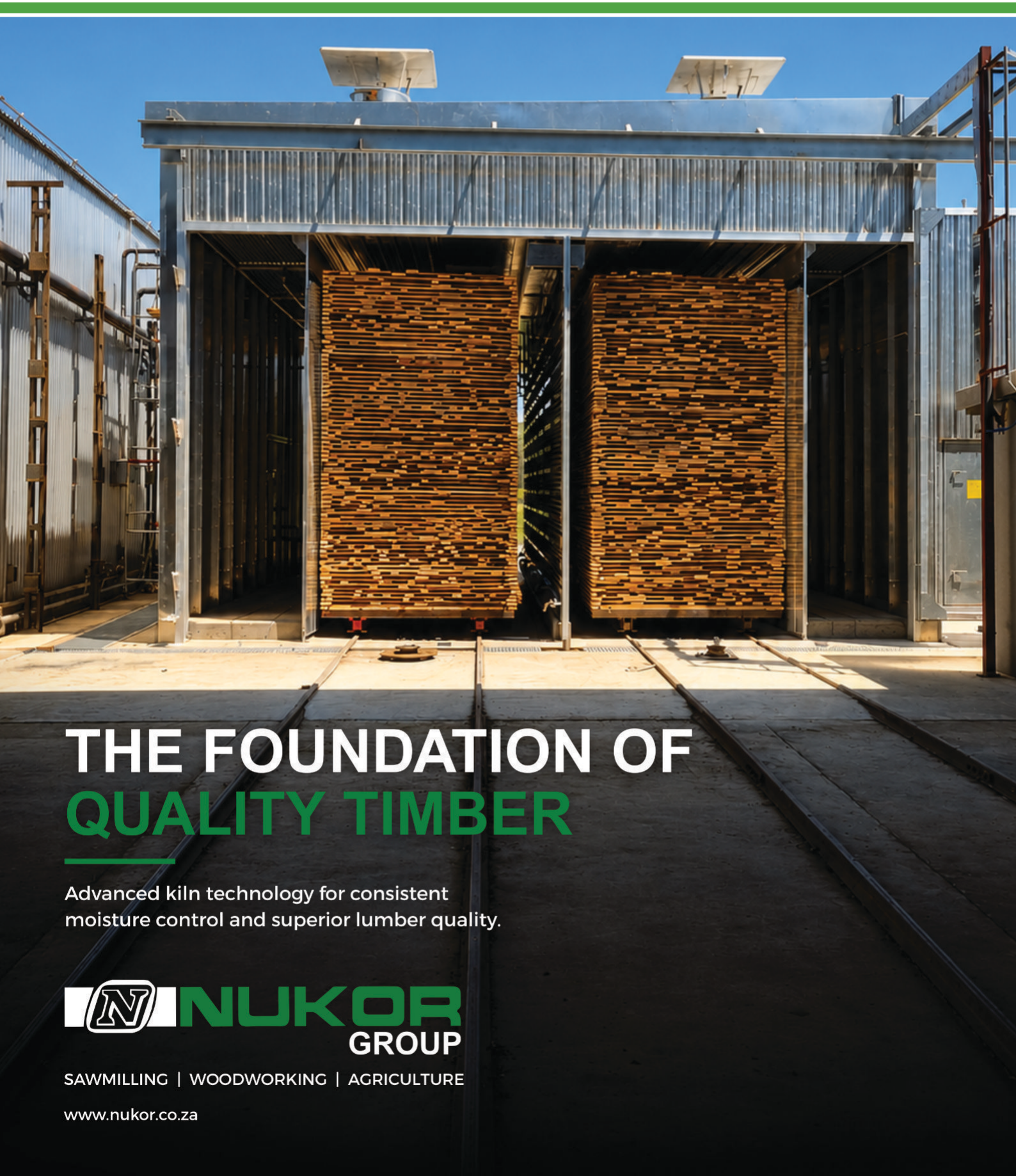
WoodBiz Africa
SA Forestry

JULY 2026
ISSUE 61

Engineered & Structural Timber
Design / Furniture / Kitchens
Boards / Forestry / Sawmilling
Biomass / Treatment / Markets
Certification / Carbon credits





PROMOTING THE USE OF PRESERVATIVE TREATED TIMBER

Commercially grown timber (sawn & round) in South Africa is primarily of Eucalyptus and Pinus species of non-durable varieties (sapwood & heartwood), and susceptible to biological attack by fungal decay and wood destroying insects. To ensure a long service life it's necessary to treat the timber with wood preservatives.

Timber is placed in a pressure vessel and put through vacuum and pressure cycles that allows absorption of the chemicals into the treatable sapwood of the timber and that the penetration and retention of the chosen hazard class is achieved.

CHOOSE THE CORRECT PRESERVATIVE TREATED TIMBER FOR YOUR END APPLICATION (H classes)


H2


H3


H4


H5


H6

HOW TO IDENTIFY COMPLIANT TREATED TIMBER

- Treatment plant identification (ABCTT)
- Certification mark
- SANS Standard number (e.g 457)
- Hazard Class (e.g H4)
- Year of treatment (01 depicting 2001)

POLES (Metal Marker)



SAWN TIMBER (Ink Stamp)



H2 – Low Hazard: Inside above ground (Roof trusses, framing, panelling, laminated beams

H3 – Moderate Hazard: Outside above ground (Cladding, decking, stairs, balustrades)

H4 – High Hazard: In ground contact (Fencing and structural poles, landscaping, pergolas)

H5 – High Hazard: In contact with heavy wet soil or in fresh water (Walkways & jetties)

H6 – High Hazard: Prolonged immersion in marine waters (Marine piling, jetty cross bracing)

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON ANY ASPECT RELATED TO TREATED TIMBER PRODUCTS AND THE CORRECT USE OF TREATED TIMBER OR WHERE TO CONTACT SAWPA MEMBERS, PLEASE CONTACT:

Tel: 011 974 1061 / 078 144 6213 | admin@sawpa.co.za | **www.sawpa.co.za**

SAWPA
South African Wood Preservers Association

WoodBiz Africa SA Forestry

WoodBiz Africa & Southern Africa Forestry Online is a digital business-to-business publication serving the forestry, sawmilling, timber processing, wood products and biomass sectors in Sub-Saharan Africa.

EDITOR
Joy Crane
T: (+27) 082 330 0777
E: joy@woodbizafrica.co.za

ADVERTISING & ACCOUNTS
Mickey Petersen
T: (+27) 082 321 0371
E: mickey@woodbizafrica.co.za

GRAPHIC DESIGN & WOODBIZ AFRICA
Craig Patterson
E: craigpmd@gmail.com

SOCIAL MEDIA & SA FORESTRY ONLINE
Jay Cupido
E: jay@koebanimedia.co.za

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Back in the 1990s, my work took me to the woodworking companies in Knysna's industrial area, including a brief visit to John Tanner and T&B Log Homes. In this issue, Dave Simpson explains how modular design and innovation have helped T&B Group grow into a leading greenfields provider of premanufactured hotels and resorts that welcome tourists across Africa and on exotic shores, including the Caribbean, Maldives, Seychelles and Mauritius.

In our Conversations with Leaders feature, Willie Stander, CEO of the White River Saw Mills Group, talks candidly about the challenges of running an independent sawmill with ageing machinery. Despite these hurdles, the mill increased its productivity and competitiveness over five years, enough to win the Sawmill Improvement Award in Crickmay & Associates' Intermill Comparison.

Getting truck loads right, neither overloading nor underloading, is another headache for forest owners, sawmillers and contractors. We look at the solutions offered by Loadtech and TruckWeight.

We also celebrate women in the industry through a report on the annual She is Forestry SA campaign and on the role that mentoring, reading and open communication play in empowering women in forestry.

Finally, we hear from PG Bison about the anti-dumping application it has lodged with the International Trade Administration Commission of South Africa (ITAC). The company argues that China is dumping MDF into the Southern African Customs Union, which it says constitutes an unfair trade practice and threatens the long-term sustainability of the forestry and board-manufacturing value chains.

Enjoy the read.



Joy Crane
Editor
joy@woodbizafrica.co.za

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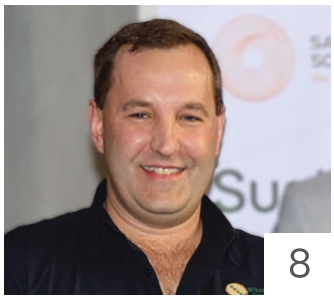
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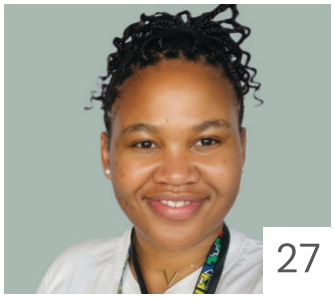
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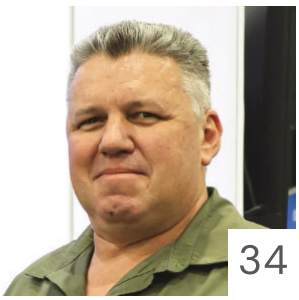
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Knysna's T&B Group provides timber construction solutions to the world's island resorts

Forty-one years ago, a small company was established in Knysna to manufacture handcrafted log homes. Today, the T&B Group's prefabricated building systems remain in demand in South Africa and, through savvy management and product and marketing innovations, are sought after as a turnkey construction partner for exotic tourist destinations such as Mauritius, the Maldives and the Caribbean islands.

By Joy Crane

Founded in 1985 by John Tanner, T&B Log Homes was one of the first construction companies in the Southern Hemisphere to develop premanufactured timber building systems. John invented and patented a method for compressing solid logs under downward pressure to produce premanufactured construction elements.

Enter Dave Simpson, who has been involved with T&B Log Homes for most of its existence. Over 20 years ago, he took over running the company from the Tanner family and, more recently, has been the hands-on CEO.

He is a straight-talking, seasoned South African entrepreneur who has repositioned the company as the T&B Group, integrating patented timber-frame solid-log home products with the innovative REVO post-and-beam and laminated timber infill panels system.

WORLD-LEADING COMPANY

"We are still happy to design and construct a traditional log home, but the secret to our longevity and success is our ability to innovate and embrace changes in demand, which has made us more flexible and adaptable to every possible situation", says Dave.

"Few companies can match our experience in designing and pre-manufacturing timber buildings in our



own factory, managing bulk export logistics, and constructing on-site while providing technical support for timber-based buildings in remote areas. We have always stayed ahead of the competition".

The T&B Group offers a comprehensive range of products, including solid log homes, timber-frame homes, REVO homes, conventional "wet" structures, custom timber designs, tented camps and combinations of these.

For resorts, there are several added-value options, including water treatment and desalination plants, wastewater treatment, various generator and solar power systems and just about anything else a client may need for a project.

The key, Dave says, lies in premanufacturing. "Our goal is to make construction an on-site assembly function".

Trucks deliver precisely machined structural components as needed, and cranes assist the assembly team, making their work safer and keeping the construction site clean and neat. Each team member knows what to do, how to do it and when to do it, all of which contributes to the speed of assembly.

THE REVO EVOLUTION

"We originally designed the REVO system as a low-cost housing solution for Angola. It was designed for on-site assembly using basic power tools such as a cordless drill, screwdrivers and a few basic hand tools. When our resort business began to grow, we realised we could leverage this base system, making it an acronym for Resort & Residential Evolved", he explains. The REVO system has performed well beyond expectations, opening countless new opportunities for the company. It is a "post and beam" system comprising laminated beams and posts, with infill panels of either insulated panels or window or door fixtures. It is supplied, like all T&B products, fully premanufactured, labelled and indexed against the drawings and detailing.



