

# THE SPLINTER



2024 AKD Kokoda trek participants. See pages 20-21 to read about their trip.



AKD EMPLOYEE NEWSLETTER

EDITION 58

JULY-AUGUST 2024



EDITION 58

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'AKDSoftwoods'   

### THE SPLINTER

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

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YOUR SPLINTER  
CONTENT IDEA**



**OR CONTACT YOUR  
SITE REPRESENTATIVE:**

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# Health & Safety

First off – how good has this weather been (for the Victorians)! It's still technically winter, but we have had days of blue sky and temp's hitting 19 degrees. I'm not sure about everyone else, but it's amazing how some nice weather can lift your spirits and motivation.

## FUN FACT:

*Did you know that on average we spend 30% of our waking hours at work during our working lifetime?*

Given how much of our time is spent at work, at times people might find it difficult to fit 'self-care' activities into their day. For example, a team member that works in operations – starts at 5am and finishes at 3pm. They get home from work and get straight into parent duties – running the kids to their sports (or whatever they do outside of school). From there, they have to organise dinner for the family, get the kids sorted and to bed and by the time they have done all of that – it's time for bed. So where during the day do they get some time for themselves?

So, what is 'self-care'...it's taking care of yourself physically and emotionally, in the best way you can to promote better health and wellbeing. Self-care allows us to cope better, to keep up with our busy daily life and aids in long-term health benefits.

Given the above and while we are at work, why not start adding in some time for 'self-care'? At lunchtime, instead of sitting in the lunchroom – why not grab your lunch and go for a walk – even if it's just out to the carpark and back. Take that time to clear your mind, enjoy some sunshine and have some time to yourself. If you are someone that sits at a desk or operates mobile plant – take some time to get up and walk around, have a stretch and get some fresh air. There are many ways that we can all add in a little 'self-care' while at work – sometimes these small changes can make a big difference to our day.

## Self-care is not selfish ~ it's necessary!

As a continuation of our Top 10 Critical Risk Program, the focus for July was Fire & Explosion.

Whilst all sites have processes and practices in place to reduce the risk associated with Fire & Explosion, it is important that we continually check that our control measures remain effective and any areas for improvement are identified and actioned accordingly.

The focus included the release of the Fire & Explosion Standard and the requirement for all sites to conduct an internal audit and raise actions where improvements were identified.

I must say, the engagement throughout the month was fantastic to see (and hear about). The audit results across the group are shown below, with actions assigned within DoneSafe to address the areas for improvement:

Critical non-conformance	Non-conformance	Recommendation	Conformance
5	25	39	173



**Toni Kirkup**  
National  
HSE Manager



There has been some great work done in the environment space over the last few months – keep reading to see Sean’s article on what’s been going on.

Our performance has improved slightly over the recent months which is always pleasing to see. But what I do think about when we demonstrate that we can achieve two consecutive months without a recordable injury is – if we can do it for two months, why can’t we do it for three, four, five? Nothing significant has changed in our operations during this time.

So, if today we have an injury free day / month – that just goes to show that zero harm is achievable. We just have to do the same as what we did yesterday, today!

And let me take the time to re-enforce that regardless of the ‘numbers’ or what the ‘graph’ looks like, this is about you – so you can go home uninjured and enjoy your ‘why’.

# SAFETY: WHAT'S YOUR WHY?

Please also remember – that if you are dealing with any personal issues and you need some support...TIACS is available to you.

While this service is completely confidential – I have had people contact me and tell me that they have used the service and found it really beneficial.

**There is always help & support available – you just need to reach out.**

## TOP 10 CRITICAL RISKS

### FIRE AND EXPLOSION



Fires and explosions has the potential to be catastrophic to the business and result in loss of life, significant injuries, and destruction of plant, equipment or buildings.

Controlling fire and explosions risks requires a systematic long term approach and as a business, we all have a part to play in preventing and minimising the risk to our business.

All Hot Work activities must be carried out in accordance with site procedures and permit requirements

Smoking is only accepted in designated smoking areas

Accumulation of combustibile dust should be controlled with regular housekeeping and monitoring programs

The storage of combustibile materials is not permitted in high fire risk areas

Flammable liquids not required for use in the process shall be stored in appropriate containers, cabinets and bulk stores

Portable cylinders that contain flammable gasses to be used and stored in a manner that minimises the risks of fire and explosion

All heaters used to provide thermal comfort to people must be suitable for the working environment, kept clear of combustibles, regularly inspected / maintained and turned off when not in use

Fire fighting equipment (extinguishers, fire hoses etc) must be appropriately positioned, labelled and inspected

Emergency Response Plans must be prepared and Response Teams established

In the event of a fire or explosion – never place your self or others in danger

# Legend, need a hand?

Call, text or scan QR code for  
FREE mental health support

**0488 846 988**

Monday to Friday 8am-10pm AEST



# Environment



**Sean Maxwell**  
Environmental  
Advisor

## WATER MANAGEMENT STANDARD

It can be easy to take water for granted - at times it seems so abundant, yet it is also so integral to all life on Earth. In the form of steady, soaking rain, it can replenish our plantations. But it can also be destructive when coursing across bare soil in our log yards.

In our sawmills, water is crucial to various processes, including cooling, heating, lubrication and dust suppression. Water is also a crucial to, and in some cases must be kept separated from, our timber treatment plants.

To help us better understand and fulfill the requirements to manage risks associated with water use and storage across our sawmill sites, the HSE Team released the AKD Water Management Standard.

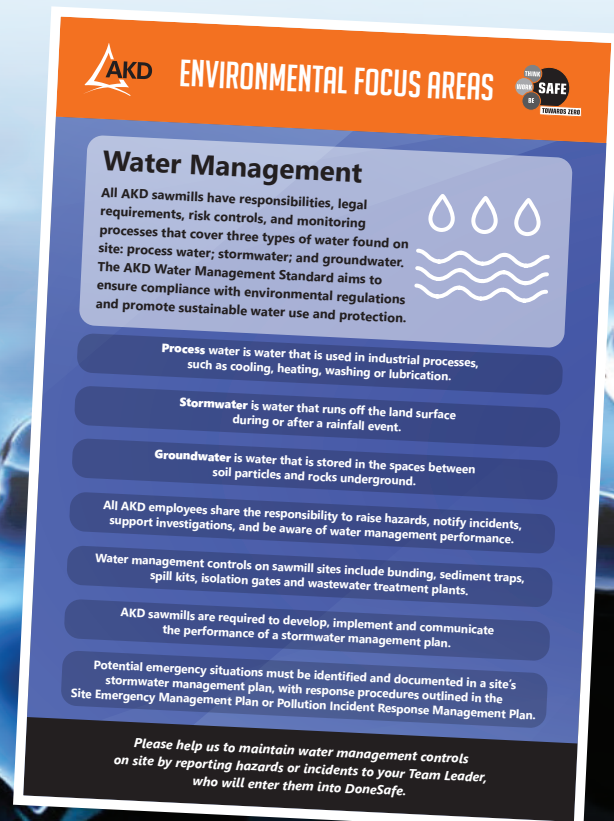
This is the third release of our environmental standards and covers management expectations for three kinds of water:

1. Process water is any water that is used in an industrial process (e.g. cleaning a loader).
2. Stormwater is water that runs off the land surface during or after a rainfall event. Stormwater can also be collected and stored in dams, wetlands, swales or tanks.
3. Groundwater is water that is stored in the spaces between soil particles and rocks underground.

The release of the Water Management Standard is crucial for two primary reasons: ensuring compliance and protecting our environment. It outlines the environmental obligations related to water management in the states where AKD operates, setting clear expectations for building risk tables, establishing controls, monitoring performance, and providing training programs.

Additionally, the Standard emphasizes our commitment to caring for our waterways, recognizing that stormwater runoff from our sites typically flows into nearby lakes or oceans - places many of us enjoy for recreational activities like fishing, boating, walking, or swimming.

For the Water Management Standard to be effective, your engagement is essential. Please review the Standard, ask questions, and seek clarification as needed. If you're interested in getting more involved in water management, reach out to your team leader, your HSE lead, or myself.



# Have you checked in with your mate lately?

If your mate says, “I’m not crash hot” and you’re all like, “What the bloody hell do I say now?”

That’s when you call us at TIACS. We’re here to support you and the people you care about. TIACS is a free, confidential mental health counselling service for tradies, truckies, rural, blue collar workers, and those who care about them.

Do yourself and your mate a favour and call us today!

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.



ALLIANCE  
MEMBER

# Caboolture

## Around the Grounds

### SAFETY

No one comes to work and thinks today I am going to be involved in an incident and get injured.

Much like when we are driving a car, no one is anticipating being in an accident and being killed – yet people are injured and killed in workplaces and on the roads.

Vehicles have many safety devices which, whilst can be somewhat annoying or slow us down, they serve the purpose of supporting our driving behaviours to reduce or prevent injury in the event something goes wrong.

Since last edition we installed some guarding in the log yard – like an air bag in a car we hope it never has to be called on to save someone from injury or worse.

The logyard team played an important role in the design and we all know that when we have to adjust or change practices, it can be a little challenging when compared to what was previously there.

Creating the environment where trust allows us to be vulnerable with each other is highly important, so we work through what the best option is regarding change or problem solving.

