



Message from Mark

After a tough 2024 it is promising to see the building and construction market experiencing a gradual improvement. The recent drop in the Official Cash Rate to 3.75 percent is set to further boost this momentum, making financing more accessible and encouraging investment in new projects. On top of this the proposed new projects within the Fast Track approvals process will further expedite infrastructure and development projects across New Zealand. All these factors will hopefully lead to greater demand for our local wood products, which in turn will boost our sustainable forestry and wood processing industry. A strong domestic timber market tends to lead to an increase in exports of value-added wood products, which is both positive for our industry and our wider economy. On a final note, a warm welcome to our two new members Millari NZ (a distributor of True Blue Timber) <https://truebluetimber.com.au/> who have recently purchased the Gisborne JNL mill, and KopCoat a wood preservations solution 's company <https://www.kop-coat.co.nz/>.

Mark

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Green shoots for Manufacturing and NZ Business

Recent BusinessNZ surveys suggest possible green shoots of economic growth in New Zealand.

The BNZ-BusinessNZ Performance of Manufacturing Index and BNZ-BusinessNZ Performance of Services Index, which give a monthly reading on the state of the manufacturing and services sectors, have both indicated expansion in their most recent results. Previously the PMI and PSI surveys recorded sectoral declines over the last 10 months (services) and 22 months (manufacturing). The latest month's results, while not conclusive, give some cause for optimism.

United States talks trade and tariffs

At certain times in our history a decade happens in a month, and with Donald J Trump being inaugurated as the 47th President of the United States on the 20 January it sure feels like the world has been turned upside down in the last 4-5 weeks. From a New Zealand wood products exporter perspective, we are watching closely on the tariff front as to what may eventuate. To date, there has been a lot of noise, but fortunately we have been spared any tariffs on our \$340 million plus of

exported wood products to the USA. The United States is an important export market for many of our members, with the potential for growth given our sustainable and high-quality timber. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs trade officials see the USA situation as one of their main priorities, with intelligence requested from industry and exporters. We will continue to support our trade officials and members as they endeavour to engage and transpose any proposed tariffs on NZ wood exports to the USA.

Future of training and education for wood processing and manufacturing at risk

Plans to close the Toi Ohomai, Waipa Timber Industry Training Campus in early 2026 could leave a large hole in the wood processing sector for Timber Machinists and Saw Doctors apprentice training. This announcement, along with the proposed government changes to vocational and education reform, will lead to a transformed landscape for future wood processing and manufacturing training. With predicted skilled staffing shortages for key positions within wood processing, there is a risk that a lack of trained staff for mills will result in slowing industry growth and economic returns for New Zealand. To ensure our industries future is secured for trained mill staff, a collective of wider industry, Toi Ohomai, training providers, and government will be working together over the coming months to discuss options with the goal of implementing a workable and affordable solution for future training. If you would like to know more, please contact mark@wpma.or.nz



Mark Ross, CE WPMA and Kerry Parker, Senior Academic Staff Member, Forestry and Wood Manufacturing, at the TITC campus

Improvements to Resource Consenting process supported by WPMA

The Wood Processors and Manufacturing Association supports the latest RMA amendment Bill which aims to reduce the regulatory burden on resource-seekers and resource-holders. Our submission on the Bill recommends extending resource consents beyond 35 years for long-life assets, such as wood processing mills (for greater investment certainty), mandating that decisions on wood processing facilities and specified energy activities must be issued within one year of consent application being lodged, and making it easier to gain consents for building and construction projects.

Vietnam meeting results in WIN for New Zealand wood processors

As reported in our December 2024 Newsletter, representatives of the wood processing and forestry sector met with a delegation of Vietnamese industry leaders as to business and investment opportunities. This meeting has already produced positive results, with the Vinafor (Vietnamese Forestry Corporation JSC) delegate requesting to connect with NZ suppliers of high-quality sawn radiata pine timber. Vinafor currently import pine COL, mill run and Industrial grade for furniture and packaging/pallet manufacturing. They are looking at a monthly volume of 20-40 containers of NZ pine timber, with the potential for further business opportunities. WPMA is working in with Vinafor as to connecting interested members with this export opportunity. Noting that as an industry Association our only interest is to provide our WPMA members with potential business opportunities and benefits. We do not involve ourselves in any commercial matters or negotiations.

