

MEMBER'S BULLETIN

December 2008**No 3****IN THIS ISSUE:**

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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. The Board's last meeting was held on 18 November in Melbourne. Some of the issues summarised in this bulletin were considered at that meeting. The next Board meeting is scheduled for March next year. The meeting will be held prior to the ATIF Annual General Meeting.

Attendance at International Timber Trade Federation meeting

The ATIF was represented at the first meeting of international timber trade federations held in Geneva in 26-27 October by John Halkett. Twenty nine timber trade associations from 18 countries together with other timber industry business representatives from around the World came together to discuss how the industry can best respond to new international demands to prevent trade in illegally logged timber. Proposed legislation in the European Union and in the United States of America that place mandatory requirements on the timber industry to prove that their products have been legally harvested was outlined.

In his presentation John Halkett said the Australian timber industry took the issue of illegal timber imports very seriously and was working closely with the Australian Government to develop and implement a legislative-backed timber legality verification scheme. In particular he noted that Australia was continuing to work closely with South East Asian countries, notably Indonesia, Malaysia and Papua New Guinea to ensure that timber producers understand the objectives of government policy and to assist in formulating and implementing a system that met government goals and was workable.

Second meeting of Forest and Wood Products Council

The ATIF was represented at the second meeting of the Forest and Wood Products Council (FWPC) under the direction of the present Federal Government by John Halkett. The meeting was held at Parliament House in Canberra on 1 December and was chaired by the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Tony Burke.



Illegal logging policy was on the agenda for the meeting. The Minister indicated that the Government was continuing with the development of a statutory-based timber import policy in line with the Government's election pledges.

Further meetings with forestry officials

Since the last Members' Bulletin, further meetings have been held with officials from the Forest Industries Branch of the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF). These meetings have been held to assist in advancing the Federal Government's illegal logging policy process. Officials indicated that policy development would need to take a whole-of-government approach and involve the preparation of a Regulatory Impact Statement and a public consultation process. Further, that continuing input into policy formulation and implementation from the ATIF would be sought.

Forest & Wood Products Australia wood promotion campaign

The Forest and Wood Products Australia (FWPA) generic wood promotion campaign is now up and running. Advertisements are appearing in weekend newspaper magazine supplements and elsewhere. Following discussions at the last Board meeting, ATIF will be writing to FWPA with some initial impressions of the campaign and following up requests from members for posters and advertising collateral licensing agreements. For additional information about the wood promotion campaign visit: www.naturallybetter.com.au

Forest & Wood Products Australia research project

Forest & Wood Products Australia (FWPA) has selected URS Forestry as the research provider to carry out the ATIF-initiated study to examine legality mechanisms of imported timber and wood products, including third verification and other procedures.

This study will cover both tropical hardwood and temperate softwood timber and wood products and is designed to identify, describe and rank mechanisms or aspects of procedures that could work in the Australian context. The study is intended to inform the general intent and direction of the research has been endorsed by the DAFF.

URS Forestry has held information and feedback sessions in Brisbane and Melbourne for both the FWPA and a DAFF funded project also related to the development of illegal logging policy and related procedures. This research is supported by the ATIF.

Other news

The November meeting of the ATIF Board was held in conjunction with the annual general meeting of the Victorian Timber Importers Association. The association reelected Tasman KB's Victorian state manager Rob Cairns as chairman and Wright Forest Products' managing director Ashley Wright as deputy chair.

Mr Cairns said that although most major Victorian importers were now members of the ATIF, the state organisation continued to fill an important role addressing state issues such as quarantine, customs, wharf logistics and other issues vital to the business success of timber importers and wholesalers in Victoria.

At their meeting the ATIF Board debated progress on illegal logging policy by the Federal Government, noting that the ATIF had and would continue to make a substantial contribution to that process. ATIF President Norm Long said ATIF understood that the Government plans to develop a legislative-backed policy process and that ATIF remained enthusiastic about continuing to support and participate in that process.

This newsletter has been prepared by ATIF Technical Manager John Halkett