cover feature

The Independent Hardware Group's annual Expo has moved into the virtual world for 2021 and a raft of clever technologies are being used to help members network and discover new suppliers. Plus, meet the national finalists in the Annual IHG Awards of Excellence..... 14

Feature story

Windows and doors represent enormous opportunity for more sales, whether you're a fabricator, retailer or timber supplier. For those already in the sector, clever new machinery has revolutionised manufacture, while technology has added a wealth of new possibilities for homeowners 20

People business

Relating, reflecting, recalibrating and reconditioning are key to help your business step forward smoothly after the challenges of 2020. Here's how to put the four R's into practice smoothly 32

AutoBuild News

In the frame

Updates to the AS/NZS 1604 series clarify many of the issues around specifying for treated timber in all its forms, and will help to solve some of the issues that arise out of the current standard 34

FTMA newsletter 36

Truss talk

With Paul Davis 38

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ASSOCIATION NEWS

ATIF

John Halkett

CHALLENGING YEAR IN PROSPECT

As long as Covid continues to impact on the ability of businesses to travel to develop and interrogate often complex supply chains, 2021 looks like continuing the challenges of last year for timber wholesalers and importers.

Importers recognise that the building and construction industries are relying on them to plug supply gaps, particularly in the face of a recognition that the 2019-2020 summer bushfires not only destroyed forward timber supplies, but further reduced the already muted interest in investment in long-run softwood plantations.

This is in addition to the continuing equivocation on the part of state governments in relation to ongoing native hardwood supplies. So, some significant supply-side issues that will need to be tackled this year.

The predicted post-Covid building and construction contraction has not eventuated, and this is further exacerbating supply-side pressures. In addition, changes in metropolitan building preferences from detached housing to apartments has increased the demand for imported engineered wood products.

Timber wholesalers and importers will have a job to do in 2021 to assist to develop new international sources of supply of both softwood and hardwood timber products into the Australian market.

Future supply-side questions will include where to get additional supplies of MGP10 structural softwoods; where to source future supplies of engineered wood products and building components, and where to source high-quality hardwoods.

NATIONAL STRATEGY

At a national level, ATIF sees merit in seeking to identify future international softwood and hardwood supplies, and to identify current impediments to the importation of timber products.

Future policy and research effort should include work on the acceptance and/or harmonisation of international building codes and standards, grades and sizes and other impediments directed at improving the opportunities to expand softwood and hardwood timber imports.

The ATIF Board will be seeking to advance these issues via a meeting with Senator Jonathon Duniham, Assistant Minister for Forestry and Fisheries when Covid restrictions permit. ATIF will also seek to provide additional advice to FWPA as part of the review of FWPA strategic direction.

For further ATIF-related information contact John Halkett at: john.halkett@bigpond.com or 0417 421 187.

TTIA

Brian Beecroft

LEGISLATION SEEKING REFORMS TO CASUAL EMPLOYMENT

The Fair Work Amendment (Supporting Australia's Jobs and Economic Recovery) Bill 2020 entered Parliament on Wednesday, 9 December. As part of the proposed federal government legislation, changes to casual employment are intended to provide more certainty for businesses in the future. Key aspects of the proposed reform are outlined below:

Casual employees

According to the Bill's explanatory memorandum, the Bill will introduce a statutory definition of a casual employee that focuses on the offer and acceptance of employment and draws on common law principles.

The measure is aimed at preventing unfair outcomes in situations where employers have to pay an employee twice for the same entitlement.

A statutory obligation will be introduced for employers to offer regular casual employees a conversion to full- or part-time employment, unless there are reasonable business grounds not to do so.

Under the entitlement, employers will be required to offer an eligible casual employee conversion to full- or part time employment after 12 months of employment.

Award flexibilities

The Bill will also address award complexity by extending existing JobKeeper flexibilities in the Fair Work Act concerning duties and location of work to employers and employees to whom identified modern awards apply.

The flexibilities will be available for a period of two years following the passage of

the bill through Parliament.

Part-time flexibility provisions will also be made available across identified modern awards, enabling employers and employees to work together to agree additional hours of work to part-time employees who already work at least 16 hours per week, to be paid at ordinary rates of pay.

Compliance and enforcement

The Bill introduces a new criminal offence for dishonest and systematic wage underpayments and increases the value and scope of civil penalties and orders that can be imposed for non-compliance.

Employees will be able to recover their entitlements by increasing the small claims cap from \$20,000 to \$50,000.

The Federal Circuit Court and Magistrate's courts will be able to refer small claims matters to the Fair Work Commission for conciliation and consent arbitration.

Further, the Bill will prevent businesses from publishing job advertisements with pay rates below the minimum wage.

Making agreements

The Bill will enhance these processes by reducing the level of prescription imposed by the Fair Work Act and providing greater flexibility as to the methods by which employees may be provided with a fair and reasonable opportunity to consider whether to approve an enterprise agreement prior to the vote.

The Fair Work Commission will be required to listen to the views of the bargaining parties in the approval process, and intervention by other persons before the FWC will be limited. In addition, the Commission will be required to approve agreements within 21 working days.

The Bill will also enable franchisees to opt in to a current single-enterprise agreement that covers a larger group of employers that operate under the franchise. The measure ensures that industrial instruments do not transfer where an employee may transfer between associated employing entities at the employee's initiative.

Agreements on major construction projects

According to the Bill, the Fair Work Commission will be allowed to approve longer-term greenfields agreements made in

relation to the construction of a major project, to specify a nominal expiry date of up to eight years after the day the agreement comes into operation.

Where the greenfields agreement specifies a nominal expiry date more than four years after the day on which the Fair Work Commission approves the agreement, the agreement must include a term that provides for annual pay increases for the nominal life of the agreement.

We will keep TTIA Members up to date on the progress of this proposed legislation.

MGA TMA

Ann Sanfey

COVID-19 NORMAL, AND THE SUMMER SEASON

Usually around the start of any year everyone gears up in many different ways, at work and personally. Our New Year's resolutions become the ghost of Christmas past.

Now we are heading into a more cautious future and resuming a time that is 'Covid-normal'. We cannot lose focus on protecting ourselves, colleagues and the community. The retail industry has been at the forefront of keeping communities and employees safe and will continue to do so.

We need to remind ourselves of what is Covid-19 and how it has spread.

A key way to continue to protect employees and others from the risk of exposure to Covid is by practising good hygiene. Below are some suggestions to ensure good hygiene within the workplace.



We cannot lose focus on protecting ourselves, colleagues and the community.

WORKPLACE HYGIENE

Be aware of areas that have interaction between employees, customers etc. Highlight these areas as 'high risk' and implement control measures to mitigate the risk. The areas could include:

- Common areas such as restrooms, kitchens and other common areas where employees and customers congregate;
- High traffic areas where customers and employees are together;
- Visitor access;
- High touch surfaces such as door handles throughout the workplace.

To enhance and maintain workplace hygiene and its culture, its best to:

- ✓ Have a strict and regular cleaning schedule that cleans and sanitises these areas.
- ✓ Have appropriate social distance rules in these areas and posters stating these.
- ✓ Reduce the 'traffic' if possible.
- ✓ Encourage personal hygiene to be the forefront of your employees' thoughts

when performing tasks (both workplace and personal).

- ✓ Reduce the sharing of items or storage of items (i.e. cross confirmation). Example: employees' water bottles not to be stored closely in an area or touching
- ✓ Provide alcohol-based hand sanitiser in appropriate locations.

PERSONAL HYGIENE

Personal hygiene should be a policy and procedure that is instilled into the workplace culture and made easy to achieve.

A comprehensive hygiene policy must include topics such as:

Hand Washing

- ✓ before commencing or recommencing work.
- ✓ immediately after:
 - smoking, coughing, sneezing or blowing the nose – here have information about sneezing/coughing into the elbow;
 - eating or drinking;

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- touching the hair, scalp or any wound;
 - using the toilet.
- ✓ between tasks to avoid cross-contamination.

Uniform policy

Stating the expectations on the cleanliness of the uniform and presentation

Personal presentation

Stating the expectations on:

- Hair, facial hair;
- Jewellery (big contributor to cross-contamination);
- Fingernails;
- Covering of wounds.

Personal protection equipment

Covering what is required when completing certain tasks, how to use and even how often, e.g. single-use gloves, masks and mask hygiene.

SICK LEAVE AND RETURN TO WORK POLICY

To enhance the hygiene policy for both workplace in general, and personal, it is best to provide:

- Processes to regularly monitor and review the implementation of hygiene measures to ensure they are being followed and remain effective (part of the store's WHS risk assessment policy);
- Training for employees in the policy and procedure, ensuring they understand;
- Posters throughout the workplace to reinforce the message;
- Adequate and accessible facilities to achieve good hygiene. Make sure that they are in good working order and clean and safe.

- Washroom facilities that are properly stocked and have adequate supplies of toilet paper, soap, water and drying facilities (preferably single-use paper towels). They must also be kept clean and in good working order.

Another point to consider is opening windows or adjusting air-conditioning for more ventilation in common areas and limiting or reducing recirculated air-conditioning where possible.

For any enquiries regarding MGA TMA Timber Merchants Australia, contact Ann Sanfey national membership manager on 0411 886 716 or ann.sanfey@mga.asn.au

TABMA

Peter Andersen, contract GTO manager

GROUP TRAINING: ACHIEVES SUCCESS FOR APPRENTICES AND BUSINESSES

A uniquely Australian concept, Group Training Organisations made an appearance in the 1970s as a mechanism to make employing apprentices more flexible and provide them with a solid training pathway.

Since those early days, Group Training Organisations (GTO) have managed the training of over one million apprentices and trainees. Today, Group Training Organisations, through the peak body, the National Apprentice Employment Network (NEAN), are the largest employer network of apprentices and trainees with over 25,000 employed by GTOs across Australia.

Group Training Organisations fall into two categories: Not For Profit entities that serve a specific industry or community and For

Profit companies that provide Group Training services as a profit-driven business. The Timber Industry's GTO – TABMA Apprentices & Trainees – is a Not-For-Profit dedicated to the sector.

WHAT DO GTOS DO?

Group Training Organisations employ apprentices and trainees (as a group we will refer to them as apprentices) and place them with Host Employers. The GTO is the legal employer of the apprentice, meaning that they are responsible for all aspects of that employment relationship.

GTOs provide a heightened level of care for their apprentices through what is generally termed a pastoral care program. Dedicated Field Officers are allocated to each apprentice. It is their role to ensure that the apprentice is safe, receiving the training they should be getting and providing valuable assistance to their host employer's business.

It is this extra care and focus that contributes to the incredible completion rate that GTOs achieve. According to the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER), GTOs have a higher success rate in achieving completion of apprentices than those employed directly by companies.

WHY USE A GROUP TRAINING ORGANISATION?

