Exciting news out of Tasmania is that a brand new, purpose-built hardwood CLT plant will be constructed in the state’s north-west industrial centre of Wynyard. Stirling Machinery was selected by CLTP Tasmania to supply state-of-the-art machines for stage 1 of the project, due to be completed before the end of 2019.

Both a domestic and international game changer, this new partnership will help deliver the first commercially available hardwood cross laminated timber panels. Several significant innovations were established as a result of the project including:

- **‘Whole of log’ sawing** to deliver the entire spectrum of structural characteristics from all parts of the tree, not only low grade, delivering a superior engineered outcome over softwood panels.
- **Creation of a new structural product** from a plantation species that is otherwise only processed as high-quality chips for the pulp and paper industry.
- **A ‘plantation to project’ approach** by utilising 15-to-20 year old sustainably grown Tasmanian plantation hardwood *Eucalyptus nitens* (shining gum).

With Australia currently running an annual wood and wood products trade deficit of nearly $2billion; replacing presently imported wood products with Australian grown and processed plantation
hardwood timber will support a sustainable timber industry and assist in Australia becoming internationally competitive.

Stirling is proud to be involved with this historic development and has been hard at work compiling the comprehensive portfolio of machines required. The project will require cross-lamination timber building systems, CNC to specification cutting and glue lamination and finger jointing lines. “We are obviously delighted to be on board with this project,” Stirling Machinery MD Craig Honeyman says. “It’s going to bring huge benefits to this regional community, and it will reinvigorate the manufacturing industry. Our partnership with CLTP Tasmania is important not just to us but to investment in Australian business as well.”

The Wynyard plant will involve a considerable capital investment in laminating machinery at the outset and with a strong focus on technology and automation, employee costs will be significantly reduced.

The new CLTP Tasmania operation will deliver hardwood manufactured products into new markets. Construction innovations and the rise in off-site built modular construction have brought about an enormous opportunity for cross-laminated structural timber. Its strength and integrity as a building product have been proven through rigorous testing, plus its other main selling point is its capacity to use large quantities of younger and lower quality plantation-sourced logs.

In a massive tilt for innovation, the waste material generated from the new plant will be converted into direct injection biofuel which will feed back into the grid as dispatchable, on-demand electricity.

CLTP Tasmania’s CEO, Chris Skeels-Piggins looks forward to the plant's first production day with eager anticipation. “There’s no doubting this will be a momentous development in the wood processing industry,” he says. “It’s going to pay dividends for the community, for the utilisation of species that were previously unusable for structural products and we’re going to make a real dent in the import of overseas structural timber.”

The CLTP Tasmania/Stirling Machinery relationship is additional proof of Stirling’s reputation going from strength to strength as a serious player in the machinery market.

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