

MEDIA RELEASE

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How electronic tags can enhance construction benefits of prefabricated timber:

Launch of WoodChat Episode 9

The advantages of prefabricated timber systems in construction are being given a boost by researchers trialing Radio-Frequency Identification (RFID) tracking technology to improve on-site processes.

The latest podcast episode of WoodChat focuses on research funded by Forest and Wood Products Australia (FWPA), which has been testing the value proposition associated with attaching small, computerised tags to timber construction elements manufactured off-site.

By utilising tags on cross laminated timber (CLT) panels, wall frames and flooring systems, real-time data about each component can be easily stored and accessed. Such information might include details of properties, records of repair and maintenance, inspection history and treatments, as well as where the component currently sits in the construction process, and what needs to happen to it next.

Electronic readers can then be used by construction teams to unlock all the information stored, allowing for easy identification and tracking.

Perry Forsythe, Professor of Construction Management at the University of Technology Sydney, who is leading the research, told WoodChat that the project came about due to the industry's desire to seek methods of improving the ways prefabrication and timber are used in construction.

"There is a desire in Australia and worldwide to position timber as a viable solution, not just for one or two storey buildings, but for much larger structures. One of the major points of difference is timber components can be prefabricated off-site, which brings a whole host of advantages.

"RFID technology can be used to add to the existing advantages of prefabricated timber, by enabling improved productivity. Having immediate information available about each component speeds up on-site processes and improves workflow, ultimately saving time and money.

"There are also advantages around quality assurance, both now and into the future, far beyond construction. As component information can be stored for the lifespan of the building, the eventual owner has complete transparency and visibility. This knowledge will help them manage the ongoing maintenance of their building," Professor Forsythe said.

The research team has conducted thorough consultation with representatives from across the supply chain, explored the different types of technologies available in the space, and has undergone rigorous field-testing scenarios with industry partners, leading to encouraging results.

This episode is part of the second series of the WoodChat podcast, following topics on how emerging Australian leaders have been supported to discover the latest in global timber advancements and how 3D printing can turn timber waste into construction materials.

WoodChat represents FWPA's commitment to exploring engaging new ways of communicating industry news and innovations. Each episode includes in-depth conversations with experts on recent discoveries, innovations and initiatives.

You can listen to WoodChat on [SoundCloud](#) and [iTunes](#).

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