T&B GROUP EST.1985

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—since 1985—



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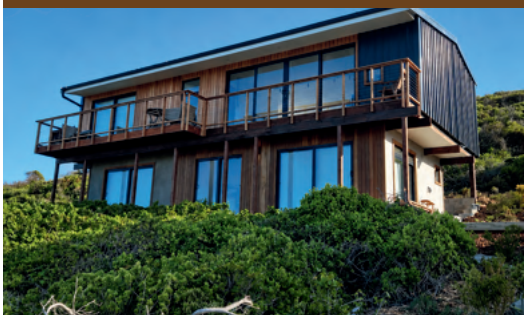
LUXURY LODGES & ECO RESORTS



INTERNATIONAL RESORT PROJECTS



CONTEMPORARY TIMBER HOMES









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For customers handling their own project management and site installation, the modular construction kit is supplied with a comprehensive set of drawings and an instruction manual.

UNLEASHING THE VALUE OF TIMBER

"We have been doing this for decades, making us part of the global timber evolution. Our panels are a form of mass timber, which developers and international governments increasingly specify as a sustainable, carbon-sequestering and environmentally responsible building material", Dave explains.

He is encouraged by the move towards recognising the true value of timber. Up to three decades ago, woodworkers were spoilt for choice with what seemed to be abundant, relatively cheap wood. Waste was not an issue, and the focus was on profit, not costs.

"Our panels were ahead of the curve. Today, almost all wood processors are running recovery lines to optimise and add value to their offcuts".

PRECISION PREMANUFACTURING

T&B's procurement process focuses on locally available materials, such as Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certified SA Pine. All timbers used are pressure-treated to protect against decay and wood-boring insects, in accordance with the relevant SANS (SA National Standards) codes, depending on the application and location of the project site.

However, the company operates in the global market and must keep abreast of modern engineered wood products, coatings, cladding and detailing that are not available in South Africa. T&B defaults to the Rational Design process for highly customised projects that combine, for example, stone, bricks, mortar, steel and timber.

Drawing on decades of experience in remote locations and on logistically challenging projects, they have refined the use of computer-aided design and manufacturing (CAD/CAM) software, robotics and advanced machinery to ensure that each prefabricated module is perfect before leaving the Knysna factory.

"Pre-manufacturing does not mean the product is inferior or design-limiting. Technology is changing everything, and our CNC machines allow our design teams to produce any shape, size, or form you want", Dave says.

MODULAR WINS ON COST AND SPEED

While initial costs may be comparable with traditional building materials, the savings in time, labour and waste give modular construction the edge in overall project costs.

As a building material, wood has natural thermal insulation properties. This means it needs less wall space for insulation than a brick building, and it cuts the cost of installing heavy-duty insulation in the walls.

Interestingly, with timber-frame walls being less bulky than brick walls, there is a gain of approximately one square metre of internal floor area for every seven running metres of external wall length.

Dave says modular methods offer tangible advantages over traditional buildings. Structures can be more resilient, better insulated and



designed with intricate details that would be tough to achieve using conventional methods.

- Speed: Modules can be made 24/7 in a controlled environment, unlike traditional construction, which cannot take place in adverse weather conditions. Installing a prefabricated structure is 30% to 50% quicker overall.
- Cost-efficient. Traditional construction, with its sequential approach, can't compete with the parallel construction processes of modular methods. Modules arrive on site when needed. This isn't just about speed; it's about cost. Reduced labour time means fewer hourly wages and faster project completion, translating into significant savings.
- Environmental sustainability. Modular assembly is environmentally friendly. Excavated foundations are often unnecessary, with strong timber posts in the ground forming the base of the support platform. T&B's construction footprint on the project site is substantially smaller and less invasive than conventional construction.

REMOTE LOGISTICS

T&B Group is known for its luxurious island, beach and mountain resorts in hard-to-develop locations. It specialises in providing every aspect of resort development, from feasibility studies, designs, and market analysis to complete turnkey solutions.

The beauty of the resorts does not, however, reflect the seamless manufacturing, infrastructure development and transport logistics that made them possible. This is another factor that sets T&B apart from its competitors.

"Developing resorts in remote locations presents unique challenges, from logistical hurdles to environmental considerations. Our expertise in managing remote logistics ensures materials and resources are transported efficiently, even to the most inaccessible sites", Dave explains.

T&B excels at hassle-free turnkey services. When entrusted with the entire process, it coordinates all stakeholders, including architects, engineers, and contractors, to deliver a fully operational resort within the specified timelines.

A distinct advantage of premanufactured products in logistics is that only finished products are shipped to the project site, offering significant savings on logistical costs because of the reduced mass and volume of goods to be shipped.

Ensuring the building systems are on site at the right time is usually the biggest challenge, Dave comments.

"We assess each project's needs and develop customised logistics plans. This includes securing permits and clearances, selecting transport methods appropriate to local conditions, such as shallow-draft ships that can deliver at low tide, and accounting for potential obstacles, such as road access for trucks in mountainous regions".

This is where technology and relationships play a large part. "We use advanced tracking systems and work with experienced logistics partners to ensure timely delivery of materials and resources. By leveraging technology and expertise, we can efficiently manage the flow of materials and personnel, keeping the project on schedule and within budget", he says.

MARKETS

The group's resort customers are familiar with engineered timber construction, so it does not have to contend with the misperceptions that timber structures are inferior to traditional building materials.

T&B Group has supplied kits and/or supervised the construction of over 40 hotels, beach resorts, mountain lodges, and fishing and golf estates worldwide. While its success hinges on its technical expertise and the precision pre-manufacture of modular construction elements, marketing is important.

Dave says it is vital to build and maintain relationships and open communication systems. The company is represented on the ground by a network of agents and installers in countries like Trinidad & Tobago, Panama, Australia, Ireland, Spain, Mauritius, Reunion, Mayotte and the Maldives.

Willie Stander, CEO of White River Saw Mills: "Our people are our edge"

How does a sawmill without its own log supply survive Covid, a collapsing structural timber market and soaring input costs driven by load-shedding? For the White River Saw Mills (WRSM) Group, the answer lies in its relationships with people.

By Joy Crane

The group comprises White River and Densa Sawmills in Mpumalanga, which produce 88,000 cubic metres of kiln-dried, Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)-certified structural and appearance-grade lumber each year. They serve their local market, with a small volume exported to Botswana, Namibia and Zimbabwe.

White River Sawmill was founded in 1989 and is located off Sabie Road on the outskirts of the small rural town of White River. Densa Sawmill was acquired in 1993 and is nearer to Mbombela, the province's economic hub.

INDEPENDENT MILLS

Unlike vertically integrated groups, White River and Densa are independent mills without their own plantations. They rely on short-term, five-year contracts with their main supplier, the state-owned Safcol, which accounts for over 90% of their log intake and requires multi-million-rand deposits to secure.

CEO Willie Stander says this limits WRSM's ability to achieve volume-driven growth. "We can't risk making long-term investments in new technologies without securing a longer-term contract of at least ten years, which will let us build cash reserves and see a return before the deposit and supply terms come up again".

The mills are designed to produce 88,000 cubic metres of kiln-dried structural wood products annually. Without the option of volume-driven growth, they are yield-driven instead. However, both mills still run on older



The White River Sawmill senior management team: Top left to right: Willie Stander (CEO), Rico Venter (group engineer) and Carel Jacobsz (sawmill manager White River). Middle left to right: Metsing Maloka (sawmill manager Densa), Shenè Roberts (sales manager) and Karlien Maritz (HR manager). Front: Douw Steyn (CFO). Absent: Kobus Hugo (log procurement manager).

Linck and Mohringer framesaw technology and lack the modern log and board scanners and semi-automated materials handling found at better-capitalised competitors.

"The only way for us to lift productivity is to extract more value from each log by salvaging high-value structural and clear appearance-grade timber. To do this, we need to rely on what we have, and our biggest asset is our people. They are our edge", Willie explains.

PEOPLE ARE OUR EDGE

White River employs 215 people and Densa 340, with turnover low enough that 30-year service awards are



White River Sawmill's Springbok team supporters.



White River Sawmill Manager Carl Jacobsz accepts the sawmill improvement floating trophy from Andrew Crickmay.

common. It was business as usual, Willie says, until 2020. The Covid lockdown was potentially devastating for the group and its employees.

"Fortunately, the industry associations, Sawmilling SA, Forestry SA and the SA Wood Preservers Association assisted the sector in having the forestry and sawmilling industries declared essential services, and we could start up again".

White River's workforce is bussed in from surrounding villages and about 20% live in the staff village, while Densa's employees live close to the mill. Uncertain times, compounded by load-shedding, left the mill managers unsure how employees would react to the onerous compulsory Covid health and safety protocols

"Our staff had to queue up every day for health checks before work could start. We expected complaints or resentment and were surprised that there were none. Instead, everyone wanted to play their part in



The sawmill women celebrating National Womens Day.



Willie Stander CEO of White River Saw Mills.

helping the company to survive. That is when the penny dropped", Willie explains.

"Our track record of employee retention proves that our staff want to work for us. It was time to review communication and relationships and chip away at the 'us and them' barrier associated with large organisations."

What began five years ago has gained momentum.

National days, sporting events, friendly competitions and staff development achievements are enjoyed and celebrated by everyone. The group offers and supports workplace wellness programmes, including courses in teamwork, leadership and personal finance management. Attendance is voluntary, and the programmes are scheduled at different times and intervals to fit people's work schedules.

COMPETITIVENESS

While researchers say SA's sawmills need to upgrade and modernise to remain competitive, WRSM is focusing on managing its tangible and intangible resources. "How do you measure company culture? How do you assign a value to acknowledging people for their dedication, hard work, positive attitudes and team and individual performance?" Willie asks.

Average mill recovery is around 51%, above the industry average of 47.4% for pine sawlogs. Shorter-length material is finger-jointed into saleable structural lengths, and planed flooring, decking and ceiling boards add value to otherwise marginal products while



The White River Sawmill team taking a well earned break from painting White River town kerbs.



The WRSM Group puts health and safety first.

offering customers a wider variety of products.

None of the sawmills' by-products goes to waste. Fibre is sold to the Sonae Arauco board mill and Sappi's pulp mill; dry wood shavings are used by horse and chicken farmers for bedding; bark is supplied to macadamia farmers for mulch; and the remaining biomass fuels the mills' boilers.

"We may have antiquated machines; however, we measure everything. This includes material yield, cycle times, machine productivity, maintenance and breakdowns, tooling and tool changes, and production costs per cubic metre in the wetmill and the drymill. Data analysis is indispensable for staying competitive in the industry," he explains.

WRSM has embraced digital data management. It uses customised apps that have replaced manual paper-based records across stores, maintenance and HR, turning what was often lost, forgotten or hidden in mountains of paperwork into data the mills can act on.

Willie says it wasn't easy to shift mindsets among so many long-serving staff, some with over 30 years at the company. Management had to demonstrate that measurement was a production tool rather than a means of catching people out. "We have had to persuade and educate our staff that capturing real-time data frees them to focus on their core functions rather than waste time on filing."

This data shows that well-maintained equipment lasts longer, consumes less energy, and delivers more consistent results. Willie says, "We have our own sawshop and our preventive maintenance schedules keep unplanned breakdowns low. However, through all of this, we must not forget that it is people operating the machines, changing the blades, chasing throughput and keeping the mills clean and safe".

