

Media Release

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Forest Industries congratulate Toni Kirkup: Winner! Innovation Health and Safety Award: 2021 National Forest Industry Awards

Australia's forest industries congratulate AKD Softwoods' National Health and Safety Manager Toni Kirkup on winning the NSW Forestry Corporation – Innovation in Health and Safety Award of Excellence at the National Forest Industry Awards – organised by the Australian Forest Products Association (AFPA).

Toni is completely safety minded, holding the philosophy that safety doesn't start or stop at the gate and that it's a collective responsibility to look after the safety of self and others. This mindset has allowed Toni to drive a cultural safety shift, resulting in a 20 per cent reduction in lost time injury frequency rates (LTIFR) in 2019-20 and further 40 per cent reduction in 2020-21.

Toni implemented a national Safety Interaction Program and ensured that all of AKD's leaders were introduced to the process. She also initiated a process where employees provided statements and photos about why safety was important to them and their families (see example attached).

During the COVID pandemic in 2020 where Colac case number grew to 130, in a town of just 12,000, Toni provided leadership, not only to AKD, but in the wider community, including through the Keep Colac Safe campaign.

AFPA CEO Ross Hampton congratulated Toni on her persistent effort on an issue so important to forest industries.

"Forest industries in Australia and across the world have come a very long way on safety. That's only because of people in our industries who are dedicated to the cause like Toni Kirkup," Mr Hampton said.

"Safety is a collective effort in all of our forestry operations right across the supply chain. When you're dealing with dangerous equipment or heavy loads, it's important that everyone involved is on the ball.

"Congratulations Toni on this award and to all the people across forest industries who work not only to keep themselves safe, but their fellow employees as well."

NSW Forestry Corporation sponsored the award and CEO Anshul Chaudhary said forest industries need safety warriors in the workplace. "We congratulate Toni on winning the Health and Safety Award of Excellence. The forest and wood products industries can involve dangerous operations and it's critical our employees foster the importance of safety across every business and operation," Mr Chaudhary said.

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AKD CEO Shane Vicary said, “AKD is incredibly proud of both Toni and what she has achieved for AKD through her perseverance and persistence. Quite simply Toni made safety personal and engrained in our behaviours and culture. Toni achieved this through driving a consistent message of it’s not compliance, it’s our collective responsibility to ourselves and our families.

“The real strength of what Toni has achieved is a system or a set of behaviours, that are sustainable and owned by all employees, not requiring Toni’s constant reinforcement. Toni has made AKD a safer place to work, and for that we are incredibly grateful.”

The National Forest Industry Awards are organised by AFPA.



CAPTION: Example of statements from AKD employees about why safety is important.

ENDS

AFPA represents forest growers, harvesters, and manufacturers of timber and paper products.