The mobile plant site reps/team also committed to moving a section of Sims Street from an internal road to external road of our green yard which has highly improved traffic flow and a safer operating environment.

Our stock in WIP is very high and our forkies in Greenmill and Kilns have some significant challenges and are consistently looking for room. Recognise the patience of these drivers in challenging conditions whilst we get DRY WIP levels back down.



Logyard Guarding installations to separate walkways and log conveyors/decks.



P2 Dust Mask Dispenser and Emergency Go Kits have been installed.

With changes of staff onsite and importance of emergency response, we have been conducting training for warden and chief warden roles. We have been installing P2 dispensers for workers to easily access respiratory protection and centralised emergency go kits. Whilst some of this stuff looks fluffy, it serves as our recognisable brand and a standard, we want to maintain not just with plant but also behaviours.

We all have things going on both in and out of the workplace, this can make our minds wander or sometimes we go into auto pilot whilst we are doing a task. Please take the time to refocus on what's your why and keep this close to your heart and mind when at work, stay focused and stay safe.

### PRODUCTION

Congratulations to the Log Yard team for achieving the new annualised Log Volume of 385K for July. The Greenmill fell short in the last 3 days of the month with some major failures coming in at 365K. The site is still focusing on the Top 5 impacts to ensure one-off breakdowns do not impact the focus of achieving the full volume.

The commitment to filling the Drymill vacancies this month has paid off with all positions expected to be assigned by the end of the month. This would be the first time in 12 months they have had a full contingency of people. These shortages in the past have been impacting the mill along with severe cases of sickness.

The Sales team has advised there are additional sales opportunities for blue-treated products estimating a further 500 to 1000m<sup>3</sup> of blue products could be sold



**Paul Ryan**  
Caboolture  
Site Manager



**Greg Levinge**  
Caboolture  
OHS Manager

each month. The site process improvement team will work on increasing the piece count through the line in August to assist with this volume. However, further work will be required in the stacking area to streamline this process for the longer term. Contract treatment facilities will assist with this volume until resolved to ensure the increased customer demand is serviced.

These volumes will exceed any blueline volumes the site has produced in the past.

## PROJECTS

The project team has been reviewing options to increase productivity through the Greenmill by splitting boards in one pass through the Ahlstrom Edger. One option to take forward is to place another Edger behind the existing to produce finished products in one pass.

## PEOPLE

### Trade Taster

In August 2023, Caboolture embarked on the launch of the first-ever 'AKD Trade Taster' program, in partnership with St Columban's College, which we were excited to hold again this year. The program involves six students from year 11 and 12, 'try a trade' rotating between all four trades (Electrician, Fitter, Saw Technician

and Wood Machinist) for one day a week over a four week period.

Our current apprentices and tradespeople play a pivotal role in guiding and mentoring these young minds during their trade exploration journey.

We're excited to continue offering students opportunities for growth and exploration locally through initiatives like these and showcase our dedication to fostering the next generation's interest in trades and empowering them to take their first steps toward potential career paths. One of the 2023 participants was hired as part of AKDs 2024 apprentice intake.

### Canopy Program

In partnership with Timber Training Creswick and Queensland Timber, local job seekers can sign up for the Canopy Program which provides them with five days of class-based learning and 25 hours of work experience, in addition, the program provides participants a Certificate III in Timber and Wood Production Operations.

At Caboolture, we provide candidates the opportunity to complete their work experience component, which also opens employment avenues for those who stand-out during this period.

Almost half of the candidates that completed their work experience with us last year, are currently full time employees with AKD.

AKD Trade Taster students L-R: Brielle, Dayne, Trent, Rex, Zachary and Kai.



# Colac & Irrewarra

## Around the Grounds

### SAFETY

What a warm welcome I received when I started my new role as the HSE Manager for Colac at the beginning of June!

The support and friendliness from everyone at the Colac site has been truly outstanding. Department managers, supervisors, and team leaders took the time to walk me through their work areas and answered all my (many) questions about the processes.

Additionally, the warm smiles and considerate check-ins, especially given my move from the warmer climate of Queensland to Victoria's chilly winter, were deeply appreciated. Thank you all for making me feel so welcome.

Recognising that our people are AKD's greatest asset, one of our main focuses in Colac over the past few months has been enhancing worker engagement. We have concentrated on improving hazard reporting and reintroducing the HSE Interaction Program (formerly known as safety interactions).

These initiatives are designed to facilitate two-way communication on health, safety and environmental matters, putting us in a strong position to improve the site's safety culture, behaviours and workplace conditions.

Our goal should always be to identify areas for improvement and seek better, safer ways of working before incidents occur or property damage happens. This is demonstrated by the ongoing changes at the Colac site - how we worked in the past, how we work now, and how we will work in the future - reflect our commitment to continuous improvements.

As a valuable member of our team, you are ideally positioned to identify these opportunities through hazard reporting and active participation in the HSE Interaction Program.



*Kirsty and Ryan from the Dry Mill undertaking a safety interaction with a forklift operator.*

### CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Some exciting things have been happening in the CI (Continuous Improvement) space. New dashboards were made for the greenmill stacker, and the team is developing more for each machine center before moving into the drymill.

There has also been a focus on bins jams and sorter jams which have been at the top of the downtime list for the GMC. Shark fins were installed in the bin sorter to guide timber into the bins, and since installation bins jam downtime has significantly reduced, only recording four minutes for the month of July. The highlight is we've been able to lower the risk of potential injury by limiting the amount of times needed to clear bin jams.

Additionally, a new camera system has been installed at the sorter by the electrical team to understand why sorter jams have been occurring. Not long after installation we were able to witness why multiple jams were occurring, we took those bins down, had them repaired and since have had no further jams.

Thanks to the CI, electrical and maintenance teams for the work that has gone into these projects.



*Cameras were installed at the sorter by Electrical Apprentice, Tanner Fratantaro.*

### PRODUCTION

Colac's performance in July was strong across all departments. All operational and service teams have been working well together on our top five downtimes in each department. This focus has led to improved production performance and uptime. It's been great to see the collective focus, thank you to all those involved.

Some major works were completed at the log sorter in July, with a focus on changing out the 2nd log kicker which had been on our top five downtime list.

We needed two consecutive days to take the log sort off-line to complete the project. To support this the team ran





**Jared Pietsch**  
Colac Site  
Manager



**Kirsty Stuart**  
Colac HSE  
Manager

an additional two hours per day for over a week to ensure we had sufficient stocks for the green mill during the shut. Thank you to the team for your efforts. It's great to see that the new kicker is performing well.

Another strong month in the greenmill saw the team close out the month at 155m3/hr. What's most impressive is that the first week ended at 120m3/hr after a major breakdown. The team were able to claw that back and more. Congratulations to a fantastic team effort, and to the service departments who supported.

Kilns continued their strong performance, and with two kilns remaining down for repairs still produced good numbers. Kilns nine and 11 now have their new vertical

baffles installed which will further improve performance.

Drymill also finished the month ahead of budget, the team has done a fantastic job, particularly this month processing large volumes of D2 and D3. This enabled the site to reduce WIP that was previously produced for the sleeper market, into 90x35 and 90x45 NSTR.

It was announced in July that the drymill will be moving from a 5-day operation to a 4-day operation in August due to WIP now being at a sustainable level, and the log intake for the next FY being at minimum intake due to the current market conditions. Thank you to all the drymill team for your understanding as we worked through this change.

# Congratulations Jared

We're excited to share the news that Jared Pietsch has been appointed as the new Colac Site Manager!

Jared has been a vital member of the AKD family for over 10 years, starting in 2013, in the Colac Drymill in a Wrap and Strap role before progressing to the Quality Control Officer and 2IC. His journey with us has seen him move to and excel in various roles, including Site Production Planner and later overseeing the Colac Kilns. Most recently, in 2022, Jared took on the role of Production Manager, where he continued to demonstrate his deep understanding of our business, products, and processes.

Jared's commitment to AKD is evident in his proven capabilities, strong relationships, and passion for culture, people, and continuous improvement - qualities that will undoubtedly benefit the Colac site as we move forward. Alongside his role, Jared is also pursuing a Master of Business Administration (MBA), which will further enhance his contributions to our team.

Outside of work, Jared enjoys life in the Colac District with his wife Kristen and their three lovely children. Despite a busy schedule filled with family, studies, and now his new role, Jared still finds time to enjoy camping, fishing, and the great outdoors when he can.

Jared's AKD journey



Jared with his wife Kristen and their children, Isaac, Spencer and Penny.

# Tumut & Gilmore

## Around the Grounds

### SAFETY

I heard a quote the other day that I would like to share, as it resonates strongly with me at the moment, **"Safety is not the absence of events - Safety is the presence of defences"** ....let's explore that for a moment.

Let's break this down - the wording **'Safety is not the absence of events'**.... the perception for some can be, if we are not injuring anyone, damaging property or harming the environment then we are completely safe, and no improvement needs to be made.

The second part to the quote **'Safety is the presence of defences'** is talking about the importance of having effective defences or as we often refer to it – control measures. For example: appropriate machine guarding, isolation, traffic management, being trained and competent in the tasks we perform and the tools we use, everyone having a clear understanding of expectations, having well understood procedures in place and demonstrating safe behaviours are all defences.