CUSTOMER SERVICE

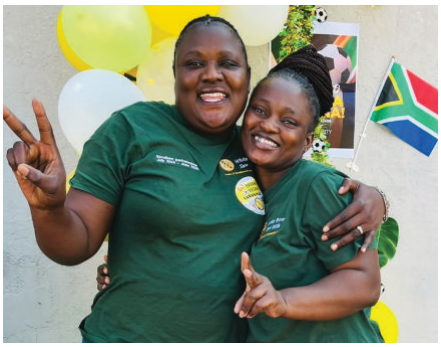
Business is all about relationships. "We are not the cheapest supplier; however, we have loyal customers because they know we are reliable and deliver on time", Willie comments.

"Also, our data analysis goes beyond measuring productivity. We add value by monitoring orders and keeping our resellers informed about changes in market buying behaviour".

SAWMILL IMPROVEMENT AWARD

In June this year, White River received the prestigious Crickmay & Associates Sawmill Improvement Award, which recognises the South African sawmill that improved its productivity and competitiveness between 2021 and 2025. Densa placed among the top 10 runners-up.

"This recognition belongs to every employee whose hard work, expertise and commitment contributed to our productivity improvement over the past five years," Willie concludes.



Supporting Bafana's world cup attempt.



This year the White River team commemorated Mandela Day by painting the walls of the El Roi Clinic.



A stack of pine waiting to enter one of the sawmill's progressive kilns.

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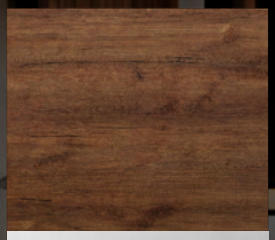
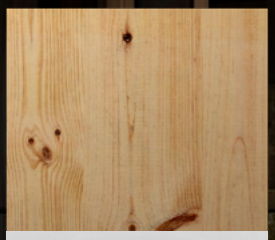
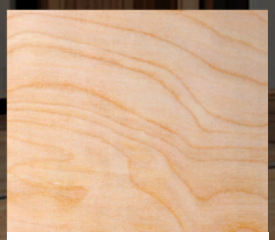

HARDWOODS


FIBRE CEMENT


PINE


CEILINGS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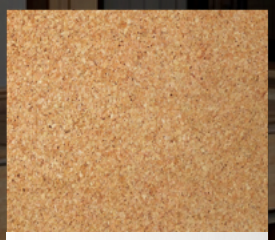
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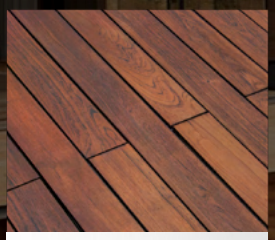
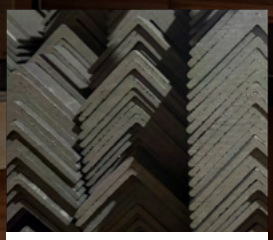

DECKING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Western Cape

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Gauteng

8 Haggies Road, Dunswart, Boksburg, 1508
+27 11 865 1148

Easten Cape

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Arxada restores treatment reliability at York Timbers' Sabie Mill

The relationship between a wood-preservative supplier and a timber treater extends far beyond the supply of treatment solutions. In industrial timber treatment, consistent performance depends on plant condition, equipment reliability, disciplined maintenance routines, and operators who can recognise early signs of trouble.

When technical and maintenance issues at York Timbers Sabie Mill began to affect output, the company turned to Arxada's South African Wood Protection business, a global leader in wood treatment technologies, for support.

"York Timbers faced treatment issues that required expert guidance, so they called on us for help", says JJ du Plessis, Senior Regional Sales Manager at Arxada.

"We approached the problem as a full-system intervention. Rather than repairing faults individually, the team delivered targeted maintenance, operational guidance and hands-on training to restore plant performance and build long-term operational capability", explains Du Plessis.

SYSTEMATIC APPROACH

Each component in a treatment plant has a specific function, and problems with pumps, valves, seals, or moving parts can affect solution transfer, pressure, vacuum levels, or timber movement.

The focus on restoring overall mechanical system reliability rather than addressing issues separately enabled both teams to assess the impact of equipment condition on overall performance. They promptly addressed immediate issues and identified long-term maintenance requirements, which were then incorporated into regular schedules.

ARXADA'S INTERVENTION

Repairing equipment was only part of the solution.



From left - John Schoombie and Robert Fourie of Arxada on the right at the York Timbers treatment plant in Sabie.

Arxada also trained the York Timbers team in the maintenance routines needed to ensure consistent plant performance.

The training covered maintenance scheduling, inspection frequency and the operational requirements of each treatment stage, with particular emphasis on the vacuum, pressure and transfer cycles. These cycles must run in sequence and within defined parameters to ensure the preservative penetrates the timber effectively.

A clearer understanding of how the cycles interact helps operators spot early changes in plant behaviour. A gradual loss of vacuum, difficulty maintaining pressure, or sluggish solution transfer often signals developing mechanical issues. "Problems don't always start with a major failure. Wear on pumps, valves, bearings and seals usually builds gradually. When routine checks are carried out, and early warning signs are recognised, maintenance can be planned before production is affected", explains Robert Fourie, Engineering Co-ordinator at Arxada.

By clarifying what to monitor and when to act, the training encouraged a more preventive approach to maintenance.

BUILDING OPERATOR CAPABILITY

A treatment plant's condition directly affects production reliability. For York Timbers, effective planning depends on knowing that the plant can complete its cycles consistently.

The structured maintenance programme now gives the team clearer visibility of when components require inspection, servicing or replacement. Maintenance can be scheduled around production requirements rather than being triggered by breakdowns.

While not eliminating every risk, this approach reduces avoidable interruptions and helps the team respond more effectively to issues.

"Arxada's support went well beyond product delivery," says John Schoombie, Dryside Production Manager at the mill. "Robert and his team were fast, efficient and professional, and always available for technical assistance. Their willingness to get directly involved in resolving the issues demonstrated a genuine



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For Arxada, this reflects the broader technical relationship it builds with customers: supplying a preservative is only one part of the system. The plant applying it must also be well maintained and properly operated to achieve consistent treatment results.

RELIABILITY AND COMPLIANCE

Plant condition and operational control are also central to meeting the requirements for the South African National Standards (SANS) mark, which gives customers independent assurance that products comply with the relevant national standard.

Maintaining the mark requires ongoing control of the treatment process, equipment, testing, record-keeping and quality systems. If these controls lapse or plant issues result in nonconformances, the right to use the SANS mark can be suspended until compliance is restored. This reinforces the importance of a well-maintained plant and operators who understand the treatment process, recognise early signs of trouble, and act before quality or compliance is compromised.

"Robert and his team provided the qualified supervision and skilled labour required to refurbish, test and recommission the treatment plant. The plant is now fully operational and meets the required engineering standards. SATAS has inspected the plant, audited the treatment process and approved itf", says Schoombie.

RELIABILITY BUILDS CONFIDENCE

The York Timbers project highlights a broader point about Arxada's role in the timber sector.

Supplying wood-treatment products is only one part of the job. Long-term performance depends just as much on the plant's maintenance, the consistency of process control and operators' confidence in managing the equipment.

By supporting rigorous plant performance, strengthening health, safety and environmental compliance, and providing hands-on technical expertise, Arxada helps ensure that treated timber performs as intended throughout its service life. This end-to-end support improves on-site reliability and reinforces timber's position as a durable, low-carbon building material.

Arxada's broader technical involvement also builds confidence across the value chain.

When treatment plants run reliably, records are accurate, and operators understand the process, producers can supply consistent, compliant products. That stability supports environmental responsibility, strengthens customer trust, and contributes to the long-term sustainability of the timber industry.

ENVIRONMENT

African collaboration for African forests

The Great Green Wall Initiative (GGWI) is a flagship project of the African Union (AU) to combat desertification and land degradation in Africa, using tree planting, including reforestation and land restoration.



Initially focused on the Sahel region, it has expanded into other parts of Africa. A recent example is that the government of Ethiopia is working to plant at least eight million trees in Zimbabwe as part of the continent-wide Green Legacy Initiative (GLI), launched by Ethiopia in 2019.

Since that time, Ethiopia's massive tree-planting exercise has resulted in the planting of 47 billion trees. By 2030, the GGWI aims to:

- Restore 100 million hectares of degraded land, roughly the size of Egypt
- Remove 250 million tonnes of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere
- Create 10 million green jobs across Africa
- Improve food security and livelihoods for millions of people in the Sahel.

The project is significantly increasing the restoration rate to meet its 2030 target. Thus far, more than 20 African countries are taking part in the initiative, supported by international organisations, development banks and environmental groups, as well as individual countries outside Africa.

Source: *Monitoring the EU Forest Value Chain Vol II No 9, June 2026*

RAW Modular camp blew me away

Although I had already spent a significant amount of time researching timber housing for my master's research, I arrived at the RAW Modular camp confident I understood timber as a construction material and expecting to deepen my knowledge. Yet the experience exceeded every expectation I had.

By Namhla Phikwa



Celebrating the end of a tough, stimulating and enjoyable learning journey.

The camp gave me a much broader appreciation of timber, not only as a construction material but also as a complete housing solution.

A COMPLETE HOUSING SOLUTION

One of the highlights for me was witnessing the speed of timber construction in real time. Reading about fast construction in journal articles and listening to presentations are one thing, but physically assembling a structure yourself is a completely different experience. It transformed theoretical knowledge into practical understanding.

Another concept that fascinated me was the ability to assemble and disassemble timber components with relative ease, allowing homes to be extended or adapted as families' needs evolve. This flexibility challenges many misconceptions about timber housing and demonstrates just how innovative the material truly is.

THE POWER OF FIRST-HAND EXPERIENCE

Prior to attending the camp, I was already very open to the idea of living in a timber house.



Communication skills were tested.



Namhla Phikwa and her group presented their project to their peers and judges at the camp.



The students learn to use woodworking power and hand tools.

My research had convinced me of many of the benefits of timber construction, so the idea was not unfamiliar to me. However, seeing the different timber house designs in person, particularly the container timber homes, and experiencing how aesthetically pleasing, modern and functional they are, made that openness feel immediate.

Instead of thinking, "One day I would love to live in a timber house," I left the camp thinking, "I would happily move into one tomorrow." That shift surprised me.

It reminded me just how powerful first-hand experience can be in shaping perceptions. My marketing brain never switched off throughout the camp. I kept thinking about how we could encourage more South Africans to embrace timber housing. I began to consider consumer adoption beyond the technical aspects.

EXPERIENTIAL MARKETING

An idea that stands out to me is the potential of experiential marketing to promote timber housing. While communication campaigns are important, I believe consumers would benefit immensely from physically experiencing timber structures.

Imagine temporary display homes in shopping malls where consumers can walk through a timber house, interact with knowledgeable brand ambassadors, ask questions about the material, and even help build a small timber structure themselves.

CAREER-FORMING EXPERIENCE

Reflecting on the RAW Modular Camp, I am asking myself



The RAW Modular camp experience provides students with problem solving skills.



Presentation time.



Each group had to prepare and present models to illustrate their solutions.

- Would I recommend the RAW Modular Camp? Definitely.
- Do I advocate collaboration between architecture and marketing? Most definitely.
- Would I do it again? Most, most definitely.

Finally, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to York Timbers, RAW Modular Design, and everyone involved in making this experience possible. Thank you for investing in students and for creating opportunities that extend far beyond the classroom.

As a master's student researching the adoption of timber housing, I returned from camp with greater technical knowledge and renewed enthusiasm for the future of timber construction in South Africa. It has been an experience I will carry with me throughout my academic and professional life.



BoardTech returns: Where South Africa's cabinetry & furniture industries connect

Following the success of its inaugural event, BoardTech returns on 17–18 September 2026 to Nukor's showroom in Edenvale, Johannesburg, to showcase the latest products, technology, and expertise for the cabinetry, furniture manufacturing, kitchen, joinery, and interior industries.