Businesses have differing reasons for using a GTO to manage their apprentice requirements.

As a summary, the benefits of the Group Training system are:

- Relief from navigating the complex Vocational Education and Training system;
- Employment lies with the GTO providing the Host Employer with flexibility;
- GTOs like TABMA have a professional recruitment team ensuring our Host Employers get to choose from the best available candidates;
- GTO staff understand the VET system meaning the apprentice is assured that they will receive the most appropriate training for their vocation;
- Payroll, Workers Compensation, RTO enrolment, and management are all taken care of by the GTO;
- GTOs have a high level of understanding about the Industrial Relations framework associated with employing apprentices and young people.

THE BENEFITS OF THE GROUP TRAINING SYSTEM FOR BUSINESSES VARY

SMEs benefit from the expertise offered by the GTO staff and relieving their business of the additional paperwork, record keeping and payroll involved with employing and

managing an apprentice. They also appreciate the flexibility offered by virtue that they are not the employer nor the signatory to the apprentice's Training Contract.

This allows the Host Employer to provide the GTO with due notice that they can no longer retain the apprentice if they experience significant changes to their business.

Larger companies appreciate the focus GTOs provide to the management and placement of the apprentice. Generally very busy and focused businesses, the knowledge that a professional GTO Field Officer is overseeing their apprentice(s) training and welfare means they can concentrate on core business.

In all business circumstances, apprentices taken on through a GTO make good business sense. As with other critical aspects of business, engaging a specialist pays dividends. As an analogy, you can prepare and manage your marketing material – advertisements, strategies, social media posts – but, investing in the help of a marketing company will always yield a better result, and in the long term, a better return for your investment. So it is, too, with having an apprentice in your workplace. To get the best outcome for the business and

the apprentice engaging a GTO will pay dividends.

WHAT IS THE COST?

At first glance, many newcomers to the GTO system are shocked by the hourly rate that the GTO charges when compared to the apprentice's hourly pay.

This shock is soon tempered by analysis of the inclusions in that rate. For TABMA, the Host Employer's hourly rate includes:

- The apprentice's base pay rate;
- Allowance for annual leave;
- Allowance for sick leave;
- Costs associated with off the job training;
- Cost of basic PPE;
- Workers Compensation Insurance;
- Statutory superannuation;
- A minimal administration fee to cover the GTO's costs.

The additional cost involved with using a GTO is usually covered by savings in the Host Employer's own business, either directly or time taken in managing the above.

WHY HAVE AN APPRENTICE OR TRAINEE IN YOUR BUSINESS?

This is the ultimate question. The answer has two components.

Firstly, it is training young people to

become professionals in the industry. The Timber Industry is complex, sustainable and vital to our country. If we do not train people to have the skills and knowledge necessary to move through the industry the vitality of the industry will diminish. Current industry people have so much history, knowledge and skills to pass onto a new generation. Doing this through a formal apprenticeship program is the most effective. The apprentice will receive the benefit of current industry professionals' knowledge along with the formal off the job accredited training and qualification.

Secondly, apprentices are valuable physical assistance in the workplace. They take up tasks that are appropriate for their age and skills, relieving more experienced staff to concentrate on the more complex and involved jobs.

TABMA is the Group Training Organisation for the Timber Industry – we are also the Registered Training Organisation dedicated to the industry. Our team has the industry knowledge and infrastructure to provide your business with the apprentice you need.

If you would like a chat about TABMA's GTO and how we can assist your business, call our contract GTO manager, Peter Andersen on 0447 892 002. T

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Left and above: Peter Arcus and Mick Stephens in the beautiful new Timber Hub offices.

INDUSTRY NEWS

Responsible and beautiful

Meet the expert craftsman bringing a 'Timber Hub' to life.

When Timber Queensland and Responsible Wood relocated to their shared new office, an opportunity arose for both to create a 'Timber Hub' – a vision showcasing Responsible Wood-certified Queensland timber species to visitors and stakeholders alike.

That vision has been realised with timber materials and supplies generously donated from a variety of members for the new fit-out. Glulam beams and treated pine framing came from Hyne Timber, solid spotted gum timber flooring from Parkside, engineered blackbutt flooring from Boral Timber, solid Darwin stringybark timber flooring from DTM Timber and recycled hardwoods in feature roles from Kennedy's Timbers.

Additionally, three different types of ply came from PNG Forest Products, Austral Plywood and Carter Holt Harvey, along with black Shou Sugi Ban cypress wall cladding from Hurford Wholesale, cypress doors from

Eco Cottages and flooring adhesives supplied by Mapei.

Behind every great transformation is an expert craftsman. Enter Peter Arcus, of Anything Wood, who draws on 45 years of craftsmanship in carpentry and joinery.

"I was thrilled to be commissioned by Timber Queensland and to be a part of this broad-spectrum project," Arcus says. "It was not without its fair share of construction issues but sorting these and getting results satisfactory to all involved is a powerful motivation. And we kept within budget."

A native New Zealander, Peter runs his own timber joinery operation in Brisbane. Anything Wood specialises in delivering bespoke timber carpentry and joinery services. He has also spent time working on Norfolk Island as manager of the local sawmill and a timber cabinetry business.

Mick Stephens, CEO of Timber Queensland, says, "The concept from day

one was to reflect the warm and wonderful features of wood as well as showcase the variety of commercial timber products and species produced in Queensland. Based on the concept designs from Mark Hogan at Architectus, Peter was able to bring this vision to life."

Individual offices, common and break areas, and the foyer have been framed with a variety of timbers and hardwood upright dowels – with a deliberate emphasis on 'biomorphism', where certified Responsible timbers are used to reflect the patterns and shapes that are seen in nature.

Stephens says, "The 'Timber Forest' screens in the foyer were a highlight of the project and a testimony to Peter's craftsmanship, having put into practice the artistic vision of the concept design.

"As the project nears completion, the next phase will be the inclusion of timber furniture including an exquisite boardroom table using three Far North Queensland species sourced from Branch95 and produced by DTM Timber in Maryborough. Mary Valley Timbers from Dagon are also producing a raised meeting table using local eucalyptus hardwood from South-East Queensland."

Stephens also plans finishing decorative touches of a locally crafted timber surfboard as well as a fine acoustic guitar made with local wood species. "These will provide additional life and ambience to the office space and will also represent the ubiquitous nature of wood in our everyday lives," he says. "Many of the great people working in the Queensland timber industry are avid surfers, and at the end of the day who doesn't like music? I'm sure a fine craftsman like Peter will appreciate these final touches."

PHOTOS: COURTESY RESPONSIBLE WOOD

New courses for building

A range of free and low-cost courses are designed to upskill the sector in NSW.

More education is one of the most common requests we hear in the sector, both fundamentals for new entrants and easy-access courses for professionals. The NSW government has taken a step to meeting this need with a range of new courses on its digital training platform.

The platform, a partnership between the Office of the Building Commissioner and TAFE NSW, is called Construct NSW and courses are designed in collaboration with prominent industry members. The first course, Understanding Occupation Certification Audits (cost \$140) has been joined by two new modules: the Value of Australian Standards (\$140) and the NSW Planning Portal (free). Three additional courses are coming soon: Ethics in Construction, How to communicate with consumers and the advantages of getting it right and The Benefits of Design & Building Practitioner Legislation.

NSW Building Commissioner David Chandler said, "All the modules are being developed in consultation with representatives from across the industry – architects, designers, builders, certifiers, engineers and so on – responding to their feedback on the priority learning gaps that are common across the field.

"The modules are short and sharp, only taking up to two hours each, and they can be done anytime, including when you're offline."

An additional 18 modules are expected to be rolled out throughout 2021.

"I encourage everyone in the construction industry to visit the platform and consider taking a module to help them enhance their



All modules are being developed in consultation with representatives from industry – architects, designers, builders, certifiers, engineers, etc.

professional capability," Chandler said. "As we rebuild from Covid, we want to establish a more capable and innovative workforce that is able to deliver NSW a pipeline of trustworthy buildings."

The platform is part of the NSW Government's Construct NSW transformation

strategy that is establishing new benchmarks of industry performance to restore public confidence in residential construction standards after a difficult few years.

For more information, visit: <https://training.tafensw.edu.au/constructnsw/>

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A safe story

Hyne farewells one of its longest serving employees, who helped build the company's safety culture.

Recently, the team at Hyne Timber farewelled one of its longest serving members, Noel Puller. Noel started with the business in 1981 as an experienced and qualified fitter and turner.

What he thought would be a six-week stint of maintenance work turned into a diverse and successful career that has lasted for 39 years.

Noel has worked across the whole of the Hyne business over the last 12 years or so in corporate roles in internal audit, and safety management, leading the safety function for a number of years.

Prior to that, Noel had worked at some Hyne operations that many now in Hyne would not even know existed, including the Granville Pine Mill, Maryborough Hardwood Mill, Virginia I-Beam Plant and Rocklea Beam Plant.

Noel spent a large portion of his years at Hyne Tuan Mill, having joined the Tuan team in its formative years in the early 1990s and was a key contributor to developing many of the systems of work that assisted Tuan in becoming the successful operation it has been for many years.

He fondly recalls the challenges of building a visionary mill, working alongside German suppliers while maintaining a strong focus on safety.

Stakeholder engagement manager, James Hyne remembers his days as a cadet back in the Hardwood Mill, where Noel was also working.

"Noel always has a joke to share and has brought many positive vibes throughout the business over his 39 years," James says.

"In fact, I don't think I have ever seen him cranky! Importantly also, he has certainly brought about significant progress in safety over the years starting with his own focus on safety when he was on the tools. He has delivered on a shift in safety culture and should be proud of the difference he has made.

"I would like to thank Noel for his commitment and long service over the years and wish him all the very best with retirement," James added.

Reminiscing on the years that were, Noel believes he has been lucky to work with some of the very best in the timber industry, and for that he will be always thankful.

"I would like to particularly thank the Hyne family for providing a secure and supportive working environment, which has allowed not only myself, but many others to progress through the ranks," he says.

"Many years ago, I met the visionary who saw pine as the company's future and he was right. In 1982 at the Hyne 100-year celebration in the Maryborough Town Hall, Lambert Hyne addressed workers and their families, the majority of whom had worked with hardwood all their life. Lambert, who had retired as Managing Director in 1979, informed us all that softwood would be our future.



Above: James Hyne (left) and Noel Puller.

"Noel has certainly brought about significant progress in safety over the years, starting when he was on the tools."

"The hall filled with laughter as most felt that pine was only good for making pallets! How things change," Noel concluded.

Noel looks forward to the next stage of life, with new toys for his shed and a few acres to maintain and hopes to get a trip back to France at some stage in the Covid-free future.



An honorary doctorate for the Dame

Dame Judith Hackitt DBE was recently awarded the Doctor of Science honoris causa by RMIT University, in recognition of her long career in engineering where she has worked to advance public health and safety and advocate for young women in STEM.