We have installed a set of traffic lights at our main site entrances to improve mobile plant and pedestrian interaction, the traffic lights work in conjunction with the flashing lights however they are programmed to turn RED for a set period of time at the heaviest foot traffic times e.g start of shift, lunch breaks and



end of shifts, once the traffic lights turn RED the forklifts are not to cross the pedestrian crossing

For the Tumut / Gilmore sites, our incident and hazard reporting has dropped off recently. We need to make sure we do not fall into the trap of thinking we can't improve. So please remember, reporting hazards or events is important so we continually improve.

Have a think about the area you work in and the tasks you undertake daily – what hazards exist, how can this be improved? Our workforce is full of great ideas, we want to hear about them!

### PROJECTS

The Horizontal Shape Saw (HSS) is in full production. A visit this month from USNR Techs to follow-up on alignments, control and optimization was positive. The USNR team confirmed that all the alignments had maintained the install and commissioning specifications.

The time was utilised for some additional training for the Maintenance and Productions teams.

- Excavations work is under way for ESP footings
- The 2nd RBS infeed cant turner has been trialled on some log sorts with positive results. The next step is the modifications for control when changing from the vertical to horizontal plane.
- Headrig cant transfer to HSS is commissioned.
- The new hogger commissioned with diverters and dockings re-entry.



We hosted the AFPA (Australian Forest Products Association) Safety Sub Committee for the softwoods manufacturing chamber quarterly meeting.



**Rab Green**  
Tumut Site  
Manager



**Rodney Sutton**  
Tumut EHSR  
Advisor

## PRODUCTION

Sales throughout NSW continue to be a challenge for the site and sales team. Hoping that coming out of winter things might improve. Currently reviewing days coverage for all product and ensure we have the right stock on the ground off site to transfer to customers.

Production continues to be very pleasing with all sections running really well. We have started 4-day trials in both the Greenmill and Drymill during this quiet period.

The HSS continues to give the site lots of options and is improving conversion and wood quality.

Key milestones during July and August for employees:

***Mick Hardwick with 45 years' service***

***Steven Goode and Bill Stuckey 40 years***

***Matt Hardwick and Lachlan Knox 30 years***

***Brad Annetts, Stuart Hawkins and Steve Thomas  
25 years' service.***

Congratulations to all and thank you for all the effort you have contributed and continue to contribute to the site and AKD.

## TIMBER DONATION

We recently donated timber to Tumut High School, where Year 12 Construction students used it to build a dog kennel, which they plan to raffle off to raise funds for Can Assist fundraising event. Students have learnt how to frame up the dog kennel, and later, they will tackle the challenge of building the roof. Additionally, two Year 11 Construction students completed the Step Stool project as part of their curriculum.



*Students have completed the frame for the dog kennel and will move to start to work on the roof next.*



# Yarram

## Around the Grounds

### JULY SHUT

As we reach the halfway point of the year once again the Yarram site stopped for a week as it performed the annual maintenance shut. This year was particularly helpful with our very healthy stocks that allowed us to keep our customers fulfilled but also allowed us to get the site into a much more orderly state quicker.

Very pleasing to see not only a good volume of jobs completed on the site but also that we had absolutely no safety issues. It was a great test for the LinkSafe sign in system over this period as we switched on the contractor sign in process and began implementing the change.

As expected, there were some hiccups but overall, a very successful improvement. The system definitely highlighted a couple of contractors that didn't have the right credentials to do work on the site that previously might have been challenging to pick up.

### SAFETY

Yarram took another step forward with traffic management over the shut with the expansion of walkways being completed. This time the focus was on the Palings line and creating further segregation of forklifts from pedestrians. It is a great improvement, and the team certainly has more plans for this area.

Other updates have also commenced for Yarram with some improved signage in the car park area. The design of the ordered signs should help welcome people to the site and make it easier to understand, adding to the safety for visitors.

The self audit for the critical risk of Fire and Explosions was completed during this latest period. It was good to receive extensive supporting input from the site which generated 18 recommendations which once in place, will improve the way we work around controlling this risk.

With the end of the financial year and the beginning of the new one, this gives us a chance to reflect on our performance. From an injury aspect, Yarram did not have any Lost Time Injuries for that 12 month period, which is definitely a highlight, however the total number of injuries is something we need to aim at improving.

Something that has been running for a little while at Yarram is our physio intervention program which aims at getting involved with manual handling type injuries at the early stages as well as providing training to prevent these types of injuries from occurring in the first place. It is a great program that is well run and organized on site by Crystal Lewis and Graham Clarke.

### PRODUCTION

Despite tough market conditions, the Yarram site has completed a fantastic 12-month period with solid production results hitting most targets over the last 12 months. A great team effort highlighting flexibility by both our staff and the range of products we offer in a period where most of the timber industry has found it difficult.





**Glen Davis**  
Yarram Site  
Manager



**Graham Clarke**  
Yarram EHSR  
Advisor

## PEOPLE

I would like to take some time to congratulate Laurie Kyne who has become a grandfather for the first time. Laurie looks after our inventory on site, does a lot of data entry and also helps out the IT team at times.

A bit of an unsung hero, Laurie's effort around inventory control is nothing short of exceptional and was highlighted at the last stock take with a super accurate result. Laurie's daughter Chloe, partner Garry, and her new son Eric are now at home in Bendigo with proud Granddad Laurie beaming as he plans his next visit.

We recently celebrated the wedding of two of our own, Peter Sykes from the Drymill and Sammie Dale (now Sykes) from the Greenmill. They exchanged vows at the charming Port Albert foreshore, the very spot where Peter proposed to Sammie a year earlier.

Despite a recent power outage in Gippsland that had everyone on edge, the power was restored just in time for their special day. Following the wedding, the couple enjoyed a fantastic honeymoon in Perth, soaking up the sun. Congratulations to the happy couple!



*Granddad Laurie and Eric*



*Peter and Sammie on their wedding day.*

# Portland Pine



**Daryl Hann**  
General  
Manager  
Portland Pine

The past two months at Portland Pine have been busy with cambio orders leading the way. These posts are used for smaller, new development vineyards in the Mildura and Swan Hill regions in Victoria, and in the Barossa and McLaren Vale regions in South Australia.

A great deal of work has gone in over the past few years to secure customers in South Australia and it is pleasing for all at Portland Pine for this to now be occurring.

Customers requiring poles have started placing orders for their new developments which are being built in the Shepparton region of Victoria.

These poles are used for holding the netting over the apple orchards and despite competition from concrete and steel, long term customers are still using timber.

Precision round production from the refurbished Bezner has hit its first milestone, producing 1000m<sup>3</sup> of high-grade precision stock. This stock has been made for our customer in Queensland, Pinewood and our new customer, Meyer Timber in Victoria.

Staff from Portland and Morwell unveiled the precisions to the Meyer's sales team in June and answered questions around the product and how it was made.

Not long after this visit, Meyer's took their first load of precisions and feedback was ***that this is the first time many rural/hardware stores in Victoria have seen such a quality precision product.*** In September, Pinewood will receive over 250 packs to start fulfilling their orders which is great for Portland Pine.

The Morwell Distribution site are still dispatching orders in the East of the state. All customers from the Jelfor days have come across, with new ones seeing the quality of the Portland Pine product, placing orders. Having Portland product spanning the whole of Victoria, as well as into South Australia is great for all at Portland Pine.

David Durbidge, our site safety rep, researched a new safety blower system that allows employees to blow themselves down after cleaning to remove dust from their clothes, great job David.



*Meyer Timber with their first delivery.*



*New jet-black dust blower installed for employees.*



*Pomona Valley recently updated their vineyards with Portland Pine poles.*



**TAKE A BREAK AND GET CREATIVE!**  
Coloring isn't just fun; it's also a great way to unwind, reduce stress, and boost mental well-being.  
Grab your favorite colors, take a breather, and let your creativity flow!



# LEAD LEADERSHIP EXCELLENCE AND DEVELOPMENT



*Facilitator Cathy Taylor and Gen Ryan, AKD's Talent Attraction and Development Manager.*



**COHORT 2**



**COHORT 3**

This year, we were able to deliver two more cohorts through LEAD - our leadership development program, one in Geelong in June and one in North Lakes in August.

With every cohort, brings a different experience, with the dynamic and energy of the group being at the heart of what that experience ends up being.

The more we continue this journey, the more we gain collectively as AKD. It is the diversity in thinking, cross site collaboration and leadership authenticity that we foster within the week, with the hope that each participant takes those elements to their teams and continue to apply what they have learnt.

To see and feel the impacts of LEAD spreading through the organisation is a beautiful thing to be a part of. This has completed our roll out for Modules 1 and 2 for 2024, with us continuing the program six monthly moving into 2025.

Cohort sizes vary between 14-18 participants with representatives of different sites and roles across the business. The program is delivered offsite, so that participants can immerse themselves in the learning and spend the week investing in themselves.

Once again, the program was delivered by Cathy Taylor, from Dalmau Consulting. Her effective facilitation being one of the key ingredients to encouraging people to share and dive into the themes and topics. The experience is highly experiential with a focus on discussions, small break out activities and team building.

We continue to improve and reiterate the program to ensure we are always providing the best content at the right level so a big thank you to all our participants for your feedback!

