

# THE SPLINTER



*Proud AKD employees after working at the Caboolture State School. Back row L-R: Liam Callender, Kayla Bighton, Randal Davis, Noah Flaton, Carolyn Compton, Caleb Cox. Front: Aiden Beattie.*



AKD EMPLOYEE NEWSLETTER

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JANUARY - FEBRUARY 2024





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## Let's get Social!

'AKDSOFTWOODS'   

### THE SPLINTER

*is AKD's employee newsletter...  
it's made for you!  
Contribute to what you read.*

**SCAN QR TO SHARE  
YOUR SPLINTER  
CONTENT IDEA**



**OR CONTACT YOUR  
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# AKD's Commitment to Mental Health: Partnering with TIACS

AKD proudly announced its partnership with TIACS (This is a Conversation Starter) during Safe StartUp 2024.

AKD is honoured to be a member of the TIACS Alliance, a collective of businesses who share a common vision to support blue-collar communities by funding easily accessible mental health counselling.

TIACS is a free phone and text counselling service offering mental health support to Australia's blue-collar community. Since 2020, TIACS has supported over 18,000 clients through 18,500+ hours of conversation.

AKD acknowledges that there are factors both in and outside of work which can have an impact on mental health. With a workforce of 1100 people, there is someone that will have something they are dealing with personally, whether that is financial stress, relationship issues, or health issues.

It can be challenging sometimes to access mental health support due to the cost associated with it, the time, or inability to get into a counsellor when you need it most, navigating the system with referrals etc. We are really pleased to be able to assist in providing our entire AKD team and their families with access to support by removing some of these barriers. Along with access for our customers, suppliers and the wider community.

As part of this launch, AKD handed out TradeMutt funky lunch bags to every employee. The lunch bags feature a QR Code for direct access to the TIACS contact options, creating a visible daily reminder of the resources available to anyone seeking support.





# Legend, need a hand?

If you've been struggling with your mental health and don't know what to say, just reach out and say hi and our counsellors will take it from there.

We're here to offer free mental health counselling to tradies, truckies, operations, rural, blue collar workers, and those who care about them.



#### Text or Call

Whether you would like to talk on the phone or find it easier to text, we can do both.



#### Match Up

Match up with a counsellor that best suits your needs and talk to the same counsellor each time.



#### Free and Confidential

There are no costs involved - TIACS is free and you can remain completely anonymous.



#### We Care

We care about your experience and ensuring that you receive the highest quality care.

Call or text us to speak with a counsellor.

Monday to Friday  
8am-10pm AEST

**0488 846 988**



TIACS is a free phone and text counselling service offering mental health support to Australia's blue collar community.





# Health, Safety & Env

Welcome back everyone – I hope you all had a chance to relax and take some time out to do those things in life you enjoy doing most.

Our intention for the 2024 Safe StartUp was to theme it around our 'Healthy Mind + Healthy Body = A HEALTHY ME' program. The day was focused around ensuring a 'relaxed' vibe was felt for day one and from the feedback that was received, we certainly achieved that.

**HEALTHY**  
mind • body • ME

All sites were required to deliver specific company-wide messaging, departmental walks were conducted to highlight any changes that may have occurred during the shut period and hazard identification activities. This messaging was communicated through:

- CEO Welcome back video
- Launching the AKD alliance with TIACS
- Re-induction

There were no additional programs or focus areas scheduled in January – the aim was to purely focus on getting back into the 'swing of things' safely.

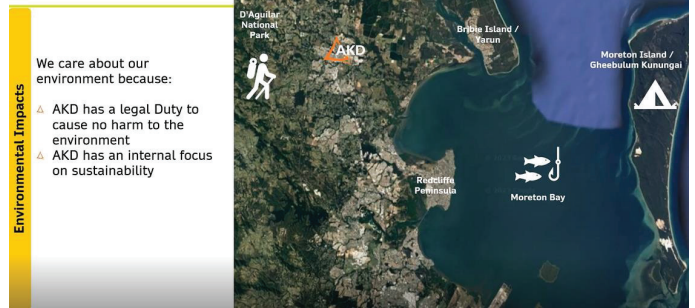
The day was wrapped up with team lunches and what was meant to include some non-work related team activities (golf etc) – however the weather had different plans, with significant rain events resulting in the activities being cancelled or changed last minute. Each site touches on their Safe StartUp on the following pages.

## ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS TRAINING

Effective management of our environmental impact is central to three of AKD's core pillars - taking a long-term view; being internationally competitive; and having a zero-harm workplace.

To promote awareness of our environmental impacts and how we manage them, we recently published and distributed training videos for all AKD sites. The videos were

## Our Environment



*Environmental awareness training.*

shown to the workforce during January and February and were designed to serve as a useful resource for our sites going forward, for example as a general site environmental induction for new employees or contractors.

The training videos covered five broad topics: environmental impacts; environmental risk analysis; reporting hazards and incidents; AKD's commitments and responsibilities; and our roles and responsibilities as AKD employees.

The key take-away points from the videos were:

- Our operations can have both positive and negative environmental impacts.
- Risk analysis involves defining hazards, assigning risk levels, and then implementing controls.
- Environmental controls must be monitored and maintained to ensure they remain effective.
- We need the help of all AKD employees to report environmental hazards and incidents across our sawmill sites – we have a collective responsibility.
- Fulfilling our legal duties and owning the AKD pillars will safeguard our social licence to operate.

Enhancing the awareness and capability to respond to environmental incidents is a key objective of the FY24 Environmental Plan which we expect will go some way to achieving this objective.

General awareness videos will be expanded with more detailed training aimed for site leaders, which will include legal requirements, monitoring programs and response procedures for environmental incidents. We also plan to weave in some environmental elements into the practical incident response training scenarios, which are planned for all sites later in the year.

## LINKSAFE

You may have noticed we now have 'sign in' tablets on all sites at main entry points...another big step forward for the business, as we launched our new Visitor and Contractor Management System – LinkSafe.





LinkSafe allows us to:

- Know who is onsite at any given time, improving our emergency management processes
- Ensure contractors and visitors have all of the necessary HSE information
- Notify the relevant AKD representative via SMS and email when a contractor or visitor arrives
- Have automated emails sent to contractors when required information and inductions expire
- Manage online inductions prior to completing the site-specific induction
- Report on Contractor compliance

We have another big year ahead of us, and regardless of the possible distractions and activity we have going on – the safety of our people will not be compromised. We all have a collective responsibility and I ask everyone to really focus on their safety and the safety of those around them. No job is that important that it can't be done safely.

## CRITICAL RISKS

In February, we released our first Critical Risk for 2024 – 'Confined Space'. Whilst we don't typically do a huge amount of Confined Space activity, given the nature and potential risk associated with Confined Space, it is critical we take the opportunity to review our existing processes to ensure the control measures remain effective.

The focus will include the release of the Confined Space Standard and Permit, a review of our training to ensure we have adequate resources and a self-audit to assess we are meeting our legal obligations with regards to Confined Space compliance.

## TOP 10 CRITICAL RISKS

### HIGH RISK WORK: CONFINED SPACE



Working in a Confined Space is deemed as a high-risk activity as the areas are usually not designed to be areas where people work. Confined spaces often have poor ventilation which allows hazardous atmospheres to quickly develop, especially if the space is small. The hazards are not always obvious and may change from one entry into the confined space to the next.

Confined spaces are commonly found in vats, tanks, pits, pipes, ducts, flues, chimneys, silos, containers, pressure vessels, underground sewers, wet or dry wells, shafts, trenches, tunnels or other similar enclosed or partially enclosed structures.

