

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.

Spectacular night of awards and glamour planned

Get ready for the industry's gala event of the year. The TABMA (NSW) Annual Awards evening will be held at the Four Seasons Hotel, in Sydney on Saturday 10 November.

Judging for the various categories of the prestigious TABMA (NSW) Annual Awards has now been completed. This has involved judges making site visits to the various award category finalists from Nowra to Inverell and from Eastern Sydney to Dubbo and to a fair few place in-between.

Meanwhile the gala awards night menu, wine list, entertainment and flare have been worked through by the TABMA organizing committee. A spectacular night of fine food, great wine and entertainment is guaranteed. So if you haven't done so already put a big circle around 10 November on your calendar now.

Make sure you come along to acknowledge excellence in your industry and catch up with the comings and goings over the past year.

Please be aware that gala awards night discounted accommodation at the Four Seasons Hotel is limited and available on a first-come-first-served basis. To book your room ring the Four Seasons Hotel on (02) 9238 0000 and quote the TABMA Group.

Capturing all of Sydney's most celebrated icons from the Harbour Bridge to the Opera House, the Four Seasons Hotel is set in the historic Rocks district of Sydney only a few minutes walk to the harbour and major shopping, dining and city attractions. One of Sydney's best, the Four Seasons Hotel is vibrant and elegant, with dramatic harbour views and a luxurious day spa.



Finalizing the TABMA dinner menu are Four Seasons' Banqueting Sous Chef Krunoslav Velican and Director of Catering Alistair Keep.

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TABMA Recommended Price Book

TABMA (NSW) has recently surveyed merchant members to determine if they would use a recommended price book similar to the one published by TABMA in 1995. TABMA Commercial Manager John Theoharris said the outcome of the survey was that less than 20 per cent of members indicated they would use such a document.

"The survey outcome combined with the significant cost to TABMA to make a formal application to the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission for permission to publish a price book, has meant that the TABMA Board decided not to continue further with this project at this stage," he said.

Weak upturn in new housing just emerging

Census results have boosted the potential demand for new housing and resulted in a lift in the forecast for the year ahead. The signs of the coming housing upturn, however, are only just emerging. New home building activity edged a single percent higher in the 2007 March quarter, to be 5 percent greater than a year earlier.

Work on new houses increased by 4 percent and was 11 percent more than a year ago. However, work on units fell by 5 percent and was 8 percent less than a year ago.

New housing activity strengthened in most states, but was slightly weaker in Victoria and down 4 percent in the Northern Territory and 13 percent in the ACT.

Work on national housing renovations fell by 2 percent, but was 9 percent higher than a year ago. Over the year to March, renovation activity increased in every state except Tasmania.

The trend in dwelling approvals declined in the 2007 June quarter, to an annual rate of 148,300. The trend in approvals of houses increased slightly but multi-units continued to trend lower.

Timber importing commitment

Timber importers are calling for continuing effort to eliminate illegally-sourced timber products. The Australian Timber Importers Federation (ATIF) has been leading initiatives to implement measures to address illegal logging and confirmed that it remains a major problem in a number of developing countries.

ATIF member and Homebush Bay Timber managing director Norm Harrison said many Australian timber companies were long standing family-owned businesses. "As such we recognise that our future is inextricably tied to the sustainability of forest resources. We have a vital interest in ensuring imported timber continues to be a renewable resource."

He said the way to the future was for the industry to work together to deal with the challenge that illegal logging presented to future timber supplies.

Executive officer Kevin Collison said the ATIF strongly supported the Federal Government's decision to develop self-regulatory mechanisms and

emphasized the intention of the ATIF to work with the Government and key supply countries to develop credible timber import verification processes.

"ATIF members recognise that independent third party forest management and process chain certification is the most useful tool in providing assurances that the timber they deal with comes from lawful and well managed forest operations."

ATIF illegal logging committee member and TLB Timber managing director Joe Chapman believes it is important for Australia to act decisively on the issue of illegal timber trafficking "both to help protect the integrity of

Australia's own timber industry and to strengthen our credentials as responsible stewards of our region's and indeed the world's forests."

He said the ATIF was intent on being proactive in the policy debate and in the market place. "Working with the Commonwealth Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry,

Our future is inextricably tied to the sustainability of forest resources

TABMA Sydney wholesalers bus tour

It was a day for networking, bargain hunting and clever promotion by wholesalers. The TABMA merchant's bus tour visited eight of Sydney's leading wholesalers. Merchants on-board included a contingent from Western Australia and others from across NSW.

