

The header graphic features the WPMA logo on the left, which consists of a green circular icon with a stylized 'C' and the letters 'wpma' in a dark blue sans-serif font. To the right of the logo, the word 'Newsletter' is written in a large, bold, green sans-serif font, and the word 'December' is written below it in a smaller, dark blue sans-serif font. On the right side of the header, there is a photograph of a smiling man wearing a grey beanie, a yellow high-visibility vest over a grey long-sleeved shirt, and purple work gloves. He is holding a large stack of light-colored wooden planks. The background of the header is a light grey with a dark blue triangle in the top left corner and a green triangle in the bottom right corner.

wpma

Newsletter

December

Message from Mark

'Tough' is the one word that I have heard a lot lately when members describe current trading conditions and productivity. This is not only within our industry, but extends to many other sectors like hospitality, construction, and retail. Economic indicators are showing small signs of improvement in demand for wood products, but this is not sector wide with items such as pulp finding global trading conditions very challenging. As we head into the end of 2025, we all hope for growth in 2026, with enhanced profitability the main priority. This is not something that can be found wrapped up under the Christmas tree or in your Santa stocking. It will take the whole of industry and government working together, plus hard work by companies to gain market advantage, with WPMA providing our expertise and assistance where possible. We thank all our members for their support over 2025, and we stand proud to work with you in making things happen to provide benefits and positive gains for you and our wider industry.

Merry Christmas



Mark

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Sawn timber exports increase by 9 percent to \$1.2 billion – SOPI report

The latest Situation and Outlook for the Primary Industry (SOPI) was released earlier this week by the MPI DG, Ray Smith, and Minister for Trade/Forestry, Hon Todd McClay. Wood processing and manufacturing received good airtime during speeches as to its economic and

environmental benefits to New Zealand. The new Parliament Building being built next to MPI being highlighted as an example of how engineered wood products/timber can be used in mid-rise construction to replace steel and concrete.

Key highlights from SOPI for our sector (see p. 52 – 57):

- Forestry (incl. wood products) up 2% to \$6.3 million
- Sawn timber exports to surpass \$1.2 billion (up 9%)
- Pulp exports increased 9% to \$688 million driven mainly by Pan Pac resumption following the cyclone Gabriel rebuild – high operating costs cutting into margins
- Paperboard/Paper exports rose 15% to \$414 million – with OjiFS closures imports of paper/paperboard also rose 27%
- Panel exports grew 2% to \$381 million, but export revenue remains subdued due to weak demand in Japan
- Food and Fibre export revenue up to 30 June 2026 estimated to reach \$62.0 billion, 12.4 of employment and 15.3% pf GDP

You can access a copy of SOPI [here](#)



Invest New Zealand backing wood processing and manufacturing growth

Endorsing wood processing as a sector where New Zealand has a competitive edge on a global stage has been welcomed by WPMA. The announcement was made at the Invest New Zealand scope setting launch where strategic growth areas and three investment prospectuses were outlined. Selecting the prospectus for wood processing as one of the three focus areas for InvestNZ is demonstrating to the world's investors, we are open for business, ready to scale up and take advantage of new opportunities. New Zealand is well-positioned to meet rising global demand for sustainable, low-carbon construction materials. Our plantation forests are sustainably managed, with large areas under international certification programmes, whilst processed outputs range from lumber, pulp and paperboard, panels, and engineered wood to bioenergy and remanufactured products, with exports increasingly shifting toward high-value, value-added timber. The wood processing prospectus is available on the InvestNZ website [here](#)

WorkSafe NZ launches national wood manufacturing sector assessment focus

In the New Year, WorkSafe NZ is kicking off a nationwide initiative to strengthen health and safety practices in the wood manufacturing sector. From January to March 2026, their Inspectorate will conduct proactive assessments across the country with a focus on the wood

product manufacturing subsector. These visits aim to help businesses understand their health and safety responsibilities and manage critical risks such as machinery safety, worker exposure to toxic dusts, fumes and chemicals, and hazardous substances. The focus of the assessment visits is on engagement and education, providing advice and guidance to businesses to support healthier and safer work practices. Businesses will be contacted in advance to arrange a suitable time for an in-person visit, which typically takes about an hour.