New Zealand Government dallies in recognising mass timber as our future sustainable building material

While global trading partners such as the United States and Canada are progressively recognising and incorporating mass timber products in construction projects, the New Zealand government is doing the opposite by cancelling the Building for Climate Change programme, for example, and other initiatives aimed at supporting low emissions building and construction materials. According to an international Research and Market report, Government amendments are being enacted in building codes, particularly in North America and Europe, to accommodate and encourage the use of mass timber products in building and construction projects. As these standards become more prevalent, they install confidence in architects, engineers, and builders to adopt mass timber in a wider range of projects.

Globally, the mass timber market is experiencing steady growth driven by the escalating shift towards green building practices, supported by government regulations and eco-friendly building standards, increasing environmental awareness among consumers, and the growing demand for sustainable construction materials. With key allies such as the United States, Japan, Australia, and Great Britain committed to recognising the benefits of wood through signing a pledge for increased timber in construction at COP 28, New Zealand now needs to reflect and join the mass timber movement. See our earlier media release: <https://business.scoop.co.nz/2023/12/07/increased-timber-in-construction-commitment-pledged-at-cop28/>



India – New Zealand trade relations theme of business forum

At the recent business forum ‘A new era of New Zealand-India business relations’ the Minister for Trade & Investment, Hon Todd McClay noted that "India is a key relationship, and we are committed to delivering growth across all levels." As the wood products and forestry industry looks at rebuilding our exports to India, it is important to build relationships with India and to have the Minister’s support. Common themes at the forum included the need for policy alignment, sustainable practices, and investment in emerging sectors, along with the adage ‘*the time to act is now*’. New Zealand needs to take proactive steps to deepen engagement with India, establish stronger business relationships, and ensure that it is not left behind by other markets such as Australia. As panellist Bharat Chawla commented “*India and New Zealand relations are in their best phase of growth, and a strong push from businesses, the diaspora, and both governments will help to reach the best outcome for both countries.*”



High Commissioner HE Ms Neeta Bhushan and Minister Todd McClay at the India-NZ business forum

Immigration – Accredited Employer Work Visa scheme reforms webinar

In December 2024, the Government announced reforms to the Accredited Employer Work Visa (AEWV) scheme, which will be implemented over the course of 2025. These changes include removing the median wage threshold, reducing experience requirements to 2 years and introducing new seasonal visa pathways to support employers to fill skill gaps. The changes will be implemented in 4 different stages over the course of 2025. ImmigrationNZ are holding a webinar to explain more details of the changes on the 5 March. If you are interested in attending the webinar, please register here [Webinar Registration - Zoom](#). Noting that the WPMA will also be holding a specific member only virtual meeting with Immigration officials in late March to discuss the AEWV changes in relation to wood processing and manufacturing.

New WPMA Member – Kop-Coat



Kop-Coat is an innovative protection products company that serves the forest products industry by providing customized, state-of-the-art wood preservation solutions to enhance wood's natural sustainability. Kop-Coat has over 40 years of experience working with global producers of solid and engineered wood products. As part of the RPM Specialty Products Group, Kop-Coat is aligned with a family of companies that provide beneficial resources for sourcing and research and development which are able to be shared with our customers. Combining research and development expertise with efficient chemical and application equipment manufacturing and experienced regulatory support allows Kop-Coat to offer our customers innovation and efficiency to create value and advantage. Their Sales and Service Specialists design management action plans for each customer that are executed in conjunction with the customer to support protecting valuable wood products. They pride themselves on being partners with some of the largest lumber producers in the world. Kop-Coat appreciates that preservative treatment is not the focus of forest products producers but believe strongly that wood is an amazing resource that if protected and preserved can maintain the competitive edge against rival products that threaten solid wood market share.