*"As an experienced leader I wasn't sure what benefit I could get from this training however after the 1st day it was clear that it was going to be one of the best leadership training programs I have ever attended, and I have attended many."*

**Craig Karrani**  
CONTINUAL IMPROVEMENT AND LOGISTICS MANAGER, COLAC



with Gen Ryan

Talent Attraction and  
Development Manager



"The AKD LEAD Program has been a fantastic opportunity to gain insights into leadership, self-understanding and how to connect with other team members effectively. The program covered a wide range of topics, including how to manage difficult conversations, understand personality types, manage teams effectively, and several communication skills. It also gave me the opportunity to build meaningful relationships with some of my colleagues at AKD, allowing us to discuss several challenges faced in our roles, even though we all had different teams, activities, and responsibilities. I strongly recommend this program to those looking to expand their leadership and general soft skills to manage themselves and work in high-performing teams."

**Mateo Gutierrez**

NATIONAL R&D AND PRODUCT ENGINEER

"LEAD was a great experience to learn and be made aware of different tools and skills which will be valuable both at work and everyday life. By having members from different departments and sites allowed us to share different knowledge and experiences about the business, which each of us can take back to further improve our own teams, processes and tasks moving forward. The North Lakes environment that the training took place in I feel was perfect to allow us to move out of the classroom for discussions with 'neighbours' and for role playing, so that the content was broken. It also allowed us interstateers to visit the Caboolture site. Thank you for this experience."

**Jye Tillack**

SENIOR ACCOUNTANT, COLAC

As you may recall from a previous LEAD update, we are working on Module 3 delivery now, to complete the program. For those leaders who were involved with the program prior to LEAD i.e. OPEX, we will also be looking to run leadership events to refocus on some of the concepts with new working examples and application in 'LEAD ON'.

Watch this space for more details.

# ESCAPE ROOM FUN

To add some fun and boost social engagement, each cohort took part in Escape Room challenges, providing a much-needed break from the intensive week



# The ripple effects of Workplace

As a business, we feel it is important to address this topic. It's one everyone should pay attention to – a sombre topic I'm going to be honest and raw about. The topic is workplace fatalities. If you're thinking about skipping to the next page because this doesn't relate to you or doesn't seem important – please don't. This is a topic to share with your partner, your kids (if they've started working), and your friends – anyone in the work environment.

Before I move into the 'detail', please take a minute to look at the Australian map graphic below.

***200 people in 2023, woke up in the morning, got dressed, said 'see ya later' to their families and walked out the door to go to work. Neither them, nor their families, would have ever expected that they wouldn't return home that day.***

Think about it. What would life look like if your partner or child was killed at work and didn't come home? The funeral arrangements, grieving, the frustration of "how did they let this happen?" Then, the sad reality of life without them. Birthdays, weddings, and celebrations aren't the

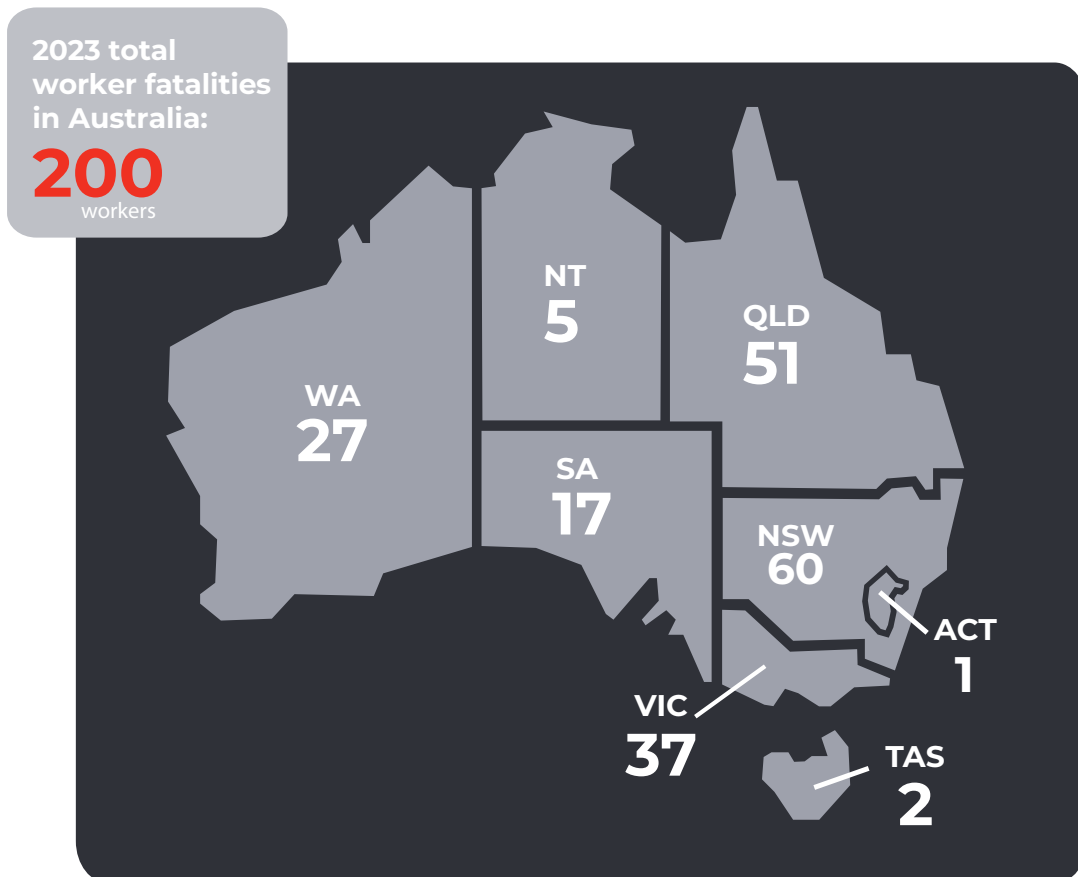
same. Everyday tasks still have to be done. The financial impacts. The person who tucks the kids in or kisses you goodnight is gone. Life is altered in every way.

Now imagine if it was your actions that caused someone's death. How do you deal with that? How do you keep working? How do you face that person's family at the supermarket? Regardless of whether it was an accident, it's something you live with for the rest of your life.

***And if you don't think 'it can happen to you' – I'm sure those 200 people last year, didn't think it would happen to them either.***

For those who have been at AKD for a while, you've heard me talk about the workplace fatalities I've been exposed to before joining AKD. I've said it before, and I'll say it again – this is not something anyone should have to experience. It impacts not just the family, but the team and the community. These impacts last forever.

In August, we shared devastating news of a workplace fatality within the industry – a person was struck by a loader. We don't have the specifics, and we don't need them. That person had a family whose lives have been turned upside down. The loader driver will carry this for life. Workmates will remember it every time they step onto the site.



# Mobile Fatalities



Toni Kirkup  
National HSE Manager

We communicated this across all AKD sites – not in detail, but to ensure everyone is aware. Our sites are similar to the one where the fatality occurred. We all operate mobile plants like forklifts and loaders, have traffic management plans, and designated walkways.

Since then, we've had reports of exclusion zone breaches. What part of "someone was killed by a loader" do people not understand? For those following site expectations – thank you. But for those who don't – I can't understand why.

One of AKD's Top10 Critical Risks is 'Mobile Plant and Pedestrian Interaction.' It's a Top 10 risk because, if controls fail or processes aren't followed, it could seriously injure or kill you. Through induction, training, the critical risk program, SOPs, toolbox talks, and constant communication, there is no excuse for not knowing the expectations – NONE.

Given we still have people disregarding this, **changes will be made going forward.**

Any breach of an exclusion zone will result in:

1. Person (s) involved being stood down immediately
2. A full investigation will be conducted

3. If the investigation findings show the breach was a result of poor behaviour (blatant disregard to requirements), that person (s) will be disciplined and depending on the nature of the event, receive:

- As a minimum – First and Final warning OR
- Termination

**AKD will not tolerate poor behaviour / blatant disregard to company requirements.**

While this may seem harsh or unfair, ask yourself: would your family rather know you were terminated for putting yourself at risk, or face the consequences of a fatality?

Remember, AKD has a legal obligation to provide a safe workplace. But as individuals, you also have obligations under the OHS/WHS Act to take reasonable care for your own safety and the safety of others. If an incident occurs, and it's found you breached company requirements, you can be held personally liable.

It's disappointing we have to reinforce this again, something that's been constantly communicated and is well known.

The business – including Managers, the CEO, and the Board – do not expect you to risk your life for business gain. This has been communicated time and time again. So if the owners of the business are saying this, why would you make the decision to rush or take shortcuts?

**Surely your life is more important than that?**



**SAFETY: WHAT'S YOUR WHY?**

# 2024 Kokoda Experience



**Simon Gatt - Forestry Resource Manager**

Our saying on the trek was "what it is, is what it is," emphasizing the choice to either embrace the challenge or let it become a negative experience. Kokoda wasn't easy, yet it was a fantastic adventure because team members relied on each other to enhance the experience. This reliance often came from unexpected sources, such as students or colleagues we had just met.

In this environment, we assisted each other in subtle ways, like offering encouragement, spotting signs of fatigue, or lending a hand. Equally important was being humble enough to accept help and encouragement from others along the way. This journey highlighted the importance of both self-awareness and teamwork, allowing us to achieve something truly special in overcoming what many of us consider the greatest challenge we've ever faced.

