

MEMBERS'

BULLETIN

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Welcome

This *Members' Bulletin* is intended to keep you up-to-date with ATIF activities. This issue highlights recent work related to the Federal Government's illegal logging policy and *Illegal Logging Prohibition Bill 2011*.

Government's *Illegal Logging Prohibition Bill 2011*

After substantial input into the Federal Government's illegal logging policy development process ATIF has now turned its attention to preparing a submission to the Senate Rural Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee on the Government's *Illegal Logging Prohibition Bill 2011*.

An ATIF working group, including Robert Cairns and Nils Gunnersen has met to assist with the preparation of the Senate submission. The submission will be finalised and forwarded to the Senate Rural Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee by the deadline date of 6 May.

While ATIF broadly supports the Government's actions directed at restricting the import of illegally logging timber products, some aspects of the proposed legislation needed to be 'improved'. This is particularly the case as imported timber products are growing in significance and will be central to the performance of the Australian building and construction industries into the future – including keeping housing affordability under check and supporting thousands of building and construction industry jobs.

While ATIF supports key elements of the draft legislation, the Bill nonetheless runs the risk of making timber products less competitive against other building products that are less environmentally friendly. The Bill and supporting memorandum are silent about the cost impacts of the measures contained in the legislation on timber products – both imported and domestically produced.

In simple terms, the Bill sets up a mechanism for appointing timber industry certifiers who will be required to do the 'heavy lifting' in terms of developing the mechanisms and



procedures to give effect to the Act and to approve individual timber product importers and ensure they 'toe-the-line'.

This approach essentially puts the onus for ensuring the effectiveness of the Act on the industry. Such an approach will have notable resourcing, workload and funding implications for those timber industry entities appointed as timber industry certifiers.

The ATIF is of the firm view that the considerable setup costs and initial implementation costs of the proposed legislation *must* be met by the Government.

ATIF has also participated in the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry's working group to progress details of the legislation that will form the regulations to the Act. The working group met in Melbourne of 19 April.

Australian Forest Products Associated up and running

The formation of the Australian Forest Products Association (AFPA), announced at the UN International Year of Forests dinner in Parliament House, Canberra on 21 March, is now a reality with the new industry organisation operational.

AFPA is the result of the merger between the National Association of Forest Industries (NAFI) and the Australian Plantation Products and Paper Council (A3P). The interim Chair of AFPA is Linda Sewell, Managing Director, Hancock Victorian Plantations and the Interim CEO is former NAFI CEO Allan Hansard.

Mr Hansard says the formation of AFPA will give the Australian forest, wood, pulp and paper products industry a stronger voice in dealings with Government and in key negotiations on the industry's future. "AFPA will also play a key role in representing the industry as critical climate change and water policies are developed, including a carbon tax and the Murray Darling Basin Plan."

AFPA will be based in Canberra and a new website and rebranding will be released in coming weeks. The formation the new organization will not affect the operations of ATIF.

Chilean timber products contact

ATIF has met with the recently appointed Trade Commissioner for Chile, Silvana Gattini. The meeting discussed Chile's timber product exports to Australia, notably their radiata pine finger-jointed, pre primed products, panels products and plantation-grown 'Chilean ash' (*Euc. regnans*) hardwood flooring and decking lines.

Enquires about supplies of Chilean timber products can in the first instance be directed to: Tess Fowler, International Trade Advisor at the Embassy of Chile (Tel: 02 9262 5199 or Email: tess.fowler@prochile.com.au)

New ATIF DL size brochure

Bulk copies of the new ATIF brochure are now available to member companies for their use and are free. Contact John Halkett for your supply.

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