Hackitt notably led the Independent Review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety commissioned by the UK government following the Grenfell Tower fire in 2017.

RMIT Vice-Chancellor and President, Martin Bean CBE, said Hackitt's ongoing work in the building and construction industry had changed contemporary engineering and advanced the health and safety of the profession. "We are proud to recognise Judith's many outstanding achievements and pleased to welcome another exceptional woman in STEM to the RMIT community," he said.

Hackitt visited Australia in February last year as a guest of RMIT, presenting to industry, government and community representatives and hopes to return to strengthen local ties.

"I am truly honoured to receive this Honorary Doctorate from RMIT and so sorry that I could not be there in person to receive it," she said. "My personal mission – to make buildings safer for everyone who lives in them – continues here in the UK and in Australia."

Hackitt has a degree in Chemical Engineering from the Imperial College London, is a Fellow of both the Royal Academy of Engineering and the Institution of Chemical Engineers, and has an Honorary Fellowship from the Institution of Engineering and Technology.

PHOTO AND TEXT (TOP) COURTESY HYNE TIMBER; (BOTTOM) COURTESY RMIT

UPCOMING EVENTS

FEBRUARY

NOW FORTNIGHTLY WOODSOLUTIONS WEBINARS

After the success of 2020's weekly webinars, the series has moved to fortnightly for 2021 and will again be covering a wide range of topics with both local and international presenters. Free every second Tuesday, starting at 11am AEST, Eastern Daylight Time and archived on the WoodSolutions website. Upcoming topics include Demystifying Bushfire Attack Level Assessment on 2 February and Marrickville Library Case Study on 16 February. **For details, visit www.woodsolutions.com.au/events**

WOODSOLUTIONS NON-RESIDENTIAL TIMBER BUILDING TYPES SERIES

An eight-part short course run over Zoom, this series will run on Thursdays from late January to June and discuss eight building types in detail, alongside options and considerations that result in the best

design. The first off the rank is Timber Portal Frames focusing on low-rise buildings and looking at their cost and ease of installation advantages. This webinar is presented by TTN's own George Dolezal from Meyer and Rob Nestic from TGA Engineers, both of whom have extensive experience with these frames, on 28 January. **For details, visit www.woodsolutions.com.au/events**

MARCH

INTERNATIONAL MASS TIMBER CONFERENCE (ONLINE)

Featuring virtual building tours as well as a Covid-safe line-up, this US-based event has over 40 speakers, 100 exhibitors and 1000 experts. Four tracks will run simultaneously: Reimagining Our Cities; Project Delivery With Mass Timber: New Product, New Process; Building Performance: Design & Implementation and Overcoming Barriers & Growing The Market, plus networking events. Held 30 March to 1 April. **For more details and to register, visit www.masstimerconference.com**

JUNE

FRAME 2021

The renowned Timber Offsite Construction conference and exhibition will be held Tuesday and Wednesday 22–23 June at the Crown Promenade Melbourne. Experts in the field will talk about advances in building design and construction through the lens of existing projects. The format will combine in-person local presentations and live streaming of international (and interstate where necessary) speakers with a mix of live and online delegates. Last year's successful Building Project Panels are back, with 'real life' discussions of multiple timber and mass timber projects across the spectrum of construction.

Session details and registration available in Feb 2021 at www.timberoffsiteconstruction.com

TABMA NATIONAL CONFERENCE

The first TABMA National Conference will be held 16-18 June 2021 in the Hunter Valley, NSW, along with a celebration of TABMA's 80th birthday. Announcement to come at www.tabma.com.au/events/



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HARDWOOD - The Proven Performer



Above: The machinery at the NDWITF can drop up to two tonnes, creating up to 200,000 J of impact energy.

Testing tool

A new state-of-the-art facility will test safety and save lives.

A state-of-the-art impact testing facility was launched at Monash University in December last year. The National Drop Weight Impact Testing Facility (NDWITF) uses world-leading technology that can observe the behaviour of elements and sub-assemblies under severe impact loading of up to two tonnes.

The facility will assess the structural safety of building and construction materials used in both new and existing structures, railway networks, tunnels and bridges, as well as road safety barriers and protective equipment. The NDWITF will also support research in the broader research community on construction, mining, geo-mechanics, energy and the environment. Fields of application and interest include construction materials under high strain loading,

structural dynamics and engineering, mining excavation and rock fragmentation.

Enabled by an Australian Research Council (ARC) LIEF grant, the NDWITF is a Monash University-led collaboration involving six other universities, including the University of New South Wales, Swinburne University of Technology, University of Wollongong, Queensland University of Technology, University of Technology, Sydney and the University of Melbourne. The facility is located at Monash University's Department of Civil Engineering and accessible to all researchers, students and industry.

Associate Professor Amin Heidarpour, Head of Structural Engineering at Monash University, has led this project. He was supported by some of Australia's esteemed experts in this space, including Prof

“The facility will advance understanding of the behaviour of infrastructure exposed to impact loading.”

Xiao-Ling Zhao and Prof Mark Bradford (UNSW), Prof Guoxing Lu (Swinburne), Prof David Thambiratnam and Dr Sabrina Fawzia (QUT), Prof Alex Remennikov (Wollongong), Prof Brian Uy (Sydney), Prof Chengqing Wu (UTS), Prof Tuan Ngo (Melbourne) and Prof Pathegama Ranjith Gamage (Monash).

“A state-of-the-art impact engineering facility provides a national research focus on behaviour of construction materials and systems under impact loading with unique observation techniques,” Assoc Prof Heidarpour says. “The facility will advance understanding of the fundamental behaviour of critical infrastructure exposed to impact loading and will foster innovations in design and construction.

“The size of the surface of the specimen could be up to 1m wide by 2m long, with no limitation on the height, making it suitable to test long-span CLT panels and glulam beams. If the size of the specimen is out of this range, a re-scaling technique will be used. This is the largest drop weight impact testing facility in Australia and the state-of-the-art measurement instruments, such as a non-contact photogrammetry system, associated with it make the facility unique in the world.”

The impact weight of NDWITF can be up to 2000kg, creating an impact energy of up to 200,000 J and impact velocity of up to 18m/s.

A key partner in this project is Austeng, a Geelong-based engineering company who engineered, manufactured, and installed the facility in line with the University's requirements. “Austeng was proud to be part of this important project and collaborate with Monash University and I am delighted our team was able to deliver a practical and workable solution given the stringent performance parameters set by Monash and the significant engineering challenges involved,” says Ross George, Austeng managing director.

PHOTO COURTESY MONASH UNIVERSITY

In brief

Not satisfied with solving environmental problems on Earth, timber may now be about to solve them in space, with the team at Sumitomo Forestry teaming up with Kyoto University to design timber satellites. Built on the small CubeSat model that has become increasingly affordable, popular and adaptable in recent years, the concept relies on the superior strength-to-weight ratios of wood, allowing more payload for the same amount of fuel and thus making space flight more economical. As an additional bonus, the satellite will burn up entirely on orbit re-entry.

The project is led by retired astronaut and engineer Prof Takao Doi, who once threw a boomerang on the ISS. He has been researching wooden materials for use in satellites since 2017 and hopes to see his first 'LignoSats' in space by 2023.

With China following through on its threatened expansion of Australian timber bans and adding NSW and WA to the list, exporters are rushing to find new markets. While some may find local buyers who are over dealing with erratic imports,

others are looking to new markets. Gary Addison of Varied had \$3 million worth of logs set to go to China when the trouble started. He put a hold on the shipment and turned to India instead, where he hopes to lead a drive into a new, growing and potentially very lucrative export market. For the full story, visit www.abc.net.au/news/2021-01-01/wa-nsw-timber-ban-forces-exporter-to-look-to-india/13024360

The ARC Future Timber Hub (FTH) recently commissioned the Australian Institute for Business and Economics (AIBE), to undertake an analysis of the potential economic, environmental and social impacts of four of its current marquee ARC FTH research projects. The ARC FTH focuses on research and other actions that will drive development of commercially viable, safe and sustainable timber-based solutions, with an emphasis on engineered timbers. The report found that even at a very conservative valuation, the net benefit of the projects currently being undertaken was over \$150 million and the actual figure was likely to be considerably higher.

The report found that engineered wood products (EWP) offer “a tremendous

opportunity for Australian industry and society, both from an economic and environmental viewpoint” and that “for commercial and residential buildings up to a height of about 35 metres, EWP have enormous potential to substitute for the current dominance of concrete and steel construction. In addition, EWP can be used more broadly in combination with concrete and steel construction in virtually any commercial or residential designs.” For the full story, visit <https://futuretimberhub.org/news/report-emphasises-importance-research-engineered-timber-built-environment-0> or to read the report, visit https://futuretimberhub.org/system/files/annual-reports/20200820_future_timber_hub_cba_final_report_low_res.pdf

The FTH is also currently running a continuous drying kiln technology trial with the Forest Product Innovation team at Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries to investigate the impact of continuous drying kiln (CDK) technology on various quality parameters of Australian Southern Pine timber. For more information, visit <https://futuretimberhub.org/news/continuous-drying-kiln-cdk-technology-trial-underway>

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MORE FROM WOOD.

EGGER



Clockwise from top left: Diamond Valley Mitre 10, Victoria; Bungendore Rural Services Thrifty-Link, NSW; the tools display at Manjimup True Value Hardware, WA; the timber yard at Tully Mitre 10 Trade Centre, Queensland; Fiona and Mark from McLaren Vale Mitre 10 in South Australia.

An Expo like no other

The Independent Hardware Group is taking its annual networking and awards events online.

When no one knows if they'll be able to travel to the 2021 IHG Expo, IHG's simple answer is to bring the Expo to their members instead. From 22-26 February, IHG Virtual Expo will come into members' stores and connect them with over 200 key suppliers to network, learn, make deals and explore new business opportunities.

Using an interactive and easy-to-navigate online platform that allows visitors to customise their Expo experience, IHG has thrown open the doors to ensure more people working at the store can experience

Expo than was ever possible at a physical event. While official proceedings will run from 10am to 5pm daily, the virtual showcase from suppliers will be available 24 hours, so even the busiest store owners will be able to peruse what's on offer and leave comments and questions for suppliers who can make appointments to talk at a time that suits.

The traditional Executive Business Sessions and keynote speakers will take place on the first day as usual, sharing bold new ideas with the membership that will help drive growth through 2021 and beyond.

On the remaining four days, a mix of education through webinars and learning labs and shopping at the Expo will keep members busy. A virtual showbag will hold all the information from suppliers members are interested in and all platform content will remain on-demand for attendees until March.

The prestigious IHG Awards Ceremony will also be broadcast online during Expo Week to celebrate the best of the Group with State Finalists coming together to compete for the national titles. Read on for the list of nominees in the store categories.

