



NSW FIELD TRIP

EXPLORING SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF PRIVATE NATIVE FORESTS

31 MAY 2025

The NSW Branch of Forestry Australia hosted a Field Trip and Dinner in Tomerong, NSW, over the weekend of Saturday 31 May to Sunday 1 June.

The event brought together 22 attendees for an informative and engaging program, exploring a range of forestry operations and approaches across the South Coast.

On day one, at Schutz's commercial firewood operation, **Jake Schutz** (Doug's son) explained that their hardwood supplies largely come from integrated harvesting operations on private property, where timber is processed and split into firewood for a wholesale market, including Canberra. Timber is segregated by species. Production is around 10,000 tonnes per year.

The second stop was at the high-site-quality hardwood forest property of **Ron McKinnon**, who has been practising forestry and harvesting for many years. He has the objective of long-term sustainability by keeping his forest at a relatively high stocking and returns to harvested areas every 10 years or so. He has a Lucas sawmill on site for special orders.

Ron has worked closely with Doug Schutz over many years to promote the South Coast timber sector through events such as the Nowra Show and art installations such as *Underwood Ark* in Underwood Street in Sydney's CBD.

(cont.)



Inside the forest showing Ron McKinnon's practice of keeping high stocking and intended light thinning of this forest.



Jake Schutz at firewood site showing the group how the firewood splitter works.



Ron McKinnon, showing large hybrid tree in powerline cleared area.

The third stop was a property at Falls Creek, recently harvested for logs and firewood. The owner lives in Sydney and has a very different forestry strategy to Ron. The retained forest after harvesting was generally in accordance with the Basal Area limit under PNF guidelines and stream retention, but the resultant thinning of the ~40-year-old Blackbutt regrowth stand presents a management challenge to both LLS and the landholder.

On Saturday night, after dinner, **Jeff Boyd** spoke about the work of NSW Local Land Services (LLS), with 35 staff encouraging and assisting private forest owners to manage their forests to include timber production. LLS has been the regulatory authority for approving harvesting plans since 2018 and is expanding its operations as more private owners become aware of the services and benefits of practising forestry.

The visit to the Pentarch sawmill on Sunday showed the log yard, breakdown and recovery sawing (focusing on timber decking), then air drying, kiln drying, and moulding of the finished product for sale. **Hugh Morrison** from Pentarch conducted the tour.

This sawmill processes 12,000 cubic metres per year, with 80% from State forest and 20% from private property. A special thanks to Pentarch Forestry for hosting the visit to the Pentarch hardwood sawmill at South Nowra on Sunday 1 June with Hugh Morrison guiding and Charles Fisher in attendance.

Two video links relating to this field trip are below.

- [A legacy of forest management](#)
- [Underwood Ark](#)



Group inspecting Pentarch timber yard with stacking timbers ready for kiln drying and finishing.



Hugh Morrison explaining the moulding system for decking which has been kiln dried.