**IN 2022, THERE WERE 24 WORKPLACE FATALITIES ACROSS AUSTRALIA WHICH INVOLVED PEOPLE WORKING IN A CONFINED SPACE.**

**Confined Space requirements are strictly controlled by legislation and require specific control measures to be implemented, provided below:**

Do not perform any task that involves Confined Space entry unless you have been trained and are authorised to do so.

Prior to commencing any task involving Confined Space entry, hazards are to be identified and appropriate controls implemented.

Confined Space Entry Permits must be completed and approved prior to entry.

Always follow task specific instructions. This may be in the form of an SOP, JSA or the Confined Space Permit requirements.

Confined Space entry points must be signposted and secured at all times to prevent unauthorised entry.

A Stand-by Person must be assigned and remain outside & in close proximity throughout the duration of the work.

If you are unsure how to safely perform tasks that involve work within a Confined Space or have concerns with the Confined Space requirements – STOP and ASK.

Confined Space breaches are serious and will be investigated accordingly.

**Always report incidents, near misses or hazards associated with Confined Space to your Supervisor / Manager.**

**REMEMBER: NO JOB IS THAT IMPORTANT THAT IT CAN'T BE DONE SAFELY!**



# Caboolture

## Around the Grounds

### SAFETY

As we stepped into our major project of the Drymill upgrade, mother nature was watching us. To add some spice to the situation, she decided it was time for Queensland to get some outrageous heatwaves with scorching UV and crazy humidity. 27 days out of 36, our daily temps soared past 33 degrees and humidity was above 80%.

The team adapted to the risk and changed up daily toolboxes to ensure our safety comms were high, daily permits, JSA's were reviewed, lightning trackers, safety stations were stocked and of course we had plenty of water, ice, and hydration supplements available.

We saw a staggering amount of work undertaken by the maintenance crews and projects, both working together and across boundaries. A testament to all and those who supported them as we only saw two first aid treatments. A count of 207 hot work permits were issued and 2439 hours of Firewatch were undertaken.

All in we had 229 hours of crane lifts undertaken, 68 out of service tags applied, 300m<sup>2</sup> of concrete poured, 92 toolbox talks completed, and 26 hazards reported.

At Safe Startup we introduced TIACS to our team as a part of this year's 'Healthy Mind + Healthy Body = A HEALTHY ME' program. Followed up by a load of laughs with our guest comedian and then some time to give back outside

the gates and sawmill boundary. A team of 147 attacked the grounds of the local school to support and prepare the school for the new year start up.

Caboolture State School is a state funded school and, like many, has challenges and a diverse range of cultures. They are 350m from our front gate so it was obvious to us that we could help them with our orange army.

The school had an immediate need to support their groundsperson by giving some love to gardens and playgrounds with bark and woodchip, which was donated by Basset Barks.

We also revitalised their veggie patch, that was covered in over 1m tall grass, and spent eight hours mowing their oval and surrounds with our site grounds person ready in time for students and staff to return from school holidays. The day had challenges and we were chased out by the rain at the end but the amount of effort and work ethic from the Caboolture team exceeded everyone's expectations.

The efforts, which may only seem small to us, truly will have an impact not just visually for all the students and staff, but allows the current grounds person to get a head start for the year.

Well done to all parties involved, from organising, delivering, physically assisting on the day, the site is looking forward to another exciting and safe year ahead and other ways we can support our community.







**Paul Ryan**  
Caboolture  
Site Manager



**Greg Levinge**  
Caboolture  
OHS Manager

## PEOPLE

A big thank you to all those who worked constantly over the shut to make our people safe, providing drinks and ice for the people working in these hot conditions. It was a battle to ensure people remained hydrated through both day and night shifts and it was only through the constant monitoring by the team that no one was impacted by the heat over this period.

Safe Startup would have to be one of the most rewarding days in sawmilling I have experienced in over 40 years. The AKD team pulled together at our local Junior State School to bring their gardens and playground to a state the children would be proud of when they returned to school.

I would like a special thank you to Greg Levinge and Paige Spencer who worked tirelessly pulling this together to make it such a day to remember. To all the employees involved, everyone deserves congratulations for their hardwork for the children.

## PRODUCTION

The start of the year has been mixed for the teams with extreme heat and rain over the January period, making it difficult for our maintenance and project teams to bring our equipment back together for our operational start-up.

The maintenance team fully rebuilt the quad bandsaw which will be covered in another article however with the extreme humidity and rain events, the new paint would not cure requiring heaters to accelerate the drying. It was

very frustrating for the team playing the waiting game. The project team managed to come in on schedule after some great work completing the major change to the Drymill and the vibrating conveyor in the Greenmill in the time frame allocated.

We focused hard on our controls and behaviours in the maintenance period. There were challenges to meet standards, as some of the work, now completed, had not been done for 38 years. Everyone deserves praise and we look forward to our maintenance and project teams getting a well-deserved break.

As the site started to gain momentum, a flood struck Caboolture right at the end of January which resulted in the closing of the site to ensure all employees returned home safely. No damage resulted to the site as the water receded as quickly as it arrived. The finished stock was taken to a higher level to reduce any possible impacts.

Fun fact for those that may not have experienced rain in QLD – the Caboolture site received 283mm of rain in a 8.5hr period. The forecast triggered our Emergency Response plans and we navigated the event, but we are hoping mother nature will be a little kinder for us for the remainder of 2024.

February started with some significant gains across the site but with a less-than-average order bank for our case products. Low grade normally bypasses the Drymill however a large portion is now being processed through the Drymill for export orders impacting productivity. We are looking forward to some better news in the months ahead from the market.





# Colac & Irrewarra

## Around the Grounds

### SAFETY

The year kicked off with a few minor hiccups, but overall, it's been a promising start with successful Safe StartUp.

While it was very low key compared to other years, the feedback has been that the day was engaging, to the point and didn't drag on like a classroom session sometimes can.

Special thanks to Cameron Grant and Mick Ritchie for doing most of the organisation and also organising a fantastic lunch which went over really well.

Also thanks to Mick Ritchie who by now would have taken the whole site through the TIACS introduction and handed out the AKD/TIACS lunch bags. This is an important initiative for AKD and even if only one person rings the TIACS number and gets support for what they are going through, then it makes it all worthwhile.

One effective strategy to enhance health and safety is conducting 'Hazard Hunts' through various departments each month. This proactive approach involves identifying potential hazards and risks across different areas of the operation.

By rewarding such efforts, we can continue to foster a culture of safety while minimising the likelihood of incidents and injuries. From the mill floors to office spaces, all areas will be reviewed and all employees are encouraged to take part in examining equipment, workspaces, and processes for any hazards and or risks

Through this collaborative effort, employees become active participants in the safety of their immediate work areas, departments and of course the site. Their firsthand knowledge of day-to-day operations gives them the a unique perspective to be able identify potential risks that might otherwise go unnoticed.



*Josh Zammit and Lisa Howard on a Hazard Hunt.*

Another initiative that we will be taking part in this year is the 'Healthy Mind + Healthy Body = A HEALTHY ME' program. Throughout the year we will be rolling out various initiatives, including mental health resources, wellness programs, and a supportive work environment. By promoting a balance between mind and body, we believe that investing in the wellbeing of our employees is essential for their overall success and happiness.

### IRREWARRA

Unfortunately, we had to announce the closure of Irrewarra in February. This was a decision that was extremely difficult but made for the good of the overall company.

As many of you will be aware, Irrewarra has been used to







**John Browne**

Colac Site  
Manager



**Cameron Grant**

Colac Health and  
Safety Manager

increase production when required but due to the market being stubbornly depressed, it is time to place Irrewarra into a care and maintenance mode until the market picks up, at which point the company will consider its options as to scaling back up again.