PHOTOS: COURTESY IHG



Clockwise from top left: Sunshine Mitre 10 in Queensland's Gympie, a finalist in the Large Format category; the team from Western Australia's Waroona Home Timber & Hardware; Strathalbyn Mitre 10 in South Australia exemplifies the breadth of offer in the Small Format category; Matt and Heather Hawker from Rochester Mitre 10 in Victoria have driven their store to grow even through Victoria's lockdowns.

CONVENIENCE

This award recognises Thrifty-Link and True Value stores – seriously local hardware stores that are there to meet the needs of their communities.

WA – Manjimup Motors True Value Hardware

This store has proven time and again that they punch well above their weight with great customer service, ranging and standards that make this a destination store for many in the community. Maree and Jeff Hurley have overseen steady growth through 2020, and credit their great staff for making that possible.

VIC & TAS – Trafalgar True Value Hardware

Gary and Sarah Jenkins work hard to keep the immaculate store relevant to the needs of their community. They've recently added a Garden and Green Life section to meet local need and also a Support Local section as part of a wider local initiative.

SA & NT – Port Broughton Thrifty-Link Hardware

A true family business that has been owned and managed by multiple generations and won many national awards over the years. Mark, Kay and Kate Bellman continue to uphold those standards and remain tied to their community through the CFS as well as the store. Mark credits his staff and the warehousing team at IHG for

An exemplary garden centre layout and tremendous offer of plants and products is supported by highly sustainable practices.

helping them to get through a very odd year.

QLD – Woodgate Beach Hardware

Thrifty-Link A small store, but one with a great offer for their local community and extremely high standards of stock and display. Denis and Diane Ham and their tight-knit team bring hardware expertise to their local area.

NSW & ACT – Bungendore Rural Services Thrifty-Link

Greg Simms, Matt Rombouts and the team at this store have been working hard to lift standards throughout the business, focusing on expanding the product range in the retail and trade spaces. During the devastating Black Summer fires, the team were key supports for their local community.

GARDEN CENTRE

This award celebrates garden centres across all the IHG brands, ranging from small

specialist centres to sprawling nurseries. Each has its own way of meeting the needs of local customers.

WA – Tuckey's Mitre 10, Pinjarra The competition was exceptionally close this year, but this store's dedicated customer base and highly committed staff gained it the win. An exemplary garden centre layout and tremendous offer of plants and products merchandised to the highest standard is supported by highly sustainable practices including recirculated water. Peta and John Tuckey credit the "dedicated ladies who run the garden centre" for their state win.

VIC & TAS – Diamond Valley Mitre 10 A five paint-brush store with the garden centre beautifully presented and service that's second-to-none. The team are constantly reviewing ranges and use social media extremely well to engage with their local community and promote their business. >>>



Above: Bindoon Mitre 10 is another of the finalists in the Mitre 10 Small Format category. A thriving local store with immaculate presentation, the team are also keen contributors to the wider IHG network, happy to pass on their knowledge and experience.

SA & NT– McLaren Vale Mitre 10 The standard across all of the state finalists set the benchmark not just in SA, but nationally. To come out on top, this store focused on presentation and overall shopping experience. During Covid, the store managed to maintain healthy stock levels and quick service even when plants were in high demand. Anthony Butz, the garden centre manager, is both happily obsessed and expert when it comes to plants.

QLD – Emerald Mitre 10 Eye-catching displays and innovation in promoting sales have made this store into a destination garden centre. Strong community involvement has cemented its role as a key part of local life.

NSW – Gubbins Pulbrook Mitre 10 Moss Vale In a huge year for garden sales, this store's extensive power garden tool offer and Green Life range, along with their very helpful staff has helped it stand above a very competitive state field. The garden centre is a key part of the Moss Vale store and brings people in to shop from all over the Southern Highlands.

Every decision in this store is about putting the customer first, making sure they leave with everything they need to complete their project.

MITRE 10 SMALL FORMAT

These small stores, up to 1000m², are rich in expertise, service and community spirit. Their focused ranges make the stores easy to navigate for people in a rush, while still meeting customer needs.

WA – Bindoon Mitre 10 This store's level of presentation is second to none, and they couple that with an exceptional loyalty to the brand, as active contributors to village, regional and national meetings. Owner Brad Smith has invested significantly into his store, attracting new customers who had previously been shopping out of town. He credits his staff with the store's success.

VIC & TAS – Rochester Mitre 10 Matt and Heather Hawker have concentrated on

doing the basics well and providing what their customers need this year. As a result, even under Victoria's Covid restrictions, they've grown their customer base. As well as having a team that "work their butts off", the store has helped to trial new Mitre 10 systems and finesse their roll-out.

SA & NT– Strathalbyn Mitre 10 This store has maintained high standards year on year, reinvesting in improving the shopping experience for their customers as well as giving new ranges and categories a go. The small team, managed by Shane and David and under the leadership of Brad Fuss, has managed a big upswing in trade over the last year with aplomb.

QLD – Bundall Mitre 10 In a heavily competitive market, and just two years since they made the Sapphire transformation, every decision in this store is about putting the customer first, making sure they walk out of the store with everything they need to complete their project.

NSW – Sunlite Mitre 10, York St A consistent five paint-brush standard and thriving rewards program are two keys to this store's retail success. They fit a lot into a small space and maximise sales of fast-selling lines, achieving very high stock turns with low stock weight. Meeting the needs of Central Sydney customers are a vibrant, expert team and extremely clever use of space that is a pleasure to shop.



Above: Kies Home Timber & Hardware is a major regional shopping destination, keeping local tradies and retail customers alike supplied with all their hardware needs.



Above: Narooma Building Supplies never rests on its laurels, with the staff and management being keen innovators and big consumers of IHG e-learning modules. They protected their vulnerable staff through Covid with stringent lockdowns, yet still met all their customer needs.

HOME TIMBER & HARDWARE

Excellent standards, service and community engagement make these stores central to their local markets. With a trade focus, but not forgetting the retail market who like to shop where the experts shop, Home stores are built on meeting all their customer needs quickly and at great prices.

WA – Waroona Home Timber & Hardware Mark and Barbara Hiller work hard to make sure every department is merchandised and ranged to the highest possible standard. All the store's departments are constantly under review to find what improvements can be made, and the staff are integral to that success.

VIC & TAS – Beaconsfield Home Timber & Hardware Set on four acres, Rohan Treasure and his team are keen participants in IHG initiatives and have worked hard to receive a five-paintbrush rating this year. It's their 11th year as a Home store and 36th year in business and despite it being one of the oddest, they've kept their store shining.

SA & NT– Kies Home Timber & Hardware This truly local, independent business has an offer that keeps customers from driving out of town to buy their hardware, bringing personalised service to each and every customer. Andrew and Nigel Kies come from a pub-owning family that moved into hardware – not the easiest change! A new trade shed and expanded retail offer have kept the store competitive in the region.

QLD – Home Timber & Hardware Biloela In a tightly contested state, this store demonstrated pure commitment, with continual reinvestment in the business. The store has also been actively involved in the broader IHG goals and activities.

NSW – Narooma Building Supplies



Above: The Margaret River Mitre 10 team, finalists in the Mitre 10 Large Format category.

Best practice is second nature among the staff here and has resulted in double-digit growth, even with a big-box competitor on their doorstep.

Kevin and Judy Cowley run a consistent five paint-brush store and their 12-person team has shown a commitment to knowledge and growth in completing over 373 e-learning courses between them. The team was there for the community when Narooma became an evacuation centre during last summer's fires and donated generators and tools where they were needed. With an eye to protecting their much-loved staff, many of whom are vulnerable to Covid, the store has operated successfully from a self-imposed Stage 4 lockdown during the pandemic and yet still showed similar growth in sales to other stores.

MITRE 10 MEDIUM FORMAT These stores are in the Goldilocks zone, between 1000m² and 2000m² – big enough

to cover almost every need, but small enough to get in and out quickly. They meet the daily needs of DIYers and tradies alike.

WA – Streeter & Male Mitre 10 Merchandised and ranged to within an inch of each department's life, standards and best practice are second nature among the staff here and have resulted in double-digit growth in an environment driven mostly by tourism, with a big-box competitor on their doorstep. The store recently went off-grid with a state of the art solar system. Store manager Jody Cole says his staff are the reason customers keep coming back.

VIC & TAS – Pontings Mitre 10 A long-established business, they've continued to reinvest and find new and innovative ways to deliver to their community. Clever social media campaigns, Mighty Reward drives



Above: Hume & Iser has been keeping Bendigo building for 140 years and is still going strong!

From tradie breakfasts to special deals, this store is all about relationships with its customers and has seen sales steadily growing.



Above: Home Timber & Hardware Biloea represents pure commitment to the business.

and colouring competitions for the kids have helped to increase community impact and a loyal, expert staff have kept the business thriving and customers happy.

SA & NT – Wills & Co Waikerie Mitre 10 Mike, Sharee and Josh Wills continue to create new experiences for customers, growing and innovating even through the difficulties of 2020. The store has a strong advertising strategy, based on social media and local print. A dedicated staff keep customers feeling comfortable and familiarised with the store and new ranges.

QLD – Parkside Mitre 10 Diane Tapiolas has heavily invested in their own business to make sure the stock and displays draw in customers and make it easy for them to find what they need. Add a focus on exceptional customer service and it's a winning mix.

NSW – Kincumber Mitre 10 Peter Steele

and Steve McCumstie and their team are highly engaged with their local community, delivering a wide offer to a high standard. They're also leaders within the IHG network, with regular visits from other members seeking to learn about marketing and displays.

TRADE CENTRE

Open to all Mitre 10 and Home Timber & Hardware trade outlets, the stores nominated in this category represent the benchmark in trade and are driving the IHG group's trade-focused strategy.

WA – Versatile Mitre 10 The trade drive-thru offers all trade customers the convenience of being able to park and load the majority of their needs easily. There is a dedicated trade desk convenient to the drive-thru, as well as a retail trade offer that is very well maintained and easily

accessible. Owner Dom Stillitano is a dedicated member of the network and has driven the store through the Sapphire transformation as well as being the first WA store to implement Truck Tracker.

VIC & TAS – Hume & Iser Mitre 10

Stephen Iser and his store team recently completed a huge upgrade to focus on the trade needs of the Bendigo region. The store has been operating for 140 years and the staff are firmly local, which helped them to adapt quickly to the travails of Covid. At the same time, they're also innovators, trialling new systems and sharing what they learned along the way.

SA & NT – Barossa Mitre 10 Whether organising tradie breakfasts or offering up trade deals to drive more business, this store is all about relationships with its customers. They've seen their trade sales steadily growing since their Sapphire rebuild, with their trade team also growing. Tweaks to stock and layout that better serve their customers' needs and a team of committed individuals, from the floor staff to management and especially the trade team, have made all the difference.

