

MEMBERS' BULLETIN

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Welcome

This *Members' Bulletin* is intended to keep you up-to-date with ATIF activities. This edition reports on the Federal Government's illegal logging legislation, possible changes to imported timber kiln dried requirements, the formation of an International Timber Trade forum and an imported timber trade advocacy campaign.

Illegal Logging legislation update

The status of the *Illegal Logging Prohibition Bill 2011* hasn't changed since the last edition of the *Members' Bulletin*. At the time of writing the Bill has been passed by Parliament's House of Representatives, however, it remains unclear whether or not it will be debated in the Senate before the end of the current parliamentary session. If this does not occur the Bill will be deferred until to commencement of Parliament next year.

ATIF continues to be involved both on its own account and in collaboration with other relevant timber supply chain associations on details of the Bill and the preparation of various submissions and representations to the Government and Opposition.

Additional information about the Bill is available from Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) at www.daff.gov.au/illegallogging. Meetings of the stakeholder working group and further dialogue with DAFF officials related to the development of risk assessment and due diligence procedures, plus related administrative mechanisms related to the Bill have been deferred.

Possible changes to imported timber kiln dried requirements

As previously advised, the Federal Government is investigating changing treatment and document requirements for imported kiln dried timber to move away from the current fixed time and temperature requirements.

ATIF made a submission to DAFF based on information provided by Board members and from other sources. Preliminary feedback from DAFF has acknowledged the ATIF input

and indicated that additional work will be undertaken on minimum percentage moisture content requirements. DAFF has also indicated that, based on ATIF advice, it is now unlikely that a timber stamping requirement will be implemented.

International Timber Trade Forum proposal

ATIF participated in an international conference on timber and timber products marketing, plus an event directed at establishing an International Timber Trade Forum. Both events were held in Kuala Lumpur in conjunction with the Malaysian Timber Council's *Global WoodMart 2012*. The European Timber Trade Federation (ETTF) is assisting in exploring the possibilities that the proposed Forum could offer the international timber trade. These include:

1. Acting as an information exchange platform
2. Facilitating industry cooperation and coordination
3. Discussing and promoting greater international uniformity in government timber policy and legislation
4. Providing an industry support network.

ATIF has provided written advice to the ETTF about the merits, scope and resourcing of the Forum proposal, including its potential to assist in sharing information and technical capacity; sharing information on global markets and other trends; improving supplier/exporter country level of legality assurance and building codes compliance, and moving in the direction of standardising legality (and other) requirements and procedures.

Imported timber trade advocacy campaign

The Board has initiated a program to rebut inaccurate statements and commentary being made and published about the fit-for-purpose and standards compliance credentials of imported engineered and structural timber products. It is believed that unfounded allegations being made of inflated market share, underpricing, employment impacts and lack of standards compliance levelled against imported timber products do the Australian timber industry and accusers little credit.

It is considered that standards compliant, quality imported timber products are able to make a worthwhile contribution towards the demand of the building and construction industry, especially to meet residential and commercial building needs as this activity ramps up in coming years.

There have also been inaccurate remarks made about the jobs-related virtues of imported timber products when building and construction industry employment data verify the substantial contribution imported timber products make to jobs in these industries, in the timber supply chain and associated support industries.

ATIF will be writing to relevant state and federal ministers and mounting a limited editorial and advertising campaign in an endeavour to counter the inaccurate statements and commentary being made about imported engineered and structural timber products.

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