This process is incredibly difficult for our dedicated Irrewarra team and I am personally impressed at the maturity and professionalism that all the 10 employees have shown and thank them for being so understanding and so flexible while we relocate them to the right places in Colac.

The plan going forward is to ensure that all the Irrewarra employees have a position in Colac that suits their needs and that we have a system of ensuring that, should it be required, the Irrewarra Mill is ready to start back up.



*Drymill lug loader feeding the new trimmer.*

## DRYMILL PROJECT

The Drymill project has taken much longer to bring up to 100% than was planned but this has not been because of the lack of hard work and commitment of the employees involved. I thank all those that continue to work on bringing the Drymill up to its potential.

As I write this we have just had consecutive shifts at 100% of target and I'm sure there are many more to come as we iron out the bugs and get through the old 'Work In Progress' that has built up while we have had issues.

The next stages of this project are to put in a high speed Strapper as well as an additional 36 sling sorter bins. While the bins are programmed to go in during April, it looks like the Strapper has had some "damage in transport issues" and may be much later in the year.

## NEW YEAR'S GOLD BONANZA

*Written by Matthew 'Fur' Laity, Colac Saw Shop Supervisor*

Over the holidays, I had a fantastic time with family in the Talbot area, combining relaxation with my favorite hobby - metal detecting. While my wife, sister-in-law and her husband, enjoyed camping, I seized the opportunity to search for gold. New Year's Day proved to be particularly fruitful, as I unearthed a total of 15 small gold pieces in just one hour, surpassing my previous record. The following weekend, a revisit to the New Year's patch resulted in the discovery of six more bits, increasing my satisfaction.

Inviting my dad, who had previously been unlucky in his attempts, we returned to the patch after a fortnight. With a bit of persistence and a heavy rake, Dad scored his first-ever piece, and we collectively found a total of 10 bits during the outing, bringing the patch's overall tally to 31. Now, Dad has caught the gold bug and is eager to join the search with his own Minelab 6000.

Feeling the thrill, I decided to explore the area again the following Sunday, inviting Dad along. Our early morning adventure led to a remarkable discovery - a significant nugget nestled just inches below the surface. Excitement ensued, and I captured the moment on GoPro as I unveiled the mother nugget.

The nugget was the biggest piece I have ever found, weighing at 108.79 grams. I haven't had it tested as yet, but they say Victoria gold is the purest it can get, so it should be around the 24 carats.

It was a special moment, not only finding the once in a lifetime nugget, but to have my dad there when it was discovered, was very special.





# Tumut & Gilmore

## Around the Grounds

### SAFETY

Excellent start to the year. The safe start on day one was a great day. All employees attended the presentation and lunch at the local Golf Club unfortunately due to the rain on the day the golf had to be cancelled. The highlight was the TIACS presentation which is a great initiative that AKD has partnered with as part of the 'Healthy Mind + Healthy Body = A HEALTHY ME' program.

The Christmas shut went smoothly and a credit to all the maintenance team who worked on project installations safely. Continuing with our site Gguarding plan, perimeter guarding has been installed around the HSS and into the Greenmill basement area tying the new to the old, and making it safe for our people to work around.



### PRODUCTION

Sales were challenging throughout December and January, but Tumut had a positive month. Tumut continues to put the right product on the ground to service the market. Bunnings again continues to take away the majority of our product. Well done and thankyou to the despatch teams who worked throughout Christmas and New Years to ensure our customers were serviced.

Stock levels are still higher than the site would like, we are in the process of moving finished goods to warehouses for storage. The dry mill is reworking distressed stock to ensure we have good rotation of stock and removing any risk of product getting to market that isn't fit for purpose.

Another pleasing month in production with all areas hitting their targets. The site continues to perform well and look at opportunities to hit the basics of conversion, grade, and uptime. Well done to the maintenance department for their continual efforts in improving production by focusing on the areas that are restricting performance.

When we start to move into the middle of the year it will get challenging as the market continues to tighten. Let's ensure we focus on keeping ourselves and our teammates safe through this period. The site continues to look at performance opportunities to keep our production on track, reduce costs, but importantly supply to the market a quality product we would purchase ourselves.



17 OPEX certificate were awarded at SafeStartUp.

Back row L-R : Brian Clough, Tim Crampton, Kelvin Matchowitz, Matt Hardwick, Mark Johns, Steven Beaven, Peter Annetts, Ray Lucas, Rab Green, Dan Attwood and Rod Sutton. Front row L-R: Jon Baker, Jason Delany, Brett McNally, Bill Stuckey, Frank Jusup and Scott Gorman.





**Rab Green**  
Tumut Site  
Manager



**Rodney Sutton**  
Tumut EHSR  
Advisor

## PROJECTS

The Horizontal Shape Saw (HSS) is getting closer to commissioning. The team are in the process of alignments and preparing for the technical from USNR to attend site during February and March. We took the opportunity to install the new transfer deck in front of the 'Ukiah' and the rebuild of the 2nd RBS infeed during the Christmas break. Well done to all involved and a shout out to Alex Stuart for the design of the 2nd RBS infeed, a fantastic result.



*The HSS Electrical Room.*

## VISITORS

Recently Trevor Riddle, NSW Sales and Service Manager, guided one of our national customers Ubeeco on a tour of the Tumut mill and a local plantation. Their feedback mentioned the sites high level of housekeeping, how impressed they were with the AKD employees level of enthusiasm, and passion, to take the time to explain their roles and 'why' we do things. Great work team AKD Tumut!



*Trevor Riddle, NSW Sales and Service Manager with Ubeeco visitors.*



*AKD Controller Nathan Green and Mark Johns with Ubeeco visitors.*



# Yarram

## Around the Grounds

### SAFETY

It has been an impressive start to the year, in some ways. Lots of work completed during the shut – all without any safety issues of concern arising - followed by our Safe StartUp of site activities.

Leading up to the shut, we had a roll out of the new LinkSafe Contractor system. The response from the contractors that worked on or supported the shut was good to see. The site looks forward to the next step.

Even though we have been busy since the start of year, it was pleasing to see a group of 'stakeholders' assemble to consider the improvement to the Green Mill to Boiler Room walkway. It was an open forum with some great ideas being floated.

The 'summer' weather was not kind to our Safe StartUp plans, but it was good to see all our Yarram team together all at once. We experienced flooding in the region during late December into January, the heaviest rainfall for the region being recorded on StartUp Day. Despite the challenging weather, the Start Up program was simple and clear with strong participation with a mix of on-site and off-site activities bringing our team together. Some said it was one of the best so far.

Special thanks to the Red Cross ladies for providing a delicious lunch, with proceeds benefiting the local community.

The highlight of the day was the Safety Pictionary, showcasing the artistic talents of our employees. Congratulations to Matt Camburn and team for their

outstanding Picaso-like talent, proving their prowess in both safety and creativity.

### A HEROIC ACT

Several of our employees demonstrated extraordinary courage and first aid skills when they came across a motorcycle accident. Despite the unfortunate outcome, their efforts in providing CPR and support reflect the true spirit of our Yarram AKD family.

### MAINTENANCE SHUT

Our recent maintenance shut was a resounding success, thanks to the hard work and dedication of each team member. The comprehensive maintenance program involved several crucial tasks:

- *Replacement of Kiln 1 Railway Tracks and Drainage System Upgrade:* Ensuring the smooth operation of our kiln is vital, and the replacement of the worn railway tracks and drainage system upgrade contributes to the efficiency of our processes.
- *Scanner Chain Replacement at the Debarker:* Upgrading the design of the scanner chain at the Debarker enhances its functionality, showcasing our commitment to continuous improvement.
- *Kiln Condensate Tank Repair and Refurbishment:* The welding of cracks in the Kiln condensate tank demonstrates our proactive approach to equipment maintenance, ensuring longevity and reliability.