QLD – Tully Mitre 10 Trade Centre This store has a fully functioning drive-thru with undercover timber and building supplies, making it an easy get in, get out, get on with it offer to the customer, backed up by an experienced and expert team since 1958.

NSW – Johnson Bros Mitre 10 The Johnson family were early adopters of IHG trade strategies and this store continues to maintain solid trade growth even with recent softening in the Sydney trade market. The trade centre was opened as part of the store's Sapphire transformation and provides a straight drive-thru with undercover timber, coffee station and dedicated trade desk, helping customers to get in and out quickly. Deliveries are managed by Truck Tracker, making sure the customers always know where their order is.

MITRE 10 LARGE FORMAT

The ones that exemplify the brand's Best Store In Town promise, these stores have everything the customer might need, no matter who they are. Staff need to possess broad knowledge along with specialist skills to make sure everyone leaves with what they need to get the job done.

WA – Margaret River Mitre 10 Another very tightly contested state competition was won by a store that is firmly entrenched in its community. Anne and Lloyd Shepherdson and their team have withstood downward pressure within the wider local market to keep their trade and retail customers engaged. A mix of intelligent marketing and attractive rewards programs have kept customers coming in, and the high-quality of

service and expertise from the staff has kept those customers happy.

VIC & TAS – TM&H Mitre 10, Moe Jeff, Lynn, Laura and James Hitchins guided the store through its Sapphire transformation just 12 months ago and it's already delivering incredible results. They are core members of the local community, with active fundraising and support programs, as well as fast responses to keep builders and families going through recent lockdowns.

SA & NT – McLaren Vale Mitre 10 This store has been continually seeking out opportunities for improvements large or small to stay wholly relevant for their customers. Mark and Fiona Loveday have been at the reins of the store for four years and, with their expert team, are focused on continual improvement of the displays, ranges and more.

QLD – Sunshine Mitre 10, Gympie This store has continued to grow in a tough and competitive market. It prides itself in its customer service, reflected in its month-on-month high scores in the Mystery Shopper program and have great customer service training for the team, including e-learning.

NSW – Johnson Bros Mitre 10 During 2020's unprecedented customer traffic, the store standards never wavered and remained impeccable. The Johnson family started the store in 1955 and it is an institution in



Above: Johnson Bros Mitre 10 is a finalist in both Trade Centre and Mitre 10 Large Format categories.

Sydney's Northern beaches. The 4000m² store recently added a new garden centre and cutting edge kitchen and bathroom showroom as part of their Sapphire transformation, truly a one-stop shop.

VILLAGE

IHG's member villages have been more important than ever this year, offering support as well as sharing the load of trialling innovations and new products. In one of the most difficult years in retail

history when so many went above and beyond, it was hard to choose winners, but these regions stood out.

WA – Western Warriors

SA & NT – Central Diggers

QLD – Bush 2 Border

NSW & ACT – Northern Independents

VIC & TAS – Melbourne Traders & VIC Pioneers

Stay tuned for the National Winners in an upcoming edition of *TTN!* **T**



Versatile was the first WA store to implement Truck Tracker under the leadership of Dom Stillitano.

Above: Versatile Mitre 10 Trade Centre has a capacious drive-in, drive-out undercover offer with dedicated Trade Desk nearby.

Strong and lovely

Windows and doors are more than just openings: they're the faces and the security of our homes. And now there are more sophisticated options for them than ever before.

There's a cliché that residential building is conservative and slow to change. Nothing disproves that as much as windows and doors, which even in the most traditional of buildings bring an incredible range of options and tech for builder, fabricator and owner.

At the most basic level, homeowners and developers want windows and doors with street appeal. Layered on top of that come concerns with safety, fire resistance, noise proofing, durability and potential for integration with Smart home systems.

All of these are opportunities for fabricators, retailers, joiners and builders to take advantage of what the manufacturers are bringing into this sector to help grow their businesses. Over the following pages we talk with leading manufacturers about what's new in technology, manufacturing and tooling. Whether your customers are retailers, builders or homeowners, you'll find something to add to your offer – and profits.

SOPHISTICATED MODELS

Windows have been making enormous strides in technology for decades now, first with soundproofing and, more recently, with high-strength fire-resistant glass for BAL-rated areas. What's less well known are the advances being made with doors.

Solid or cavity choices have been joined with a range of composite options that take advantage of new materials to provide

previously unachievable security at lower weight and cost points.

As an example, Hume Doors & Timber have added to their range of architectural and BAL-rated doors and frames with the Bandit door. This model takes the traditional high-impact metal security screen and effectively puts it 'inside' an attractive external door.

Its genesis didn't come from standard R&D, as Ian Sengstock, marketing manager at Hume, says: "We met a fellow at an expo and he had this particular type of material that he'd been developing and was looking for opportunities for it. It's a kevlar-like material that's refined with fibreglass and more. He started to talk to us about the possibilities of using it in timber doors and we were really interested, so we started doing some research and prototyping, and here we are."

The Bandit door comes with a wide range of door face options for the exterior and interior sides but, in between, layers of safety materials work together to provide a door that is extremely strong without being overly heavy or expensive (see page 24 for a diagram showing the layers).

The timber frame that goes around it has also been reinforced using similar material and metal. "A lot of technology from our steel-door framing section is incorporated into the timber, making a hybrid sort of frame," Sengstock says. "The weak access points where doors tend to fail –

whether they be the lock or the hinges – are also reinforced."

Coming in at multiple price points dependent on finishing, the Bandit door is just as at home in social housing as in holiday homes and domestic residences. And while it's no more difficult to install than a standard door, it significantly outperforms them. "From our testing, we've advertised that it's 16 times stronger than a normal door," says Sengstock. "In fact, the figures we're getting are significantly higher than that, but we want to do more sampling and testing to make sure we have the fully accurate numbers and that they're consistent in real-life applications."

"We haven't had these doors tested for fire or noise ratings yet, but the raw sheeting that goes into them has been tested. When we test the whole package through the CSIRO, we're confident it will perform well."

"If we hadn't struck up that conversation, this design would never have happened!"

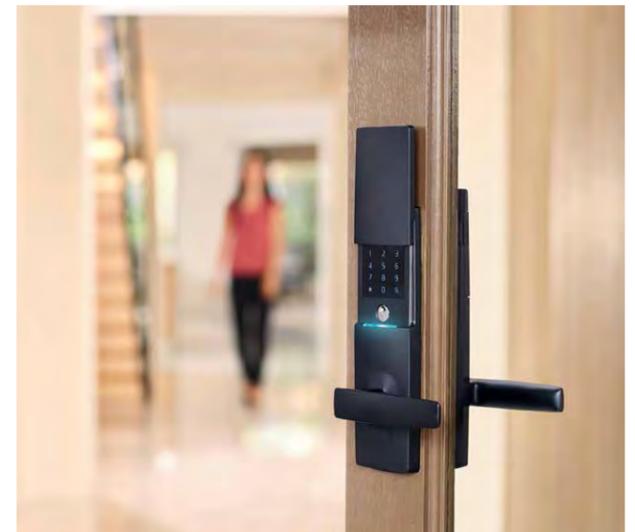
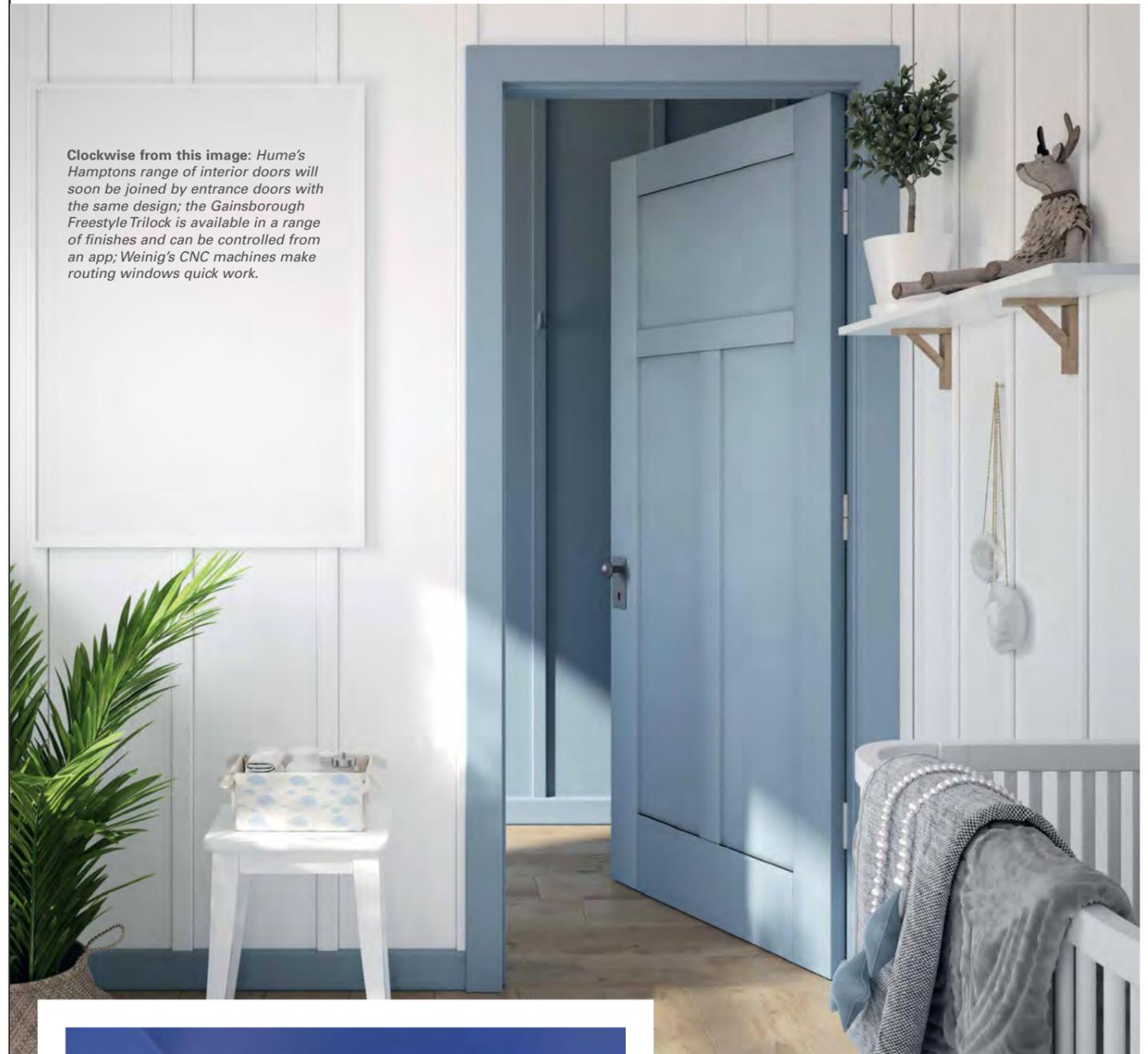
STYLE AND SUBSTANCE

Internal doors have also had an upgrade. Hume's Evolution Complete system, a cavity unit that comes in both timber and steel frames to suit the house structure, is one of the company's most popular lines.

