



Newsletter

February



Message from Mark

As many of you will have seen, recent U.S. trade developments have sparked plenty of discussion. The latest White House Proclamation clarifying that imported timber and lumber covered by Section 232 measures and already at a 10% tariff, will not be impacted by the new 10% tariff or a possible tariff of 15%. We'll continue to watch closely as the situation evolves. On the domestic front, it was great to visit the new Museum Street Parliament Building in Wellington as part of the Mid-Rise Construction initiative, along with an informative site visit to the rejuvenated Pan Pac mill in Napier. Thank you to Tony and Mark for hosting me. This newsletter provides updates, insights, and activity from across the sector. We hope you enjoy reading what WPMA has been up to.

Mark

mark@wpma.org.nz



On site at Pan Pac

WPMA assessing risks from questionable and mis-represented Imported Timber

On-going concerns are being received from WPMA members about the growing volume of imported timber products entering New Zealand with, for example, inaccurate performance claims, unverifiable sustainability certification, and misleading species or grade labelling. This comes on the back of an Australian study where 63% of imported timber entering Australia carrying private certifications was incorrectly labelled. With no border enforcement in New Zealand by regulators and the 2025 Building Act changes set to ease the use of overseas wooden building products, the risk of non-compliant timber entering

the New Zealand domestic building and construction market is increasing. Industry feedback points to recurring issues with dubious certification—creating risks for building safety, consumer protection, environmental integrity, and fair competition for domestic processors. WPMA is calling for stronger verification systems, border enforcement checks for imported timber, clearer regulatory responsibilities, and improved industry collaboration. WPMA will be elevating this concern using actual case studies with political parties heading into the 2026 election.

Inclusion of Wood Product sector roles on the National Occupation List is welcomed

WPMA welcomes the addition of two key wood processing and manufacturing roles, Timber Machinist and Senior Timber Treatment Plant Operator (kiln drying/chemical), to the NZ Immigration National Occupation List (NOL), effective 9 March 2026. These roles are among 47 new occupations that will be recognised at skill levels 1–3 for Accredited Employer Work Visa (AEWV) applications. WPMA has worked closely with Immigration New Zealand to support recognition of these skilled sector positions, which continue to be difficult to fill through the domestic labour market. The NOL is progressively replacing ANZSCO as New Zealand’s job classification framework. During the transition, both systems remain in use. However, NOL classifications currently apply only to AEWV applications and not for skilled residence pathways. More details can be found [here](#)

NZ’s new Trade Envoy briefed on Wood Product export priorities

New Zealand’s newly appointed Special Agriculture Trade Envoy (SATE), Nathan Guy, met with Dr Elizabeth Heeg, CEO, NZFOA and WPMA CEO, Mark Ross last week for a focused discussion on New Zealand’s forest and wood processing export landscape. Current market conditions were outlined, including export volumes, key trading partners, industry makeup, and the anticipated growing demand for higher-value processed wood products. Challenges were also highlighted, such as global supply shifts, market volatility, and increasing sustainability expectations from international buyers. The session aimed to equip Guy with up-to-date insights ahead of his upcoming overseas engagements, ensuring he can effectively represent the sector’s interests and reinforce New Zealand’s reputation as a reliable, sustainable supplier of logs and wood products. The meeting underscored the value of close collaboration between industry leaders and government representatives as our industry works to strengthen market access and support long-term export growth.

Spotlight on Mid-Rise Construction: Advancing New Zealand’s Mass Timber future

Mid-Rise Construction, a partnership between MPI and Red Stag, continues to champion the targeted use of wood in New Zealand’s construction sector. Last week the initiative hosted a visit of the new Museum Street Parliament Buildings, showcasing how modern timber technology is reshaping the built environment. The site visit brought together Minister Todd McClay, Minister Mark Patterson, and Suze Redmayne, MP, who were able to see firsthand how mass timber grown in New Zealand and manufactured by Red Stag and Nelson Pine is being successfully integrated into the project. Following the site visit a focused discussion on accelerating wood processing investment and expanding the use of mass timber in

construction was held between invited stakeholders, officials and Minister McClay. The conversation highlighted the economic and environmental advantages of timber over traditional materials such as steel and concrete, reinforcing the role of wood in meeting New Zealand’s economic productivity goals. Among the policy topics tabled was a proposed Wood Option Policy, which would require all government buildings with a project value over \$1 million to formally consider wood as part of the design and procurement process. This approach aims to level the playing field for sustainable materials and stimulate further industry growth. Additional actions were outlined, including future meetings with other relevant Ministers, notably Hon Chris Penk, Minister for Building and Construction, to ensure coordinated progress across government portfolios.



Suze Redmayne MP, Minister Todd McClay, Minister Mark Patterson on site highlighting the use of NZ wood and wool in construction

Trans-Tasman Standards alignment strengthened

Standards Australia and Standards New Zealand have signed a new Development and Distribution Agreement, modernising how joint standards are created and helping prevent further fragmentation between the two countries. The agreement builds on a 2025 programme that successfully halted new “dejointing” of standards, reconnected dozens of previously separated AS/NZS standards, and supported New Zealand’s adoption of 57 international standards in emerging digital technologies. These improvements reinforce the Single Economic Market agenda and support long-standing trade frameworks such as CER and the Trans-Tasman Mutual Recognition Arrangement. A new commercial arrangement removes commissioning fees for New Zealand industry participating in joint standards development—addressing a key barrier that previously led to dejointing. Standards New

Zealand will continue working with regulators and industry to maintain joint standards, align regulatory approaches, and expand the use of international standards.