Matt Camburn taking his turn at Safety Pictionary.



Winning team Safety Pictionary team L-R: Riley Duve, Corey Vacino, Matthew Camburn, Wayne Brown, Shamal Icchram, Andrew Devitt and Justin Platt.





**Glen Davis**  
Yarram Site  
Manager



**Graham Clarke**  
Yarram EHSR  
Advisor

- *Guarding Installation Around the Hewsaw:* Safety is paramount at AKD, and the fabrication and installation of guarding around the Hewsaw mark another milestone in our continuous safety journey.
- *Hewsaw Maintenance:* The replacement of worn bushes in the top chipping head and outfeed rollers of the Hewsaw ensures optimal performance, contributing to the overall efficiency of our operations.

A heartfelt congratulations to the entire team for executing a safe and well-run maintenance program. To express our gratitude, a final thank you was extended to all team members with bacon and egg rolls for breakfast on the last day.

Adverse weather conditions in December and January significantly impacted sawlog deliveries. Kudos to Luke and the logyard team for managing the challenges seamlessly as we transition from periods of scarcity to abundance.

## POWER ISSUES

Not for the first time, our Yarram site was heavily impacted by inclement weather as ferocious winds lashed Gippsland destroying power infrastructure and then later taking down the mobile network.

On site, we saw many timber pieces picked up by what can only be described as a mini hurricane and hurled against, and over buildings, with some landing 50m away from where they started. Smashed windows, damaged gates, broken timber and other superficial damage to top it off.

The flow on effect saw the site without power for several days as repair crews struggled with the enormity of the repairs. Following on from the lack of log early in the month and then this major disruption, it has been a trying start to the year that if for sure.

Despite these setbacks, our resilient team at Yarram is actively addressing the aftermath and working diligently to get operations back on track. As we move forward, let's continue working together to overcome challenges and achieve new milestones.



*Contractor assisting with the kiln condensate tank repairs.*



*Replacement of kiln railway tracks and drainage system upgrade.*



*Aftermath of the storm on site.*





# Portland Pine



**Daryl Hann**  
General  
Manager  
Portland Pine

At Portland Pine our safe start up went well, with no incidents or injuries thankfully during the start up period. During the first two weeks of the site starting up, the site installed a new car park away from the production areas to make it safer for pedestrians to access the site and production areas.

Over the break we saw massive storms that impacted the site, causing some issues for the treatment plant with flooding occurring throughout. This delayed the start-up of the treatment plant by a couple of weeks, thankfully no environmental issues were caused by the flooding.



*The overflow of water during the storm filled the dam.*



*Water damage in the Treatment Plant.*

## SAFETY

Safe start up was a success at Portland Pine, with employees unanimously agreeing that this year's approach was a success. The reduced stress of start up training made for a smooth transition back into the working year.

Big shout out to the team, this year's safe start went extremely well, with all PPP employees participating in the activities which were designed to be a bit more relaxed.

We are predicting a big year for safety here, now with the support of Cameron Grant and Mick Ritchie, we feel confident that we will achieve what is needed to ensure a Zero Harm workplace, which is always a work in progress. We are looking forward to the support and guidance that Mick and Cam can offer to us.

We started the year with a focus around mobile plant and pedestrian separation. The dispatch team have made a huge improvement on this, ensuring that there is always five meters separation, never having a pedestrian on the opposite side of the truck, utilizing UHF communication when needed and making sure that all customers and contractors adhere to the site requirements, educating them as needed.

The production team have also been working on this, revisiting the process of pack collection from work centers, and coming up with suggestions as to how to ensure separation between mobile plant and employees.

For this year our site will be focused on what matters to us all, going home safely each and every day, so welcome back to the new year of 2024.

*Below: Michael Pevitt guiding trainee loader driver Harrison Heard and a customer on the safe loading procedure.*





# Truckin' Out and About

As a major sponsor, AKD donated the use of two trucks and trailers for the Colac Motorfest - a celebration of automotive culture from classics to elite.

Colac Truck Driver, Rossco Maw, donated his time to deliver the trucks to the showground where one was used as a stage for entertainment and the other used for the movie screen at the drive-in night showing Top Gun Maverick.



AKD's Brand and Communication Coordinator, Brooke McEwan. and Colac Truck Driver, Troy Jones.

On Sunday February 18, Colac Truck Driver, Troy Jones, and AKD's Brand and Communication Coordinator, Brooke McEwan, attended the annual Camp Quality Convoy Geelongalong with 200+ trucks.

Troy and Brooke, along with their partners, are members of the Colac Camp Quality Committee, who fundraise throughout the year holding numerous events including indoor markets, Gala dinners and BBQs. The Colac team took out the 'Highest Fundraising Community Team' award after raising a massive \$40,017.

*"This year, there were Camp Quality families at the event and they got to join us in the convoy by bus. It was heartwarming to meet the kids we fundraise for and to see them enjoy the day!" - Brooke McEwan.*



Colac Camp Quality Committee.





# Life Extension for Caboolture's Quad Bandsaw

with Richard Bambling  
Caboolture Maintenance &  
Reliability Manager



Over 30 gruelling days and nights through the Christmas / New Year closure, our maintenance teams embarked on a journey to extend the operational life of the Caboolture greenmill's most important operating asset – the Quad Bandsaw Assembly.

Without the ability to break logs down in the greenmill, our site grinds to a halt. Thus, we have to ensure we have an Asset Preservation Strategy for the Quad Bandsaw Assembly; to ensure the unit lasts as intended.

The Quad Plan involved stripping all moving parts of the Assembly back to bare metal, dry ice blasting, and applying a protective coating. Any worn components were to be replaced before the machine is realigned for a test run.

Prior to the outage, we identified our exposure to "Escalation of Commitment" and "Planning Fallacy" or "Hofstadter's Law"; based on shared learnings in the planning process and provided clarity on the uniqueness of this outage...and the importance to execute on time.

- **Escalation of Commitment:** tendency to justify increased investment in a decision, based on the cumulative prior investment, despite new evidence suggesting the decision may be wrong and additional costs will not be offset by benefits.
- **Planning Fallacy (Hofstadter's Law):** It always takes longer than you expect, even when you take into account Hofstadter's Law.

All moving parts were meticulously stripped down, followed by a comprehensive Dry Ice and Bicarbonate blast to reveal the parent metal, which was then coated with three layers of paint. Notable replacements included the RH Front Bottom Band wheel Shaft, LH Rear Bottom Band wheel Shaft, all four pairs of Bottom Band wheel bearings, Chipper slides, bushes, bearings, and motor cables.

Additionally, motor overhauls were conducted for the four Bandsaws and two Chippers, and hydraulic positioning cylinders were re-kitted or replaced. Chrome rods and bushes on the hobbs were substituted, and both Chipper assembly chip deflectors were rebuilt. The asset was expertly reassembled, the machine realigned to the centerline, and a thorough test run was performed.

This work was not possible without the entire maintenance team ripping in to get us back into service for January 16, with an exceptional amount of labour hours, sweat, BBQ's, laughter and personal sacrifice that only a maintenance practitioner will understand.

As four-week outages in this industry are extremely rare, we utilised our time wisely to set our site up for a bright future and gained a wealth of knowledge in how the Quad Assembly works for all our maintenance team.