"The Evolution has been around for a while, but we saw there were ways we could improve it," says Sengstock. "We've increased the strength, we've changed the materials so you can tile up against it in wet areas and we've improved the running system, so it's nice and quiet. There's also a quick release system to get the door off – hopefully you'll never need to use that, but you never know."

Like most cavity systems, the Evolution fits neatly within a standard wall. It comes >>

Clockwise from this image: Hume's Hamptons range of interior doors will soon be joined by entrance doors with the same design; the Gainsborough Freestyle Trilock is available in a range of finishes and can be controlled from an app; Weing's CNC machines make routing windows quick work.



PHOTOS CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: COURTESY HUME DOORS & TIMBER; COURTESY ALLEGION AUSTRALIA; COURTESY WEING

The Bandit door takes the traditional high-impact metal security screen and effectively puts it 'inside' an attractive external door.



Above: Sikken's Cetol HLSe and Cetol Filter 7 Plus were used for the timbers at this Bringelly, NSW property.

It comes with installation instructions so straightforward that the same model is sold successfully in the retail market for DIY builders.



Above: Allegion's Brio 312 screen lifts and lowers at the touch of a button – perfect for servery windows.

with comprehensive installation instructions – so straightforward that the same model is sold successfully in the retail market for DIY builders – and can fit a wide range of door frame sizes, which makes it perfect for closing off semi-open-plan areas, helping to meet Green Star requirements when it comes to heating and cooling.

“It’s got a one-touch release system where it sits and holds itself inside the pocket when it’s fully open,” Sengstock says. “A quick press and out she pops. Pull it along a little bit and then the soft-closer takes over and grabs the door, closing it for you without slamming. Particularly in new homes, architects are using cavity pockets more and more, because they mean you get to use all your room, not leave a big space for a door to swing.”

Appearance remains a key selling point for doors. Hume stocks timber faces ranging from Australian hardwoods to popular tropicals. The frames, cavities and internal panels are usually engineered wood products (EWP), with LVL common in framing and moisture-resistant MDF internally. As Sengstock says, “The reason for choosing EWP in so many applications is the stability of the product. It lets us back all our product with a five-year warranty with confidence.

In addition to the new technologies, new style ranges are scheduled at Hume. >>

PHOTOS: COURTESY SIKKENS/TENARU; COURTESY ALLGION/BRIO



HUME DOORS & TIMBER

BANDIT DOOR SECURITY AT HOME

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Above: The layers that create the high-strength Bandit door available from Hume.

"We've got an exciting entrance range we're just about to release for the Hamptons genre of homes that are all the rage at the moment," says Sengstock. "You'll see a really lovely change in street fronts as these come through."

SMART OPTIONS

Clever materials choices are increasingly being joined by Smart technology in windows and doors, whether for security or comfort. Not just convenient, these remote- or app-controlled devices mean you don't

have to worry about kids losing keys and cut out a lot of awkward reaching for insect screens and shade blinds.

"We're working hard to get the word out on these products," says Craig Patterson, marketing manager at Allegion (Australia), "because people can be a bit intimidated. They think they're hard-wired or complicated or expensive and that's actually not the case at all, they're pretty easy to install and a great upsell to many of the customers for your average fabricator or builder."

The Gainsborough Trilock is one of Allegion's best-known products. Found in houses all over Australia, it has three modes: Passage with both sides unlocked; Privacy with it locked from the outside only and turn-handle exit from inside; and Deadlocked, which is locked with a key and entirely secure when you leave the property. "Last September we launched an electronic version, the Freestyle Trilock," Patterson says. "If you can install a Trilock – which most builders and many homeowners can – then it's just as easy to install this." >>



Above: The Evolution Complete soft closing system from Hume, makes opening and closing doors a breeze – especially for older users and children.

PHOTO & DIAGRAM: COURTESY HUME DOORS & TIMBER

Created by Nature · Fashioned by Craftsmen · Finished by Sikkens



Sikkens exceptional translucent colours and finish bring out the natural beauty of the timber. High performance to meet the most demanding environments.





Above: Clever engineering has made Smart systems and most of the sophisticated new window and door systems as easy as traditional models to install.

For fabricators and builders installing these types of windows, it's a very easy addition that really pays off in what the house can do.

The Freestyle Trilock can be retrofitted into existing doors and is all battery-operated, with an emergency key and back-up battery option. It has an optional Wi-Fi bridge that lets you operate and monitor the lock remotely from a phone app, and a door sensor kit that can tell you when your door is closed or open.

"The app is super user-friendly," says Patterson. "You can set schedules or give out limited codes. If you've got a cleaner that comes only on Tuesday afternoons, you can set a code for 1-4pm. We have one on our house, which is for sale, so we gave a limited access code to the real estate agent so they could show people through without us being here, keeping it Covid-safe.

"It gets rid of all the complexity around having copies of keys and keeping track of the copies and worrying about them going missing. And you can control it all from your phone in real time."

While most Freestyle Trilocks are being bought by the fabricator and builder market as a value-add on new homes, the same model is sold in Mitre 10, Natbuild and

Bunnings stores, highlighting the simplicity of installation and set-up.

Allegion also distribute Schlage electronic locks, an American brand that's designed for the DIY market and also uses battery power, so can be easily retrofitted.

"They're great products," Patterson says, "very well-designed keypad systems that are now also Smart. There's the Schlage Encode, which was one of the first locks with built-in Wi-Fi so that you can connect it to your Smart systems. It works with Google Assistant and Amazon Alexa, so you don't even need to get your phone, you can be in bed and say 'Alexa, lock the door'. Again, you can send entry codes to the real estate agent or cleaner, and it tracks when someone uses or attempts the door. If someone tries to tamper with the lock, it sends an alert to your phone."

The Schlage models include a range of matching modern hardware options and allow you to send guest codes by text to your visitors, making them perfect for holiday properties and Airbnbs.

EASY SCREENS

Smart options go beyond the front door. Large windows have become a popular part of modern homes, especially servery windows leading from kitchens directly to outdoor dining areas. Enter the Brio 312, an electronic insect screen/shade screen.

"Before, the options for those sorts of windows were all mechanical," says Patterson, "so you'd have to lean over the bench to pull it down. The Brio has a battery-powered motor that recharges via USB and uses a remote or an app to pull it down or up as needed. It's a great little device.

"For fabricators and builders working on these types of houses and windows, it's an easy addition that really pays off in what the house can do and people's enjoyment of living there. It's a good return for the small amount of work involved, without being a big extra cost for the homeowner."

Again, the installation process for the electronic product is just as easy as for the mechanical. Brio is best known for sliding and folding door hardware – French doors and conservatory windows, for example – and so a range of window systems are available that will work seamlessly with the 312.

The Brio and Gainsborough products were both developed in Australia and were made specifically for Australian standards and conditions, while the Schlage has been extensively tested under local conditions both in Australia and NZ. »

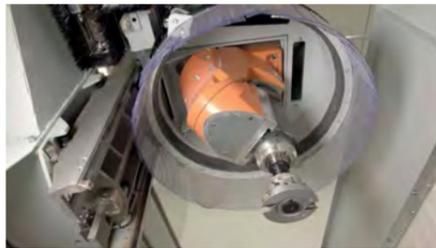
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Brio®

Brio 312 Automated Pleated Insect Screen

- Fully integrates with Brio's Weatherfold 4s Window and Servery systems.
- Retractable screening which fits in a 138mm jamb.
- Capable of screening openings to 2600mm wide and 1800mm high.
- Remote controlled operation by a single touch of a button. No hard wiring required, all battery operated. Chain free screen for quieter and safer operation.



Above: Weinig's HOLZ-HER Pro-Master 5 Axis CNC series is a one-stop joinery saw and routing machine.

CONSTRUCTION OPPORTUNITIES

At the same time as the user technologies have been improving, manufacturing machinery has reached new levels of ability in its automation. Complex CNC machines make it economical to do small bespoke runs or high-capacity production in the same plant, depending on what's required.

Weinig is one of the leading machinery brands in Australia in this space, with an offer that can supply machinery for every process required in window and door manufacture. The brand offers two sector-leading CNC ranges, the Conturex series and the HOLZ-HER Pro-Master series. Both are able to handle complex milling and joints

in extremely short processing times, with accurate clamping and a single data set controlling all production components helping to deliver exceptional precision, time after time. Complex, triple-glazed or fire-rated designs are handled with the same ease, reducing labour costs and removing the laborious and time-consuming set-ups required for a more manual joinery line.

While there is an obvious set-up cost, automation delivers equally obvious advantages, particularly at a time when we are losing a lot of industry expertise and labour costs remain high.

For specialist joiners and businesses with a joinery sideline, the 5-axis Pro-Master series delivers a large-capacity machine with a comparatively small footprint. The models have a class-leading working depth and height, making them suitable for decorative elements as well as basic cabinets and a full range of window and door components with the appropriate clamping systems installed, expanding what you can bring to your market at an attractive price point.

The Pro-Master combines precision milling with extreme acceleration and high-speed feeds of the head, plus accurate drilling and a pressure-booster for very hard surfaces, all covered by a 10-year warranty. A comprehensive basic tool magazine with short changeover times delivers a huge series of options, with the tooling sequence automatically optimised by the machine's software. Depending on requirements, additional tool holders can be added.

The software that runs the machinery is highly advanced, but doesn't require expert levels of training for users. A comprehensive library of elements and integrated drag-and-drop design facility works on user-friendly design principles to help operators input new projects and delivers matching CNC programs, plus optimal positioning recommendations for materials and the machine's suction cups.

A milling visualisation of the CNC program comes as a standard part of the software and can be upgraded to incorporate other aspects of the machining process, allowing designers and plant managers to preview the manufacturing process from the office.

A raft of safety and ergonomic features are installed to benefit the users, ensuring lower injury rates and therefore lower insurance costs. When added to the increased output, increased accuracy and removal of retouching time and costs, it's easy to achieve a fast return on investment.

Weinig's machinery portfolio is designed to work harmoniously across the ranges, with a broad set of accessories depending on your needs. The specialists on staff include experienced joiners who can help develop system solutions.

PHOTOS: COURTESY WEINIG; (FACING PAGE) BMPHOTOGRAPHER/SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

KEEPING UP APPEARANCES

"The main goal for timber is always to make it look as good as possible and to protect it for as long as possible," says Stuart McLean national specifications manager for Tenaru Timber & Finishes, the national distributor of coatings brands including Sikkens.

"Aesthetics and protection are the two key factors. Then there's respecting the timber, trying not to change its appearance too much. We want to let the timber do all the talking, rather than the product."