Wood Sector Key to Advancing NZ's Green Economy – WPMA submission

New Zealand's wood processing industry is uniquely positioned to drive the Green Economy Policy Agenda (GEPA). Engineered wood products store carbon, replace high-emissions materials, and support our economy and value added manufacturing. Sustainably managed forests and recyclable, renewable wood products strengthen circular economy outcomes. As per the WPMA submission, GEPA can elevate wood as a recognised environmental good, opening new export opportunities and supporting investment in low carbon materials. With growing demand for climate positive products, New Zealand's wood sector is well placed to lead the transition to a net zero future. You can read our full submission [here](#)

Planning Bill and Natural Environment Bill – WPMA submission

WPMA welcomes the Planning Bill and Natural Environment Bill, noting that efficient consenting, resilient infrastructure and clear environmental direction are essential for the wood processing sector's growth and investment. While the reforms offer promising improvements, such as the one-year consenting timeframe, WPMA highlights the need for clearer national guidance, consistent regional planning, and strong recognition of forestry and wood processing as key contributors to emissions reduction and regional economies. Ensuring streamlined processes, reliable infrastructure, and climate aligned policy settings will be critical to supporting the industry's long-term viability and New Zealand's transition to a low emissions bioeconomy. You can read our full submission [here](#)

Wood Product Exporters to the EU need to be prepared - EUDR Starter Toolkit now available for members on WPMA website

Even with the delay of 12 months until implementation of EUDR, NZ wood product exporters to the European Union need to prepare their export compliance requirements now. To assist WPMA and NZFOA members they can now access the EUDR Starter Toolkit on our website. The Toolkit has been developed by a cross sector working group and is designed to equip businesses with the essential knowledge and practical resources needed to navigate the European Union Deforestation Regulation. It provides a step-by-step guidance on where to start, what data to collect, and how to prepare Due Diligence Statements. If you are not a member and would like to know more then please contact jeanette@wpma.org.nz Access for members can be found [here](#)

Government expands Digital Manufacturing Light Programme

The Government is backing the growth of New Zealand's manufacturing sector with a three-year funding boost to expand the University of Auckland's Digital Manufacturing Light programme. The initiative helps manufacturers adopt practical, low-cost digital tools, from automation to real-time machine monitoring, without major capital investment. The expansion will support at least 180 small and medium-sized manufacturers across Auckland, Waikato, Northland, and the Bay of Plenty. Businesses receive tailored assessments, help choosing the right technologies, hands-on installation support, and training to build long-term digital capability within their teams. With research showing faster digital

adoption could lift national GDP by \$8.6 billion, the Government says the programme is a smart, targeted investment in productivity and innovation. Businesses interested in taking part can contact dmlight@auckland.ac.nz

Energy efficiency wins supported by the Wood Processors and Manufacturers Association – new video released

One of the country's leading packaging manufacturers, OjiFS, has slashed nearly a fifth of its LPG use at its Christchurch box plant. The Wood Processors and Manufacturers Association says it is a clear example of what progress is possible in the industry where efficiency opportunities need to be seized to reduce energy costs and fuel use. A lot of our sector's emissions come from energy, as well as a large proportion of ongoing operational costs. We are increasingly seeing businesses taking steps to use less energy because it is a win-win; lower bills and lower emissions. EECA (Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority) says there has never been a more important time for businesses to consider their energy use, with costs rising and growing uncertainty about the security of supply. The easiest and most cost-effective first step businesses can take is to see how they can operate more efficiently. Many businesses can save 10-30% off their energy bills by doing simple adjustments like boiler tuning or fixing leaky valves. Through a process of ongoing tuning the OjiFS packaging plant has been able to send automated decisions to its boiler and reduce LPG fuel use by 18%. The process has supported a learning culture at the plant, enabling the team to continue refining operations. Check out the video of the full case study [here](#):



Trends in the Dutch Port Sector and NZ Opportunities

Rotterdam, the largest port in Europe, handled 320 million tonnes and 10.7 million TEUs in early 2025, underpinned by deep-water access, advanced automation and strong inland

transport links. The port contributes nearly 3% of Dutch GDP and is rapidly becoming Europe's leading hydrogen and low-carbon energy hub. EU rules such as CBAM are reshaping market access, increasing compliance demands but creating openings for low-emissions exporters. For New Zealand, the Netherlands offers a strategic base to meet Europe's sustainability expectations. Rotterdam's green-logistics services can cut supply chain emissions, while NZ's low-carbon wood products and high value food products are well placed to benefit. In 2024 New Zealand exported \$58 million in wood product to the Netherlands, making it our biggest European customer. There is also scope for NZ ports to partner with global operators on automation and for NZ firms to support EU emissions measurement and certification needs. Longer term, opportunities may emerge in Rotterdam's growing hydrogen value chain.

Upcoming Events

Timber Design Awards 2026

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 Awards website](#).



In the News

Nippon Paper forms NZ joint venture for softwood chips production

NP Wood Fibre Company Limited will operate a major New Zealand softwood chip production and export business, leveraging off the country's abundant forest resources and positioning itself to meet the anticipated growth in global demand for softwood chips. For NPI, the transaction supports the diversification of procurement sources and the establishment of a stable supply of softwood resource for the Japanese market.

<https://www.pulpapernews.com/20260211/17443/nippon-paper-forms-nz-joint-venture-softwood-chips-production>

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!



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

Apply online
www.widetrust.org.nz