Designed as a focused industry event, BoardTech offers visitors the opportunity to experience the full production journey under one roof. From live demonstrations of CNC machining, edgebanding, panel saws, and sanding to the latest in boards, veneers, furniture fittings, tooling, software, adhesives, and interior finishing solutions, visitors can compare products, ask technical questions, and explore practical solutions to improve their businesses.

A highlight of this year's event will be the official launch and live demonstration of Nukor's new Softforming Edgebander, offering visitors an exclusive first look at the latest technology for applying decorative profiles and soft-formed edges with speed, precision, and an exceptional finish.

This year's exhibitor line-up includes Nukor, FIT, Roco, Freud, Kayreed, National Edging, Cabinet Vision by Manmade, Pearlman Veneers, *WoodBiz Africa & SA Forestry Online*, and many more, with each company showcasing innovative products, new technologies, and exclusive BoardTech show-day specials available only during the event. Whether you're planning your next machinery investment, sourcing new suppliers, exploring the latest materials, or simply looking to stay ahead of industry trends, BoardTech offers a unique opportunity to connect with leading experts and discover the solutions shaping the future of manufacturing.





Best of all, entry is free, making it accessible to business owners, production managers, designers, installers, and manufacturing professionals across the industry.

See it. Connect. BoardTech 2026 – where the industry comes together.

Nukor is expanding in Africa

Nukor is growing and proud to announce the opening of the Nukor Cape Town branch to reinforce its customer support in the Western Cape.

We are proud to announce the opening of our new Cape Town branch, which strengthens our presence in the Western Cape and brings our products, technical support and industry expertise closer to one of South Africa's fastest-growing woodworking regions. The new branch enables cabinet manufacturers, furniture producers, joinery companies and interior fit-out specialists to access machinery demonstrations, expert advice, spare parts and responsive service without travelling long distances.

This expansion is part of Nukor's broader strategy to support customers across Southern Africa. In addition to our long-established operations in Johannesburg, we have expanded our presence in Motola, Mozambique, increased our support in Kenya, and strengthened our reach in the Eastern Cape through Port Elizabeth. These strategic locations enable us to respond more quickly to customer needs while delivering the same high level of technical support and service that our customers have trusted for over 60 years.

As manufacturers continue to invest in automation, CNC technology, panel processing and solid-wood machinery, local access to knowledgeable specialists and prompt service support has never been more important. Our regional teams work closely with customers to understand their production goals and recommend solutions that improve efficiency, boost productivity and support long-term business growth.

At Nukor, expansion is about more than opening new branches; it's about building stronger partnerships. By investing in regional infrastructure, skilled technical teams and customer support, we remain committed to helping Africa's woodworking industry innovate, grow and compete with confidence for years to come.



PG Bison takes action to support fair trade, local jobs and the forestry value chain

PG Bison has lodged an anti-dumping application with the International Trade Administration Commission of South Africa (ITAC) regarding imports of medium-density fibreboard (MDF) from China, which PG Bison believes are being dumped into the Southern African Customs Union (SACU).

By PG Bison



PG Bison has invested millions of rand in establishing world-class board manufacturing facilities in South Africa.

The application seeks to support fair competition and the long-term sustainability of South Africa's forestry and board-manufacturing value chains.

"As an active contributor to the South African Forestry and Furniture Master Plans, PG Bison is taking this step to support fair, sustainable conditions for investment and growth across the value chain", says Gerhard Victor, CEO of PG Bison.

"Our success is closely linked to that of our customers, including furniture manufacturers, cut-and-edge businesses, resellers and retailers. A competitive local industry enables businesses to invest, develop skills, create jobs and provide customers with reliable choices".

The application forms part of efforts by the broader forestry and board manufacturing value chains to strengthen the competitiveness and resilience of local manufacturing.

It is not intended to restrict legitimate import competition but to support a market in which local and international manufacturers compete on fair terms. Addressing unfair trade has the potential to support confidence in future investment while helping to sustain productive capacity, specialised skills and opportunities across the value chain. PG Bison is backing this position with direct investment. In collaboration with the National Empowerment Fund (NEF) and the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition (dtic), PG Bison is contributing R20 million to the NEF/PG Bison Furniture Industry Fund.

The funding is intended to be invested in qualifying businesses and initiatives that support enterprise development, create opportunities for entrepreneurs and strengthen the resilience and competitiveness of local furniture manufacturers. It will also assist broader industry efforts to



PG Bison is the largest boards manufacturer in South Africa.

combat illicit trade and unfair trade practices across the board and furniture value chains.

PG Bison believes that a strong board industry depends on a healthy, growing downstream furniture industry. The anti-dumping application is therefore not an end in itself but part of a sustained effort to foster industry collaboration.

Victor concludes: "We remain confident in the long-term potential of South African manufacturing and are committed to working with government, customers, industry bodies and manufacturers to promote fair trading conditions, encourage investment and create opportunities for new and existing businesses. A healthy and competitive value chain is in all our interests. We are in this together".



PG Bison's forests employ people from local communities.



Inside PG Bison's manufacturing plant.

ABOUT PG BISON

PG Bison is a leading manufacturer of wood-based panel products in Southern Africa, driven by its purpose of 'Inspiring and enabling beautiful spaces'. The company operates across multiple sub-Saharan African countries, employs more than 2,400 people, and plays an important role in the forestry and furniture value chains. PG Bison is a division of JSE-listed KAP Limited.

ABOUT KAP LIMITED

KAP is a leading industrial group with a diversified portfolio of businesses spanning wood-based decorative panels, polymers, supply chain and operational services, automotive components, sleep products and road safety.

Women's records tumble at US Lumberjack World Championships

Three new women's world records have been set at the Lumberjack World Championships, held in a small United States community known for high-powered sawing, chopping, logrolling, speed climbing and cheers of "Yo-Ho!"



Image generated by ChatGPT.

This year, 66 men and 40 women attended the three-day competition in Hayward, Wisconsin. They represented 16 states and nine countries.

Competitors take their gear seriously with custom-built chainsaws, carefully sharpened axes and single buck saws that can cost upward of $400 (over R6,000) just to sharpen.

Karolina Urbanová from the Czech Republic set world records in two events. She came first in the Women's Underhand Chop, cutting through 11 inches (30cm) of white pine in 21.28 seconds. She also came first in the Women's Standing Chop, cutting through 9 inches (23cm) of white pine in 19.38 seconds.

Meredith Ingbretson of Hayward set a world record in the Women's Boom Run, sprinting across the water and back over eight red cedar logs in 13.78 seconds.

While women have been competing since the inaugural competition in 1960, the events they participate in have expanded significantly, organisers said. They started competing only in logrolling and now participate in more than 20 timber sports events.

"When I started chopping, I chopped with the men", said Nancy Zalewski, a competitor for 27 years who has trained others, including fellow participant Kate Witkowski.

According to the organisation, the tradition of competition among lumberjacks began in the 1890s. The competition is held at the Lumberjack Bowl on the shores of Lake Hayward. In the past, the area served as a holding pond for log drives down the Namekagon River.

The lumberjack theme is ever-present, with children in lumberjack socks, flannels and suspenders, and brands handing out blow-up axes and toy chainsaws. Outside the competition bowl, there are wood-carving demonstrations, log-rolling practice for kids, live music, food trucks and axe-themed events.

"The culture of it, I think, is really wonderful", Witkowski said. "I don't know of any other sports where athletes support each other as we do here, because it's such a niche sport and the gear is so hard to come by that we're all just trying to get better".

Source: nbcnews

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South Africa's bioeconomy represents opportunities for women

> Every day, my role requires me to view our business through two very different lenses. On the one hand, I sit in boardrooms and speak with global investors who analyse our performance using balance sheets, ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance) targets and the hard numbers of the circular bioeconomy. On the other hand, I have never lost sight of what is happening on the ground, because that is exactly where my own journey began.

By Tracy Wessels, Group Head Sustainability and Investor Relations

Over two decades ago, I walked into Sappi's Saiccor Mill as a young graduate with a PhD in Organic Chemistry. Working in research and development and customer technical services, I spent years in laboratories and manufacturing plants learning the intricate science of woodfibre. I discovered how a tree could be transformed into everything from dissolving pulp for sustainable textiles to renewable packaging that helps reduce reliance on fossil-based materials.

That technical foundation shaped my career. It taught me that sustainability is not merely a corporate buzzword or another reporting requirement. It is a living value chain that begins with a seedling in rural South Africa and extends into global markets.

THE BIOECONOMIC BRIDGE

As we celebrate Women's Month, I believe South Africa's bioeconomy is one of the country's greatest yet often overlooked opportunities for women's economic empowerment.

In investor circles, we often discuss the growing demand for renewable, plant-based materials. Yet the true engine of the bioeconomy is not found in laboratories or on stock exchanges. It is found on the land.

Across South Africa's rural communities, women are proving themselves to be entrepreneurs, employers and stewards of sustainable growth. Corporate forestry has an important role in connecting these women to the global economy. The sophisticated demands of international customers must translate into meaningful opportunities through enterprise development, skills transfer, market access and long-term business ownership.



Tracy Wessels.

SAPPI KHULISA

That is exactly what Sappi's Khulisa programme was designed to achieve.

Today, Khulisa supports 4,434 growers and 1,033 contractors, with women accounting for almost half of all independent growers. Since 1995, the programme has delivered more than 5.5 million tonnes of timber valued at R3,565 billion, while providing technical training, subsidised seedlings and ongoing support that enables entrepreneurs to build resilient businesses rather than rely on assistance.

Programmes like Khulisa demonstrate that when women succeed, the impact extends far beyond individual businesses.

We see women investing in education, creating employment, supporting extended families and becoming respected leaders within their communities. Strong businesses translate into stronger households, stronger communities and ultimately a stronger economy.

VISION, RESOURCES AND LEARNING

Whether you are a scientist developing the next generation of biomaterials, an investor evaluating sustainable businesses, a grower managing commercial forestry or an entrepreneur transporting timber across the country, the bioeconomy has a place for you.

My advice to women seeking to build businesses or careers in South Africa's growing bioeconomy is simple: believe in your vision, start with the resources you have, and never stop learning.

The transition to a more sustainable future is already underway. If we are serious about building a resilient, low-carbon economy, we must continue to create opportunities for women at every stage of the value chain, from the laboratory and the mill to the farm, the boardroom and beyond.

When we empower women, we do far more than strengthen individual businesses. We strengthen families, communities and South Africa's future.

Sappi's ESD programme grows businesses



Pinky Mooko of Baleti Estate.

Pinky Mooko, director of Baleti Estate in Mpumalanga, combines forestry with avocado, macadamia, pecan and honey production, while creating permanent and seasonal employment opportunities within the local community.

Through Sappi's Enterprise and Supplier Development (ESD) programme, Baleti Estate received business development support, along with 30 beehives and honey-processing equipment, enabling the business to establish a new income stream while developing additional skills among employees.

Pinky says access to finance, land, equipment, and established business networks in agroforestry industry remains more difficult for women than for many of their male counterparts. Yet she believes that determination, continuous learning, and the right support structures can overcome these barriers, enabling women to build successful businesses that benefit entire communities.

The Power of Words

Mentorship helps women overcome career barriers and build confidence

This year's She Is Forestry South Africa (SIFSA) Women's Day webinar celebrated the second anniversary of its Mentor Me programme, with the theme The Power of Words.

By Joy Crane

The event was hosted by six women mentees: Dr Noxolo Ndlovu, Mfundo Ngcobo, Noxolo Kheswa, Yoliswa Dlamini, Nonku Ntinga and Trudy Sebelebele. They brought personal experience and practical insights to the discussions.