Concerns about maintenance have historically been a motivating factor for homeowners choosing non-timber window options – a false economy as even quality metal windows are out-performed by the vast majority of timber options when it comes to thermal and noise concerns. Choosing high-end coatings that are specifically suited to the project will give the best and longest-lasting result.

"I would always recommend people talk to us to get exactly the right information," McLean says. "We work with both the resellers in stores and the retailers that stock our product as well and we do a lot of educating to make sure they have all the right information to pass onto the builder or the homeowner. But we're also here for the



Above: Feature doors require long-lasting finishes to keep them looking good for years.

designer or builder to talk to directly so we can be as specific as possible about what our products and systems can and can't do."

Even quality metal windows are out-performed by the vast majority of timber options when it comes to thermal and noise concerns.

The product ranges on offer include oil- and water-based options, suited to the wide range of joinery choices on the market.

McLean says, "For joinery in timber doors and windows, a lot of the time the timber

something like a deck where it needs to be super hard as it's getting walked on all the time. But both need that maximum protection for facing fully exposed areas."

A recent project in Bringelly, a Sydney suburb (see page 22), showed how both needs can be met with complementary products. Two coats of Sikkens Cetol Filter 7

Plus (in Pine) were used on the (many) exterior windows and doors that sit in direct sunlight. An oil-based medium-build top coat with a satin finish, it lets the natural timber grain shine through, while filtering out the sun with UV light absorbers.

Underneath, a base coat of Cetol HLSe – a low-viscosity, low-build stain – allowed maximum penetration of the timber and optimum key for the top coat. It comes in a matching colour range with the Filter 7 Plus and can be used on its own as a three-coat system, as it was here around the pool and decking. Low-build finishes help to prevent peeling and uneven weathering on hard-wearing surfaces and are easy to re-coat.

For the reconditioned cedar windows, doors and uprights that receive a large amount of sunlight, the Filter 7 Plus was brush-applied to give a high-end finish that will last the test of time.

"That job highlights the trend to natural and clear finishes that let the timber shine rather than changing its appearance and >>





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Above: A Port Douglas door that had been left to weather (left) then revived with Sikkens BLX-Pro.

with painters, I started using it myself and it has impressed me. The price is on a par with the current options now, and you save considerably on labour.”

Testing done through Sikken’s R&D department has shown that BLX-Pro is one of the longest-lasting water-based finishes on the market, with excellent protection.

While still quite new, it has real traction in the market and McLean has seen some of his regular customers switch over to it from the oil-based options in the Cetol range for various reasons. One such customer is a painter who regularly works up in Port Douglas, Tropical North Queensland.

“He was working on a residence where the doors and balustrades had been left to weather and were a bit damaged and looking the worse for wear, but stripped them back, used the BLX-Pro, and he’s managed to bring them back beautifully,” says McLean.

“Because it’s so humid up there, and the weather can change from sunny one moment to very wet the next, quick drying was a factor. The BLX-Pro has a two-hour recoat, so he could get the job done in a day. With the old oil-based systems it’s 24-hours per coat, and you need three coats.

“For him it meant he could get in and out and get the job done while still achieving a premium finish with maximum protection. It was the first time he’d used our water-based and he was so impressed he sent me snaps from his phone. He also works on the resorts in the region and will be using the BLX-Pro there as well, as it suits both domestic and high-traffic areas.”

McLean emphasises that it’s up to the industry to reinforce the suitability and quality of timber windows and doors at all stages of the process. “It’s not enough to just have the fabricators and builders understanding,” he says. “It need to be earlier than that, so the design professionals are able to talk homeowners through the options available to them and advocate for timber. In my own role, I’ve had to realise that my customers, the painters, already know about Sikkens’ systems, but they’re having products specified by designers and architects. So we’ve moved our focus and built relationships there, so when a project goes down the channel, the decision is already there to use the Sikkens product.

“We realised we needed to be a part of that discussion early on and show the designers what our system does. No one system suits every project, but there are areas where we just shine. The timber industry needs to be doing the same.” **T** For more details, visit www.allegion.com.au, www.humedoors.com.au, www.sikkens.com.au and www.weinig.com.au

“Our new BLX-Pro water-based system is just as long-lasting as our oil-based system, if not longer in the exterior tests we’ve done.”

colour,” says McLean. Though he adds that the Sikkens product is not 100% clear.

“There’s still a subtle pigment. We’re big believers that pigment is the first line of defence against the sun in Australian conditions, with the amount of UV we get. Anything on the market at the moment that is absolutely clear requires a lot more

maintenance as it doesn’t have that durability. If we were to bring something fully clear to the market it would have to be well-tested in Australian conditions.”

WATER-BASED QUALITY

Sikkens has traditionally been known for its oil-based ranges, but the brand has recently moved into a high-end water-based range at very competitive pricing.

“We were one of the last to come on board with the water-based product,” McLean says, “because we had to make sure it was right.

“The expectation is that the oil-based system will last longer, but with our new BLX-Pro water-based system, it’s just as long-lasting if not longer in the exterior tests we’ve done on windows, decking and doors. It’s a one-stop shop product and has excellent durability, especially for coastal areas and pool surrounds. In salt-water areas, it’s highly recommended.”

McLean admits he wasn’t an immediate convert: “I was never really a water-based fan,” he says, “but while I was trialling it



Above: Sikkens’ Cetol range delivers a long-lasting finish even under tough conditions.



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PHOTOS: COURTESY SIKKENS



PEOPLE BUSINESS

with Peter Maguire



The four R's

Relating, reflecting, recalibrating and reconditioning will help your business reshape effectively after the stresses and changes of 2020.

Coming into the New Year of 2021, it is apparent that the effects of the pandemic will be with us for a while yet. There will continue to be localised flare-ups and restrictions from time to time, but we have largely emerged from lockdown and business activity has bounced back in most sectors.

That means that it is time to have a think about what the Covid-19 situation has meant for our own business and people and what that means for our people strategies going forward.

In doing that, it is important not to take a 'one size fits all approach' because there are so many differences in the needs of our people, their respective experiences during the pandemic and their preferred way of working.

Some had to work from home, some had to go to work and some had no work at all. Some had to home school, some suffered from social disconnection and loneliness and many had challenges with maintaining physical fitness and/or mental health.

For some, having tasted it, working from home will have its attractions and for others, the opposite will be true and the social environment of the office will be the clear preference. Many will want a bit of both, and this hybrid model of working is one that will become very common in the years ahead.

Some will decide that they want to do something different altogether from what they have done professionally for many years while some will be happy just to be back doing what they know and are comfortable with.

So how do you work all of that out and come up with a reasonable approach for your business and your people? We suggest the following four steps.



PHOTO: JKSTOCK/SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

It is important not to take a 'one size fits all approach' because there are so many differences in the needs of our people and their preferences.

RELATING

Talk to your people and ask them where they are at.

What has their personal experience of the last year with work and life been? What do they each (individually) want their personal future work situation to look like – the job that they will do and when, where and how they will do it?

By all means, talk about what might be possible in the context of business needs but don't make promises that you can't keep and don't discard ideas without really giving

them proper consideration. This is just really about having a genuine and respectful and open conversation.

REFLECTING

Take some time to have a think about what each of your people has said about their experiences and their preferences for now and the future.

There could be genuine opportunities that could present in honestly thinking about different ways of doing things and providing flexible or remote working opportunities.

Are there things that have worked OK or perhaps even better during lockdown?

Perhaps some of your employees have demonstrated some particular qualities, talents or vulnerabilities that you should take into account.

How can you structure things in ways that are going to work better for the business and your people?

RECALIBRATING

The recalibration is about resetting the work experience for people based on what has been learned from the pandemic situation in the context of the needs of your business and your people.

The first part of that recalibration is getting your Covid-safe workplace plan in place and ensuring that everyone understands it, is equipped to play their part and does so.

The second is about how you take advantage of any positives that have come out of the pandemic. For example, many businesses made new uses of technology from which they have reaped benefits during lockdown. What opportunities does this present for the future?

Many businesses are reporting higher levels of employee satisfaction with the support they received from their managers – probably because the need for timely communication became a priority and more communication activity occurred as a result. Put simply, more conversations occurred.

How can you maintain a culture of continuous conversations and coaching that will engender greater employee wellbeing, engagement and higher performance?

RECONDITIONING

As with any process of change, people take time to adapt.

Many people who have been without work or working from home for months on end will take time to adjust back to the

routine of coming to work. People need reconditioning – physically, socially, with their use of time and with personal and family commitments. As noted above, some will want to make adjustments to their working arrangements to get better balance in their lives.

There are also those who are still concerned about the Covid threat and who therefore may be reluctant to return to the normal workplace. Education on how you will keep people safe at work (ie your Covid-safe workplace plan) will help this situation. Finally, we know that there is always the possibility of Covid infections and contact tracing impacting on your locality, members of your staff or, in more serious cases, your business operations. This is all a part of the new normal in life for us now for the foreseeable future.

So just remember that is the case and maintain that line with your people – it is just another one of those temporary inconveniences that everyone has to bear in the new normal. **T**

There are also those who are still concerned about the Covid threat and who therefore may be reluctant to return to the normal workplace.

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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IN THE FRAME

By Craig Kay, national product engineer, Tilling



Treatment standards

Updates to the AS/NZS 1604 series will help with specifying to preservative treatment standards.



The 'In the Frame' article of the April 2020 edition of *TTN* was centred on the use of preservative-treated EWP in the external environment. The intent of the article was to reinforce to building professionals and consumers the fact that, provided the preservative-treated EWP was correctly detailed, it would provide the durability expected for timber in that application.

Unfortunately, despite articles like this and other tangible evidence such as written warranties produced by manufacturers against decay for preservative-treated EWP, the SmartFrame Design Centre is now seeing a so-far small but influential number of Building Surveyors making policy decisions not to accept H3-treated LVL in any external application. This issue will need to be addressed by the industry in early 2021 to prevent misinformation spreading. Happily, updates to AS 1604 should provide some additional clarity.

The AS/NZS 1604 series of standards dealing with timber preservation has now become even more relevant within modern

timber framing. We now have an almost ubiquitous use of softwood framing and EWP, most of which (there are exceptions) are subject to insect (termites and others) attack, and biological decay if exposed to moisture.

All Australian standards are subject to review at set intervals to ensure that they reflect contemporary industry practice but, unlike many standards that require little change between those review periods, this one is virtually in a constant state of review due to rapidly developing timber preservative technology.

As outlined in earlier 'In the Frame' articles about AS 1684, an Australian Standard does not command any regulatory authority on its own and it is only when that standard is

referenced by legislation, regulations that accompany legislation, a legally enforceable contract or similar that it gains legal authority. Unlike well-known standards like AS 1684 which are Primary Reference Documents within Schedule 4 of the NCC, the AS/NZS 1604 series is deemed a Secondary Reference Document because it is referenced by AS 3660 Termite Management standards. Thus, a search of the NCC will not see any listing of AS/NZS 1604.

