

Message from Mark

Although 2026 has only just begun, New Zealand's political landscape is already gaining momentum as the country heads toward the 7 November general election. Industry groups, including WPMA, will soon roll out policies and actions that we want political parties to support, such as value-added wood processing, market access, infrastructure development, training, and timber as a national building and construction solution. As a voluntary based industry Association, we will remain focussed on our members and what they see as the way forward for their businesses to be successful. If you are not a member and would like to know more about the WPMA, feel free to reach out to me. Your voice counts.

Mark

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WorkSafe NZ launches national wood manufacturing sector assessment focus

WorkSafe NZ has commenced a nationwide initiative to strengthen health and safety practices in the wood manufacturing sector. From January 2026 to March 2026, their Inspectorate are conducting 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](#)



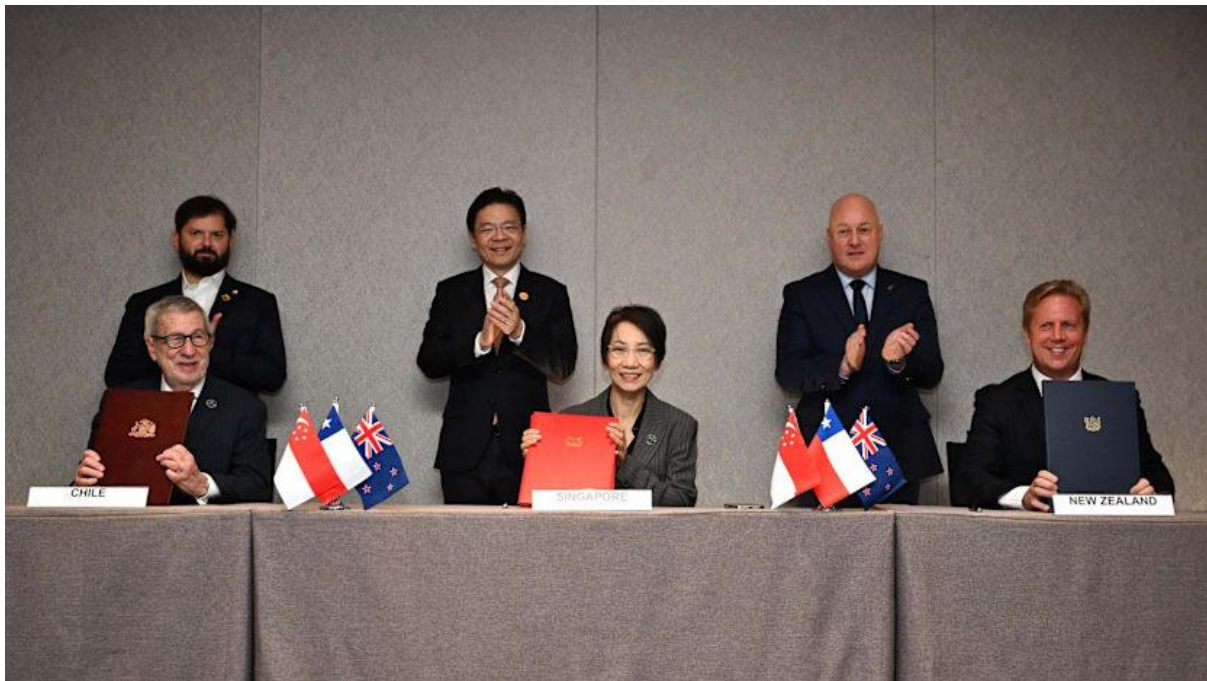
Unlocking opportunity: NZ–India FTA opens new doors for wood product exporters

With India’s rapidly expanding construction, furniture, and sustainable materials markets, the newly concluded New Zealand–India Free Trade Agreement places New Zealand wood product exporters in a position to meet rising demand in India while exploring long-term industry partnerships. For businesses on both sides, information exchange and collaboration will be key leverages to fully realise the Agreement’s potential and allow New Zealand producers to tailor wood products to India’s diverse market needs. At the same time, Indian manufacturers and distributors will gain reliable access to high-quality, sustainably sourced wood products, thus supporting their own growth and environmental commitments. WPMA is already exploring opportunities with our members and government for areas such as coordinated market development, branding of NZ Pine, and shared sustainability standards. At the first meeting of the ‘India Trade Interest Group for Wood Products’, there was strong support to work as a NZ collective as a means of maximising the value of our exports. By working together, companies can reduce barriers, improve product fit, and build resilient commercial relationships that benefit both economies. With strategic collaboration, the wood products sector can turn this free trade agreement into a catalyst for export growth, innovation, and long-term investment.

