

9th May 2018

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Rise of Mass Timber Buildings in Australia

It has been just over 5 years since the first mass timber CLT building was completed in Australia, Forte Living by Lendlease; a 10 storey (9 on 1) apartment building in Melbourne. For a while it was the world's tallest modern timber building. Since then there has been around 30 other mass timber buildings constructed or under construction in Australia; many of these are houses or extensions to existing buildings but surprisingly there has been some tall buildings amongst them which is exciting for the timber industry.

Notable completed projects are:

- Forte Living – 10 storey apartments, Melbourne
- The Gardens, 6, 7 and 8 storey apartments, Sydney
- International House Sydney, 7 storey office building, Sydney
- Verde, 5 storey apartment, Adelaide

There is also a number of projects under construction and last year saw a large number start to appear.

These include:

- AVEO Retirement Living, 11 storey apartments, Sydney
- K5, 10 storey office, Brisbane
- ANU Teachers Facilities and Student Accommodation, 2 x 10 storey, 1 x 7 storey, Canberra
- 55 Southbank Boulevard, hotel, 10 storey over an existing 6 storey, Melbourne
- Taronga Retreat, 5 storey, hotel, Sydney
- C1, 7 storey office building, Sydney

Alongside these are number of buildings in the design and approval stage; most are office buildings, apartments and hotels. Surprisingly there is very little construction occurring in the low to mid-rise market which has become an almost forgotten sector for the mass timber building market in Australia, at odds with European and North American experience.

It appears the builders are leading the charge using mass timber. We saw CLT first come to the market through Lendlease who are a large international builder and developer and then Strongbuild joined the party. These two builders have been matching each other with an impressive array of projects and recently both have invested in their own fabrication facilities to process blank CLT and produce panelised timber framed systems.

Holz DC and Atelier Projects are two new builders that have just joined the market. Holz DC, with holz meaning wood in German, are focusing on CLT and have recently completed three low rise residential projects south of Sydney, with many more in the pipeline. Atelier Projects have three projects in Melbourne under construction; these being 5 storey townhouses, a child care centre and a 10 storey extension of an existing building for a new hotel. This is an impressive start for the next generation of Australian mass timber builders.

In comparing where Australia sits in the world of tall timber buildings, it is first necessary to understand what a tall timber building is. Looking at the Centre of Tall Buildings and Urban Habitat global audit, seven storeys is the minimum. However this needs to be overlaid with the following conditions: storeys only count if they are timber, timber is the main load bearing element and the buildings are modern, i.e. since 2008.

Applying this measure Australia has around 15% of the world's tall modern timber buildings with only Sweden ahead of Australia and the United Kingdom is equal. Both Sweden and the UK have been building mass timber buildings for longer so you would expect them to be ahead but considering Australia only completed its first mass timber building 5 years ago this is an impressive start for our country.

There are many factors to explain the recent interest in mass timber buildings in Australia considering that CLT was not even produced here until recently. There has been a code change, a desire for off-site manufactured building elements, sustainability and a want to do something different, exciting and new as well as address Australia's expensive site construction costs.

To understand why, there is an opportunity to see and hear for yourself what is happening in mass and off-site timber construction in Australia. WoodSolutions is holding a tour of the recently opened XLAM CLT plant in Wodonga, Victoria and then following this is a two day visit to Sydney to see a number of mass timber buildings under construction or recently completed. You can either start the tour in Melbourne or Sydney commencing 20, 21 and 22 June. The tour follows Frame Australia's Timber Offsite Construction conference on the 18 and 19 June. This two day conference discusses the latest in timber fabrication and design. Details on both events are below.

WoodSolutions Tour: Wodonga and Sydney: 20, 21 and 22 June -

www.woodsolutions.com.au/calendar/woodsolutions-tour-melbourne-wodonga-sydney

FrameAustralia's Timber Offsite Construction Conference: 18, 19 June - www.frameaustralia.com

ENDS

Word Count: 726

[Mass Timber: Timber products such as CLT, Glulam and LVL that are a minimum of 75 mm in thickness.]

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Image:

Caption: 10 storey mass timber office building under construction in Brisbane (Image Credit: TDA)



Caption: Aveo, Norwest: CLT apartment building, Sydney (Image credit; Strongbuild)



About WoodSolutions

www.woodsolutions.com.au

Resourced by Forest and Wood Products Australia Ltd (FWPA) and the Australian Government, WoodSolutions is an industry initiative designed to provide information on timber and wood products to individuals and companies involved in building design and construction. WoodSolutions is a collaborative effort between FWPA members and forest and wood product levy payers and is supported by timber industry peak bodies and technical associations.