



# Newsletter

## May 2024



### Message from Mark

It is a freshen up time for the WPMA with the release of our new brand, new projects on the go, Field Days coming up, plus launching of our refreshed website. Through our updated website the overriding aim is to be the future 'go to' hub for the latest news and developments within the wood processing and manufacturing industry.

A key part of our website is the Member News sections - we encourage our members to send through news on the latest industry developments or non-commercial items of interest happening within their business. The 'About Us' section is now fully up-to-date and includes profiles on our current staff and board members. You can access our refreshed website here [www.wpma.org.nz](http://www.wpma.org.nz)

If you are interested in knowing more about WPMA membership, feel free to contact me [mark@wpma.org.nz](mailto:mark@wpma.org.nz)

Mark

### Fast Track Approvals Bill hearings underway

WPMA presented to the Environment Select Committee last Monday to highlight our key points on the Fast Track Approvals Bill. Our core message is on the need to encourage investment and growth for our sector by allowing the government to make faster consenting processing for new and existing builds, plus major infrastructure such as roads and power generation. We also stressed our support for national decision making, rather than regional, as a means of providing certainty to our industry. Hearings will conclude in early June, at which stage the refreshed Bill will head back to the House for further debate and deliberation.

### WPMA signs MoU with the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority

An MoU has been signed between WPMA and EECA to partner on initiatives aimed at decarbonisation of the industry. The intent of this MoU is to provide a framework under which the parties can work together sustainably at both a strategic and operational level. The identified pathways provide tools and resources to help businesses increase energy efficiency and reduce their emissions, while also unlocking a range of company benefits. See [Sector Decarbonisation Programme](#).

## Immigration setting changes likely to place pressure on the industry workforce.

A collaboration involving Forest Industry Contractors Association, NZFOA, WPMA and TIF, has written to the Immigration Minister, Hon Erica Sandford, on the new immigration changes as to the problems they are causing within the industry. Reports from members include uncertainty and worker anxiety. Under the new Accredited Employer Work Visa (AEWV) the total time a worker can stay in New Zealand (also called a maximum continuous stay) on one or more AEWVs has been reduced from 3 to 5 years. When a worker gets to the end of their maximum continuous stay they will need to leave New Zealand for a specified amount of time — normally 12 months — before they can apply for another AEW. In response to our concerns, Minister Standford has reinforced the temporary nature of the AEWV and her appreciation of the difficulties that it may have caused. Further engagement has been sought with the Minister to push for a rethink and input into future policy settings. If your business has been affected by the new immigration rules, please let Mark know [mark@wpma.org.nz](mailto:mark@wpma.org.nz)

## Worker Exposure Standards

WorkSafe is currently engaging with industry on proposals for softwood dust and Isocyanates (used in some polyurethane glues). The proposed levels are half and 200 times lower than the current levels. Industry is concerned about the cost, practicality, and feasibility of achieving these levels. However, these items are currently out of scope when WorkSafe consider Worker Exposure Standards. WPMA does not believe there is robust technical justification for the proposed WES and invites our members to provide feedback and input into our discussions with WorkSafe. Please contact our Technical Manager, Jane Cuming [jane@wpma.org.nz](mailto:jane@wpma.org.nz)

### Proposal Summary

#### Workplace Exposure Standards for Softwood dust

|             | Current             | Proposed            |
|-------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| WES-TWA     | 2 mg/m <sup>3</sup> | 1 mg/m <sup>3</sup> |
| WES-STEL    | -                   | -                   |
| WES-Ceiling | -                   | -                   |
| Notations   | sen                 | sen                 |

#### Workplace Exposure Standards for Isocyanates (CAS: various)

|             | Current                | Proposed                              |
|-------------|------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| WES-TWA     | 0.02 mg/m <sup>3</sup> | 0.0001 mg/m <sup>3</sup> <sup>a</sup> |
| WES-STEL    | 0.07 mg/m <sup>3</sup> | 0.0005 mg/m <sup>3</sup> <sup>a</sup> |
| WES-Ceiling | -                      | -                                     |
| Notations   | dsen; rsen             | dsen; rsen; skin                      |

<sup>a</sup> all isocyanates (mono-, di- and triisocyanates, including prepolymers, present in the workplace air as a vapour, mist or dust) as -NCO.