She Is Forestry SA was established in 2020 by Forestry South Africa (FSA) and the Forest Sector Charter Council (FSCC) in partnership with the sector. The annual webinar is relevant to women across the forestry value chain.

In 2025, the Mentor Me five-year programme was launched to break down barriers that prevent women from advancing into leadership roles and to connect them with mentors, female role models and professional development resources.

"Women consistently cite a lack of confidence, experience, limited opportunities and flexibility as the biggest barriers to advancing their careers", says Makhosazana Mavimbela, FSCC Executive Director. "Handing over this year's programme to women who were themselves mentored by women is exactly what Mentor Me was built for".

Dr Kaluke Mawila, Campus Principal at Nelson Mandela University's George Campus, delivered the inspiring keynote address.

SHE IS FORESTRY
Power of Words

THE MENTOR ME TALKS FEATURED:

- Dr Karin Hofer (Research & Development Manager, Gratkorn, Sappi Europe): *Effective Communication in Your Network*
- Cindy Mji (Business Development Manager, Mondi Zimele): *Building a Personal Brand: Creating a Strong Professional Identity and Networking Effectively*
- Tamaryn Whittal-Steynberg (Manufacturing Strategy and Optimisation Manager, PG Bison): *From the Boardroom to the Laboratory: How Motherhood Upgrades STEM Leadership*
- Prof Sanushka Naidoo (Programme Leader of the Forestry Molecular Genetics – EPPI group at FABI, University of Pretoria): *Leadership Styles: Exploring Different Approaches and Embracing Your Own*
- Dr Tatenda Mapeto (Lecturer, Nelson Mandela University): *In Progress: Figuring It Out – Lessons from a Career Still Being Built*
- Sedzani Nemukula (Senior Forestry Regulatory Officer, Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment): *A Career Protecting South African Forests*

SIFSA BOOK CLUB

Dr Katy Johnson of FSA launched the **SIFSA Book Club**. The online book club offers curated reading recommendations for women balancing work and home life, often leaving little time or flexibility for their own development.

Women working in or outside the forestry sector are encouraged to visit the website and find an impactful book to read. You are invited to add your own recommendations, including industry-specific titles, personal development, health and wellbeing, inspirational autobiographies or biographies, or any book you would recommend to a friend.

The Special Guest Speaker in this session was Erika Donker, Head of BEE, at KAP.

GOING BEYOND

The Going Beyond discussion explored ways to develop the next generation of forestry sector role models. Early-career women from across the sector shared the journeys

SHE IS FORESTRY SA SHE IS FORESTRY SA SHE IS FORESTRY SA SHE IS FORESTRY SA SHE IS FORESTRY SA
Mentor Me Initiative


Khosi Mavimbela.

that led them into forestry, a process SIFSA has engaged in since inception. The programme includes videos of the webinar hosts discussing their backgrounds and why they chose forestry as a career. The videos are slowly changing the mindsets of female high school learners and opening them up to the opportunities the sector offers.

During the webinar, Ruth Hicks from the Shaya Izibalo Maths Institute shared how its maths programme provides additional support to learners and teachers in schools across Limpopo, Mpumalanga, KwaZulu-Natal, Eastern Cape and Western Cape, including those supported by SIFSA.

SPONSORS

The following sponsors made this impactful annual event possible.

- Forestry South Africa (FSA) sponsored the webinar while the Forest Sector Charter Council (FSCC) sponsored the webinar hosting.
- The session sponsors were MTO Group, Sappi, Mondi, NCT, SA Wood Preservers Association (SAWPA), Mondi Zimele, Paper & Allied Manufacturers of SA (PAMSA)
- The comfort and lunch break sponsors were SA Utility Pole Association (SAUPA), NCT and the Fibre Processing & Manufacturing Sector Education & Training Authority (FP&MSeta).

The day ended with the revered annual Forestry Sector and Student Awards.

Powerful words from the SIFSA 2026 hosts

The women hosting the She is Forestry 2026 webinar are participating in the SIFSA Mentor Me programme, launched last year. Here are their perspectives on mentorship:


Mfundo Ngcobo.


Noxolo Ndlovu.

MFUNDO NGCOBO (Public Relations and Communication, NCT)
"When SIFSA first approached me to share my story as a role model, I did not think of myself as particularly inspiring, simply as someone working hard and making the most of every opportunity. I believe that growth is never a solo journey and everyone has something to teach and something still to learn"

DR NOXOLO NDLOVU
(Forest Research Scientist, NCT)
"Every hard thing I've pursued has been the direct result of watching a woman I admire do it first. Being mentored allows us to learn from the wisdom and experience of those who have gone before us. Mentoring allows us to invest in the next generation.

Those who refresh others will themselves be refreshed"

NONKULULEKO NTINGA (Nurseries Manager, Mondi South Africa)

"The best mentors are those who continue to be mentored. Mentorship is not always about grand gestures; often it is about being present, opening doors, sharing wisdom, and believing in someone before they fully believe in themselves"

YOLISWA DLAMINI (Management Forester, Sappi Midlands)

"Mentorship is a two-way journey that fosters growth, inspires continuous learning and empowers individuals to achieve their full potential. It teaches us to grow through others' wisdom"

NOXOLO KHESWA (GIS Analyst, Mondi South Africa)

"I am honoured to have a seat at the table to learn and grow alongside seasoned professional women. Mentoring is a platform where we can openly share our authentic journeys and learn from one another. My success is incomplete if the door shuts behind me. Mentoring is about creating inclusive spaces where the next generation of young women can confidently claim their seat at the table"

TRUDY SEBELEBELE (Forest Certification Manager, Sappi)

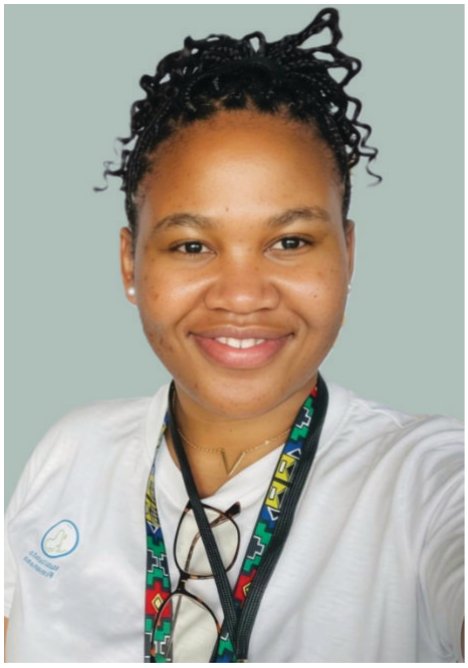
"I believe curiosity and perspective are powerful tools for helping people and the planet thrive, and that individuals who are passionate about their work need to claim their space. She Is Forestry as a powerful platform to extend the reach of this message, inspiring the next generation through our Role Model videos and helping my generation grow into the next."



Nonku Ntinga.



Yoliswa Dlamini.



Noxolo Kheswa.



Trudy Sebelebele.

SHE IS FORESTRY
Power of Words

She Is Forestry 2026 Awards

The prestigious She Is Forestry annual Forestry Sector and Student Awards rounded off an exciting day celebrating women in the forestry sector and South Africa's National Womens Day.

FORESTRY SECTOR AWARDS

RESOUNDING CONTRIBUTION TO FORESTRY SECTOR AND FOREST PRODUCTS VALUE CHAIN

Sponsored by NCT

Winner: Sanelisiwe Mbense, Silviculture Forester at Mondi.



ANGEL SIBISI

DISTRICT MANAGER FOR RICHARDS BAY

NCT

Angel Sibisi is recognised for exceptional leadership during the 2023 Richards Bay mill fire, where she coordinated logistics, teams and stakeholder communication under pressure. As the first woman named SAIF Forester of the Year, she represents resilience, service and trailblazing leadership, inspiring greater inclusion and excellence across South African forestry.

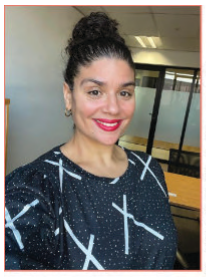


ANTOINETTE DE WET

RISK SUPERINTENDENT

SAPPI FORESTS

Antoinette de Wet is recognised for transforming safety culture through authentic leadership, practical training and deep personal engagement. Her work has contributed to major reductions in injuries and record safety performance. She connects with people at every level, driving ownership, innovation and care across forestry operations, teams and communities.



ILSE BOTMAN

GENERAL MANAGER: CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE

SAFCOL

Ilse Botman is nominated for transforming forestry operations through mechanised harvesting, improved safety and increased efficiency. She has opened pathways for women in technical forestry roles by championing training and upskilling. Her leadership combines innovation, empowerment and operational impact, making her a powerful role model for women across the value chain.



JUDY DOWSETT

FSA PIETERMARITZBURG OFFICE MANAGER

FORESTRY SOUTH AFRICA

Judy Dowsett is recognised for four decades of dedicated forestry service, including twenty years supporting FSA and its members. Her organisational skill, institutional knowledge and warm professionalism make her indispensable. She coordinates major meetings, supports communications and strengthens relationships across the sector, ensuring FSA members' needs are efficiently



DR KANYANTA CHIPANTA

YORK CHAIR

UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

Dr Kanyanta Chipanta is recognised for advancing timber construction through international expertise, research and practical demonstration projects. She leads training camps, live builds and prototype housing initiatives that promote timber as a sustainable construction material. Her work bridges architecture, research, education and community delivery, strengthening timber innovation in Southern Africa.



KHETHUKUTHULA SHOZI

SAPPI RICHMOND NURSERY GROWER

SAPPI HEAD OFFICE

Khethukuthula Shozi is nominated for her vital contribution to nursery production and plant quality, supporting the foundation of the forestry value chain. Through innovation, staff development and strong operational management, she helps produce millions of healthy seedlings annually, supports rural employment and strengthens sustainable forestry from its earliest stage.



SANELISIWE MBENSE

SENIOR SILVICULTURE FORESTER

MONDI SOUTH AFRICA

Sanelisiwe Mbense is nominated for outstanding silviculture leadership, operational excellence and commitment to developing future forestry professionals. She has led award-winning teams, mentored numerous young foresters and championed women's advancement through inclusive leadership initiatives. Her contribution combines technical excellence, mentorship and transformation across Mondi and the wider forestry sector.

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RESOUNDING CONTRIBUTION TO FORESTRY SCIENCE

Sponsored by SAWPA
Winner: Dr Nicky Jones, Programme Leader – Tree Biotechnology at Sappi



DR NICKY JONES

PROGRAMME LEADER TREE BIOTECHNOLOGY

SAPPI HEAD QUARTERS

Dr Nicky Jones is nominated for over thirty years of contribution to forestry biotechnology, propagation and tree improvement. Her work has advanced Eucalyptus and pine deployment, disease research, genomics integration, conservation and mentorship. She has translated specialist science into practical forestry benefits while developing future scientists and women leaders.



GABRIELA CARZOLA

PROCESS ENGINEER IN TRAINING

UNIVERSITY OF STELLENBOSCH

Gabriela Carzola is recognised for research into converting pulp and paper mill residuals into slow-release nutrient products for plantation forestry. Her work supports circular bioeconomy principles, reduces waste and improves nutrient-use efficiency. By linking engineering and forestry science, she offers practical solutions with environmental and economic benefits.



YASMIN DE RAAY

MASTER'S STUDENT IN INDUSTRIAL ENGINEERING SPECIALISING IN AGRITECH

PAMSA

Yasmin de Raay is recognised for developing a low-cost automated root phenotyping system for forestry research. Her prototype uses affordable technology and machine learning to capture and analyse root growth with high accuracy. The innovation supports better irrigation, fertilisation, tree selection and plantation resilience, making forestry science more accessible and scalable.



