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Sawmill investment creates new jobs in Great Southern

AFTER injecting more than \$4.5 million in the Redmond Sawmill, Managing Director Corey Matters has increased his staff numbers from seven to 20.

The investment has seen Redmond Sawmill, near Albany, receive a complete upgrade to predominately automated machines, including a large kiln, and has more than doubled their timber processing capacity.

The sawmill was originally established in 1997 by the Gatti family, before Corey purchased the business in 2015 and saw great potential for expansion.

“I could see an opportunity within the market and decided to invest in the infrastructure, so we could capitalise on that opportunity and attract skilled labour,” Corey said.

The significant investment has also allowed them access to new markets, by supplying products such as timber battens.

Corey has enlisted the help of industry veteran Rob Hossen as Operations Manager, who is helping to guide the growth of the mill.

“This level of investment is great for the local community,” Rob said.

“Corey had a vision and he’s bought it to life. The mill is now far more efficient but we’re employing more people.”

The mill processes mainly Jarrah and Karri, sourced from sustainably managed forests around the South West and Great Southern regions.

The timber is processed specifically for the needs of the infrastructure market (wharfs, jetties, rail), structural market (timber battens, fence posts, garden sleepers), flooring, decking and furniture and joinery.

Products are sold both locally, interstate and exported, and sales have doubled since the upgrade despite the fact they are currently operating at 70 per cent capacity.

There is also minimal waste, with solid market demand for by-products such as firewood, sawdust and woodchips.

Corey said even at full operating capacity demand would outstrip the supply, but that was a healthy scenario for the business.

“This is a profitable business and an industry worth investing in, as long as we can secure our resources going forward, then it will continue that way,” he said.

Looking to the future, Corey said there was potential for further expansion in value-adding, which would result in more local jobs.

Photos

CoreyMatters: Redmond Sawmill Managing Director Corey Matters.

RedmondSawmill_Control: The automated control cab at the upgraded Redmond Sawmill.

RedmondSawmill_Timber: Timber processed at the recently upgraded Redmond Sawmill, near Albany.

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About FIFWA

Forest Industries Federation WA (FIFWA) has been representing the interests of the Western Australian timber industry since 1895. The industry is a key driver of economic activity and jobs in Western Australia, contributing \$1.4 billion to the WA economy and creating about 6000 jobs in WA, with more than 90% of those in regional areas. The industry employs careful and comprehensive management policies to ensure WA's forests are sustainably managed. Less than 1% of the total forest area is harvested annually. In 2001 WA became the first state to abolish harvesting old-growth forests.