GEPA: A New Green-Focused Trade Initiative

The Green Economic Policy Agenda (GEPA) is a trilateral negotiation between New Zealand, Singapore, and Chile aimed at aligning trade and investment with the global shift toward green, low-emissions growth. It seeks to create rules and cooperation mechanisms that accelerate climate-friendly innovation, support green technology flows, and reduce barriers for sustainable goods and services. As a low emission, biodegradable, renewable resource New Zealand Radiata Pine can play a key role in the GEPA priorities especially in regard to building materials and the circular economy. With negotiations formally launched, the New

Zealand Government is calling for written submissions from industry, which remain open until **5 February**. More details can be found [here](#)



Planning Bill and Natural Environment Bill out for consultation

The Planning Bill and Natural Environment Bill, which together form the core of the Government's reform of the Resource Management Act 1991, represent an opportunity to create an enduring planning system that supports both environmental integrity and economic prosperity. As a sector that relies on efficient land-use planning, resilient supply chains, and sustainable environmental management, wood processors and manufacturers have a direct interest in ensuring that the new legislative framework is workable, enabling, and future-focused. WPMA supports the intent of the reforms to simplify planning, reduce consenting delays, and provide clearer environmental outcomes. The current RMA system has been widely recognised as slow, costly, and uncertain. The proposed shift to a more strategic, outcomes-based framework has the potential to unlock economic development while strengthening environmental protections. WPMA will be submitting in support of the Bills, but will highlight several identified aspects that require refinement to ensure they do not unintentionally constrain wood processing operations, forest supply chains, or the development of low-carbon manufacturing. Submissions on the Planning Bill and Natural Environment Bill close on the **13 February**. See [here](#) for more details:

Industry Skills Boards (ISBs) seeking board nominations

The eight new ISBs became fully operational on 1 January 2026, marking a major milestone in the transformation of the vocational education and training system. They are now seeking nominations for additional board members. The ISBs will give industry a stronger voice in shaping vocational education. They will set and maintain standards, endorse

programmes, advise on workforce development priorities, and strengthen collaboration between education and employers. During the transition from the New Zealand Institute of Skills and Technology (NZIST) to a new industry-led training system, some ISBs will also temporarily manage work-based learning. Serving as a board member on an industry skills board gives the opportunity to shape the future workforce, utilise early insight into emerging skill needs, and help build training pathways that strengthen the industries they represent. Board candidates will need strong governance and change management skills, an industry background, and an understanding of vocational education and training. Each ISB will, by 31 March have eight board members: two ministerial appointees and six industry nominated members. For more information about the requirements and process to nominate or express interest please visit [Eight Industry Skills Boards established | Tertiary Education Commission](#). Submissions must be received by **5pm on Wednesday 18 February 2026**.



Manufacturing and Engineering

Industry Skills Board

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](#)

IKEA forestry shopping spree

IKEA's parent company Ingka Investments has spent about \$500 million on 41,000 hectares of New Zealand farm and forestry land, making it one of the country's top 50 landowners. Ingka's forestry estate is currently 28,300ha but will grow to 41,200ha once the recently announced purchase of Greenheart Group's forestry holdings is approved. Ingka Investments' Kelvin Meredith says the business continues to assess opportunities to expand their forest portfolio in NZ. Ingka Group, which Ingka Investment as well as Ikea NZ are part of, is owned by a foundation with a charitable purpose, he says. "This means that no-one

else owns our assets, and there is no dividend going to any private shareholder. “Our aim is to reach our climate targets without the use of carbon offsetting. We don’t participate in carbon farming and selling carbon credits.”

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](#).



Wood Taiwan 2026 – 23 -26 April – Buyer Incentive Programme available

With the theme “Craft Smart!”, Wood Taiwan welcomes you to attend their 2026 event. The Exhibition will highlight smart woodworking and sustainable craftsmanship, showcasing Taiwan’s advancements in technological innovation and green transformation. The event will feature products in the following sectors:

- Machinery & Equipment
- Hardware Accessories & Panels
- Hand Tools & DIY
- Furniture Manufacturing & Timber Structures
- Smart Manufacturing & AI Solutions

Event Details:

- **Date: April 23 - 26, 2026**
- **Location: Taipei Nangang Exhibition Center Hall 1.**

The event entry is free for overseas companies. Application for the Buyer Incentive Program is open until April 2 2026, and is available on a first-come-first-served basis. The two categories are:

A: One round-trip economy-class ticket scheduled stay during two full show-day periods between April 23 and April 26, 2026. Attending procurement meetings is requested.

Criteria: Foreign companies with annual sales in any of the past 3 years exceeding US\$ 5 million that are related to the industries profiled in the show.

B: One room with a maximum allowance of NT\$18,000 to be used toward lodging (up to 4 nights being in April 22 to April 26, 2026) and airport pickup to-from the accommodating hotel.

Criteria: Foreign companies with annual sales in any of the past 3 years exceeding US\$ 0.3 million that are related to the industries profiled in the show.

For further information on the event, please visit its official website [here](#)

In the News

NZ-India Free Trade Agreement to scrap tariffs on NZ wood and log exports

WPMA Chief Executive Mark Ross said tariff removal opens the door to significant growth: "India is set to become one of the largest consumers of wood globally. Eliminating tariffs on over 95 per cent of timber, lumber and derivative products presents a major opportunity for New Zealand processors and manufacturers,"

<https://woodcentral.com.au/historic-nzindia-fta-scrap-95-of-tariffs-on-new-zealand-wood-exports/>

How to build a Green Parliament

Overall, the building is expected to produce 89 percent less climate pollution over an estimated 60-year lifetime than a non-sustainable, industry standard comparator.

<https://newsroom.co.nz/2026/01/10/how-to-build-a-green-parliament/>

22 construction firms liquidated in one week

It's a new year but times remain tough for the construction industry, with a high number of building or property related companies still going into liquidation. Over the seven days from January 20 to January 27 there were 22 applications to put building or property related companies into liquidation, according to the NZ Government Gazette.

<https://www.thepost.co.nz/business/360937874/one-week-22-construction-firm-liquidations>

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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