



ACT FIELD TRIP: SUSTAINABLE PLANTATION FORESTRY IN ACTION

NOV 2025



Pinus pinaster, Ellerslie – **Photo by** Jake Lazarus

Twenty five members and students joined one or both days of an informative program addressing key aspects of plantation growing and processing around Tumut and Batlow, NSW - part of the single largest plantation region in Australia, and one heavily impacted by the 2019/20 bushfires.

Forest management foci at Bondo were Forestry Corporation NSW's comprehensive monitoring program for the endangered Northern Corroboree Frog, a 30-year program focused on streamside reserves adjacent to plantations; the Mt Tumorrana fire tower, one of the 22 across the region at which fire detection cameras have been installed in conjunction with Pano AI; and recent mechanical thinning of a heavily overstocked plantation replanted following the 2006 Billo Road wildfire which had generated massive wildling pine regeneration.

At Ellerslie, close to the ignition point of the 2019 Dunns Rd fire, the focus was again fire detection, risk management and response; and exploration of alternative softwood species, such as maritime pine, on sites that were becoming too dry for radiata pine.

In contrast, at a high-elevation and high-rainfall Bago Forest site, sugar pine (*Pinus lambertiana*) had been replanted adjacent to the iconic 100 year old stand lost in the Dunns Rd fire.

There and at the nearby Pilot Hill arboretum, which escaped the same fire, the NSW Government and Forestry Corporation have co-invested in sculpture walks and recreational facilities to maintain the appeal of these distinctive forest stands to both tourists and locals.

Cont.



Pilot Hill picnic area – **Photo by** Jake Lazarus



Mt Tumorrana fire tower – **Photo by** Adele Wedding



Sculpture in the Forest, Pilot Hill – **Photo by** Tony Bartlett

At the AKD sawmill at Tumut, which has undergone a series of technology upgrades since the 2019-20 bushfires to partially offset the consequent 40% reduction in log intake, the group saw the impressive new Horizontal Shaping Saw in action. Technology improvements have enabled a 6% increase in merchantable product recovery from the reduced annual log intake of about 250,000 m³.

Acknowledgements:

Thanks to **Adele Wedding** and **Jake Lazarus** for their organisation and guidance; **AKD, Forestry Corporation NSW staff**, and **Jake Lazarus** for hosting the site visits; and **Tony Bartlett** and **Peter Kanowski** for preparing the report.