To all involved, around 70 people, I offer my thanks, for without you, this Life Extension Project would not have happened. It has been a privilege to have worked with you all.



*Quad LH Chipper Assembly twin Gas Heaters to cure the paint of the bearing quill assembly.*



*Crane lifting and placing the Top Band Wheel Structure back into place.*



*Quad LH Side Band Wheels re assembled ready for cutting logs.*



# Congratulations

## APPRENTICE CLASS OF 2023

We would like to say a huge congratulations to the 13 AKD Apprentices who completed their qualifications in 2023 and have now transitioned into their new roles within our business.

Through many weeks of TAFE training and hands-on experience with our skilled tradespeople, these employees invested 3-4 years developing their skills and knowledge in areas such as Fitting, Fabrication, Electrical, Saw Technology, and Wood Machining. These trades are pivotal roles that are integral to AKD's success, ensuring our equipment and mills operate efficiently. Congratulations to all our recently qualified apprentices and thanks to managers and those who have supported and mentored these apprentices throughout their course.



**Brooke Schultz**  
Wood Machinist  
CABOOLTURE



**Cheyenne Booth**  
Electrician  
OBERON



**Daniel McNabb**  
Saw Technician  
CABOOLTURE



**Jason Mitchell**  
Wood Machinist  
COLAC



**Joel McInnes**  
Fitter  
COLAC

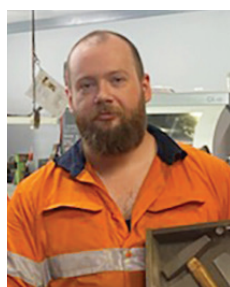
*During my time as an apprentice with AKD, I've been lucky to have had great mentors and continuous support. I'm excited by the challenges and growth that lay ahead for Caboolture and the chance to mentor others taking on the Wood Machinist trade.*

*I enjoyed meeting other apprentices and tradespeople from the other mills and getting the chance to learn from them.*

*It has given me a sense of achievement completing my four year apprenticeship where I have gained confidence in my skill set, life experience, a qualification, job security and a career path for the future.*



**Kevin Lovett**  
Wood Machinist  
OBERON



**Kris McAdam**  
Saw Technician  
OBERON



**Morgan Bowes**  
Electrician  
COLAC



**Narayan Peacock**  
Fitter  
COLAC



**Sam Cassidy**  
Wood Machinist  
YARRAM



**Scott Bowdern**  
Wood Machinist  
COLAC

Not pictured: George Van Den Brink, Colac Saw Technician and Jacob Hardy, Oberon Electrician.



# February Forest Fires

One of the most intriguing aspects about forest fire is its unpredictability.

In 2023 it rained in Victoria. A lot! One of the positive things to come from that was a very low fire danger as the season kicked off in October. For a while we thought the fire season might be a non-event. Then the rain stopped west of Melbourne followed by a mini-drought of sorts, leading the region into one of the driest February's on record.

On Thursday 22nd February a forest fire ignited by a dry lightning strike, near the township of Beaufort in western Victoria. Under the prevailing hot and windy weather, and dry soil conditions, the fire was deemed a significant threat and within several hours had escalated to a very large size and was now out of control.

Metres away from one edge of the fire ground, AKD has a small 108 hectare plantation of four and five year old Radiata Pine. AKD personnel, and those of a neighbouring forest owner, alongside more than 1,000 fire fighters, were quickly battling what would eventually become a 22,000-hectare fire ground (that's the equivalent of more than 14,000 AFL footy ovals!). What had seemed manageable early on, was quickly anything but.

Less than a hectare of that plantation was ultimately fire damaged – a testament to the personnel at the scene.

At the time of writing this article, this fire has been going for 12 days, and is still not out. Meanwhile, a second fire broke out near one of AKD's forests near Tumut, NSW. And soon after that a third fire broke out back in Victoria,

within three kilometres of one of AKD's larger plantations near the township of Dereel.

On their own, any one of these events was challenging for AKD to respond to – we are the largest wood processor in Australasia, but we are one of the smallest forest owners with our forest assets spread 500km north to south and 300km east to west, creating a large territory to help protect. We can't do that alone – it's just not feasible or practical. Our relationships with our neighbours, contractors, other forest owners, and the CFA, are all critical parts of our defence against fire. But so too are the people at AKD.

The forestry team make up the core of our firefighting capability. But it's a small team, with less than a dozen qualified fire fighters. Which is why other AKD personnel who have taken the time to be trained and are able to turn out to fire events to help, are an important part of the mix. Paul Hicks, from Finance, and Jaden Angus, from Colac Maintenance, stepped up for multiple days on the fire line during these February fires. It increased the AKD personnel by about 25% at the time and gave us the ability to rest and rotate the team more regularly - critical for work of this nature.

## Callout for firefighters!

AKD's current firefighters are primarily based at Colac. We're always looking for new recruits across all of our sites and with training provided at a high standard of firefighting proficiency. If you think you might want to be part of one of the firefighting teams at AKD, or simply want more information, we'd love to hear from you! Contact: Simon Gatt [simon.gatt@akd.com.au](mailto:simon.gatt@akd.com.au) or Alan Rossouw [alan.rossouw@akd.com.au](mailto:alan.rossouw@akd.com.au)



Paul Hicks



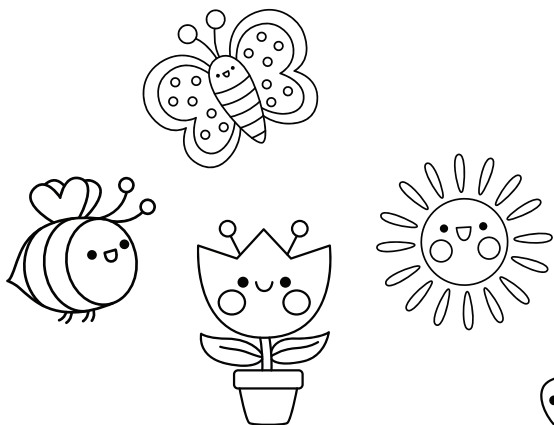
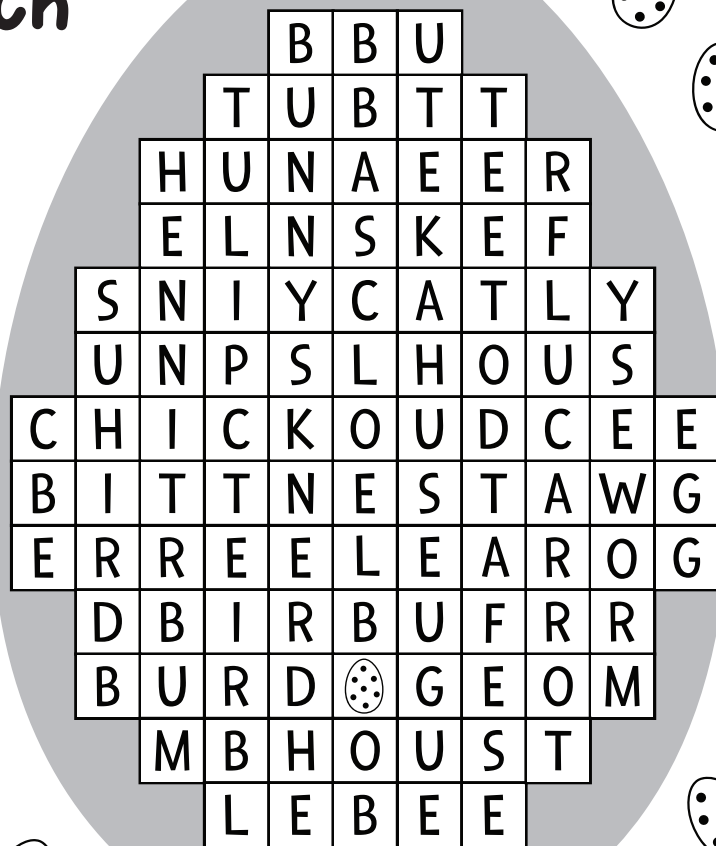


