

Timber - the climate friendly building material!



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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.

New chief executive takes the helm

For the first month or so new chief executive Colin Fitzpatrick has been familiarizing himself with the timber industry and with the role and place of TABMA within the industry. "I have visited a number of members to discuss their attitudes and hear their suggestions. Plus, of course I have been coming to grips with the people who work for TABMA and their roles."

"I think it is important that I get out, meet members and receive feedback on how TABMA can lift its game. Members want, and deserve to feel that they are getting value for money - you don't want to be paying money and just getting silence," he said.

In his discussions with TABMA members Mr Fitzpatrick said it seemed that the substantial benefits TABMA offers have not hit home. "We need to do a whole lot better with our communications - that's what comes across to me - members just don't know what we can do for them. I believe that communication with members is of paramount issue and we have to do a much better job."

He added that in visiting members in the immediate future he will be accompanied by the Manager of TABMA Training Werner Robb. "In addition to talking about the broad potential of TABMA, we will be selling the training services message."

"I have already given an undertaking to reexamine TABMA's recruitment role. I believe there is the real prospect that such a service will be rejuvenated. Clearly it's a service we should be able to provide for our members."

Mr Fitzpatrick confirmed that TABMA can offer members expertise in group training, trainee and apprenticeship placement, debtors control and collection, OH&S services, insurance savings, trade credit insurance, research and surveys, fuel discounts, group buying discounts, representation to governments, industry specific or commercial advice.

For a full version of an interview with Colin Fitzpatrick visit the news section of the website.



Chief Executive Officer Colin Fitzpatrick - visiting members to get feedback.

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Standard timber finished sizes and profiles

In June 2004, TABMA completed the Forest and Wood Products Research and Development Corporation funded standard timber profile review project. The end result was the publication of the booklet Standard Timber Finished Sizes and Profiles - 2005 (see www.tabma.com.au under Supplies).

According to TABMA President Peter Hutchison the principle objective of this publication was to describe to the building industry, specifiers, renovators and end-users standard timber sizes and moulding profiles that are commonly available on the East Coast of Australia. "The document can be used by producers, suppliers and importers to encourage uniformity in supply to the industry."

Mr Hutchison added that since the completion of the project some new products have been introduced, changes in certain regulations have occurred and there has been further involvement from other states, particularly Victoria and Western Australia.

"It is important that the publication remains relevant and up-to-date with changes in standards and availability of products to further increase the attractiveness and competitiveness of timber and moulded timber products," said Mr Hutchison.

"We have been encouraged by the support for the project and publication received from end-user organisations including Housing Industry Association, the Masters Builders Association and the Building Designers Association of NSW. These and other organisations see value in updating the publication to assist their members to select and specify timber in building projects."

Mr Hutchison advised that TABMA had now made application to Forest and Wood Products Australia to financially support a review and update of the existing publication. "We are optimistic that we will receive a favourable response to this request in the very near future."

TABMA Training - there to help you

TABMA Training offers opportunities for both members and non members to employ apprentices and trainees through the TABMA group training scheme. According to TABMA Training Manager Werner Robb, TABMA takes on the responsibility of advertising, interviewing, selecting and training trainees and apprentices. "This includes pre-screening, based on the profile of the employee a company wants us to recruit with the final selection being made by host employers."

TABMA Training Consultant David Jones added that TABMA Training covers the broad cross section of TABMA membership requirements. "So, in addition to meeting the needs of merchants, we cover frame and truss fabrication,

wholesalers and others in the timber industry supply chain."

Mr Robb said that TABMA relieves companies of the administration of ongoing employment requirements. "So busy firms only have to handle minimal administration - we do all the paper work covering issues like workers compensation and other employers requirements. This is a no fuss way for employers to recruit young staff."

TABMA relieves companies of the administration of ongoing employment requirements.

He emphasized that TABMA monitors the progress of each trainee or apprentice at work and during training for the period of

their employment, and if necessary provides counselling and support for trainees, apprentices and employers.

