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TimberTALK is TABMA's newsletter and is published six times a year.

TABMA is a member-based organisation representing building materials suppliers, timber merchants, timber importers and related service providers. TABMA provides companies with practical solutions to improve business management, growth and profitability.

Welcome to timberTALK

Welcome to this the first issue of TABMA's revamped newsletter TimberTALK supporting TABMA's role as a national body representing the interests of the timber industry.

TimberTALK is an integral part of TABMA's national upgraded website and is available in both electronic and hardcopy. You and your work colleagues can easily subscribe online and receive TimberTALK free.

Hard copies of TimberTALK will also be distributed to TABMA member companies, suppliers and timber industry organisations across Australia.

In launching the first issue of TimberTALK I would especially like to acknowledge the support of our inaugural advertisers. They get our thanks and deserve your support.

Enquires from companies wanting to advertise in TimberTALK (as well as on our upgraded website) should be directed to John Halkett. His contact details are on Page 4.

At TABMA we are excited about the new look TimberTALK and the contribution it will play to our national advocacy and support role for the timber industry. We look forward to your involvement and support.

Best regards,

Kevin Collison

Chief Executive Officer



Chief Executive Kevin Collison

Chief Executive Officer

Kevin Collison

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Progress towards research and marketing company welcomed

Chief Executive Kevin Collison has welcomed the introduction of legislation into Federal Parliament that provides for a new industry owned research and marketing company that will replace the Forest and Wood Products Research and Development Corporation.

The new company to be called Forest and Wood Products Australia (FWPA) will continue current research and development programs in addition to the new role of promoting forest and wood products.

Mr Collison said the new company can only be good news for TABMA members, as in addition to advocating the use of timber products, will carry out some long overdue generic timber marketing activities.

FWPA Implementation Committee Chair and Australian Plantation Products and Paper Council chief executive Neil Fisher said, "For the first time, our industry will have the capacity to deliver a coordinated, national marketing program for Australian forest and wood products."

"The marketing function of the FWPA will be used to promote the many outstanding qualities and environmental values of wood and increase our access to both domestic and international markets."

"A3P has been a driving force in establishing the new entity and we look forward to working with the Australian Government and other industry organisations in a cooperative approach to ensure the entity begins operations in July 2007," said Mr Fisher.

The Forestry Marketing and Research and Development Services Bill and Forestry Marketing and Research and Development Services (Transitional and Consequential Provisions) Bill are scheduled to be debated in the next Parliamentary session.

Combatting illegal logging in PNG

The Australian Timber Importers Federation (ATIF) has congratulated the Papua New Guinea Forest Industries Association (PNG FIA) for signaling its intention to develop a system that independently verifies the legality of timber produced in PNG.

In welcoming the announcement, ATIF Executive Officer Kevin Collison noted that such a system would counteract claims about the illegality of timber harvesting in PNG.

Such a system will mean PNG Forest Industries Association timber producers will be required to provide documentary evidence of official permits to conduct forest operations, plus the origin of logs either exported or processed into timber products

ATIF supports the actions announced as further evidence of responsible forestry practices

Swiss-based SGS, one of the worlds leading inspection, verification, testing and certification companies would be providing an independent audit of the authenticity of documents.

The ATIF supports the actions announced as further evidence that the PNG FIA are being responsible about their forestry practices and can refute some of the claims made about forestry in PNG.

Continuing concerns about illegal logging in PNG are damaging to the forest industry and economy of

PNG. The new system will provide the necessary assurances to markets and consumers that timber exports from PNG are in fact legally sourced. Mr Collison said the ATIF was strongly opposed to illegal logging and is developing practical measures to assist in combating

TABMA Sydney dinner bitter-sweet

An impending more buoyant housing construction outlook for NSW points to improved trading conditions for TABMA members. However, serious concerns over compliance and legal obligations surrounding visually-grade softwood timber took the edge off a recent dinner meeting for TABMA members at Parramatta in Sydney.

TABMA President Danny Gattone, remarked that stable interest rates and an improving housing outlook in NSW meant the industry was looking forward to much improvement trading conditions in 2008 and beyond.