YOLANDI ERNST

SENIOR LECTURER / GLOBAL CHANGE INSTITUTE

FORESTRY SOUTH AFRICA

Dr Yolandi Ernst is nominated for her multidisciplinary forestry science leadership, particularly in climate resilience. She leads collaborative research teams, teaches across academic and stakeholder audiences and contributes to complex sector programmes. Her systems-thinking approach, publication record, mentoring commitment and work ethic make her a respected scientific contributor to forestry research.

RESOUNDING CONTRIBUTION BEHIND THE SCENES

Sponsored by Sawmilling SA
Winner: Precious Singo, FSA Office Administrative Assistant, Gauteng.



CHANE NEL

ICFR ADMINISTRATOR

ICFR

Chane Nel is recognised for more than two decades of dedicated service to forestry through ICFR. Her work spans technical, administrative, business support and germplasm distribution functions. Known for reliability, integrity and broad institutional knowledge, she quietly enables research delivery and stakeholder support, making her a valued behind-the-scenes contributor.



HAZEL BANDA

GENERAL MANAGER

SAFCOL

Hazel Banda is nominated for advancing transformation, inclusion and enterprise development in forestry. Her leadership helped SAFCOL achieve its first B-BBEE Level 1 status and strengthened opportunities for black-owned enterprises, women, youth and emerging contractors. She has positioned transformation as a driver of sustainable, representative forestry sector growth.



LINDA NEEDHAM

CONTRACTOR – CERTIFICATION FACILITATOR

TWK AGRI

Linda Needham is recognised for helping farmers achieve FSC and PEFC certification through the VBP platform. Her practical guidance, persistence and technical support have strengthened sustainable forestry practices, improved market access and increased environmental stewardship. Her behind-the-scenes work has had measurable impact across TWK Agri's farming community.



NADI MVAKADE

RISK OFFICER FOR THE RESEARCH PLANNING AND NURSERIES DEPARTMENT

SAPPI HEAD OFFICE

Nadi Mvakade is recognised for strengthening risk management across Sappi's research and nursery operations in Mpumalanga and KwaZulu-Natal. She supports employees and contractors with compliance, safety observations, incident follow-up and hazard management. Her determination, compassion and integrity make her a trusted safety role model.



NATASHA CLUCKIE

SENIOR LEGAL COUNSEL

NCT FORESTRY

Natasha Cluckie is recognised for her vital behind-the-scenes legal and governance contribution at NCT. As Senior Legal Counsel, she ensures integrity, compliance and sound decision-making across the organisation. Her trusted guidance supports business continuity and sector success, demonstrating the importance of professional support functions in forestry.



PRECIOUS SINGO

FSA OFFICE ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT - GAUTENG

FORESTRY SOUTH AFRICA

Precious Singo is nominated for her quiet but indispensable contribution to FSA's Gauteng office. Rising from cleaner to receptionist and administrative assistant, she now supports daily operations and finance functions, including audit preparation. Her journey reflects dedication, self-development, reliability and the importance of behind-the-scenes work that enables others to succeed.

RESOUNDING CONTRIBUTION BEHIND THE SCENES (CONTINUED)



THOBEKILE MKHIZE

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

MONDI SOUTH AFRICA

Thobekile Mkhize is nominated for leading community investment, land reform and rural development initiatives that integrate communities into forestry value chains. Her work has supported food production, livelihoods and stakeholder partnerships across many villages. Her national recognition for food security leadership reflects her impact on inclusive, sustainable rural development.



ZAPHESHEYA LUTHULI

COMMUNITY SERVICES OFFICER KZN MIDLANDS

SAPPI FORESTS

Zaphesheya Luthuli is nominated for exceptional stakeholder engagement, community development and youth inspiration. She connects schools, communities, research centres and industry partners, exposing learners to forestry careers and strengthening Sappi's social licence. Her work promotes education, enterprise development, stakeholder stability and future talent for the forestry sector.

SMALL SCALE ENTERPRISE AWARD

Sponsored by Mondi Zimele

Winner: Dumisile Caroline Vumase. She joined the Sappi Khulisa Programme in 2005 with only four hectares of Eucalyptus. Through determination and a willingness to continuously learn, she has expanded her forestry area to 105 hectares.



DUMISILE CAROLINE VUMASE

SMALL SCALE GROWER

SAPPI

Dumisile Caroline Vumase is nominated for growing from a four-hectare timber farmer into a diversified 105-hectare forestry enterprise through the Sappi Khulisa Programme. She mentors other growers, pursues certification, creates local employment and has diversified into macadamias, showing resilience, entrepreneurship and community-focused rural development.



HLEZIPHI SIBONISIWE MDAMBA

COMPANY SIMUNYE 107 PTY LTD

MONDI

Hleziphi Sibonisiwe Mdamba is nominated for her remarkable journey from timber debarker to owner of Simunye 107, a certified timber harvesting contractor. Her business supports small-scale growers, employs local people and meets FSC and PEFC standards. Her perseverance, community impact and sustainable entrepreneurship exemplify women's leadership in forestry.



MS NOMPUMELELO NGOBENI

SMALL SCALE GROWER

SAPPI SOUTHERN AFRICA

Ms Nompumelelo Ngobeni, owner of Phumi's Forestry, is recognised for leadership, resilience and contribution to South Africa's forestry sector. Through safe harvesting operations, rural job creation, strong business growth and women's empowerment, she demonstrates excellence in productivity, safety management and sustainable development across the forestry value chain, inspiring others daily.



NOSIPHO VAVA

ICFR SUPPLIER

IMPROVED SEED SOLUTIONS

Nosipho Vava is recognised for building Improved Seed Solutions into a trusted forestry service business after more than twenty years in the sector. Her expertise in seed orchard management, strong work ethic and entrepreneurial leadership have created employment and supported ICFR services, while inspiring others through resilience and determination.



RALLY MOROPA

SAFCOL CONTRACTOR

SAFCOL

Rally Moropa is recognised for developing a sustainable women-owned forestry business through SAFCOL's enterprise and supplier development support. Her company has achieved strong safety grading, expanded assets, diversified into occupational health and training, and supported other women-owned enterprises, demonstrating growth, resilience and meaningful transformation in forestry



THANDI CYNTHIA MOKOENA

SMALL-SCALE GROWER

GOVERNMENT

Thandi Cynthia Mokoena is nominated as a respected small-scale forestry entrepreneur in Mpumalanga. She owns and manages a productive timber plantation, maintains a business relationship with Sappi Ngodwana and participates in provincial forestry structures. Her resilience, commitment and contribution to sustainable provincial forestry make her a deserving enterprise nominee.

SHE IS FORESTRY SA SHE IS FORESTRY SA SHE IS FORESTRY SA SHE IS FORESTRY SA SHE IS FORESTRY SA *Mentor Me Initiative*

STUDENTS AWARDS

UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT AWARD

Sponsored by Sappi

Winner: Emihle Sobekwa, a student completing her Diploma in Forestry at Fort Cox Agriculture and Forestry Training Institute.



BUSISIWE MONICA MHLONGO

BSC FORESTRY SECOND YEAR

UNIVERSITY OF MPUMALANGA

Busisiwe Monica Mhlongo is nominated for resilience, academic excellence and determination to pursue forestry despite financial and personal challenges. After changing from physics to her true passion, she achieved eight distinctions and a merit award. Her curiosity, tutoring role and commitment show strong future potential in forestry.



GRACIOUS MARSHAL KHOZA

FINAL YEAR BACHELORS OF FORESTRY

UNIVERSITY OF VENDA

Gracious Marshal Khoza is recognised for academic excellence, leadership and research potential as a final-year forestry student. Her achievements include a Vice-Chancellor's academic award, practical exposure to forestry operations and participation in the **FOREST21** initiative. She demonstrates innovation, resilience and promise as a future female forestry leader.



KOKETSO CHOENYANE

ADVANCED DIPLOMA IN FORESTRY

NMU

Koketso Choenyane is nominated for balancing full-time forestry studies, part-time work and practical industry experience with Sappi. She also supports fellow students as a tutor and supplementary instruction leader. Her discipline, resourcefulness and commitment to mentorship demonstrate strong potential to contribute positively to forestry and student development.



SOBEKWA EMIHLE

DIPLOMA IN FORESTRY THIRD YEAR

FORT COX

Sobekwa Emihle is recognised for her dedication to forestry studies, leadership and community environmental work. Inspired by tree planting, soil rehabilitation and climate awareness, she has served as class representative, forestry club member and youth educator. Her passion for sustainable forestry makes her a strong undergraduate role model.

POSTGRADUATE STUDENT AWARD

Sponsored by PAMSA

Winner: Sandisiwe Langman, BSc Honours student in Natural Resource Management (Forestry) at Nelson Mandela University.



ELOSY KATHAMBI

DOCTORAL CANDIDATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF CIVIL ENGINEERING

UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

Elosy Kathambi is recognised for doctoral research into the mechanical properties of South African pine, strengthening confidence in local timber performance. Her work supports improved grading, export potential, engineered timber development and value addition. She also contributes actively to industry engagement through the York Timbers Chair.



NONKULULEKO POSWA

ICFR POSTGRADUATE STUDENT

ICFR

Nonkululeko Poswa is recognised for academic resilience and impactful research into biological control of wattle rust. As the first in her family to achieve postgraduate success, she completed her MSc with distinction and now pursues PhD field trials. Her work offers sustainable pest management solutions for disadvantaged growers.



PHOZISA DLOKWENI

PHD CANDIDATE

TIPWG

Phozisa Dlokweni is nominated for outstanding postgraduate leadership, resilience and professionalism. Her PhD explores precision forestry approaches to herbicide application monitoring, addressing an important operational gap. Despite personal loss and funding challenges, she has excelled academically, communicates strongly with industry and represents the future of innovative South African forestry.



SANDISIWE LANGMAN

POSTGRADUATE

NMU

Sandisiwe Langman is nominated for combining industry experience, academic excellence and student support. After working as a Sappi Silviculture Forester, she returned for Honours research on Eucalyptus yield improvement. A cum laude graduate, tutor and class representative, she demonstrates maturity, dependability and strong future industry potential.



STACY MARINUS

MSC STUDENT

STELLENBOSCH

Stacy Marinus is recognised for innovative MSc research into how leaf traits influence Eucalyptus pest interactions. Her interdisciplinary work combines physiology, chemistry, hydraulics and entomology to improve plantation health understanding. Her curiosity, field dedication, humility and leadership qualities make her an inspiring ambassador for young women in forest science.

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Kleiberit launches HotCoating for SA's decking market

Visitors at the Kleiberit stand at WoodEx for Africa 2026 in June, were impressed by the company's durable, attractive, digitally printed HotCoated exterior surfaces, engineered to withstand the challenges of South Africa's varied climate.

By Joy Crane



Bradly Larkan and Marnus Ferreira-Netto of Kleiberit at WoodEX 2026.

Bradly Larkan and Marnus Ferreira-Netto talked me through the product, which is a logical extension of Kleiberit's popular hot-coating technology, taking performance up the ladder. Bradly is Kleiberit's General Manager UK & Ireland, Vice President USA & Canada, and Marnus is Kleiberit's South African Sales Manager.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

Bradly says Kleiberit HotCoating enables design and digital printing applications for decking while meeting demanding requirements, including anti-slip properties, UV stability, and resistance to water, heat, cold, and abrasion.

"For decades, Kleiberit has supplied products for indoor applications and has built extensive expertise in this field. By combining HotCoating with UV varnish, the transparent coating system protects both the substrate and the pigments from weathering", he explains.