Mr Robb noted that not a high percentage of TABMA members presently take advantage of the training services TABMA, were exploring ways to grow the take-up

Consortium to develop large-span structures

A proposal for a multi-million dollar research consortium to develop innovative large-span timber buildings in Australasia and New Zealand has been submitted to the Foundation for Research, Science and Technology (FRST).

The Solid Timber Innovation Company (STIC), subject to FRST approval, is expected to be under way by July. It is intended that the proposed consortium will be funded jointly and equally by government and industry.

The New Zealand Pine Manufacturers Association will participate in the project as an investing partner, supported by sponsor partners Arch Wood Protection, TimTech, Osmose, Hexion Specialty Chemicals, Dynea New Zealand, National Starch & Chemical, Hunters, McIntosh Timber Laminates, and Timberbond Industries.

The other investing companies and organisations are Carter Holt Harvey Wood Products, Nelson Pine Industries, Westbeam, University of Auckland, University of Canterbury and Forest and Wood Products Australia.



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Better warehouse utilisation key to Hubtex success

A major fixed cost in the timber business is floor space. The good news is that timber handling technology now exists to minimise the dead space need for machinery access and materials handing, so a greater proportion of floor space can be devoted to stock.

Hubtex specialist timber handling machinery allows aisle widths between stock racks to be minimised and stock to be stored to greater heights.

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Hubtex works closely with its manufacturing partners to produce equipment that is well suited to Australian conditions and has assembled a national technical team to continue to offer quality after sales back up and spare parts support.



of the service. "A large percentage of TABMA members just don't know we exist and that we offer the service. One of the reasons why the Chief Executive is visiting all TABMA members is to promote the training along with other TABMA services."

"We are looking to grow our training business. We see opportunities such as developing a detailing and estimating course to Certificate 3 level for the frame and truss industry as an important part of our future direction."



David Jones, TABMA Training Consultant; Melanie Firke, Training Support and TABMA Training Manager Werner Robb – keen to grow both their business and yours.



Multi-million dollar research consortium to develop innovative large-span timber buildings.



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Part of the tight knit John Cook & Sons team. Yard staff Harry Trist and Garry Myrdoch with Manager Brenton Christopher and TABMA 2007 Sales Representative of the Year Mike Hill.

Confessions of a successful timber salesman

So what does it take to win a prestigious annual sales award in the timber industry and what secrets is the recipient willing to share with others?

Winner of the 2007 TABMA Sales Representative of the Year Mike Hill is one of St Marys-based John Cook & Sons three sales reps covering NSW. According to Mike, for a company similar, but smaller than others in the industry, what distinguishes John Cook & Sons from others are some fundamental differences in operating style.

"I have worked for a few companies now and I can say that here we have the most competent and willing team that I have worked in. We are not a big company so we all dig in and help each other."

Mike says the TABMA award was an endorsement of the performance of the entire team. "Absolutely - it's a terrific team that I am proud to be a part of. I know it's a team that is capable of driving this business forward."

He pays particular tribute to Manager Brenton Christopher. "We are fortunate to have him as the captain of the team - it's an important factor in our business success."

Mike said the 2007 TABMA Sales Representative of the Year award was very much appreciated. "For the work that has been put in, and the loyalty and relationships you build

up with customers over the years."

"The last two or three years have probably been the hardest trading that many of us have experienced. So for the customers to stick with us through that period and to open their doors and allow us to be part of their business has been very satisfying."

Modest about his success, Mike points to some sales areas he considers important. "Taking pride in the presentation of your company, products and yourself, using common sense, having integrity, being persistent and consistent and having an optimistic can do attitude while being realistic are key factors."

"Respect and courtesy to customers is critical. You also have to understand your own business and that of your customers and constantly be thinking about how you can merge your two sets of interests into a partnership for the benefit of both."

"It's a good strategy to treat customers the way you would like to be treated by your own suppliers. If you don't look after your customers someone else will - it's pretty simple."

Mike lives in the picturesque Blue Mountains township of Leura. He has been married to Natascha for 15 years. They have four kids - Patrick 14, Julia 10, Daniel 5 and Leon 2.

"Natascha is a great support for me - she keeps me going every day."

Reminder

Advertising space available in next issue. See contact details.



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