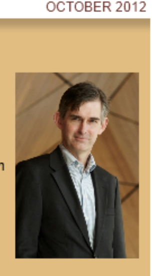
Forest & Wood Products Australia
Knowledge for a sustainable Australia

FORWOOD

OCTOBER 2012

ForWood – October 2012



Welcome to the October issue of ForWood.

On the 17th of this month FWPA held its annual general meeting (AGM) during the biennial conference of the Australian Forest Growers held in Gympie, Queensland.

At this year's AGM, Evan Rolley and John Simon were returned as directors and John McNamara was newly elected to the FWPA Board. Mark Grey and Nick Roberts completed their terms as directors.

Immediately after the AGM, the directors of FWPA elected Ron Adams to the role as Chairman for another year and John Simon was elected deputy Chair.

We were honoured to have The Hon Sid Sidebottom MP, Parliamentary Secretary for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, attend the AGM and subsequent FWPA research project presentations (See article on the AGM in Latest news and article on the presentations in Technical transfer and education sections).

Following the Industry Forum and subsequent one-on-one discussions between the FWPA Chairman and major levy payers, the Board made the decision not go forward on a levy poll for the manufacturing sector. However, discussions with the forest growers regarding a levy increase are still ongoing. Given these circumstances and FWPA's lower operating budget, the company has taken a number of cost saving measures. These include reducing the number of directors to the Board by one, a reduction in permanent staff numbers and moving publications such as the annual report to an online format. It also sees a winding back of funding and effort in the Growing Careers and Tech Transfer programs.

The industry promotion strategy remains a priority and in this newsletter you can read about some of the activities we have recently been involved in through the Wood. Naturally Better.™ and WoodSolutions programs, including participation in Grand Designs Live, Future Build 2012 and National Carpenters Day.

In this newsletter you will also read about several FWPA-funded research projects, including Tasmanian research that shows the biodiversity of retained mature eucalypt forest is not affected by forestry in the surrounding landscape, and some recent activities through the our Standards coordination program. (See Research and development and Standards coordination).

This month staff at FWPA also farewelled Brooke Garas, corporate communications manager. I would like to thank the outgoing directors, Mark and Nick, and Brooke for their valuable contributions to FWPA.

I hope you enjoy reading this issue of ForWood and, as always, I welcome your feedback.

LATEST NEWS

FWPA AGM at the Australian Forest Growers Conference

The 2012 Forest and Wood Products Australia annual general meeting (AGM) saw the return of two directors as well as the appointment of John McNamara, managing director of DTM Timbers, to the FWPA Board.

In line with FWPA's practice of aligning its AGM with relevant industry events, the meeting was held during the 2012 Australian Forest Growers Conference in Gympie, Queensland. FWPA was the principal sponsor of the successful conference that featured a keynote address by Peter deMarsh, Chair of International Family Forestry Alliance.

The Hon Sid Sidebottom MP, Parliamentary Secretary for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, was a notable participant in the conference. He was a featured speaker at the conference dinner where he highlighted the ongoing importance of the forest industry in Australia, particularly in the farm forestry sector in relation to sustainability. FWPA was also honoured to have him attend the AGM and subsequent FWPA research project presentations the following day. (See article in technical transfer and education)

At this year's AGM, Mark Grey and Nick Roberts completed their terms as directors of FWPA. The Board Chairman, Ron Adams, formally thanked both for their valuable contributions to the Board. He also welcomed John McNamara to the Board and noted that John had significant experience in both the hardwood and softwood sectors. In his Chairman's address, Ron spoke about the current economic issues facing the industry and the decision by the Board to not go forward on a levy poll for the manufacturing sector. He said that discussions with the forest growers regarding a levy increase were still ongoing.

The three directors elected at the AGM are:

- Evan Rolley was re-elected for a second term
- John Simon was elected by FWPA members after filling a casual vacancy as FWPA director from July 2012
- John McNamara was elected as a new director.

Ron was re-elected as Chairman at the Board meeting that followed the AGM and John Simon was elected deputy Chairman.

Short biography on John McNamara

John McNamara has more 30 years' experience in the forest and forest products industry and enjoys a high industry profile. Until recently he was managing director of Hyne and Sons, a role he held for 18 years. John is currently managing director and a significant shareholder in DTM Timber, a company that specialises in native forest management and harvesting, sawmilling, value adding processing and distribution, and roof truss and wall frame manufacture and distribution. John has proven ability to balance an operational focus with strong strategic leadership, and drives business performance by establishing clear expectations and objectives.

Biographies for the full FWPA Board can be found on our website
http://www.fwpa.com.au/our-board

To contact us for further information please click here

R&D Policy Statement

On 23 July the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Senator Joe Ludwig, released the Government's *Rural Research and Development Policy Statement*.