The system is based on an optimised chemical formulation with tailored additives and complies with global industry standards.

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ADVANTAGES

- extremely high abrasion and impact resistance (well above AC5 achievable)
- embossed textures (Impress Touch)
- warm, soft touch and chemical resistance
- ideal for combination with digital printing
- suitable for outdoor decks and heavy-duty applications

PROPERTIES OF THE HOTCOATING SURFACE



MORE INFORMATION

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"On a flat surface, Kleiberit first digitally prints the decorative pattern, then applies the hot-coat and finally the UV-resistant top-coat. This produces a dense, durable, and scratch-resistant surface".

For vertical surfaces and profiles, where a flat HotCoating process can't follow the shape, Kleiberit partners with PVC foil suppliers to deliver the same finish and performance to facades and other vertical elements.

DESIGN FLEXIBILITY

Marnus says, "It means a manufacturer can offer a consistent look and warranty whether they're coating a flat deck board or wrapping a window profile".

There's also a textural element built into the process itself. Kleiberit can apply anti-scratch and embossed textures during HotCoating, rather than relying solely on the topcoat for protection. With digital printing, the hot-coat, and the textured topcoat, manufacturers have one core technology that spans furniture, flooring, and now exterior applications.



Kleiberit HotCoating produces high-performance surfaces and durable finishes for outdoor applications.

DURABILITY

HotCoated surfaces exceed AC5, the toughest wear-and-tear rating used in the flooring industry and designed for heavy commercial traffic. Meeting AC5 outdoors, where UV exposure and weather cycling add a layer of punishment that indoor flooring never has to deal with, is what makes our exterior range exceptional.

"For an industry where timber decking usually means a maintenance calendar of sanding, oiling and resealing, a factory-applied finish with a multi-decade warranty changes the conversation", Marnes says.

Bradly explains, "This isn't a product developed specifically for South Africa. It's an established Kleiberit process used around the world, now being introduced to local decking, flooring and facade manufacturers who want to offer customers a genuinely low-maintenance outdoor product".

It follows on from *WoodBiz Africa's* coverage of Kleiberit's structural adhesive systems in its January 2024 issue. That story focused on the structural side of the business, with Marnus discussing the company's role in mass timber assembly and finger-jointing. This one is about the surface, and the message from the Kleiberit stand was that it's time to take the inside outside.

Post-fire recovery is about more than mopping up

Wildfires don't begin with dramatic flames racing across the landscape. They start quietly, with a single spark or ember that ignites dry grass, overgrown vegetation, and accumulated fuel, waiting for the right conditions.

And while landowners know that the best firefighting tool is good preparation to reduce impact, nature still plays a powerful role. Lightning strikes can start them, while strong winds can drive their spread and increase the level of damage left behind.

But what follows once the last flame has been doused is just as critical as the firefight itself. Whether it's a farm, reserve, agricultural holding or forest plantation, the decisions made in the hours, days and weeks after a wildfire can shape the land's recovery and



Clearing saws and brush cutters are indispensible tools for managing post-fire regrowth.

resilience when the next fire season arrives.

Restoration extends well beyond the clean-up. It is widely recognised in land management practice as a long-term process, with full ecological and structural stabilisation often taking multiple seasons depending on the severity and conditions.

Divan Vermaak, Veld Management Specialist at Husqvarna, explains, "This process should be seen as an extension of good land management rather than the final stage of a wildfire event".

SAFETY FIRST

Emphasis now shifts from emergency response to restoring the affected area to a safe, functional environment. "But before that takes place, a careful assessment of the affected area should be carried out to reduce risks and allow work to proceed safely," advises Vermaak.





Access routes must be inspected and cleared after a wild fire.

"These precautions are vital, as post-fire environments present ongoing dangers".

Fallen trees and branches are a major post-fire hazard. Burning and smouldering root systems can remain unstable for weeks or even months, and infrastructure damage is often hidden beneath surface-level charring. He emphasises that using personal protective equipment (PPE) is therefore essential in such environments, particularly where ash, debris, and unstable vegetation remain.

RESTORING ACCESS

For landowners and managers, one of the critical priorities is restoring access. Fallen trees and scorched vegetation can block main access and boundary routes, making it difficult to reach critical infrastructure and delaying recovery.

Removing these obstacles helps reconnect the area, enabling damage assessment, repairs to begin and essential operations to resume. It also restores access to infrastructure that may require immediate attention. Internal roads should be inspected to ensure they are safe before deploying heavy equipment. In the immediate aftermath of a wildfire, safeguarding water systems is also vital. Rivers, dams, boreholes, and reservoirs should be inspected for ash, sediment, or chemical contamination, and catchments protected against soil erosion and runoff to maintain clean water supplies.

Culverts, fences, power lines, and structures need to be assessed for fire damage. Addressing these essentials, once conditions allow, ensures that recovery work can proceed safely and effectively.

MANAGE REGROWTH

"Surprisingly, the land begins to green again rather quickly", notes Vermaak. "This regrowth is a natural response, but if left unchecked, it brings new challenges. Fire clears native vegetation and exposes bare soil. This creates ideal conditions for invasive species to establish rapidly, particularly along boundaries, roadsides and other disturbed areas, which can also alter the area's biodiversity and ecosystem resilience".

Managing it early with brushcutters or clearing saws keeps new growth from becoming too dense, maintaining visibility, and reducing fire risk. It also helps reduce soil erosion, promotes natural recovery, and limits the build-up of dry material that could fuel future fires in hot, dry conditions.

RESILIENCE

Each fire also teaches valuable lessons about how the land responds under pressure. Where firebreaks held or proved inadequate, how wind and topography shaped the spread, where access was restricted, and where vegetation contributed to the fire's intensity.

"Recovery doesn't end when the clean-up is complete. It continues as the environment re-establishes itself and adapts. It is part of a continuous cycle of responsible land management that extends well beyond a single event. And by tackling hazards early and managing regeneration, landowners and managers can improve resilience for future fire seasons", Vermaak concludes.

Wood-Mizer expands its network in West Africa

Wood-Mizer Africa has expanded its dealership network across the continent to include Senegal, the westernmost country on the African continent. Senegal shares borders with several countries, including The Gambia, and is an important West African economic hub.



Sawmillers celebrating a new Wood-Mizer in Senegal.



The friendly staff of Diaw Ibrahima, the Wood-Mizer Africa dealer representative in Senegal.

Senegal has an estimated population of around 19,5 million and about 6 million hectares of classified forest, most of it in the country's southern Casamance region.

Logging is strictly regulated, and forestry activities are administered by the state because of the scourge of illegal logging. Harvesting of hardwoods such as rosewood and mahogany is heavily restricted, closely scrutinised, and frequently targeted by military crackdowns on illicit trafficking.

The sawmilling trade in Senegal is organised into loose sawmilling associations, grouped into sawmilling and timber-processing hubs.



The components for this piece of furniture was cut on a Wood-Mizer.

The Pikine sawmilling compound in Dakar and the Lagal compound in Kaolack are busy crossroads where sawmillers, merchants and manufacturers trade and barter for the best deals.

The controlled log supply means sawmillers must maximise their use of available timber. Local sawmillers are opting for Wood-Mizer's narrow bandsaws because they are an affordable modern technology that wastes less than the older circular and wide bandsaws.

The quality of the boards produced by sawmills equipped with Wood-Mizer saws makes them preferred by neighbouring retailers and remanufacturers. This benefits the value chain by allowing them to keep their production costs lower and their profits higher.

Wood-Mizer's dealership in Senegal is led by Moustapha Diaw, who runs an independent network of new machine sales, training, after-sales service support, technical advice, spares and distribution across Senegal, known as Diaw Ibrahima.

Moustapha is also a sawmiller and therefore understands the value of good service. The dealership is supported by Fred Kapenda, Wood-Mizer's Area Manager for French-speaking Africa.



Moustapha Diaw receives a dealership plaque from Wood-Mizer's corporate director for emerging markets, JJ Oelofse.

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Deloitte Africa and Refuel alliance digitises SARS diesel refund claims

Deloitte Africa and Refuel have announced a "tech plus tax" strategic alliance to help businesses successfully claim their diesel rebates via the South African Revenue Service (SARS) diesel refund system.

As SARS moves its diesel refund system to a dedicated digital platform, heavy-industry players risk losing millions in rejected claims due to manual logbooks and fragmented data

By pairing Refuel's fuel-tracking technology with Deloitte's tax platform, the system captures fuel data in the exact format required for SARS compliance, thereby securing vital working capital while curbing fuel theft.

Historically, diesel rebates of up to R3,82 or more per litre have been a vital source of working capital for heavy-industry players. However, many businesses still rely on manual logbooks and fragmented reporting. As a result, claims are rejected for missing or inaccurate data, and companies risk penalties for non-compliance.

Until now, fuel management technology and SARS tax expertise have operated in silos. The Deloitte Africa and Refuel collaboration brings them together to ensure that operational fuel data is captured in the exact format the tax team needs to substantiate claims.

"SARS is modernising the system to improve compliance and create a faster, more transparent refund process for businesses", says Refuel CEO Ricky Luntz.

Intended to streamline validations and improve transparency, the move offers businesses an opportunity to digitise their systems and move away from manual logbooks. They stand to have their claims paid out faster if they provide data that SARS can trust.



Ricky Luntz.

TRACKING FUNCTION

Deloitte Africa's DESMAT platform enables effective management of compliance information, while Refuel's fuel management data is integrated into calculated claims.

Standard systems typically track fuel only at the point of pour, whereas Refuel's proprietary hardware and software track fuel levels and run hours per asset for each activity session.

This enables businesses to clearly distinguish between fuel used for primary rebate-eligible activities and diesel used in non-eligible tasks. This data is then integrated into Deloitte Africa's platform to produce substantiated claims that meet the new reporting structures.

"This automated solution aligns with SARS' digital upscaling objectives by standardising claim workflows and elevating record-keeping standards across the diesel rebate lifecycle," says Olebogeng Ramatlhodi, Deloitte Africa's Indirect Tax Leader.

"Improved data integrity and real-time processing not only reduce exposure to errors and penalties but also enhance audit readiness, demonstrating that technology is central to modern tax compliance".

Refuel is a South African technology-led energy company dedicated to modernising the fuel industry through digitisation and transparency. Deloitte provides audit, consulting, tax and advisory services to many of the world's most admired brands, including nearly 90% of the Fortune 500 and over 9,000 US-based private companies.

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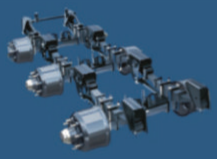
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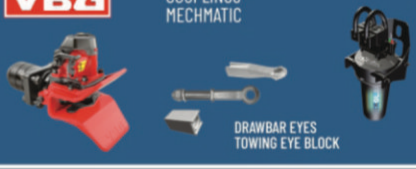

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Precision transport to maximise efficiency

South Africa's forestry industry runs on efficiency, and every load that moves from plantation to mill must cross difficult terrain to get there. Harvesting methods keep improving, but transport remains one of the sector's biggest levers for profitability, safety and sustainability, and one of the hardest to get right without accurate data at the point of loading.



In 1987, the South African company Loadtech began manufacturing loadcells and designed and supplied the first onboard weighing systems in the local timber industry in 1989.

Today, most professional forestry operators and several dedicated smaller business owners have fitted weighing systems to their trucks to prevent over- and underloading.

All trucks and trailers are manufactured to carry a specific maximum load. An onboard weighing system is an essential tool for log and timber transporters because it lets the driver monitor and control the weight and its distribution during the loading process. This ensures that the truck carries a full legal load within its operating limits on each trip.

