

MEMBERS' BULLETIN

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Welcome

This *Members' Bulletin* is intended to keep you up-to-date with ATIF activities. This issue highlights the year in prospect for importers of timber and wood-based products and provides a brief update on the development of the Federal Government's illegal logging policy. Other ATIF activities and topics of interest are also covered.

Busy year anticipated for timber importers

Timber importers are anticipating another busy year in 2011 following increasing activity in 2010. The prospect of a continuing strong Australian dollar together with increasing manufacturing and importing sophistication is likely to see imported timber products grow in significance and be central to the performance of the building industry, including keeping housing affordability under check.

In a media release ATIF technical manager John Halkett said the limited prospects for expanding the domestic production of timber products in categories like structural pine and hardwood boards has sharpened the focus on the importance of an efficient and strong timber importing sector. "This is a critical element of the timber industry if the country is going to work its way out what is shaping up to be a substantial housing shortage - not been helped by the devastating floods in Queensland and elsewhere."

He said that the *Australian forest and wood products statistics* published by the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Bureau of Rural Sciences late last year indicated that the value of timber imports increased by 6.0 per cent to almost \$430 million and volumes increased by 19 per cent to 748 000 cubic metres in 2009-10.

Mr Halkett said it is becoming more apparent that the timber importing sector will have an increasingly important role to play in meeting the country's future solid wood product needs.



“If Australia is going to deal not only with its housing construction backlog, but with new housing starts that are predicted to exceed 180,000 dwellings a year timber importers will be key players.”

Looking to the year ahead, Mr Halkett said that, in addition to continuing to contribute to the Federal Government’s illegal logging policy development, ATIF will be looking at further possible improvements in efficiencies and cost reductions in the timber importing and wholesaling sector.

“Importers will also be keen to continue to work with key industry entities, such as the Forest and Wood Products Australia to improve the availability, usefulness, coverage and comprehensiveness of current technical data on timber products with a view to improving the confidence of prospective wood products users and growing the overall size of the market for timber products.”

Illegal logging policy development

The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forests (DAFF) held information seminars in Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane in early February to advise a broad range of stakeholders on progress with the development of the Government’s illegal logging policy.

The information sessions amplified the announcement made by the Minister for Agriculture Fisheries and Forest in December 2010, including providing advice on the broad nature of the legislation to be introduced into the Parliament “sometime this year”. It was also announced that the policy would have a two year transition ‘phase in’ period from the enactment of the legislation. The intention to establish an industry working group to assist DAFF to work through the detail of policy prescriptions and their implementation was also announced.

Thanks to all those ATIF members who participated in the information seminars.

March ATIF Board meeting

The ATIF Board’s next meeting will be held on 3 March in Brisbane at the offices of Timber Queensland. The Board will be extending an invitation to Queensland ATIF members and other prominent figures in the timber industry to join the Board for lunch prior to the Board meeting.

Other news

- ▶ Enclosed are a few hard copies of the new ATIF DL size brochure for your use. Additional copies are available on request. An electronic copy of the brochure will be posted on the ATIF website www.atif.asn.au
- ▶ Simmonds Lumber has appointed John Simon as the company’s new CEO due to the retirement of long-standing CEO Paul Elsmore. Mr Simon is well known in the timber industry and has held a number of senior positions. He will take up his appointment in early March. Mr Elsmore, who is also a member of the ATIF Board, will continue to assist the company in an advisory capacity, including business activities in South East Asia and the further development of DNA timber tracking certification systems.

This newsletter has been prepared by ATIF Technical Manager John Halkett