Head of Australian Economics for the ANZ Bank Tony Pearson, presented an overview of the state of the economy, together with an interpretation of the future outlook for the building construction industry across Australia, with a particular emphasis on the Sydney region.

Nick Livanes of the Timber Development Association advised that recent testing of visually-graded structural softwood timber had focused attention on compliance with standards and legal requirements related to trade practices and consumer protection.



Span table and independent verification of visually-graded softwood timber

A change in visually-graded structural softwood timber grades available in the market place has occurred. This is a consequence of the softwood timber sector being conscious of compliance with standards and its obligations related to trade practices and consumer protection.

TABMA chief executive Kevin Collision advised that because of this shift in the availability of grades of timber and the confusion that this may cause, span tables of the common grades use as internal floor joists and seasoned floor joists for balconies and decks had been commissioned. These span tables will assist wholesalers and resellers to provide advice to customers in relation to the use of visually and machine graded softwood timber for the uses specified.

Timber Development Association chief executive Andrew Dunn said the span tables are in two forms, the first is the traditional 'span table' that nominates the maximum span that can be achieved by the grade and timber dimension and the other is a 'size table'. Size tables are the reverse. For a known span a comparison of the 'size' of timber required for each grade is given. This was done as decks are set out in traditional grids and spans and builders just wanted to know that in the new stress grade their traditional size of timber was adequate.



legal logging in South East Asia.

The trade in illegally logged timber is a major problem for a number of countries in the developing world. The practice causes environmental damage, costs governments billions of dollars in lost revenue, undermines the rule of law, funds armed conflict and lowers the price of timber in importing countries. Consumer countries like Australia contribute to these problems by importing timber and timber products without ensuring that they are legally sourced, Mr Collision he said.



Development of system to independently verify the legality of timber produced in PNG welcomed.



Presenting the arguments - Kevin Collision, Tony Pearson, Nick Livanes and Danny Gattone.



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Kevin Collison, Peter Gunnensen and Andy Roby swap ideas at over morning tea

Planning the future of timber imports

Plotting a way forward was the aim of a workshop convened by the Australian Timber Importers Federation (ATIF) to assist in eliminating the import of illegally-sourced timber and timber products.

Workshop convener and executive officer of the ATIF Kevin Collison said the way to the future was for the industry to work together to deal with the serious challenges that illegal logging and unsustainable forest management practices presented to future supplies of tropical hardwood timber.

Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry general manager of forestry Tony Bartlett, said the Federal Government was committed to working with regional countries to assist in improving issues related to the legality of logs sourced and the sustainability of forest management practices. "However, while the international momentum is increasing to deal with the range of related issues, it is recognised that we can't set the bar too high straight away."

He advised that the Federal Government was close to finalising its policy on legal logging following the preparation of a public discussion paper, consideration of submissions received and consultation with stakeholders.

"The first fundamental step will be to ensure that all wood products are sourced from legal operations. Issues like sustainability will need to be addressed second. So it will be a step-by-step process."

Representing the ATIF Peter Gunnensen

committed the association to work collaboratively with the Federal Government, industry companies and key supplier countries to develop responsible and credible imported timber and timber product verification processes.

He said the practice of illegal logging exploited foreign resources and exposed the Australian timber industry to the unsavory practice of bypassing timber obtained from legal sources.

The UK Timber Trade Federation's head of environment and corporate social responsibility Andy Roby, detailed the mechanisms developed in the UK to tackle the importing of timber produced from illegal sources.

The UK is the fourth largest importer of timber behind the United States, Japan and China.

Mr Roby said that the major market driver in the UK has been customer expectations, especially the bigger DIY stores, larger corporate and government procurement policies.

He suggested that Australia should complete any necessary work on the present code of conduct and then work on preparing a responsible purchasing policy. "That could be followed by producing practical guidelines for timber buyers and importers. Also, work with the government and high risk supply countries to assist in strengthening governance and forest law enforcement will be essential."

Reminder

Don't forget to book for the free one day Sydney industry site tour on 15 August 2007 (Call 02 9277 3100 and talk to Melanie to book).

For additional information on articles visit:

www.tabma.com.au



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