**Janelle Monaghan  
Victorian Sales Account Manager**

In July, we embarked on the Kokoda Trek through Papua New Guinea's Owen Stanley Mountain range, covering 96km of dense rainforest with steep ascents, thick mud, and numerous river crossings.

It was one of the hardest yet most rewarding experiences of my life, with every day presenting tough mental and physical challenges.

One of the most enjoyable aspects was listening to our trek leader John share stories of brave soldiers, which provided perspective and motivation on difficult days. The trek embodies four pillars: Courage, Endurance, Mateship, and Sacrifice, all crucial for completing the journey. Mateship stood out for me, as the connections formed with fellow trekkers and porters enriched the experience. Our group was incredibly positive, supporting each other through tough moments and sharing laughs at camp.

The porters were the happiest people, making the trek possible by sacrificing their comfort for our safety. Their morning and nighttime songs added a special touch to each day. A special shoutout to my porter Toby, who went above and beyond to ensure my safety and enjoyment throughout the trek.

**David Uwland - Colac Dry Mill Operator**

Participating in the 2024 AKD Kokoda Trek was a massive privilege for me. Training with the group helped me prepare physically and build connections with everyone, making the experience extremely rewarding.

The students, full of life and courage, pushed themselves to embrace the unknown and discover their resilience.

During the trek, the support from my AKD colleagues and teachers was invaluable, especially on the toughest days. Their camaraderie and humor enhanced my experience. I learned a lot about Kokoda's history, and being there in person, hearing stories and connecting with the ancestors of the Fuzzy Wuzzy Angels was humbling.

As a veteran, walking in the footsteps of fallen soldiers was profound.

I realized my body could achieve more than I thought, and I deeply appreciated the porters, for whom this role is an honor. On Day 2, I had the privilege of sharing the history of Isurava battle site with my fellow trekkers, which resonated with me as a veteran.

To AKD, words cannot capture what this opportunity has meant to me. My communication and leadership skills have significantly improved, and I've applied them in the workplace since the trek. I hope to stay connected and continue mentoring the students who joined us.



AKD is incredibly proud of our 2024 Kokoda team, which included 6 dedicated employees alongside 9 students and 2 teachers from Colac Secondary College and Trinity College Colac. Together, they tackled the challenging 96km Kokoda Track, embodying the values of courage, endurance, mateship, and sacrifice every step of the way. Here's a glimpse into their inspiring journey.



**Luke Hall – Yarram Log Yard Leading Hand and Debarker Operator**

*Six months of dedication and training hard prepared us for the 9-day trek that lay ahead of us for the 96km long grueling hike. The courage and endurance shown by the group was amazing, to see everyone overcome whatever obstacles, weather and terrain that was in front of us really drove me every day.*

*The Mateship shown on this trek not only from us but from the Porters too will be something I'll never forget, from our buddy system to looking out for each other and making sure we had drunk enough water or ate enough for breakfast, lunch or dinner, to helping each other along the trek by reminding each other to take small steps and use your poles*

*When times would get tough, we would start a conversation about random things just to get each other through. The Porters were always there when we needed them no matter what. The sacrifices we made were nowhere near as drastic as those of the soldiers in which the footstep we walked in.*

*In summary this is an experience I'll never forget, and I'd like to thank all AKD staff, CSC and Trinity SC students and teachers and John and Noreen from Kokoda Courage who helped motivate me along the trek and AKD for this opportunity.*



**Andrew McLaughlin  
National Compliance Manager**

*I was nervous going into Kokoda, unsure if I had trained enough or packed everything I needed, and concerned about being without my phone or internet. Despite my worries, the trek became one of the best experiences of my life. Spending nine days outdoors in such a beautiful, unique country allowed me to experience a way of life vastly different from my own. What stood out most were the people: the trek leaders who guided us and shared the history, the fellow trekkers who welcomed me, and the porters who cared for us. The camaraderie formed in such a short time was inspiring, showcasing perseverance and support during tough days. I signed up for Kokoda to push myself, explore a part of the world few see, and connect with people outside my usual circle. In all these ways, Kokoda exceeded my expectations, instilling a new belief in my abilities and confidence to tackle future challenges.*

**Narayan (Ryan) Peacock  
Colac Fitter and Turner.**

*Doing the Kokoda trail gave me great insight into what our forefathers endured in 1942. It was a significant challenge, especially as I had just lost my nan days before the trek. I had no time to grieve and had to prepare for the challenge I'd been training for over six months with my fellow trekkers.*

*One key takeaway from the trail was the four pillars of the War: Courage, Endurance, Sacrifice, and Mateship. Completing the trek helped me cope with my nan's passing; I used it as fuel. Just days after the trek, I delivered her eulogy—something I don't believe I could have done before.*

*The trek gave me the courage to speak despite feeling uncomfortable and allowed me to sacrifice my pride by expressing my emotions in front of family and friends. The support I received afterward reminded me of the mateship I experienced in PNG with my fellow trekkers and porters.*

*I was fortunate to do the Kokoda trail with a down-to-earth, supportive group. We built lasting friendships and memories, aided by our trek leader John, trek medic Noreen, and the dedicated porters.*

*I witnessed their compassion firsthand when I struggled on a slippery, steep decline. They lifted me, weighing 83 kg with a 20 kg backpack, and safely carried me down the hill.*

*The trek has been invaluable, influencing my everyday life and deepening my understanding of courage and camaraderie.*



# That's a boatload

On Tuesday the 20th of August, a group of AKD employees had the opportunity to visit two log customer sites at Laverton and Geelong, Victoria.

The tour started in Laverton at MZ Commodities containerised export yard where we were able to watch a load of MP grade log from a current thinning harvest operation near Ballarat, be loaded into a container. MP grade has a minimum small end diameter of 12cms, no restriction on knot size and usually cut at 3.9 metres in length. This suits our first and second thinning harvest operations where the wood quality does not meet our sawmill's specifications.

Andrew Mahony of MZ explained to the group the process of receiving the log to the site, loading the containers, the fumigation process and unloading at their destination typically in China. Overall, it was interesting to view the container loading process, as well as get an insight into the scale of their operations.

From there, we headed back down the highway to Softwood Plantation Exporters (SPE) at Geelong to meet with the sites manager, Rowan Eyre. SPE is a joint venture partnership between AKD & HVP located in Geelong, which processes and ships softwood woodchip for export sale.

AKD and HVP sell pulpwood from their harvest operations to SPE, as well as our AKD chip produced in the Colac Sawmill. The pulpwood is then chipped onsite by SPE and stored with the sawmill chip in large sheds.

As part of our tour, we had the privilege of viewing an export vessel being loaded with chip at the Port of Geelong. We were escorted onto the vessel and were able to view the process of the chip being loaded via a



conveyor belt from the storage sheds. The chip vessels can hold anywhere between 40,000 to 55,000 tonnes of chip which is equivalent to 1,400 truck loads of chip or 1,550 loads of logs.

The ships travel to Japan or China and once the chip is received by the export customers it is used to make paper and biofuel. The paper products are typically cardboard for packaging and some domestic paper like tissue and paper towel. The biofuel is used for power generation.

The second part of the tour included visiting the Grain Corp sheds used to store the chip and we also had exposure to the extensive testing regime required in sampling the chip as a vessel was being loaded. The loading of a vessel generally takes three to four days.

The tour gave our employees the ability to view the different processes at both sites and provided valuable exposure to enhance their knowledge to better understand the tasks they complete on a daily basis.



*Back row, L-R: Brent Guild, Sarah Adams, Ralph Hossack, Jason Biddle, Eliza Withall and Simon Gatt. Front row: Mark Suntjens, Kavitha Ponneelan, Jo Foster and Chris Higgins.*

# of chip

with Jo Foster  
Harvesting Manager



and Eliza Withall  
Fibre Supply Scheduler

AKD trucks cart the chip from our sawmill to SPE



Pulp logs are taken from the plantations to SPE and chipped on site

Chip is stored in a shed for protection from the weather



When a vessel arrives and is ready for loading, the chip is blown into the hull until it reaches capacity.

Vessels can hold anywhere between 40,000 to 55,000 tonnes of chip.

That's 1,400 truck loads of chip or 1,550 loads of logs!



The vessel travels to Japan or China where it is used to make paper products and biofuel.



# 40 Bill Stuckey YEARS AT TUMUT

**Tell us about your journey at AKD.**

I started as a casual in 1984 stacking noggings in the finished goods yard, then went to the green chain stacking green timber.

In 1990 I completed my Saw Doctor Apprenticeship and a year later became Leading Hand and then supervisor of the Saw Shop since 2012.

**What is your favorite part of your job?**

Mentoring the younger apprentices coming through and helping to trouble shoot problems within the mill.

**What has been a standout moment your time at AKD?**

The HSS project has been a standout for me.

**What are you currently looking forward/excited about?**

Down the track retiring.

**How do you like to spend your time outside of work?**

Spending time with family, my dogs, travelling and riding my E Bike.

**What is on your bucket list?**

More travel, I have just got back from my adventure with my wife Anita travelling to Darwin, via the red centre and back through outback Queensland. My next venture maybe Tassie.