ACC – new employer resources now available

Over the past 12 months, as part of the Recovery @ Work Projects with wood processing and forestry sectors, ACC identified language barriers as a significant issue. With New Zealand's population becoming increasingly diverse, many employees and business owners struggle to understand ACC, given its unique nature in New Zealand. ACC now have some translated documents which have been downloaded onto the ACC website. These can be useful in ensuring that important information about ACC is communicated effectively to non-English speaking employees and business owners. To access this detail, you can go to the ACC Website, click on the Resources tab at the top of the home page <https://www.acc.co.nz/resources#/>, then in the 'Search' type either the ACC8722 or ACC8721, or the language you are after.

NZ High-Tech Awards – enter now – entries close 3 March

Entries are now open for the most innovative hi-tech manufacturer of the year. To enter you would have developed an advanced manufactured product or process that is genuinely innovative and can demonstrate how it's positioned for future success.

Enter the Hi-Tech Awards - [Most Innovative Hi-Tech Manufacturer of the Year — NZ Hi-Tech Awards](#)

Recent WPMA Submissions

- Legal Harvest Assurance System – consultation on operational detail for the legal harvest assurance system
<https://wpma.org.nz/assets/Submissions/WPMA-Legal-Harvest-Assurance-Systems-feedback-26-Feb-2025.pdf>
- Options for the future of work-based learning
<https://wpma.org.nz/assets/Submissions/Submission-Forestry-PSG-Options-for-the-future-of-work-based-learning-FINAL-Feb-21.pdf>
- Resource Management (Consenting and Other System Changes) Bill
<https://wpma.org.nz/assets/Submissions/Resource-Management-phase-2-Wood-Processors-and-Manufacturers-Assoc-10-Feb-2025-FINAL.pdf>

Upcoming Events

WPMA National Conference – 8 October, Wellington – Hold the date

The WPMA Conference will bring together a dynamic range of business leaders and influential stakeholders from across a wide variety of sectors. Through the delivery of strategic insights into future opportunities for wood processing and manufacturing you will be inspired to connect and grow our industry to ensure a resilient and profitable future. More details to come.

WoodTECH 2025 – 13-14 March, Rotorua

WOOD PROCESSING AND SAWMILLING - a conference & exhibition series showcasing advances in management and technology. More details can be found here

<https://innovatek.co.nz/event/woodtech-2025/>

Mid-rise construction – Fisher and Paykel Appliance Building site visit

Mid-Rise Wood Construction invites you to attend the upcoming site tour of the Fisher & Paykel new headquarters currently under construction. Date – Thursday 20 March.

<https://mrwc-site-visits.lilregie.com/booking/attendees/new#>

Timber Bridges Conference - 29 June to 2 July, Rotorua

The 5th International Timber Bridges Conference will be held in Rotorua from the 29 June to the 2 July 2025. Registrations are now open. More details can be found here [ICTB 2025](#)

In the News

Millari Group Australia purchase JNL Gisborne Mill

"We're looking forward to seeing the new ownership and jobs being created, also a lot more logs being processed within New Zealand and that's the strategic direction we would like to head down.
<https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/country/541490/wood-mill-revival-best-news-for-nz-marks-new-chapter-new-gm>

Timber Machining apprenticeships changes made to proposed disestablishment

Parker said help from industry and the media had "definitely made a difference" but there were still "so many unknowns. We're good for this year and then hopefully we can make a plan so that we can keep pumping out apprenticeships and keep people in jobs."

<https://www.nzherald.co.nz/the-country/news/toi-ohomai-timber-machining-apprenticeship-changes-made-to-proposed-disestablishment/A6SZ4VA5JRHX7IIGUSWKG6HROE/>

Oji fibre solutions confirm Kinleith mill decision

'We will proceed with our proposal to transition the mill to a new operating model by focusing on pulp and ceasing loss-making paper production.'

<https://www.nzherald.co.nz/business/oji-fibre-confirms-230-jobs-at-kinleith-mill-to-go/D2VWDPFBSJFPDLNEMKQ4AAHGFI/>

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

WIDE WOOD INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATION TRUST

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