[What to expect from a WorkSafe assessment](#)

[Manufacturing priority sector plan](#)

Combatting mis-leading and illegal timber imports

Timber supply chains are under the spotlight with at least 15-30 percent of the global timber trade illegal, contributing up to US \$152 billion in lost revenue each year, according to the World Bank and Interpol. WPMA met recently with Dunedin based company, Oritain, as to their timber tracing technologies and the potential to identify illegal timber importations entering New Zealand, such as Russian fibre being blended into LVL imported from China. Through their proprietary methodology Oritain can independently verify the origin of products and raw materials – protecting brand integrity, supporting compliance, and strengthening supply chain trust and transparency. This is achieved through a combination of multiple analytical techniques, including isotopes, trace elements, and non-traditional isotopes, combined with advanced statistical modelling and a comprehensive global reference database. Oritain has recently been selected as the sole provider of timber testing services for the United Kingdom. Further discussions will be had with Oritain as to possible solutions for New Zealand in combatting illegal timber importations, with in my opinion, the best strategy being to avoid imported timber and only buy locally made New Zealand manufactured timber and lumber products.



Regulated farm plastics recycling approved – timber wrap a future option?

With the approval of regulations for a nationwide rural recycling scheme covering agrichemicals and farm plastics, timber wrap is being investigated as to future recyclable options. The rural recycling scheme run by Agrecovery will immediately include all agrichemicals, their containers, and certain farm plastics. It won't just benefit farmers. Forestry, manufacturing, hospitality, tourism and local authorities will also have access to national take-back services, making safe disposal easier for all New Zealanders. Plastics, such as timber wrap, will possibly be bought into the scheme, or something similar, over time. The scheme creates a unified system where producers, sellers, and users share responsibility for the full product lifecycle, ensuring practical solutions for communities and the environment. Key industry stakeholders support the scheme because it offers a better alternative to burning or burying plastics, reducing environmental risk and supporting a cleaner and safer environment.

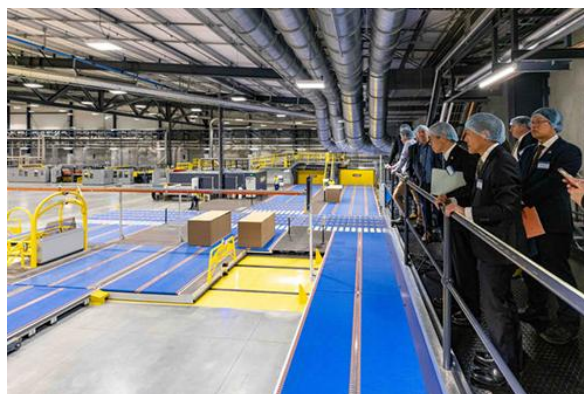
India–New Zealand Trade Negotiations Continue with FTA Visit to New Delhi

Trade and Investment Minister Todd McClay travelled to New Delhi last week to progress negotiations on a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between India and New Zealand, with talks resuming at ministerial level. Minister McClay met his counterpart Commerce and Industry

Minister Piyush Goyal on his seventh visit to India since the election. The government continues to work on the FTA to generate jobs and support Kiwi industry by reducing barriers into Indian markets. It is hoped that an agreement will be reached soon that will open up future trade between India and New Zealand.

Manufacturing in New Zealand shows expansion

New Zealand's manufacturing sector showed expansion during November, according to the latest BNZ – BusNZ Performance of Manufacturing Index (PMI). The seasonally adjusted PMI for November was 51.4 (a PMI reading above 50.0 indicates that manufacturing is generally expanding; below 50.0 that it is declining). This was 0.2 points higher than October, but still below the average of 52.4 since the survey began. Manufacturers reported a lift in demand driven by seasonal Christmas activity, improving economic conditions and rising customer confidence. Increased orders, both domestic and overseas, along with stronger construction activity, new customers, and product launches contributed to a more positive outlook.



Vocational Education update

As part of the Government's reform of the vocational education and training sector, Te Pūkenga (New Zealand Institute of Skills and Technology) is now in its final stages of being disestablished. New entities — called Industry Skills Boards (ISBs) — have been created to take over the same functions as the Workforce Development Councils from the 1 January 2026. Wood manufacturing and processing, incl. finger jointing, along with pulp and paper have been placed within the Manufacturing and Engineering ISB. Competenz will continue as the main training provider with all current, former, and pending enrolments automatically transitioning to the new Manufacturing and Engineering ISB. Employers and apprentices/trainees do not need to sign new training agreements. By 2027, Competenz intends to transition from the ISB to a new Competenz Private Training Enterprise (PTE), which will continue to support our Wood Processing and Manufacturing sector.

Positive RMA reform a step closer

The Government's introduction of two Bills to replace the current Resource Management Act (RMA) is transformational and should result in fewer consents required to unlock development while protecting what matters. The next step will be securing broad support for the changes, which will streamline the approach to resource management. WPMA will study both Bills carefully and make submissions to the Environment Committee in due course, outlining areas for further consideration.