*"I have worked with Bill for over 30 years. Bill has come through the ranks as a saw doctor shift leader and sawshop supervisor, Bill has a great knowledge of the sawshop process. Bill takes pride in his workplace and is keen to put out a good product to the sawmill team. Congratulations Bill on 40 years' service."*

*Scott Gorman  
GREEN MILL MANAGER*

*"I have been working with Bill for 22 years. It has been great working with Bill, not only as my leading hand but now as my supervisor. He has taught me a lot about saw doctoring. It has been a pleasure working with Bill (Stuck). Congratulations on your 40 years of service."*

*Adam Grayland  
SAWDOCTOR*



Bill & Anita in Darwin



25

# Andrew Hawkins YEARS AT TUMUT

**Tell us about your journey at AKD.**

I started back in 1999 in the old shift structures and Weyerhaeuser upgrade, working my way through different sorted positions and landing in the drymill. It's been a roller coaster ride for sure but with more ups than downs.

**What is your favorite part of your job?**

I like to challenge myself getting through as much rework, and normal shifts.

**What has been a standout moment your time at AKD?**

Many highpoints but reaching 25 years has been a goal and one of my greatest achievements.

**What are you currently looking forward/excited about?**

Next target is to achieve 30 years.

**What's your guilty pleasure TV show?**

Tyler Zed on youtube "Zeducation" - look it up.

**When you were a kid, what did you want to be when you grew up?**

Just be rich.

**What is on your bucket list?**

I want to tour the top end of Australia.

**What's something no-one would know about you?**

I am Batman or an apiarist (beekeeper).

*"Andrew Stuart Hawkins commonly known as Hawko has spent 25 years of his life in the timber industry, working assiduously for AKD for last 6 years. Andrew hails from Batlow, a small town known for its cold winters and apples. Andrew always seems to have an endless supply of food in his tucker box and if the machine is stopped for some unknown reason, you can usually see him digging into it. Andrew's unique sense of humour and stories has always entertained people, he has become a skilled operator over the past years. Congratulations and thank you for your continuous work efforts, well done Andrew."*

Raymond Lucas  
DRY PROCESS MANAGER

*"Andrew is a family man who likes to spend time with them at blowering dam and not catching much! His other passion is bee keeping and he loves to see the fruits of their labour. Andrew enjoys sharing his jokes, and while they may not always land with everyone, we appreciate his sense of humor. All being said I've had the joy of working with Hawko for over 10 years. Well done on your milestone Andrew."*

Jason French  
TEAM LEADER  
DRYMILL

*"Hawko is very good at what he does, which is very little, Ha ha. Jokes aside, Congratulations on your 25 years Hawko quite the achievement."*

Steven Beaven  
TEAM LEADER



**1 in 3**  
cancers can be prevented with early detection

**HEALTHY**  
mind • body • ME

**CHECK YOURSELF TO PROTECT YOURSELF**

# 30 Matt Hardwick YEARS AT GILMORE

*Matt receiving the Service Award for the Bush Fires, Commonwealth National Emergency Medal.*



## **Tell us about your journey at AKD.**

My first shift was a night shift for CSR Softwoods at Gilmore on the 5th of August 1994 at the age of 19. Stacking RSKD off the end of the 30N long chain on a cool winter's night in a flannelette shirt and tracksuit pants. After some time I found myself driving forklifts and being trained up in most areas across the site. After this, I transitioned to a relief shift leading hand role and eventually became a leading hand at the Gilmore site. My entire journey has been centered at Gilmore, with occasional stints at Tumut in the Green Mill, where I handled forklift operations and quality control during staff shortages. I've also served as a relief Purchasing Officer and as the site union representative, participating in negotiations for EB Agreements.

## **What has been a standout moment with your time at AKD?**

One of the standout moments for me came after the bushfires with the investment and support into the mills, with a lot of uncertainty at the time it felt like there was a future for us all in the timber game. I think we are now seeing the rewards of having the DC based here at Gilmore and the HSS now in operation in Tumut.

## **What are you currently looking forward/excited about?**

Going to my first test match, Day/Night at Adelaide in December. Missed out on going to the pink test in Sydney due to the bushfires.

## **How do you like to spend your time outside of work?**

With family and friends, camping and fishing, playing darts and gardening, watching cricket, football darts and horse racing.

## **What's your guilty pleasure TV show?**

Mr Inbetween – If you haven't seen it do yourself a favour.

## **When you were a kid, what did you want to be when you grew up?**

A Gunsmith, as a kid I loved going with my Grandfather and older brother fox shooting.

## **What is on your bucket list?**

I don't have a bucket list as such, if something pops up that looks good, I'll try to do/see it. But I do have a list of things that I don't want to ever do like skydive and swim with sharks.

## **If you're stranded on an island, what one item would you have with you?**

Fishing rod and tackle, and please let the island be in the tropics.



Matt, with nephews Jake and Ben, after winning the Pub 9's - Roddy Shield Trophy.

Matt works at Gilmore,  
Stands about 6 foot 4.

Gets in early every day,  
Just to wipe the germs away.

When that job is thoroughly done,  
He starts the machinery for everyone.

He doesn't seem to make a fuss,  
He just seems to inspire us.

written by Geoff Rapley, Gilmore Incisor Operator

"Congratulations Matt on 30 years. You have really grown into a great leader within the business. You have a great knack of working with people and getting the best out of their ability. The Gilmore team under your guidance has continued to grow into a really self-managed team. The site is always clean and a credit to you and the group of their continual safety performance. Well, done Matt and look forward to seeing you continue to grow in your current role."

Rab Green  
TUMUT SITE MANAGER

"Congratulations Matthew on your 30 years within the industry, I've always said to you mate if you use your head, you get results. An example being, I recall a day Matthew was playing cricket in Adelong, Matthew was standing at square leg when a ball was flat batted with some force hitting Matthew flush in the head the ball then carried another 20 metres or so and was caught by the Fine leg fielder, not sure who was more surprised the batter thinking he'd hit a boundary or Matthew being hit in the head or the fielder who caught the ball nameless to say Matt was taking the credit for the wicket. Once again well done on your achievement, Troughy!"

Ray Lucas  
DRY PROCESS MANAGER



Matt's partner Gina and daughter, Mia.

# 25

# Brad Annetts YEARS AT TUMUT

**Tell us about your journey at AKD.**

I started at the mill back in 1999 with CSR before we went to Weyerhaeuser. Back in the day Safety was still number #1 priority but I remember some PPE was optional, I have worked through many different positions and under many different leaders but over the past 10 years I have found myself mostly in the Quality Control position.

**What is your favorite part of your job?**

Doing my best to support others.

**What has been a standout moment your time at AKD?**

The memorable characters I have gotten to know. I have encountered some characters over years. Have had some different personalities that's for sure, they can make you laugh.

**What are you currently looking forward/excited about?**

The Canterbury Bulldogs winning the NRL Grand final.

**How do you like to spend your time outside of work?**

Love being with partner, family, friends and my dogs. Boating, fishing, camping, listening to music are all things I like doing outside of work.

**What's your guilty pleasure TV show?**

Watching stand up comics such as Jim Jeffries, Tom Segura, Dave Chappelle or whoever I find funny.

**When you were a kid, what did you want to be when you grew up?**

Always wanted to be a carpenter, hasn't worked as yet but I'm still working with wood.

**What is on your bucket list?**

I'm going to a couple of Music festivals, Glastonbury and Wacken.

*"Brad Annetts the original quiet man, what Brad doesn't express in words he makes up with his practical knowledge and is my go to Quality Control guy, congratulation on 25 years."*

Steven Beaven  
TEAM LEADER



*"Brad is a keen fishermen who takes his boat up to the Dam whenever he gets a chance, often telling me about the fish he caught and the one that got away. He had a parrot called Lou that would carry a snugly around in his beak which was usually a sock - sure was a funny bird. Brad is a staunch Bulldog supporter which is the worst because they have the wood over my team the Knights. Well done Brad on achieving your 25 years' service and thanks supporting me in my role, its always been appreciated mate."*

Jason French  
TEAM LEADER DRYMILL

*"Congratulations Brad on reaching this tremendous milestone of 25 years of service. Brad has shown resilience and adaptability during his time in the industry and has always supported his fellow work mate. Brad has performed multiple roles over the years, doing well in whatever tasks he's been given but has excelled as a quality control person for past 10 or more years. Here's to your 25 years of service and well done Brad."*

Raymond Lucas  
DRY PROCESS  
MANAGER



# 15 Gavin Harris YEARS AT COLAC

**Tell us about your journey at AKD.**

I began as a supervisor in the drymill on the afternoon shift in 2009. I spent four years in that role before transferring to the greenmill, where I worked as a forklift operator and in the outfeed area.

Following that, I spent the next four years in the log yard, servicing the outfeed of the log sort and feeding the greenmill. Since then, I've been utilized throughout the mill, filling various positions with all mobile plant and assisting along the line.

**What is your favorite part of your job?**

Love that the afternoon shift has traditionally had great people who work the shift and the ability to be able to do multiple roles throughout the week.

**What are you currently looking forward/excited about?**

I have just turned 65 and looking forward to seeing how much longer I can keep working until I feel like the time is right to retire.

