

# MEMBERS' BULLETIN

May 2009

No 5

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### Welcome

This members' news bulletin is designed to keep you, as a member of the ATIF up-to-date with activities being directed by the ATIF Board. This issue reports on the major areas of effort since the last *Members' Bulletin* in March 2009. In particular matters addressed at the last Board Meeting and Annual General Meeting held on 23 April are noted.

### April Board Meeting and Annual General Meeting

The recent AGM marked the first full year under the direction of the reconstituted ATIF. In noting the achievements of the strengthened industry body, President Norm Long acknowledged the significant future challenges, particularly in relation to illegal logging policy development and in supporting the business prospects of company members in the present demanding commercial environment.

He noted the activities of ATIF's Illegal Logging Subcommittee in supporting the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry's (DAFF) efforts on illegal logging policy formulation. "This is a complex undertaking requiring extensive consultation between Government agencies and with industry to ensure that the correct balance between trade equity, commercial reality and environmental outcomes are achieved."

In referring to the current work of the government-appointed Centre for International Economics (CIE) in developing a framework for a regulatory impact statement and to present the Government with practical policy options, he said ATIF was fully engaged in the process. "Individual member companies have already conveyed their views to CIE in face-to-face meetings. ATIF has also finalised a written submission in the CIE issues paper."

At the AGM it was resolved to further promote timber import legality compliance within the industry, and in particular to ensure the ATIF members continued to be at the leading edge in relation to lawful and environmentally responsible forest products importing.



Mr Long also drew attention to membership growth. “New members joining over the past year have strengthening the capacity of ATIF to adequately represent the interests of the timber importing sector. Pleasingly this trend looks like continuing with further membership applications in the pipeline.”

### **Illegal logging policy update**

The ATIF is continuing to work with DAFF officials on the development of policy and related matters. A further meeting between officials and the Illegal logging Subcommittees is scheduled for late May.

ATIF has collaborated with the Timber Development Association (TDA) and lodged a tender to undertake one of the two illegal logging policy related projects recently notified by DAFF.

### **Forest and Wood Products Australia legality mechanisms project**

ATIF has provided additional comments on the draft URS report that examines a wide range of issues and mechanisms related to the legal verification of imported timber and wood products. These comments suggest further improvements to some areas and additional clarification of the report’s recommendations. .

With the exception of the US *Lacey Act* these legal verification mechanisms are still being developed, although in the case of the EU, the Forest Law Enforcement Governance and Trade (FLEGT) based approach is well advanced, including a roll out of associated Voluntary Partnership Agreements and on-ground support in supplier countries and for consumer country trade federations.

It is considered that getting the URS report completed and published as soon as possible will assist the present DAFF directed process. ATIF members and others in the industry have already had opportunities to input into the project. ATIF has previously provided verbal and written comments of earlier draft material, particularly the conclusions and recommendations sections.

### **Other news**

- ▶ ATIF is currently preparing advice for the Canadian High Commission related to negotiations to eliminate tariffs from all the Canadian “forest products” imported into Australia.
- ▶ The Western Red Cedar Export Association has offered two night’s free accommodation and airport transfers for importers intending to visit BC Wood’s Global Buyers Mission to be held at Whistler, British Columbia on 10-12 September. See [www.bcwood.com](http://www.bcwood.com) for further information. Contact John Halkett about the accommodation and transfer offer.
- ▶ In relation to tolerance limits for light decking, Section 4 of the relevant Australian Standard, AS 2796.1 – 1999 sets of details related to moisture content, profiles, tolerances and grades. Tolerances are specified as + or - 0.5 mm.
- ▶ As a consequence of a suggestion at the AGM further advice to ATIF members to assist in meeting legality compliance, labelling, Australian Standard adherence and other marketing and technical requirements will be prepared and circulated in due course.