



Newsletter

March



Message from Mark

Middle East conflict - Industry collaboration critical

Continued collaboration across the supply chain will be essential to ensure the wider wood products and forestry sector remains resilient and competitive, particularly in light of rising fuel costs associated with the conflict in the Middle East. Feedback from members indicates that log supply levels are, in most cases, stable at present. Nevertheless, maintaining a consistent flow of logs, together with steady pricing, remains fundamental to safeguarding the long-term viability of the wood processing and manufacturing industry.

As a key value-adding sector, wood processing makes a significant contribution to national economic performance and export earnings. To meet customer orders and respond effectively to market demand, processors require predictable and reliable access to quality raw material and fuel, plus acknowledgement by the Government that the industry is critical. Ensuring this stability will be essential to supporting the sector's ongoing performance and future competitiveness.

Mark

mark@wpma.org.nz

World of Wood Convention highlights global uncertainty

The International Wood Products Association (IWPA) held its annual World of Wood Convention in Colorado from 17–19 March, drawing around 250 participants from across the global wood products supply chain. Although the event was primarily U.S. focused, international delegates accounted for around 15% of attendees. A dominant theme throughout the programme was the rapidly evolving global trade environment. Speakers highlighted ongoing uncertainty around tariffs, regulatory shifts, and broader geopolitical tensions — all factors that continue to shape supply chains, pricing, and market confidence. As an invited speaker to the Convention, the WPMA CE delivered a session on International Trade Perspectives – New Zealand, which generated positive feedback and several follow-up discussions. The Convention reinforced the value of international engagement and highlighted new opportunities for New Zealand exporters as the U.S. market navigates a

period of ongoing change. If you would like more details on the Convention, then please contact mark@wpma.org.nz



WPMA CE Mark Ross with IWPA CEO Ashley Amidon at the WOW Convention

Trades and Technician pathway confirmed for migrant workers

The list of eligible occupations for the Trades and Technician residence pathway has been confirmed. These occupations were added to the Trades and Technician pathway because they are skilled, have relevant qualification at the appropriate level for the pathway and bring important skills to the economy. Many highly skilled workers in these roles did not have a realistic pathway to residence under the current settings. There is a history of migrant recruitment showing that there is a gap in the labour market. Recognising these qualifications and providing a more realistic wage threshold for these occupations will help attract and retain migrants with important skills for the economy. Roles included for our industry are saw doctor, fitter and turner, joiner, paper and pulp mill operator, wood machinist, along with wood machinists and other wood trade workers not else classified (nec). This appears to be a positive outcome for the industry as to a new pathway for retaining migrant workers in the highlighted roles and comes about through WPMA working closely in with Immigration NZ officials.

Niagara Expands Product Range with Acquisition of OTC Division

Niagara Sawmilling Company Ltd is pleased to announce the acquisition of a division of Otorohanga Timber Company Ltd (OTC), effective 1 April 2026. This marks a significant step forward for two long-standing, family-owned businesses that share a deep commitment to quality and craftsmanship within the timber industry. The acquisition strengthens Niagara's ability to deliver an expanded range of premium pine products, with particular growth in mouldings, claddings, and finishings. Only the trading operations and associated fixed assets of OTC are included in the purchase - the wider OTC Ltd company remains independent. Its thermally modified timber operations will continue under a new name: Ingrained Timber Ltd. Operationally, customers will see continuity at the OTC site. The business will now trade

as OTC Timber – a division of Niagara Sawmilling Company Ltd, with all onsite contacts remaining the same. This partnership brings together two respected industry leaders, positioning Niagara to deliver even greater value and product diversity to customers nationwide.

Palisades Rebuild Underway: 15,000 New Homes Planned in the Burn Zone

Reconstruction efforts are now underway in the Palisades area, Los Angeles. The project will see approximately 15,000 new homes constructed over the coming years. From a drive around the area, early stages of development highlight that many of the new builds are opting for wood-based construction materials. The scale of the rebuild is expected to generate steady demand across the timber supply chain, from structural lumber to interior finishing products and is a reminder of the central role wood products continue to play in modern, sustainable construction.



Palisades rebuild underway

Wood processing health and safety inspections identify opportunities for businesses

WorkSafe’s health and safety inspectors have been carrying out proactive assessments in the wood product manufacturing sector, and early findings show there are clear opportunities for businesses to strengthen worker training and improve the safe use of machinery. Manufacturing continues to be one of WorkSafe’s highest harm sectors. It accounts for more time off work injuries than any other sector, and it has the fifth-highest number of workplace deaths. WorkSafe inspectors across the country are visiting wood product manufacturing businesses of all types – from toy makers to joiners and wood processors – through to the end of March. These assessments focus on critical risks that cause serious harm, such as machine safety, worker exposure to toxic dust, fumes, and chemicals, as well as hazardous substances. The aim is simple – to help businesses and workers better understand their health and safety responsibilities. Inspectors provide

practical advice and guidance to businesses to support safer workplaces. So far more than a quarter of businesses assessed have had improvement notices issued on machine guarding. More details can be found [here](#)

Enhance Safety with R/VISION

R/VISION is helping New Zealand manufacturers identify workplace hazards before injuries occur, supported by ACC's Workplace Injury Prevention grant programme. The system detects risks such as missing PPE, machine guarding issues, unsafe postures, and people-and-plant proximity using existing CCTV. Eligible manufacturers can access a fully funded trial, with ACC covering integration costs. All data remains confidential and is not shared without permission. To find out more, contact Caleb Perelini at caleb.p@rushdigital.co.nz or visit R/Vision project [here](#)
RUSH Digital acknowledges co-funding from ACC's Workplace Injury Prevention programme.