**What's your guilty pleasure TV show?**

Almost every night is NCIS night, probably seen most episodes 2 to 3 times.

**When you were a kid, what did you want to be when you grew up?**

I was pretty confident I wanted to be an accountant but ended up losing interest after about 2 months.

**Do you have a sporting history?**

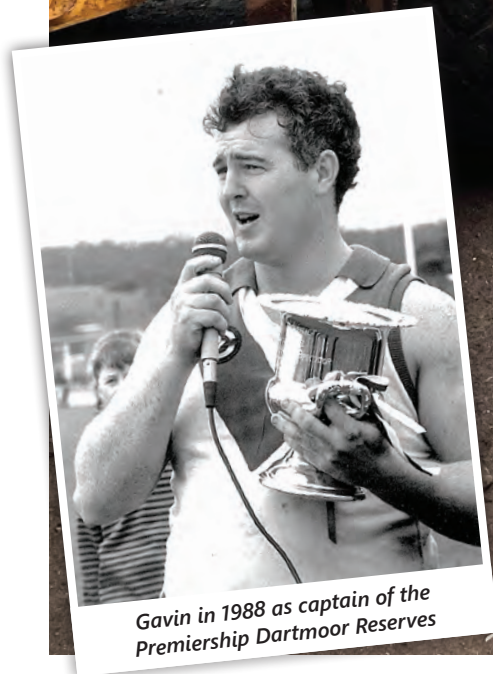
I was the secretary treasurer of the Dartmoor football club for 20 years and played my whole football and cricket career at this club where we successfully won the reserves grand final in 1982 and 1988, and runners-up in the 1983 senior grand final.

*"Gavin's attention to detail is second to none. His standards of work practices are frequently highlighted with whatever work centre he is working at, setting the benchmark for others to follow."*

Michael Lamb  
GREENMILL A/S SUPERVISOR

*"Gavin is a hard consistent worker always giving 110%. If something is not right, he is sure to bring it up to the attention to whoever has responsibility"*

Davin McNaughton  
GREENMILL A/S  
COWORKER



Gavin in 1988 as captain of the Premiership Dartmoor Reserves

# 10 Jason Davis YEARS AT COLAC

## Tell us about your journey at AKD.

Started off at AKD at Irrewarra in August 2014, working my way through the machine centres from the stacker up to the sawline rotation (Headrig, Twins, Edger and Gang Saw).

In 2016, I was fortunate enough to receive an apprenticeship as a Maintenance Fitter and Turner at AKD, working on crews supervised by Dan Delahunty, Justin Hickey and Mark Mitchel. In 2020 I completed my apprenticeship and became the Shift Maintenance Fitter, servicing all areas of the Colac mill. In September 2022, I filled in as temporary DMC Maintenance Coordinator, and by December that year I became the permanent DMC Maintenance Co-ordinator and have been since.

## What is your favorite part of your job?

Identifying a mechanical fault, deep diving into the root cause of the fault and rectifying the issue in an efficient time.

## What has been the highlight of your time at AKD?

The comradery I have had here. When I was on shift, all the maintenance team were brilliant. Smart and good to work with, and since I have been in this roll as the Maintenance Coordinator, being more heavily involved with the operations team, the Lead Teams in the DMC on both shifts, Managerial Staff, Projects Team, all have been brilliant in assisting in any way they can to help me achieve what we need to for the benefit of the drymill, and their support has been incredible.

## What's your favourite food to eat?

Home made Chicken Parmas. For anyone interested, chuck a couple of slices of salami on it too - Game changer!

## How do you like to spend your time outside of work?

Summer months do some camping, hiking, adventuring when I can. Winter months I try to get a few snowboarding trips in. And in the between, just being at home and relaxing.

## Describe your perfect day?

1000m3 days in the Dry Mill are pretty good, but you just can't beat a 'Bluebird Day' on a snowboard with some mates.

## When you were a kid, what did you want to be when you grew up?

Engineer/Boilermaker like my dad.

## What's something that recently made you smile?

Coming home from a 3 week holiday and the reception my dog (Yuka, Golden Retriever) gave when we picked him up.



"Jason's attitude and demeanour reminds me of Michael Jordan's quote - 'Some people want it to happen, some wish it would happen, others make it happen.'  
 Congratulations on 10 years Jason!"  
 Allan Davey  
 COLAC ENGINEERING  
 MANAGER

# 10 Terry Baulch YEARS AT COLAC



*"Congratulations Terry on achieving this anniversary! We know you have worked hard for this accomplishment, and we truly appreciate your input."*

Allan Davey  
COLAC ENGINEERING  
MANAGER

## **Tell us about your journey at AKD.**

Started at AKD in the DMC as a production employee, moving into forklift roles, then a team leader role and then DMC afternoon shift supervisor. After a few years I took the opportunity to follow a trade which I had wanted to do since school and moved across to the maintenance team where I completed my Fitter Apprenticeship and I have stayed in the maintenance since.

## **What is your favorite part of your job?**

The variety of work we do - No two days are the same.

## **What has been the highlight of your time at AKD?**

Completing my apprenticeship.

## **What's your least favourite food?**

Black liquorice, its just yuck.

## **How do you like to spend your time outside of work?**

Spending time with my family, hunting, fishing or travelling.

## **Describe your perfect day?**

A day out with good friends and my family chasing pigs around with the dogs up in NSW.

## **When you were a kid, what did you want to be when you grew up?**

Truck driver, like my dad was.

## **What's something that recently made you smile?**

Making it to tip of Australia at Cape York... and home again.

# 10 Jason Sander YEARS AT YARRAM

Jason's journey with AKD began when he relocated from Melbourne to Yarram in 2014 and we are grateful that Drymill Manager Julian saw the potential in him and brought him on board.

Over the years, Jason has become a valued member of our team, contributing his skills and commitment to our operations.

While his favorite part of the job is, humorously, the end of the workday - "clocking off" as he puts it - his dedication throughout the day has not gone unnoticed.

Looking ahead, Jason is eagerly anticipating his retirement. Although he's not there yet, the thought of retirement brings him great excitement.

In the meantime, he continues to excel in his role while enjoying life outside of work. Jason is passionate about fishing, golfing, and often spends enjoyable evenings clubbing with his mate Jordan. He also dreams of a future trip to Hawaii, where he hopes to relax and enjoy well-deserved downtime.

Jason's professional contributions and positive attitude have been exemplary. His presence will be greatly missed when the time comes for him to step into retirement, but for now, we celebrate his ongoing contributions and look forward to the future with him.



*"Congratulations Sando, we're glad you made it. Always a laugh at work or over a beer or two. Truly one of a kind."*  
 Michael Collins  
 GREENMILL

## THE SPLINTER

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

**Scan QR or contact your site  
 Splinter representative to  
 share your idea.**

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**TUMUT-GILMORE**

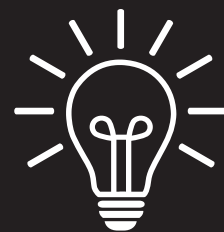
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AKD welcomed these new employees in July-August and encourages everyone to make them feel welcome and work together to keep them safe.



**ANGEL PHILLIPS**  
GREENMILL  
YARRAM



**ARCHER GRANGE**  
PACKSAW  
CABOOLTURE



**BILLY GREGORY**  
GREENMILL  
COLAC



**BOAZ CLARKE**  
DRYMILL  
CABOOLTURE



**CONNOR GALE**  
TREATMENT  
CABOOLTURE



**DARREN ROUNDS**  
DRYMILL  
CABOOLTURE



**DEAN SMART**  
GREENMILL  
YARRAM



**EMMA GEORGE**  
DRYMILL  
CABOOLTURE



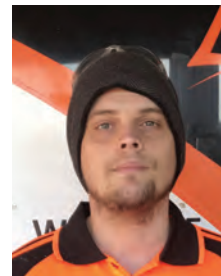
**ETHAN CONESSA**  
ELECTRICAL  
TUMUT



**JACK CONNELLAN**  
MAINTENANCE  
TUMUT



**JAMES GRIEG**  
GREENMILL  
CABOOLTURE



**JAY MADDICK**  
DRYMILL  
YARRAM



**JERSON CATACUTAN**  
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY  
NATIONAL



**JOEL HALBERT**  
GREENMILL  
YARRAM



**JOSH NARAYAN**  
PAILINGS  
YARRAM



**JUSTIN PRESBITERO**  
GREENMILL  
CABOOLTURE



**LATONIA BOLAND**  
GREENMILL  
CABOOLTURE



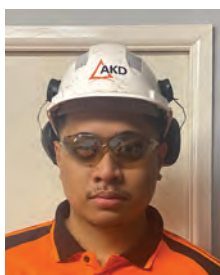
**LAUREN HAY**  
TREATMENT  
COLAC



**RILEY DOWELL**  
MAINTENANCE  
TUMUT



**ROBERT TURNER**  
DRYMILL  
CABOOLTURE



**SAMUI UELESE**  
GREENMILL  
CABOOLTURE



**STEVE YOUNG**  
TRUCK DRIVER  
PORTLAND PINE



**TIM CRISTALDI**  
DRYMILL  
CABOOLTURE



**TONY GRAHAM**  
DRYMILL  
CABOOLTURE



**ZACHARY CASEY**  
MAINTENANCE  
TUMUT

## Andrew McKinnis

*National Automation and Electrical Manager*  
NORTH LAKES



I grew up in south-west Victoria and earned a Bachelor's degree in Electronics from what is now Swinburne University. During the course, I completed six-month placements at BHP Port Kembla and the City of Doncaster Electricity Supply Authority.