# EASTER COLOURING

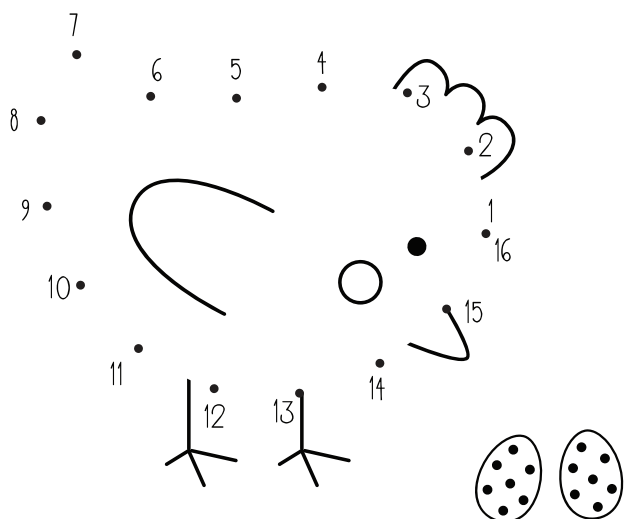




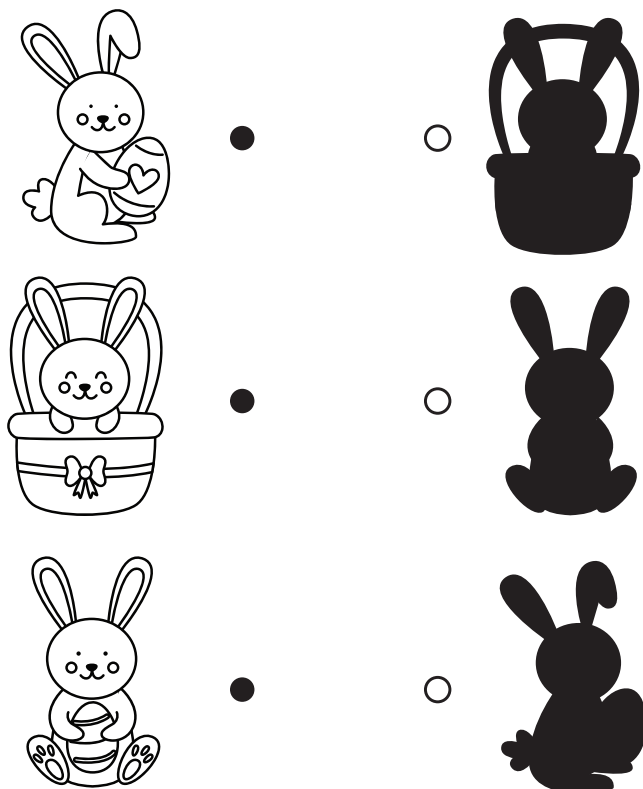
# WORM



# Dot-to-Dot



# Match The Shadows





# 30 Tracey Manning YEARS IN NSW SALES

In 1994, a return-to-work mother embarked on a part-time role, intending to stay for just six weeks. Little did she know, this would mark the beginning of a remarkable 30-year journey of dedication and growth.

Starting with general office duties, including banking, invoicing, and customer credits, Tracey quickly became an integral part of the AKD team with her final transition into Sales.

Reflecting on the early days, Tracey recalls using a whiteboard to track timber stocks, specials, and customer requests and, on some of the wet occasions, a ride on the back of truck was needed to get to the office and from the carpark.

Throughout Tracey's journey, she has worked with amazing colleagues, celebrating milestones and life events together from weddings, welcoming children and then grandchildren. She has seen the role of women in the industry grow stronger, breaking barriers and challenging stereotypes and also a shift into safer work standards.

Outside of work, Tracey finds joy in her family. Her two children, James and Kailey, live in Melbourne, and have started families of their own, welcoming grandson Arthur (Artie) and granddaughter Ludivine (Ludi).

October last year, Tracey and her partner, Colin, decided after 22 years it was time to get married. They had an intimate wedding with the family and Cricket, their whippet, then travelled the Great Ocean Road as they announced their 'perfect elopement'.

*"Working with Tracey over the past 30 years, we have developed more than just a working relationship – it's been a sharing of lives. As you share your travel stories with us, we hear the love and experiences you have with your children, and now grandchildren, and how after the weekend we exchange funny stories about our home life. Congrats on 30 years with us Trace!"*

Trevor Riddle  
NSW SALES & SERVICE MANAGER

*"Congratulations on your 30th year anniversary. I am so thankful that I've had the opportunity to be apart of your journey, being the first person I met when I joined the team, nervous as all hell, your calm nature put me at ease straight away. You have been nothing but a caring, thoughtful, knowledgeable co worker/friend, to where you have become my work mum. I'm forever grateful for your guidance through the years and looking forward to many more together."*

Ryan Kelly – (Your work son)  
NSW ACCOUNT MANAGER

*"I've been working with Trace for over 20 years and it's been nothing but uplifting to work with someone with her patience, compassion, and positivity. Congratulations on all that you've achieved over the decades. Here's to many more years."*

Rick Cook  
NSW SALES



Tracey and Colin's wedding.



# 25 John Dunlop YEARS AT COLAC

John has seen a lot of change at AKD in his 25 years. He first started in the old Greenmill, when it was on the other side of the road. John then moved to the Drymill where he learned to operate and set up the N.4 planer before progressing to supervisor and team leader. John then spent the next 12 years in the treatment plant before moving to the kilns, where he now operates the CDK'S.

John, and wife Tess, have two sons, Declan (18) and Jaxyn (17). Outside of work, he enjoys tinkering on various projects such as woodworking, and most recently working on renovations of his house. But his newest project is a one tonne ford V8 ute he acquired from his father.

John loves his motorsports, particularly sprinters and V8 supercars, outdoor activities and cooking with his smokers.

John has been an integral part of ensuring high standards of



*John, wife Tess, and sons, Jaxyn and Declan*

safety at AKD for 25 years. He has served many years as the HSR rep and first aider, demonstrating a commitment to ensuring safe operations. He has consistently provided recommendations that have improved the safety of our operations. This is a testament of John - an employee who cares.

*"I worked with John at the treatment plant and now at the kilns and he is a wealth of knowledge. He is always there either for advice or help out when needed. 'A team player' Congratulations on 25yrs."*

**Daryl Lawrence**  
COLAC KILNS  
SUPERVISOR



*Pictured L-R: Peter Cocks (Head Saw Doctor), Kris McAdam (Saw Doctor Apprentice) and Craig Thompson (Green Mill Manager).*

*Highland Pine Products Pty Ltd*

## **Congratulations Kris McAdam NSW TAFE 'Phoenix Sawmill Apprentice of the Year'**

*Recently Highland Pine Products celebrated their Saw Doctor Apprentice Kris McAdam on receiving the prestigious Phoenix Sawmill Apprentice of the Year award by NSW TAFE.*

*Craig Thompson, Green Mill Manager commented "Having worked with Kris throughout his time with the business, the award is a true recognition for Kris' diligence, hard work, and dedication to the trade."*

*"I thoroughly enjoyed the apprenticeship pathway at HPP. Being able to learn from Peter Cocks and the team, being exposed to industry-leading technology, and the classroom-based learning at TAFE Tumut has set me up for a long-term career in an industry I'm passionate about." Kris said.*

*Head Saw Doctor, Peter Cocks, proudly extolled that "we have a long and proud tradition of developing Saw Doctors at HPP, with Kris now part of this legacy."*



10

## David Te Kiki-Tuwarirua YEARS AT COLAC

David (Kiwi Dave) embarked on his journey with AKD in 2014, after making the move over the ditch with his family.