The tour took in Acacia Timber Products, Hyne Timber, ITI, Dindas Australia, Gunnensen, Swan Le Messurier and Simmonds Lumber. Most wholesalers offered merchants special bus tour deals and many were quick to snap up some really red-hot bargains.

The day concluded with an enjoyable wholesalers met merchants get together and dinner in Sydney's Chinatown.

TABMA chief executive Kevin Collison scored the day as a great success. "Feedback from wholesalers suggests they would like to see such visits more often. They were delighted with the business transaction on the day!"



American Hardwood Export Council (AHEC)

American hardwood species offer professional designers and manufacturers in Australia an exciting range of species, many of which are unique, but widely known and increasingly preferred around the world. Ash, white oak and beech are very similar to those grown in other parts of the world, but red oak, black cherry, hard and soft maple, tulipwood, red alder and black walnut are unique to North America. As the world faces up to environmental change, with sustainability the watchword for natural materials, the good news is that the net volume of hardwood growing stock in the USA has increased from 184,090 million cubic feet in 1953 to just under 400,000 million cubic feet in 2007.

With the forests continuing to grow, a new independent research study is shortly expected to confirm, once and for all, the USA as a low risk supplier of hardwood. The American Hardwood Export Trade Council (AHEC) – the leading hardwood trade association representing committed exporters - is working towards more research initiatives, particularly related to sustainability.



we intend to further refine the methodology and guidelines aimed at ensuring that timber imported into Australia comes from legal sources."

"The industry's future depends on a robust, arms-length system of audit. In addition to assisting to implement a system of third party verification, the ATIF is planning other initiatives including the recruitment of a project manager and a national series of information seminars."

The general manager of the forest industries branch in the Commonwealth Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Tony Bartlett, advised that the Government was working to finalize its policy on eliminating illegal logging.



Third party forest management and process chain certification most useful tool in providing assurances that timber comes from lawful, well managed forest operations.



Pausing at Acacia Timber are (from left) Andrew Smith, Acacia Timber Director; Ian Halliday, TABMA Board Member; Kevin Collison, TABMA Chief Executive; Danny Gattone, TABMA Chairman and Garth Smith Acacia Timber General Manager.



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Hardware & General offers one of Sydney's widest ranges of hardware, building, plumbing and industrial supplies

Hardware & General making a big splash in Sydney

At a time when some of the more traditional building materials suppliers are feeling the squeeze from the 'big boxes' it is great to hear that one of the small fish in the pond is now making a bigger splash.

Hardware & General began operations in 1960 from a single corner store. It's been a job for the stayers, but now over 47 years later they have expanded along Winbourne Road in Sydney's Northern Beaches suburb of Brookvale with eighteen specialist sales centres. In addition Hardware & General acquired St George Builders Hardware's two strategically located stores, one at Peakhurst in Sydney's south and the other at Marayong in Sydney's west in 1996.

Hardware & General offers one of Sydney's widest ranges of hardware, building, plumbing and industrial supplies. With eighteen specialty shops in the one street, managing director Philip MacGregor says the company is a uniquely "one-stop street."

"Although predominantly based in the Northern Beaches we attract customers from right across the Sydney metropolitan area."

"Part of the strategy that has worked for us has been to concentrate on product diversity and quality, rather than geographic spread," says Mr MacGregor.

With a particular focus on servicing home owners and smaller, high quality builder's Hardware & General offers friendly, professional and personalised service by industry experienced staff. The company also provides a free daily delivery service

across the Sydney metropolitan area and experienced sales representatives who are available to call on customers.

Mr MacGregor says Hardware & General is able to offer very competitive prices. "We have the buying muscle because of our affiliation with a number of the major buying groups.

He says that with the flat economy and building downturn in Sydney, the past few years have been hard yards for building materials suppliers. "By sticking to our tried and true recipe we are now starting to see some evidence of better times on the horizon."

So what is Hardware & General doing right, and are there lessons for other independent building materials supply companies? Keys are their success appear to be an extensive stock inventory, showrooms, experienced, specialist staff, free delivery and enthusiasm for the industry and business.

"Service, industry knowledge, experience and commitment are areas where the bigger chain stores struggle to match our performance," says Mr MacGregor.

So it's this difference, plus their passion that is likely to maintain Hardware & General at the leading edge of the building materials supply industry into the future.

Reminder

Dont forget to book for the NSW annual awards gala dinner on 10 November. Call Melanie on 02 9277 3100 for further details.

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