My first role after graduation was in the Timber Industry with CSR Softwoods, working at the Caboolture mill, Tumut, Lakeside, and on the Sawmill project team for Oberon. I then worked for an equipment supplier in Mount Gambier, involving time at the Colac mill and USNR's Woodland facilities in the U.S.

While working, I pursued a Master's in Information Technology from Deakin University, seeing its increasing relevance in the process and control systems I was dealing with. I later joined Auspine, which became Timberlink, where I spent 16 years in various roles and projects.

The move to Queensland was motivated by the desire for warmer weather and proximity to family. I'm grateful for the opportunity with AKD and look forward to the challenges ahead. The introduction to AKD has been great, and I'm meeting many enthusiastic and positive people.

Karina and I have traveled extensively, both in Australia and around the world, often accompanied by one or two of our "adult" kids.

Outside of work, I stay busy with interests in electronics, amateur radio, and wood and metal work. Amateur radio has fascinated me since childhood; I enjoy connecting with distant stations and supporting community events, like the 'Legend of the Lakes Hill Climb' in Mount Gambier.

I'm a keen follower of motorsport, especially Supercars, and am slowly figuring out NASCAR. Spending time with my grandson Ollie, when I can get him away from Grandma, are some of the best moments. I'm looking forward to more now that we live closer.



Andrew and Karina

## Chris Higgins

*Forestry Finance Manager*  
COLAC



I was born and have lived in Geelong for most of my life, with a brief two-year stint in Adelaide in the late '90s. I've been married to Karni for almost 30 years, and we have four children aged 19 to 26, all of whom still live at home. As a result, our house often resembles a used car lot.

Why finance? Well given it was such a long time ago, it is a bit of a distant memory, however I think it was that I was drawn to the orderliness of Accounting, and the systemic approach and I seemed to be reasonably competent at it. So there I have stayed for the vast majority of my career working with companies such as Unigrain, VIP Packing, Shell Australia and Steggles.

My curiosity drives me to understand how things work, and I have a passion for analyzing data – after all, you can never have too much information when making decisions! I often share stories and analogies from my past work experiences, which frequently involve grain, chickens, or refineries.

I take pride in being a laundry wizard, expertly managing whites, darks, reds, greens, and everything in between, whether it's cold, hot, or warm. I also have a minimalist approach to technology, I can count the number of apps that I have on my phone on 2 hands and I can't text with my thumbs. Interestingly, I don't drink coffee, tea, or alcohol.

### 3 little facts:

1. As a junior I beat a player who went on to play Davis Cup Tennis, also at the Olympics, and reached the final of a Junior Grand Slam
2. I won 2nd prize at the Geelong Show for baking a chocolate cake
3. I played 2nd violin for the Geelong Symphony Orchestra

2 out of the 3 above are true - If you want to know which ones you will have to ask!!



Chris's family.

## Campbell Sanderson

Log Procurement Manager  
TUMUT



I was born and raised in Johannesburg, South Africa. A vibrant city which is also known as “eGoli” (literal Zulu meaning is “The Place of Gold”) due to its deep history, wealth and origins in gold mining.

While I had a super upbringing, I realised early on that I did not want to live in or have a career in the hustle and bustle of a large city.

Forestry was therefore a sensible choice after having had some exposure to the sector through family friends, which since university has turned into a true vocation and fantastic career. After working in the commercial South African forestry industry for over a decade, my partner Lisa (now wife) and I immigrated to Tumut in 2011 to start a new life in Australia.

I have enjoyed working in a diverse range of operational and commercial roles across the country, for organisations across the forest and timber industries.

Lisa and I have one beautiful daughter, Caila, and a special little boy, Tristan. We love spending time together outdoors whenever possible and enjoy camping, cycling, walking, seeking out decent coffee strips and fly fishing.

Having moved on from my delusions of playing for the ‘Springboks’, I enjoy watching Rugby Union and I’m a bonsai hobbyists - which has not actually been that calming.

I have been made to feel extremely welcome from everyone I have met at AKD and I am proud to join a company that has such a strong, genuine and innovative reputation across the timber products and forestry industry.



Campbell with partner Lisa and children Tristan & Caila.

# HAPPY ANNIVERSARY

NAME	YRS	DEPT.	SITE
Michael Hardwick	45	GREENMILL	TUM
Steven Goode	40	KILNS	TUM
William Stuckey	40	SAWSHOP	TUM
Matthew Hardwick	30	SITE MANAGER	GIL
Lachlan Knox	30	MAINTENANCE	TUM
Bradley Annetts	25	DRYMILL	TUM
Stuart Hawkins	25	DRYMILL	TUM
John Kakoulidis	25	KILNS	TUM
Gavin Harris	15	GREENMILL	COL
Russell McPherson	15	KILNS	TUM
Tristan Bellears	10	TECHNICAL	COL
Jason Davis	10	MAINTENANCE	COL
Jason Sander	10	PALING MILL	YAR



@AKDSOFTWOODS

I am pleased to recognise that it is Spring, usually associated with a time of growth, longer days, sunshine. Here in the southwest of Victoria we normally see a lift in rain but also temperatures, so vigorous growth.

Spring is usually quite important to us as sawmillers and plantation owners. Not only do the trees respond to the rain and temperature, but our markets usually lift, with more building activity with the longer days and friendlier conditions. Right now, we need that lift, with sales at the lowest they have been for nearly 5 years.

As previously discussed, the increase in interest rates by the Reserve Bank over the past 3 years is an action that has been taken to reduce inflation. The action taken is consistent around the world in other economies as high inflation is so much worse than high interest rates. But the high interest rates right now are depressing our economy and reducing spending, including on house construction. So, we find ourselves fighting for market share in a market that is getting smaller.

The volume of houses being built, the number of backyards being landscaped, the number of subdivisions being developed, and the number of pallets being produced have all reduced, so we have continued to adjust our production levels to balance against our sales levels to ensure our inventory levels do not grow. This far we have kept our inventories at "normal" levels as we utilise offsite storage to maintain safe levels onsite and look after the stock.

In the markets that we compete in, we have a wide range of competition from local sawmilling companies such as Timberlink, Hyne and Wespine. We then also compete with imported timber from Scandinavia, Europe, Eastern Europe, North America and more recently New Zealand. The imported timber comes from a variety of companies from a variety of countries and as such is a real mixed bag of quality. Some of the imported timber is brought in at consistent volumes and have been long term suppliers to Australia with consistent behaviour and quality. However other imported timber comes into Australia with really low prices and a real mix of quality. This imported timber is really disruptive to the market.

As in normal life, whether it is groceries, clothing, TVs or even fish and chips, some people buy on brand, relationships, loyalty, service and quality. Then there are those customers or market participants who buy on price, who don't care about loyalty, about Australian jobs or where the timber comes from. Some of this imported timber is in our opinion "conflict timber", or it comes from countries such as Belarus or Russia.

AKD also competes with other products such as steel which is either produced in Australia or China. Steel is a scary and powerful competitor with deep pockets, and they spend a lot of money on advertising and marketing.

So AKD has effectively 6 different types of competition for residential construction customers. We have our local competitors, good imported timber, cheap nasty imported

timber, Kiwi timber, Australian steel and Chinese steel. We have had these competitors for a long time, but in a market that is currently smaller than normal and is under pressure because of the interest rates, it has become combative and ferocious. The AKD sales team are out there representing our business every day, fighting for our share.

So what can we do to help them and help ourselves, I think there are two main areas

1. Quality and Service
2. Reduce our cost of Production

Quality and service is based on doing all the little things really well. Accurate information, such as pack tags, dispatch dockets, invoices. Ensuring our packs are presented well from shape to pack wrap. Ensuring packs are rotated in the yards keeping them fresh. Making sure our timber meets our customers grade expectations. All the little details matter. We put our brand on every pack of timber, we have to show our customers that this stands for something, "that we care!"

Cost of Production is something everyone can help with. Eliminating unnecessary waste and helping with productivity. Downtime is extremely expensive, rework is horribly expensive, repairing damage to product, plant and buildings is completely unnecessary waste.

Cost of Production can be reduced by doing all the normal tasks to agreed standards. By ensuring we recover as much sellable timber for every cube of log we process, by enabling our mills to produce more timber by hour, by day and by reducing our maintenance costs we can reduce our cost of production. By improving plant reliability, by helping the equipment stay clean and tidy, by supporting the maintenance teams, we can lower production costs.

We all have a part to play. It's a tough market so we need to pull together. We are all responsible.

Lastly, I want to finish on a Safety message. We have decided to take the step of treating a breach of an "exclusion zone" to be equivalent of a "breach of isolation". This means it is serious misconduct and can result in termination of employment. But let me be very clear, we are not interested in firing employees. Firing or terminating an employee is usually terrible for both the individual and the company. What we are more interested in is your safety. We want you to be safe and this is through maintaining a discipline of safe behaviours.

**Your Safety matters,  
we are all responsible.**

Take care.

  
**Shane Vicary**  
CEO