Currently AS/NZS 1604 Specification for preservation treatment standard exists as five parts:

- Part 1 – Sawn and round timber (Note, part 1 is an AS standard only, not a joint AS/NZS)
- Part 2 – Reconstituted wood-based products
- Part 3 – Plywood
- Part 4 – Laminated Veneer Lumber (LVL)
- Part 5 – Glued laminated timber products.

The companion standard to the AS/NZS 1604 series is the AS/NZS 1605 series – Methods for sampling and analysing timber preservatives and preservative-treated timber, which provides the standard test methods to calculate the penetration and residual volume of preservative chemical within a test sample. This document is used to provide verification of conformance or otherwise to AS/NZS 1604. This document is primarily used by test laboratories and treatment plants and is not one the average building professional would ever use.

The AS/NZS series standard has now been extensively revised and, when the latest edition is published in early 2021, experienced users of the existing standard will notice some significant changes. There are now only three (3) parts dealing individually with products and treatment, demonstrating compliance and test methods. They are:

Users of the existing standard will notice significant changes.

1. **AS/NZS 1604 Preservative-treated wood-based products Part 1: Products and treatment.** The former Parts 1-5 of the existing standard have now been amalgamated into one. This change reflects the fact that the timber preservative chemicals are essentially common for all wood-based products, thus it made good sense to amalgamate five different parts outlining similar provisions, into one document.

For all intents and purposes, the retention volumes and penetration requirements for preservative chemicals within the penetration zones of the wood in existing standards that people are used to have remained unchanged, apart from some minor common sense decimal place reductions to match the available accuracy obtainable from test procedures.

This change will have large initial ramifications for the building industry and will require all standard drawings and details that currently reference AS/NZS 1604 parts 2 to 5, to be amended to read AS/NZS 1604:1.

2. **AS/NZS 1604 Preservative-treated wood-based products Part 2: Verification requirements** It was always assumed that the existing standard implied, if not explicitly stated that there needed to be a 100% pass of the retention and penetration requirements listed in Parts 1-5. If we take the example of LVL H2s glue-line treated with Bifenthrin, Table H2.2 lists the minimum

residual as 0.0021% mass/mass, a very small amount but is higher than the minimum found effective from field trials, to allow for some variability. If one of the test results of a batch gives a result 0.0020% (<0.0021%) under the current standard it technically fails, but realistically it would still be fit for purpose.

Wood is a natural fibre and exhibits variable properties. Readers who are familiar with the structural design of wood will know that the characteristic values are based upon the lower 5th percentile values with a 75% confidence level. Therefore, up to 5% of a sample size of 30 or more may exhibit strengths lower than the stated characteristic value.

This same concept successfully used all around the world for decades for timber strength values has now been introduced into the timber preservation realm in Australia for the first time.

The different statistical systems developed for AS/NZS 1748 Timber—Solid—Stress-graded for structural purposes have been modified to consider preservative retention rather than strength and rigorously analysed on thousands of test results to ensure that each method gives equal reliability of results.

These statistical methods also suit the new paradigm for increasing volumes of timber to be preservative treated as part of the in-line production process and

reflect the change in treatment technology. This is a good example of where the standard is modified to keep abreast of contemporary manufacturing methods.

3. **AS/NZS 1604 Preservative-treated wood-based products Part 3: Test methods** The AS/NZS 1605 series Methods for sampling and analysing timber preservatives and preservative-treated timber has been renamed, and will now be Part 3 of the AS/NZS 1604 series, thus keeping all the components of timber preservation under the one standard instead of two different ones.

Preservative-treated timber is protected against the expected biological hazards in the referenced hazard zone. Being preservative treated does not mean that it no longer needs to be correctly detailed; if subject to wetting and drying, it will still surface check and crack.

Timber that is preservative treated in conformance with this standard and correctly detailed has been consistently demonstrated to provide fit for purpose durability, a fact we should be emphasising when talking with designers and builders. **T**



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

Coming up in TimberTrader news

PAINT AND COATINGS

Coming up in the March 2021 issue of *TimberTrader News*, a special feature on:

- Paints, coatings and systems designed to prolong the life of timber with low-maintenance requirements.



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FTMA NEWSLETTER

with Kersten Gentle



National focus

We need the States and Territories to pull together.

If you listen to the ABC, remember the passing of marriage equality legislation in parliament or attended practically any community concert in recent years, you'll know the song with chorus assuring us that "we are Australian".

That is of course, until the Covid-19 pandemic hit. After a brief demonstration of collaboration within the National Cabinet, it seems we are no longer one!

This year's Australia Day lamb advertisement, Make Lamb – Not Walls, has highlighted how ridiculous things have become in Australia with border closures and states fighting over the best way to tackle the Covid-19 pandemic.

The National Cabinet, which was created by the Prime Minister on 13 March 2020, began with gusto, with all leaders working together to protect our country.

Ten months on however, and it seems the collaboration has stopped with leaders attacking one another and each state and territory introducing their own rules as part of their political point scoring.

We need collaboration from our leaders

After a brief demonstration of collaboration within the National Cabinet, we are no longer one!

now more than ever. We need unity and a streamlined process that gives individuals and businesses confidence in the system and furthermore it should be a national system that is rolled out in every state and territory.

The most successful processes for procedures such as contact tracing should be adopted at National Cabinet and introduced in all states. Likewise, the easiest QR code should be used, the same rules in relation to recognition of hot spots should be accepted by all the states and we should have the same border permit system in place for the whole country.

Instead, we have families being locked out of their own homes due to rule changes happening with little to no warning which is causing individuals and businesses a lot of unnecessary heartbreak.

It is time to stop the political point scoring and think of us as Australians, not as Victorians, New South Welshpeople, Queenslanders or South Australians etc, we need to be recognised as one again!

IT'S NOT HARD TO BE KIND

Everyone has been affected in one way or another by this pandemic however the level of impact varies. This is the time we need to come together, to support one another as 2021 is going to be another tough year.

Unlike National Cabinet, the Industry Associations are working together to ensure we support everyone within the timber supply chain but again there are different jobs in the industry where the impact has been harder.

Jobs such as sales representatives have

This is the time we need to come together, to support one another, as 2021 is going to be another tough year



changed dramatically from cold calling in person to trying to cold call on the phone or talk via Zoom. I don't envy their task at all as the pandemic has made their jobs extremely hard.

Think of your own sales reps and the difficulty they have faced communicating with builders and developers. You'd want your builders to give your sales reps 10 minutes to talk up your products and that's all we are asking from you.

FTMA Australia has always encouraged fabricators to support those who support your industry and all we ask, especially as we continue to navigate through the new normal of Covid life, is to give the sponsors' sales representatives 10 minutes when they next cold call you.

To remind you of our the amazing FTMA

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There is no doubt 2021 will be another difficult year with the pandemic, however, with strong housing markets continuing

throughout the country, we hope fabricators have a good year and as usual, FTMA Australia will be right there with you ensuring you are kept updated on all work-related Covid-19 issues.

Kersten Gentle T

All we ask is to give the sponsors' sales representatives 10 minutes when they next cold call you.

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TRUSS TALK

with Paul Davis



Fly LVL Deciphering Australian LVL grades without a consistent standard is up there with flight training for difficulty, and risks the market.

So, I had my first-ever flying lesson yesterday.

Guided by my flight instructor, who was half my age but a thousand times more competent, I took to the skies after two hours of theory.

The theory part was an absolute cruise for me – I’ve always been interested in aeroplanes from a technical side and a lot of the flight theory shares a common scientific basis with wind loads on buildings.

But the flying is something else. Have just two examples:

- In a car, when you turn the steering wheel the car turns. In a plane you turn the steering wheel and sure, the plane turns, but it also drops... potentially into the ground!
- In a car, you decrease power and the car goes slower. In a plane you decrease power and the plane goes slower and/or flies on a downward slope (potentially into the ground) and/or changes its relative angle to the ground or else maybe just stalls and plummets into the ground!

And that’s the easy part – there are about 20 different gauges that you’ve got to regularly monitor (all the while concentrating on not plummeting into the ground). You must constantly correct for the turbulence that is throwing you around using the aforementioned power settings and controls (whilst avoiding plummeting into the ground) and also have to keep a lookout for other aircraft and maintaining a heading and altitude (while – you guessed it– avoiding plummeting into the ground).

Oh – and the turbulence meant I felt nauseated as well.

Somewhere in all that I learnt something,

but suffice to say that those two hours in the air yesterday were the most focused and taxed and, at times, confused, that I’ve been for a very long time.

Which brings me to the timber side of this article with the common thread being information overload and confusion.

From a specifying engineer’s point of view, the penetration of LVL into heavier commercial use has been severely limited by a lack of a consistent and universally recognised grading system for LVL.

Glulam, F grades, MGP, plywood and even round poles have a grading system but, alas, LVL products are specified by each particular manufacturer with one of their proprietary grade designators.

Sadly, this situation has only got worse in recent times. With the departure of a major manufacturer from the market and a proliferation of new importers and re-sellers with their own grades and product names, even I’m confused as to what product is available and where.

I count about 25 different LVL products in the Australian market, each with its own unique combination of strength, stiffness and size properties.

So, put yourself in a position of a young engineer who has the choice of either specifying a single grade of steel I-beam or else choosing from one of 25 different LVL products. And then a few months later, finding that the specified variant is not available from the builder’s usual supplier and having to design it all again. To that engineer, steel is a no-brainer choice.

This is all the sadder because in many applications, the differences in timber strengths and stiffness sometimes makes only minor differences in the actual

improvement in the end construction.

The span of timber beams carrying a uniform load are normally limited by deflection. The best LVL product is about 50% stiffer than an average performer but that only gives around a 10% increase in maximum beam span.

On the strength (as opposed to stiffness) side of the equation there are some great LVL products out there, ranging from presumably relatively cheap lower strength material to some seriously strong gear with bending strengths approaching 40% of mild steel. These would be great used in high-end structural applications, but the proliferation of products still means that most engineers don’t know what is available and where. And so they avoid LVL.

I’m hoping that at least you as truss and frame manufacturers know exactly which LVLs you are using and don’t treat it as a generic product. You would be selecting specific LVL products from your software list to be in your design inventory. If they are using something else out in the factory then that situation would be as dangerous as my flying.

From my (albeit limited) perspective, it would be far better for suppliers to fly with a consistent set of LVL grades and expand the market rather than compete in a smaller market on the basis of material properties. If industry can’t get its act together then I am contemplating getting a bunch of engineers together and coming up with our own grading system... so be warned!

My next stay at the flying school is tomorrow. I will do my very best to not plummet into the ground... but if there is no March Truss Talk column then you’ll know why! **T**

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