UNIQUE TRANSPORT CHALLENGES

Unlike most bulk commodities, timber doesn't behave consistently. Species, age, moisture content, humidity and growing conditions all shift the final weight of a load, which means a truck that looks identical to another can be several tonnes over the legal limit.

That variability is why Loadtech builds its systems specifically for industries where payload accuracy makes or breaks productivity. Across rigid trucks, articulated combinations and PBS timber vehicles, the system gives operators real-time weight information before they're anywhere near a public road.

MOBILE WEIGHBRIDGE

Most forestry loading happens well out of reach of a weighbridge. Once a truck has left the loading zone, fixing an overloaded vehicle becomes expensive, slow and often impractical.

Loadtech's answer is to display gross vehicle weight, axle group weights, and live payload information to the operator during loading, so the maximum legal payload is achieved on the first attempt. Drivers leave already knowing they're within the legal weight

limit, rather than hoping so. The onboard weighing system employs weighbridge-type load cells mounted on the truck between the chassis and the load body, effectively turning the vehicle into a mobile weighbridge.

SAVINGS

Transport is one of forestry's highest operating costs, and every avoidable trip adds to the bill in diesel, labour, maintenance and tyre wear.

By helping fleets carry the maximum legal payload on every journey rather than running under capacity, Loadtech's technology reduces the number of trips a fleet needs to move the same volume of timber. Across a fleet making hundreds of movements a month, that adds up to real reductions in operating costs.

The same efficiency case extends directly to sustainability. Fleets that maximise legal payload need fewer vehicle movements to shift the same volume of timber, resulting in lower fuel consumption and reduced emissions without sacrificing productivity.

SAFETY AND SUSTAINABILITY

Overloading isn't only a compliance issue. Incorrect axle loading affects braking, steering, suspension life and overall stability, and this matters more on steep forestry roads and gravel haul routes than almost anywhere else a truck operates.

By continuously monitoring axle group weights, Loadtech's system enables drivers to balance a load correctly before departure, reducing mechanical stress on the vehicle and improving safety for drivers and other road users. Getting weight distribution right has moved beyond avoiding fines to become standard responsible fleet management.

Onboard weighing isn't only a timber short- and long-haul truck transport tool. Loadtech can also fit the technology to forwarders, giving operators the real-time payload information to maximise every cycle and cut unnecessary machine movements.

Loadtech designs its onboard weighing systems to operate in the dust, mud, steep gradients, vibration and unpredictable weather that are standard operating environments for forestry equipment.

DRIVING THE FUTURE

Fleet managers increasingly require real-time operational information to improve decision-making, reduce costs and maintain compliance. Accurate onboard weighing is becoming one of the most valuable data sources available to transport businesses.

For Loadtech, onboard weighing is about far more than measuring tonnes. It is about helping customers operate safer fleets, improve profitability, reduce environmental impact and maximise every journey.



TruckWeight's LoRa and cloud-based system now in SA

TruckWeight Onboard Scales & Analytics, a Canadian company that has built on-board scales for military and logging environments since 2005, has introduced its modern wireless, cloud-connected technology to the Southern African market.

Overloaded trucks face heavy regulatory fines, but the bigger risk is what extra mass does to a truck's handling. Longer stopping distances and reduced control raise the stakes if something goes wrong on the road, and that exposure can be business-ending, both civilly and criminally, if a loaded truck crashes or rolls.

Underloading is the quieter cost. A truck running below capacity is still burning full fuel for a partial load, which pushes up the cost per tonne on every extra trip.

Then there's the time penalty. A truck flagged as incorrectly loaded at a static weighbridge has to have the load adjusted and go back to be weighed again. That "load, weigh, return, adjust" cycle eats into driver hours and truck time that a forestry operation can't easily get back.

Log density and moisture content fluctuate constantly, the terrain is hard on equipment, and the standard tools for managing load weight, such as visual estimates, crane scales, and distant weighbridges, can carry massive penalties.



THE TECHNOLOGY

TruckWeight's systems are built to survive military deployments and harsh logging environments, which means they are built entirely differently from traditional wired scales.

- **No cabling to fail.** There are no cables and wiring looms running down the trailer to fatigue, snap, or snag on obstacles. This removes common failure points like wire fatigue and mechanical vulnerabilities inherent in harsh forest environments.
- **No Bluetooth.**
- **Long-range radio frequency (LoRa).** It runs on industrial LoRa, providing a stable, two-way connection over 100 metres without pairing issues.
- **High precision, low cost:** Non-intrusive strain and air sensors deliver high accuracy without the cost of buying, servicing, or replacing traditional load cells.
- **Cloud-ready from day one.** Built on a Google Cloud backend, the system is API-ready, so live weight data, GPS coordinates, and alerts can feed straight into a fleet's existing telematics and fleet management platforms.
- **Local installation.** TruckWeight's certified South African agent network handles the full sale, installation, and on-site calibration. Fleets that prefer to handle it themselves can also install the system on a DIY basis.

Remote calibration and setup are also part of the system's bi-directional design, cutting down on the need for repeat site visits once it's up and running.

REAL-TIME DATA

At the loading site, drivers get real-time axle and gross weight readings on a dedicated wireless display, or on any connected smartphone or tablet. It ensures that every truck leaves within its legal and operational limits, with no fines waiting down the road and no wasted payload left behind.

BEYOND TIMBER

TruckWeight's South African push starts with timber, but the underlying technology isn't sector-specific. The same case for precision loading applies wherever bulk product with variable weight moves by road, sugarcane, and coal among them.

Source: TruckWeight Southern Africa

African Forestry Trust Fund under discussion

The African Forest Forum (AFF) and the Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) Champions for Africa Initiative are convening a high-level Business and Philanthropic Leaders Roundtable on 8 September 2026 in Lagos, Nigeria.

The invitation-only Roundtable will bring together senior government leaders, business executives, philanthropists, development finance institutions, impact investors and strategic partners.

They will explore opportunities to invest in Africa's forest economy and advance sustainable forest management, landscape restoration, biodiversity conservation and forest-based development.

MOBILISING INVESTMENT

Africa's forests are among the continent's greatest strategic assets. They cover approximately 637 million hectares, about 16% of the world's forest area and support the livelihoods of more than 400 million people. The continent also has approximately 446 million hectares of other wooded land, representing nearly 31% of the world's wooded landscapes.

Forests are also an important economic asset. They support timber and non-timber forest products, nature-based tourism, renewable energy, pharmaceuticals, biotechnology, climate-smart agriculture and other emerging areas of the green bioeconomy.

Yet this potential remains significantly underfinanced.

Africa continues to lose nearly four million hectares of forests each year due to deforestation, land degradation, unsustainable land use, climate change and chronic underinvestment in sustainable forest management. It also represents a significant loss of economic and development opportunity. Unlocking this potential requires a shift from fragmented project financing towards long-term, catalytic investment. This means bringing governments, private capital, philanthropy and development finance institutions together around a shared vision for sustainable forest management and green growth.

AFRICAN FORESTRY TRUST FUND

At the centre of the dialogue will be the African Forestry Trust Fund (AFTF), the flagship financing mechanism being established by AFF under the Sustainable Forest Management Champions for Africa Initiative.

The AFTF aims to mobilise catalytic capital for sustainable forest management, landscape restoration, biodiversity conservation, forest-based enterprises, and green jobs. It will also strengthen African ownership of forestry financing.

With support from the African Union Commission and other strategic partners, the AFTF aims to mobilise catalytic capital for sustainable forest management, landscape restoration, biodiversity conservation, forest-based enterprises, and green jobs. It will also strengthen African ownership of forestry financing.

The Roundtable will present the AFTF's vision, investment case and funding architecture. It will also provide an opportunity to explore financial commitments, co-financing and strategic partnerships with the private sector and the philanthropic community.

The Fund's investment priorities include sustainable forest management, landscape restoration, forest conservation and biodiversity, forest-based industrialisation, women's and youth employment and rural livelihoods, and research and capacity building.

These priorities offer opportunities to generate economic value while contributing to climate resilience, biodiversity conservation, ecosystem restoration, employment creation and improved livelihoods.

FROM DIALOGUE TO ACTION

The Roundtable aims to foster long-term collaboration and co-investment between the public and private sectors. Participants will explore opportunities to:

- mobilise financial pledges and co-financing for the African Forestry Trust Fund
- develop strategic partnerships for forest-based value chains and green industrialisation
- support investment in forest restoration, sustainable forestry and biodiversity enterprises
- create opportunities for youth employment and rural livelihoods
- build a private-sector coalition committed to forest-positive business practices across Africa
- develop a pipeline of investable forest projects
- strengthen partnerships that can translate Africa's forest potential into sustainable economic and social impact.

Not to be missed events

ISCHP 26

8– 11 SEPTEMBER 2026

ISCHP26 – 9th International Scientific Conference on Hardwood Products 2026

This will be a joint conference with the **Wood Quality Modelling Working Party (IUFRO 5.01.04),** featuring parallel sessions on wood quality modelling.

Where: Stellenbosch University in South Africa.

Contact: ischp@sun.ac.za

14 SEPTEMBER 2026

The Wood App presents Timber Frame and Mass Timber Construction Workshop

University of Pretoria

Presented by Werner Slabbert and Michael Kloos.

Case study & demo by Rothoblaas

Enquiries: Philip Crafford at pcrafford@sun.ac.za

14 SEPTEMBER 2026

Growing Timber Connections Colloquium & Timber Lab visit

The Timber Construction Events bring together researchers, students, industry leaders, designers, engineers, policymakers and partners to advance the role of timber in South Africa's built environment. The Colloquium on 14 September focuses on research, innovation and the development of new knowledge, including a visit to the Engineering 4.0 Timber Lab.

Colloquium Registration ›

Timber Lab Registration ›

15 SEPTEMBER 2026

Growing Timber Connections Conference

Connected by Timber: From Forests to Future Cities

The Timber Connections Conference gathers researchers, students, industry leaders, designers, engineers, policymakers and partners interested in the use of timber in the built environment. The York Timbers Chair at the University of Pretoria, the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition, and Sawmilling SA organise it. The conference focuses on multi-industry collaboration, investment, policy alignment and the practical pathways needed to advance the use of timber in construction.

Conference Registration ›

27 – 29 OCTOBER 2026

Green Building Convention 2026 Cape Town

The Green Revolution

The focus will be on the ideas, tools, and partnerships that transform "green" from an aspiration into the organising principle of our built environment. From whole-life carbon and regenerative design to circular materials, water security, and climate-smart finance, we will highlight what is already possible and ask what more we need to do.

Don't miss the University of Pretoria's stand where the focus is on engineered timber.

Register ›

Forestry Science SYMPOSIUM

24-26 NOVEMBER 2026

Forestry Science Symposium

Green horizons: Advancing science and innovation for sustainable timber resources

This symposium will bring together researchers, practitioners, industry leaders, policymakers, and students to explore how science and innovation can strengthen the sustainability, resilience, and value of South Africa's timber resources. The programme reflects the sector's established strengths and the emerging challenges shaping its future, including climate resilience, forest health, biodiversity, digital forestry, advanced tree improvement, wood products innovation, and sustainable production systems. The aim is to promote dialogue across the full forest value chain, from genetics and silviculture to sensing, processing, and ecosystem stewardship.

Stellenbosch University

Registration ›

WOOD South Africa Conference

23 FEBRUARY 2027

16th Annual Wood Conference

Turning South Africa's Timber Potential into Reality

Cape Town

www.woodconference.co.za

LIGNA

10 – 14 MAY 2027

Ligna 2027

Hanover, Germany

www.ligna.de

11 – 14 MAY 2027

Interzum 2027

Beyond boundaries: Elevating strategic resilience

Cologne, Germany

www.interzum.com

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