E-Tipu Conference – 21-22 May

FoodHQ hosts an annual Summit - E Tipu - New Zealand's Future Food and Fibre Summit and this year it takes place on 21-22 May at Te Pae in Christchurch. The theme for the two days is *Trending Into The Future*.

The Summit is forward leaning, action oriented and impact driven - a space to bring people together to have conversations others are reluctant to start.

An invitation for WPMA to be a part of a panel at the E- Tipu conference in May has been accepted. The title for the panel is: *Being the Best for 2050 and beyond: Commodities, Premium, and the Promise of Value-Add*. Other Panel members are Richard Green (Agribusiness Investor), Bruce Weir (Rabobank) and Tanira Kingi (Emeritus Scientist, BSI). See here for more details <https://etipu.co.nz/>

Upcoming Events



2026 NZIF Conference

Back to Business: Forward with Confidence

Showcasing how we can and do get forestry right.

Dunedin, 26-18 August 2026

Join industry leaders, innovators, researchers, and practitioners as we share success stories, highlight cutting-edge innovation, and explore strong partnerships that deliver both environmental and economic gains. Together, we'll demonstrate what good forestry looks like –

sustainable, safe, and forward-focused and rebuild confidence in an industry that is vital to New Zealand's future

For more information click [here](#)



Timber Design Awards 2026

Gala Event Dinner: Friday 26 June 2026, Cordis Hotel Auckland

Now entering their 51st year in 2026, these prestigious Awards celebrate the best in timber design and construction and provide a national platform to recognise outstanding achievement in the use of timber across the built environment.

Proudly hosted by Timber Unlimited, the Awards recognise the businesses, people, and teams who are at the forefront of the timber revolution, using timber to deliver beautiful, high-performance, low-carbon, exemplary projects – from large-scale commercial and public buildings through to residential, interior and innovation-focused work.

[Register here to secure your ticket](#)

WoodTECH 2026 - programmes released / registrations open!

In June 2026 the Australia and New Zealand WoodTECH conference series will bring industry leaders and technical specialists together to network and learn. The focus is on getting the best from advancing technologies. With leading international experts there will plenty on offer. It's all about new ways of improving wood products.

2026 conference sessions will include:

- Sawing technology developments
- Wood treatment product advances

- Kiln drying improvement options
- Wood processing technologies

More details can be found [here](#):



Seminar: Designing and Building Better with Timber

Mid-Rise Wood Construction and the Timber Design Society are co-hosting Designing & Building Better with Timber — a full-day seminar focused on the end-to-end design and construction sequence for mass timber/timber-hybrid projects, and the collaboration required to deliver successfully. Includes expert speakers, practical strategies, and networking.

A great lineup of expert speakers will focus on practical, end-to-end collaboration across the full value chain (architects, designers, engineers, quantity surveyors, contractors, project managers, and construction professions) to deliver successful mass timber and timber-hybrid projects.

Christchurch
Tuesday 21 April 2026
Chateau on the Park

Auckland
Thursday 23 April 2026
Hotel SOHO

Tickets available [here](#)

In the News

Higher fuel costs pressure NZ forestry

Moir said the industry is highly diesel-dependent, requiring about 12 liters of fuel to produce one ton of logs, with contractors facing cost increases of around 25%. "The industry can't sustain that," he said, adding that discussions are ongoing with forest owners and other stakeholders. "It's a perfect storm right now."

https://getfea.com/international-markets/higher-fuel-costs-pressure-new-zealand-forestry-sector?doing_wp_cron=1774899278.5466380119323730468750

USDA announces \$115 million investment in timber production

These investments represent a commitment by the Trump Administration to expand U.S. timber production by 25 per cent, reduce wildfire risk, and save American lives and communities by strengthening domestic wood processing capacity.

<https://www.canadianbiomassmagazine.ca/usda-announces-115-2-million-investment-to-expand-timber-production-and-enhance-forest-health-in-eight-states/>

WIDE Trust – apply for funding towards your wood processing apprenticeship programmes

A promotional graphic for the WIDE Trust. The left side has a light orange background with two orange arrowheads pointing right. The right side has a light grey background. At the bottom, there is a wood grain texture.

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

Mark Ross
Chief Executive
Mark@wpma.org.nz
Mob: 027 442 9965