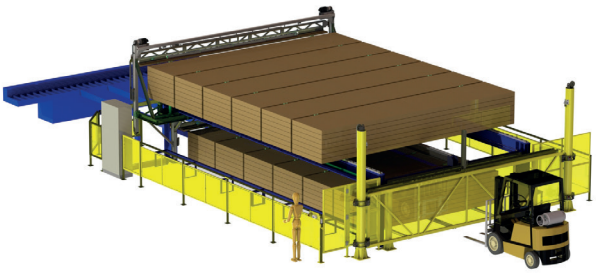
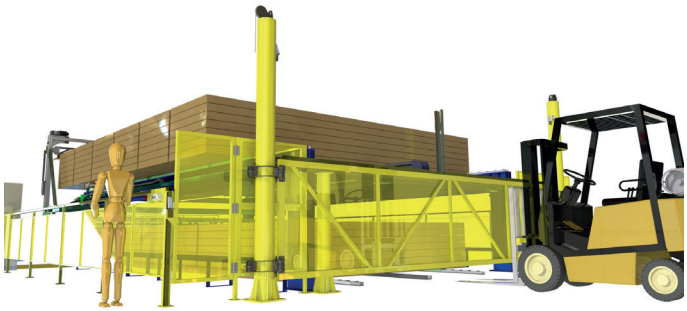
VEKTA PACKFEEDER: DELIVERING PRECISION

Packfeeders. Bunk Feeders. Call it what you will but if you're like most sites, the idea is nothing more than a pipe dream that quickly disappears once you start to ponder where you might put it. To get any real benefit from them, the perception is that you need a system that will carry a lot of packs of timber but the resulting packfeeder then takes up a monstrous amount of floor space. You've probably also heard horror stories of packfeeders currently on the market. And just like that, the dream disappears from mind.

For any linear saw, the most common cause for downtime is basic – there isn't timber on the infeed to cut! That's it! It isn't rocket science. Nothing ready to go in? Nothing's going to come out! Packfeeders are designed to solve this problem by taking out as many of the human elements as possible in the process of feeding a hungry linear saw. The saw tells the PackFeeder what it needs and the PackFeeder grabs the necessary timber and sends it to the saw automatically. A decent PackFeeder should then also allow for automatic detection and flipping of timber for bow and for automatic stacking of the timber. There shouldn't be anything left on the infeed side of the saw for the operator to do. Sounds great, but the downside is that unless you are moving into a new plant, the required floor space is just too much to be feasible – at least traditionally.

The latest innovation from Vekta, the Vekta PackFeeder, is truly a clever bit of kit. By loading timber into the system in only one location, and by storing longer lengths of timber not side by side but above shorter lengths, Vekta has been able to achieve a footprint that is only about 25% of





an equivalent system. Not 25% less but actually 25% OF the equivalent system! That makes a really big difference if you're wanting something that might fit into your existing factory. What is more, the unit is capable of picking up two boards at once, can process timber from 70mm up to 300mm wide, is designed to have minimal preventative maintenance requirements, and is a fraction of the cost!

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So how does it work? Well, packs of timber are stored on racks which are all loaded from the same location – at the end of the system. As mentioned, longer lengths are stored above the shorter lengths – allowing us to take advantage of the space above. A picking system then moves up and down among the packs of timber by travelling along the trestles that are used to support the upper row of timber. This pick system scans the racks that are holding the timber and uses this information to work out where each different grade and length of timber is located within the system. As the saw calls for timber, the picker then moves up and down to collect boards from the racks and brings them to the front to be passed on to the saw.

By storing boards on top of one another, we immediately gain roughly 50% in floor space. By then loading new packs in from one central location at the back of the system, as opposed to having to leave floor space clear next to each pack of timber, the required floor space drops by a further 50% - making the Vekta PackFeeder take up just 25% of the floor space!

If you only load new packs from the end, what happens when you need to replace a pack at the front or in the middle of the PackFeeder? Great question and easily answered. When a pack in the middle of the system is empty and needs to be replaced, the racks it was sitting on are taken out of the system manually. This leaves a gap between the other packs that still have timber. A new pack is loaded onto racks at the end of the system and this new pack is then pushed into the PackFeeder. All subsequent packs slide over until the gap created by the old pack is closed. The PackFeeder then scans the racks in the system and notes the new position of each rack – it now knows the new location of all of the packs of timber in the system! It's simple and, as we all know, simple is usually best!

To complement the PackFeeder, we have also developed a system called the Stak-N-Gap. This is a unit that can measure the bow in the timber and flip it accordingly (bow detection and flipping is optional). When installed on a Razer system, the product is intelligent enough to know when flipping is required and when it isn't – flipping as required on chords but disregarding bow orientation on studs for example. The Stak-N-Gap is also used to create gaps between boards that are hard up against one another and to stack boards on top of one another. The Stak-N-Gap doesn't have to run in conjunction with a PackFeeder either. Existing Razer customers can add this as an upgrade – hence why we made it a stand alone product!

To see the Vekta PackFeeder in action visit vekta.com.au/packfeeder/