New ACC Recovery at Work public campaign

ACC are excited to share an extension of their Recovery at Work programme with the launch of a public campaign promoting active recovery for sprains and strains – helping people stay active and connected to their workplace so they can recover faster and return to whānau, work, and life. Sprains and strains account for over 1.3 million claims each year, contributing significantly to time off work and millions of lost workdays. See more detail [here](#)

NZ Timber Museum – a must visit

If you have a passion for knowing more about the history of the New Zealand timber industry, enjoy viewing classic cars and trucks, or discovering numerous lifelike wildlife found within our forests, then the NZ Timber Museum based north of Tokoroa is for you. During a recent visit, I was impressed by the detail placed into the exhibitions, along with the wide variety of bygone buildings, displays and photos. Spotting some of the ‘older’ industry players from their younger days in the many timber and forest photos displayed throughout the museum was cause for a chuckle. If you don’t have much to do over the holiday break, then maybe a visit to the Timber Museum will make for a special day out. As a bonus there is a great café just next door.



Upcoming Events

ENTRIES ARE NOW OPEN FOR THE 2026 NZ TIMBER DESIGN AWARDS

>> Entries close Friday 6 March 2026 <<

If timber played a defining role in your project — through performance, design, or delivery — the NZ Timber Design Awards want to hear about it.

Award categories, judging criteria, and entry guidance are now available, along with a downloadable **information pack** to help you prepare a strong submission.

You can find this information and enter here [via the Timber Unlimited website](#).



In the News

InvestNZ identify wood processing as a growth area for NZ

New Zealand's wood processing industry has been identified by InvestNZ as a strategic growth area, with the government signalling that the sector offers a competitive edge on the global stage.

[Wood Processing is Now a 'Priority Area' for New Zealand Investment | Wood Central](#)

Canada's lumber and forest industry bolstered by government subsidies

Ottawa has unveiled \$2.35-billion in financial supports for Canada's forestry industry since August. That includes \$1.2-billion in loan guarantees to help Canadian lumber producers with operations and \$500-million in grants and contributions in a bid to find new buyers overseas and reduce their dependence on the U.S.

[Higher import taxes on Canadian softwood driving up construction costs, U.S. home builders say - The Globe and Mail](#)

Construction materials price rise reflects high cost of production

It's not a surge by any means, but we're starting to see some early signs of cost pressure returning – particularly in timber, cladding systems, and some specialist finishes

[Timber price surge signals turning point in NZ build costs | NZ Adviser](#)

Predators in New Zealand forests study plugs knowledge gaps

A recent study by Stephen Pawson and Sarah Wyse (University of Canterbury) examined introduced mammalian predators across native forest remnants and *Pinus radiata* plantation stands of varying ages in the central North Island. Using chew cards, tracking tunnels, and 1,512 camera trap nights, researchers recorded over 41,000 animal images. Rodents (rats and mice) dominated detections, followed by possums, hedgehogs, cats, and mustelids. Rodent abundance was consistently higher in native forests than plantations, with older pine stands (20+ years) showing slightly more rodents but no clear age-related trend. Possum activity varied by site and season, peaking in March. Hedgehogs were most common in mid-rotation stands, while mustelids appeared only in mature plantations and native remnants. The findings confirm that predator pressure is lower in plantation forests than native forests. The Forest Growers Levy Trust has funded additional research on the

topic to further understand predator abundance for different regional settings, native bird dynamics and understory composition. The research plugs key knowledge gaps on the predator profile in New Zealand and highlights that plantation forests should form a part of biodiversity strategies. It is clear that plantation forests are a key part of the biodiversity solution. The full report can be found [here](#):

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**The WPMA office will be closing for the Christmas and New Year period on 24 December and reopening on Monday 12 January.**

**We wish you and your family a joyful and stress-free Christmas and New Year.**



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WIDE Trust

Apply for funding towards your wood processing apprenticeship programmes

Do you need funds to progress an initiative, project or programme in your business?

Do your employees need funds to progress wood processing studies, projects or qualifications?

Apply to the WIDE Trust for support ...

**\$6 MILLION
AWARDED IN
GRANTS TO DATE!**

**Apply online
www.widetrust.org.nz**

The Wood Industry Development and Education Trust (WIDE Trust) is a charitable trust established in 2018. The Trust supports businesses undertaking research, development and other initiatives to advance the wood or forestry industry sectors in New Zealand and students undertaking career-related studies or projects in these industry sectors.

Initiatives supported by the Trust include:

- apprenticeship programmes
- in-house training programmes
- international study tour to seek out industry innovations and best practice
- attendance at industry events
- assessor training
- timber design and wood processing awards



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