His journey includes time spent all over site, from stacking timber, to driving forklifts at the Weinig, dry mill outfeed, and dispatch over day shift and afternoon shift. With such versatility and dependability, Dave usually finds himself working across shifts or helping out in other departments.

Since Dave transferred to dispatch in 2016, he has been a diligent, dedicated, incredibly hard worker, as anyone on site would tell you. But it is the friendships built along the way that Dave has enjoyed the most.

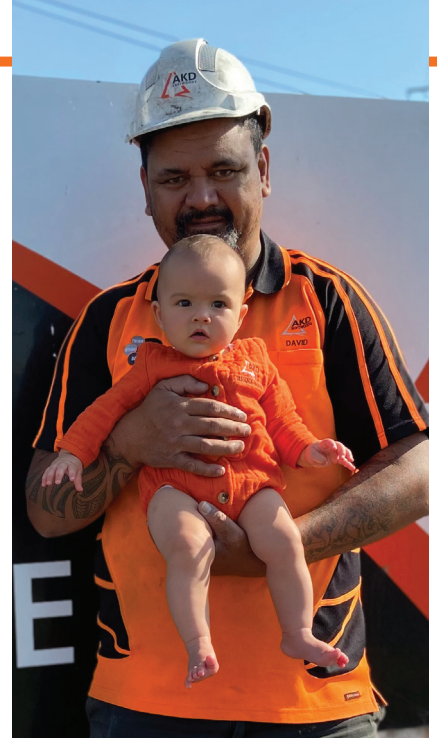
The numerous truck drivers and operators that have worked with him, all value his good natured, approachable

*"Congratulations on your 10yrs Kiwi! I am very honoured to have been able to work with you for last the 10yrs. Without hesitation you always take on anything that is ever asked of you and are always the first one to volunteer when they are in need."*

Melissa Stevens  
DISPATCH SUPERVISOR

personality and humour. His positivity adds to the atmosphere of the team daily, and is very much welcomed.

Outside of the orange uniform. Dave spends his time either winning local dart competitions, watching rugby, or spending time with his partner Sharna and their three beautiful daughters.



David with baby Manaia.

10

## Jaden Angus YEARS AT COLAC

Jaden's (Bluey) journey as AKD's Site Services Supervisor has been a varied one ranging in different areas. He started by himself doing small general carpentry tasks including building garden beds, mowing lawns, spraying, replacing fences etc.

Jaden said his highlight is being able to look back at what the site looked like and where it is today.

Now with another employee to help, Jaden has been able to branch out looking after larger projects, roadworks and laying concrete around site.

**What's something that recently made you smile?** *Watching, Lilly, my oldest daughter start her first year of school and seeing her hopping on the bus in her school uniform.*

**What's something no-one would know about you?** *I have started playing the piano.*

*"Congratulations 'Bluey' on your 10 year milestone. You have shown great pride in your quality of work over the years and it has been a pleasure working in with you. I never get tired of hearing the story of how you saved the CDFL interleague game by taking the biggest screamer since Garry Ablett SNR. Fun Fact: Jaden is a connoisseur of Dim Sims"*

Justin Hickey  
MAINTENANCE & PRODUCTION MANAGER



Jaden with wife, Amy, and daughters Grace, bottom left, Lilly, bottom right, and Lucy.



# 10 Jason Biddle YEARS AT COLAC

Jason joined AKD in 2014 and since then has moved into various roles across the business from production, site managing and now forestry.

Jason began in the role of Production Scheduler/Stock Controller and remained in this role for approximately two and a half years where he gained invaluable knowledge of the production side of the business.

In 2016, Jason became Site Manager at Jelfor. During this time, he lived away from home during the week and commuted between Traralgon and Colac on weekends.

Jason developed a wide range of skills whilst at Jelfor with managing a whole site which was a huge challenge. He did this with his calm demeanour and no fuss attitude.

During 2018 a newly created role become available within the Forestry team as a Fibre Supply Scheduler. Jason was easily a great candidate for this role and his previous knowledge of production was a vital link Forestry was missing. He quickly made this role his own and easily developed relationships with the log yard teams, production team and external sawlog suppliers.

Jason remained in the Fibre Supply Scheduler role until August 2023 when he shifted into a more traditional Forestry role of Harvesting Forester. As predicted, he jumped into this role with both feet and has recently taken on further university studies to enhance his skills and knowledge in harvesting and roading activities, and to obtain a tertiary qualification.

Outside of work Jason, his partner Bec and fur baby Alfie, have recently welcomed the arrival of their first baby, Elka, in November. Jason also loves to get outdoors to enjoy motorbike riding, camping and going to the beach.

*"Congratulations on your 10 years Jase! I have thoroughly enjoyed working with you, especially since you joined the Forestry Team. Your hard work, dedication and your interest in learning inspires me and its' always a pleasure to work with you."*

Jo Foster  
HARVESTING MANAGER

*"One word that describes Jason is reliable. Jason has accumulated a wealth of experience across a range of disciplines at AKD. Well done on 10 yrs."*

Simon Gatt  
RESOURCES MANAGER



Above: Jason and baby Elka.  
Below: Jason and fur-baby Alfie.





# HAPPY ANNIVERSARY

NAME	YRS	DEPT.	SITE
Jason Delany	35	MAINTENANCE	TUM
Jason Crane	30	GREENMILL	TUM
Timothy Crampton	30	MAINTENANCE	TUM
Tracey Manning	30	SALES	TUG
Bradley Cross	25	GREENMILL	YAR
John Dunlop	25	KILN	COL
David Te Kiri-Tuwairua	10	DISPATCH	COL
Delice Hursey	10	TREATMENT	GIL
Elizabeth Peters	10	SALES	TUG
Jaden Angus	10	MAINTENANCE	COL
Jason Biddle	10	FORESTRY	COL
Nathan Hardwick	10	SAWSHOP	TUM
Robert Flanigan	10	TRUCKS	COL
Tim Sproules	10	DISPATCH	COL
Benjamin Bailey	5	P&P	MOR
Casey Anson	5	DRYMILL	COL
Damion Rocka	5	DRYMILL	COL
Dylan Bradshaw	5	MAINTENANCE	COL
Jack Steer	5	MAINTENANCE	CAB
Jonathan Braid	5	DRYMILL	COL
Kea Anderson	5	GREENMILL	YAR
Kim Harris	5	TECHNICAL	COL
Luke O'Shannassy	5	ELECTRICAL	COL
Sarah Lawrence	5	GREENMILL	IRRE
Spencer Cochrane	5	MAINTENANCE	COL
Troy Missen	5	KILN	COL
William Wilson	5	ADM	YAR



## CRYSTAL LEWIS YARRAM ADMINISTRATION OFFICER

I joined the AKD team in December 2023 as the new Administration Officer for Yarram.

Born and raised in Shanghai, China, I previously worked as an Administration Officer for Commerzbank and an Executive Assistant to Vice President of Swiss-Belhotel Management.

I was fortunate to meet my Aussie husband, Chris, 17 years ago and got married in 2013, from then Australia became my second home. Now we have three lovely kids together – Katherine 10, Riley 7 and Olivia 5. We have just moved into our new house last year which was proudly built by Chris (took a long time).