## European Union Deforestation Regulations – next stages for WPMA

Despite global pushback and requests for delay, at this stage the EUDR will be implemented in late December 2024. To ensure we are prepared WPMA is driving the development of a solution for our members to enable them to meet the new regulatory requirements for exporting wood products to Europe. In 2023 New Zealand exported close to \$100 million in wood products to Europe, with the Netherlands alone totalling \$54 million. Our members see opportunities for further export growth to

Europe, hence our requisite to develop an industry-based solution. Our work is considering the approach and service of FSC, but feedback is that the certification scheme alone will not provide the paperwork need by European officials. With the EUDR, the EU requires specified commodities to be deforestation free, produced in accordance with the relevant legislation of the country of production, and to be covered by a due diligence statement. Contact Mark [mark@wpma.org.nz](mailto:mark@wpma.org.nz) if you are a member and would like to be included in our engagement on EUDR.

### China Timber and Wood Products Distribution Association visit to NZ

The wood industry and MPI jointly hosted a delegation of 14 Chinese leaders from the timber and forestry industries. The visit included a series of roundtable discussions, visits to Scion, wood processors, log exporters, forests, Tauranga port, the new Tauranga City Council build on Davenport Road, and a networking function in Rotorua. The key benefits of the visit included relationship development and highlighting NZ's forestry and wood products industry to potential investors and Chinese timber importers. On-going engagement with CTWPDA will continue, with some identified actions to take forward.



*CTWPDA President Li holding the rākau (speaking stick)*

### Removing barriers to overseas building products policy under development

The new government's commitment for the Building and Construction portfolio includes a proposal to mandate the approval of building materials and product systems that meet international standards equivalent to New Zealand. The purpose of the proposal according to the government is

to help improve competition, lower the cost of building products, and provide greater resilience to supply disruptions. WPMA will be meeting with the Minister for Building and Construction, Chris Penk, in late June to discuss the proposed legislation in more detail and to highlight the benefits of using NZ timber in construction. A copy of the Cabinet documents can be found here:

<https://www.mbie.govt.nz/dmsdocument/28313-removing-barriers-to-overseas-building-products-minute-of-decision>

### **Productivity slowdown (via BusNZ)**

Treasury expects NZ's productivity to grow more slowly than other OECD countries in coming years, citing declining school achievement, higher levels of people in jobs they are underqualified for, and low managerial capability. Other factors that may affect NZ's future productivity include comparatively low investment in technology, not much foreign direct investment, and NZ becoming comparatively less integrated into the world economy as global trade slows. NZ's annual labour productivity growth has averaged only 0.2% over the last 10 years, [Treasury says](#).

### **Field Days, Mystery Creek 12 to 15 June – Forestry Hub - see you there**

WPMA will be at the Field Days as part of the Forestry Hub. This is the first time we have had a stand with a key goal of wider industry engagement and promotion for our members. We hope to see you there and please drop in for a chat.



### [AmCham Awards for exporters to the USA](#)

Entries for the 25<sup>th</sup> Am Cham Awards for companies doing business with the USA close on Thursday 30 May. Applications for the Awards will be required to complete a 3-5 minute video elevator pitch. If you require any other information about entering the 2024 Am Cham awards please contact Mike Hearn, by email [mike@amcham.co.nz](mailto:mike@amcham.co.nz) or phone 09 309 9140.

<https://www.amcham.co.nz/2024-AmCham-DHL-Express-Success-and-Innovation-Awards>

### [WPMA National conference and gala dinner - 3 April 2025 – Hold the date](#)

The WPMA National 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 will be released over coming months.

## In the News

***Zinc borate approved in the manufacture of engineered wood products to control wood-decaying fungi and insects***

<https://www.epa.govt.nz/news-and-alerts/latest-news/pesticide-used-in-building-products-first-to-be-approved-through-new-rapid-assessment-process/>

***The mass timber revolution and hidden impact on our carbon footprint***

<https://architecturenow.co.nz/articles/building-change-the-mass-timber-revolution-and-its-hidden-impact-on-our-carbon-footprint/>

***Forestry seen as a modern investment***

<https://www.nzherald.co.nz/sponsored-stories/forestry-seen-as-modern-investment/2SEYOAW52ZHV7LNNO6LRKEFZ6A/>

***RadioNZ extract: Fast Track Approval Bill hearings***

*Wood Processors and Manufacturers Association spokesperson Mark Ross said the organisation supported the "intent" of the Bill but asked for more clarity on how consenting would be handled and about local representation on expert panels.*

*Overseas investors had "turned their back" on New Zealand due to over-regulation and uncertainty, he said.*