Prior to AKD, I was working as Personal Banker at Bendigo Bank. As a workaholic, I also have a second job at Woolworths where I work as a nightfiller and occasionally as Supervisor/Duty Manager.

Outside of work, I enjoy going out with my family - take the kids fishing, go to parks/playgrounds/beach and try out nice restaurants. I love travel, Macrame and I'm also a good cook. I love cooking for family and friends. Every time I show Chris the photos from 10 years ago, he always comments *'that's how skinny we were before you learnt to cook'*.

Although I haven't been here for very long, I have received so many warm welcomes and greetings on site and across the company. I have enjoyed every moment working here and I'm grateful to have been given the chance to be part of the AKD family.







**ANDREW BLOYE**  
MAINTENANCE  
CABOOLTURE



**ANNIKA VAN STRIJP**  
DRYMILL  
COLAC



**DAVID ELDRIDGE**  
SAWSHOP  
CABOOLTURE



**GWYNETH PINCOTT**  
DRYMILL  
COLAC



**JAMES GRANT**  
APPRENTICE FITTER  
YARRAM



**JESSE HUGHES**  
FORKLIFT  
GILMORE



**KATE HILDERBRANDT**  
DRYMILL  
CABOOLTURE



**REBECCA LANE**  
DRMILL  
YARRAM



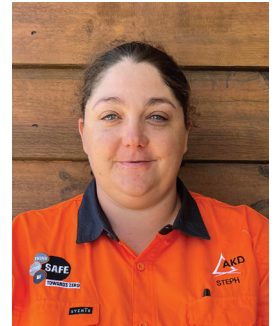
**RILEY DUVE**  
GREENMILL  
YARRAM



**SHAUN FORSTER**  
GREENMILL  
CABOOLTURE



**SIONE INISI**  
SAWSHOP  
CABOOLTURE



**STEPHANIE BOURMAN**  
SAWSHOP  
CABOOLTURE



**TIFFANY COLEMAN**  
DRYMILL  
CABOOLTURE



**TIMOTHY MOONEY**  
MAINTENANCE  
GAP YEAR - COLAC



**TUSCANY TUREI**  
GREENMILL  
CABOOLTURE



**WARREN WILSON**  
GREENMILL  
CABOOLTURE



**WIREMU HIKU**  
GREENMILL  
COLAC



**AKD welcomed these new employees in January-February and encourages everyone to make them feel welcome and work together to keep them safe.**



**BENJAMIN HANNAN**  
APPRENTICE FITTER  
TUMUT



**CHARLIE MCGUANE**  
FORESTRY GAP YEAR  
COLAC



**CHRISTOPHER RUMBEL**  
GREENMILL  
CABOOLTURE



**CORY FOGGON**  
SAWSHOP  
CABOOLTURE



**CRAIG JAMES**  
GREENMILL  
COLAC



**KELTON SMITH**  
MAINTENANCE  
CABOOLTURE



**KY SPENCER**  
MAINTENANCE  
CABOOLTURE



**LUCAS BROWN**  
APPRENTICE FITTER  
COLAC



**MICHELLE LASCELLES**  
ACCOUNTS PAYABLE  
COLAC



**NATHAN STURROCK**  
FORESTRY  
COLAC



**STEPHEN TAYLOR**  
DRYMILL  
COLAC



**STEVE AUSTIN**  
TRUCK DRIVER  
TUMUT



**TANISHA ANSON**  
GREENMILL  
COLAC



## AKD Paid Parental Leave Policy

AKD Paid Parental Leave Policy was created to support your family during this important life event. We recognise the importance of taking leave to care for your newborn and creating the balance between work and family life. Speak to your Site HR Manager for further details.

### Bodhi James Grayland

Born: 01/02/2024 Parents: Adam & Lisa  
Weight: 9 lb 9 oz Site: Tumut  
Dept: Sawshop  
Brother to Lucas, Gracie and Stella



# The Wrap-up



Welcome to 2024 everyone and the year is progressing quickly with plenty of interesting challenges.

We announced in February that we would be closing Irrewarra and taking market shuts at all of our production locations. Closing Irrewarra followed a decision to reduce production levels in 2023. Moving the mill to a "care and maintenance" position was a logical decision given its our highest cost mill. The industry experienced what we call peak demand from mid-2020 to late 2022 and since then we have seen a contraction in demand. This has been driven by a range of factors such as rising interest rates, all leading to a reduction in residential construction and reduced demand for pallet and packaging products. This has created challenging conditions for the entire supply chain, AKD our stores, competitors, and suppliers.

Last year we made the decision to reduce production capacity as we started to see warning signs that timber demand was starting to soften. We reacted by reducing operating hours at most of our sawmills. Unfortunately, residential construction has continued to decline, with new house planning approval rates at historic lows, future commencements soft and expanding build times due to residential construction labour shortages.

December and January were particularly soft trading months and came as a surprise to our business. Our customers were also caught out, this resulted in sales at 70-75% of expected volumes. Two soft months in a row meant we had to reset in February.

We decided to take the prudent and responsible action of "market related production shuts", this action is to match production with market demand and keep our stock levels in balance.

We are taking a broad approach across the country to minimise the impact on one specific site or location. Non-production periods, or "market related production shuts" will be occurring throughout March and/or April equivalent to one week at most of our sawmilling sites and 2 weeks at Colac, focused on reducing Greenmill activity. With adequate stock levels there will be no disruption of supply to customers through these periods.

As a business, we track a range of indices as well as current sales demand to determine what our production volume should be and therefore our log purchase etc. It can be quite difficult at times as we have to make either annual or multiyear commitments on log supply, but market demand for our timber products can be as fickle as changing week to week. So whilst we look at current sales dynamics we also track indices that gives us a view of underlying demand.

We track 3 for Domestic building- "Housing Finance", "New Home Sales" and "Dwelling Approvals". All three indices are showing negative trends and were particularly soft for January. For new home sales, the past 12 months were 20% weaker than the same period 1 year earlier and running at a level lower than the previous low of 2012!

Reduced dwelling approvals fell by 10%, the weakest month in 10 years and the 12-month average is 10% lower than the previous 12 months.

AKD produces a range of products at our sites, and we often focus on our structural sales as our "barometer of activity". We also need to sell our green case and dry merch, two products that cannot be sold into the structural markets. These products are typically sold for pallet and packaging.

The pallet and packaging market has also been extremely soft in demand. This is also due to interest rates. As discussed in a previous "Wrap Up", the Central Bank uses interest rates to influence inflation. If inflation is high, interest rates are increased to reduce inflation.

As such, this comes through as a pain for the economy. The Central Bank increases these interest rates to reduce people's ability to spend money, which reduces demand, which in theory reduces price pressure ie inflation. For AKD we want the Central Bank to get inflation under control. Rising interest rates are like the worst tasting medicine, you know it's good for you, but tastes disgusting.

So, the rising interest rates have reduced demand for all sorts of products in the Australian supply chain, this has resulted in reduced demand for pallets and packaging as well.

AKD has experienced contractions in timber demand many times in our long history, therefore we are taking what we view as responsible proactive steps focused on the long-term interests of our employees, the communities in which we operate, our shareholders, customers and suppliers.

We remain confident in the long-term demand for our sustainable timber products due to our nation's need for more homes for our growing population. AKD will continue to best position itself to support this future demand as a sustainable and reliable producer of quality Australian timber.

Finally we need to continue to work together as a team. Keep progressing and chasing the daily 1% improvement opportunities. Producing a quality product with exceptional service is absolutely critical at times like this. As always, no compromise on safety.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Shane'.

**Shane Vicary**  
CEO