The policy statement reflects four key themes for improvements to the RDC model which will optimise the outcomes for industry and the wider community. The themes are:

- increased transparency and accountability in the RDC model
- improved coordination and priority setting across the rural RD&E system
- an increased range of mechanisms for pursuing productivity growth
- increased operational efficiencies and value for money on RD&E investment.

For more informtion see here.

INDUSTRY PROMOTION

A favourite TV program is good for wood – Grand Designs Live 2012

Based on the popular UK TV show, presented by Kevin McCloud and the Australian series presented by Peter Maddison, Grand Designs Live was held in both Melbourne and Sydney. Featuring a wide range of exhibitors and focusing on residential architecture and design, Grand Designs Live targets people and businesses interested in quality home building and renovations.

Promoting the use of wood and wood products to this audience, FWPA sponsored a stand featuring both the Wood. Naturally Better.™ and WoodSolutions brands in addition to representation from Planet Ark and their Make It Wood campaign.

Another popular activity offered by Wood. Naturally Better.™ was the Ask An Expert desk in the Advice Centre. This offered people the opportunity to book a short session with a wood and wood products 'expert' who could provide an initial consultation or answer questions on the spot.

The presence of Peter Maddison on the stand added to our profile – in addition to hosting Grand Designs Australia, Peter is also the presenter of the popular Wood. Naturally Better.™ television commercial, aired under Planet Ark's Environmental Edge banner.

Over 50,000 people, both end customers and building professionals attended the two shows, allowing FWPA to promote both Wood. Naturally Better.™ and WoodSolutions to their respective audiences.

Promoting wood to the commercial building sector – Future Build 2012

Australia's first event of its kind, Future Build 2012 focused on sustainable building technologies and solutions for commercial applications. Unlike most events that are primarily an exhibition, or trade show with an accompanying seminar, Future Build is both a trade expo and a professional seminar program.

The primary Future Build audience are architects, building designers, engineers, property developers and builders.

FWPA's objectives were to increase awareness of the WoodSolutions brand and associated activities – the website, workplace tutorials, Technical Design Guides and WoodSolutions seminars. In addition, the Future Build seminar program presented an opportunity to promote the use of wood in commercial applications to a professional audience.

Participation at Future Build included a stand on the exhibition floor and sole sponsorship of the seminar program, at which both Andrew Dunn from Timber Development Australia and Professor Gregory Nolan from University of Tasmania gave presentations.

Andrew's presentation, *Emerging timber products and systems for the commercial construction sector*, reflected the development in recent years of timber products and systems that have taken timber into non-tradition building applications. Andrew discussed these products and emerging new timber products and systems that have made this possible. Products and systems he mentioned included cross-laminated timber, EXPAN post and pre-stressed timber, composite construction and large span solutions.

Complementing Andrew's look to the future, Gregory's presentation, *Timber durability and coatings on building exteriors: design and maintenance*, focused on current best practice in design, specification and maintenance considerations for timber species and coating used on the exterior of commercial buildings.

A feature of the stand was participation by three companies at the forefront of supplying CLT and other engineered wood products to the commercial building sector. Representatives from Stora Enso, Tilling Timber and Le Messurier joined WoodSolutions technical representatives on the stand to answer questions from attendees.

Overall feedback from the event was positive, with all agreeing that attendance at future similar events would be a worthwhile step in promoting the use of wood products in sector.

Building bonds with carpenters and beyond

National Carpenters Day, Carpenter of the Year and Apprentice Carpenter of the Year 2012

The 2012 National Carpenters Day activities saw more than 10,500 people attend barbecues at more than 192 locations, Australia-wide. Support for this FWPA instigated event is growing, with various companies contributing a total of $40,000 worth of prizes.

National Carpenters Day not only helps raise awareness of the advantages of wood among the people who use it most, but it helps our industry build relationships with other organisations operating in the built environment, thereby supporting the increased use of wood and wood products.

Associations and supporters that have partnered with National Carpenters Day include:

- Master Builders Australia
- National Association of Women in Construction
- World Skills Australia
- National Mens Shed Association
- Australian Apprenticeships
- National Tradies Expo
- Make It Wood (Planet Ark)

This year, for the first time, National Carpenters Day received support from the Federal Government in the form of a media release from Senator Chris Evans, Minister for Skills. Government support is expected to continue next year, with the department encouraging apprenticeship participation through their Ambassador program and celebrity patrons.

Media coverage of the event was excellent and ranged from television, radio and press to online and social media.

The National and Queensland Carpenter of the Year 2012 was Peter Bazzan and the Apprentice Carpenter of the Year was Paul Tran from Lend Lease in Victoria.

To view the website click here.

RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT & EXTENSION

Forest reserves preserve biodiversity in production forests

Contribution of CAR reserves to mature-forest biodiversity in production forest landscapes

Since its development in the mid-1990s Australia's National Forest Policy has relied on a network of CAR (comprehensive, adequate and representative) reserves and complementary 'off-reserve' management in the surrounding production forest to get the balance right between forestry and biodiversity conservation. But how effective has it been? Is forestry affecting the biodiversity in nearby forests?

Recent research from Forestry Tasmania and the University of Tasmania, with support funding from Forest and Wood Products Australia (FWPA), shows that it is working well; the biodiversity of retained mature eucalypt forest is not affected by forestry in the surrounding landscape, while production forest can have biodiversity levels similar to mature forest within 50 years of harvest.

A team of researchers led by Tim Wardlaw from Forestry Tasmania compared the biodiversity of birds, beetles and vascular plants in 25, 50m² sample plots in regeneration production forests with the biodiversity in 28 mature eucalypt forest plots across a 900 km² landscape of southern Tasmanian forest. The researchers chose not to include mammals, which are often the focus of biodiversity studies, because they are not very abundant in these wet eucalypt forests.

The report found the retained forest is effective in maintaining biodiversity in production forests, and demonstrates the biodiversity of mature eucalypt forest is not affected by forestry in the surrounding landscape. Although the species richness and abundance of birds and plants were significantly lower in older silvicultural regeneration plots, differences decreased as intensity of disturbance in the surrounding landscape decreased. Depending on levels of disturbance, harvested forests can recover to have a biodiversity similar to mature forest within 50 years of harvest. The closer (within 400m) a regeneration forest plot is to a patch of mature forest, the more abundant and species-rich the bird, insect and plant life becomes.

'The key message is that we now have more scientific basis underpinning how much mature forest needs to be retained in the production forest landscape. The industry can have confidence in solid, scientifically-based evidence supporting their claims that good management is sustaining biodiversity,' says Tim proudly.

For more information contact Tim Wardlaw

Machine Stress Graded Plywood maintains its Standards

The Australian Standards for plywood are based on hardwood timber harvested in the 1960s and earlier, but are the standards appropriate for plywood made from today's softwoods and hardwoods? For example, one of the current standards lists techniques for determining plywood stress grades that were not in existence when the original plywood strength properties were developed, while other standards list different grade stresses for the same plywood grades; it can all leave designers uncertain about which standard they should trust.

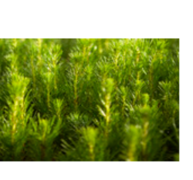
After extensive testing, the research shows that, apart from shear stresses, Australian standard AS 1720.1:2010 is the best fit for the current grade stresses.

The researchers tested batches of machine graded plywood made from Australian produced softwood and hardwood or from New Zealand produced softwood. The plywood sheets were machined graded at their place of manufacture with the assistance of the EWPAA before being sent to the testing agency. There they were tested to destruction, being measured for bending, stiffness, tension, compression and shear strengths.

In addition AS 1720.1 aligns well with the F8, F11 and F14 plywood resource from both Australia and New Zealand. The results suggest plywood producers will not have to make significant changes to their plywood production methods in order to accommodate any future standard modifications. It means designers can have renewed confidence in the strength of plywood as there will be minimal impact on the design standards for the material.

To view report click here

Operational deployment of LiDAR in Australian softwood plantations



Growing and managing pine plantations is a very competitive business, and any way to reduce expenses is very welcome. LiDAR (light detection and ranging) is a relatively recent technology that can deliver significant practical and economic advantages. For example, ForestrySA is using a LiDAR based protocol to eliminate expensive strip cruising during the age 9½ Site Quality Assessment.

Although they might be considered competitors, the six largest pine plantation management organisations in Australia have come together and formed a collaborative to determine if the deployment of LiDAR can be coordinated, thereby reducing costs and sharing expertise: a win-win benefit!

Good applied research science has to be turned into good financial outcomes. This management-focused report compares the current status of LiDAR in each organisation and suggests operational development and deployment strategies for the near future (i.e. the next two to three years). Discussion points in the report include using LiDAR to assist early age inventory of unthinned stands; the possibility of using LiDAR for later age, post first thinning pre-harvest inventory; the formalisation of the collaborative; and, how LiDAR system parameters might best be kept under continual review.

The report also recommends that a larger, later age inventory project be undertaken.

Each of the six participants will make their own decision on how they proceed. For other growers and softwood plantation managers, the non commercial-in-confidence knowledge detailed may suggest ways they too can benefit from LiDAR.

To view report click here

PROJECT REPORTS & UPDATES

Completed projects

Each issue of *ForWood* will list the latest completed projects that have been uploaded to our website. Below are projects that have been uploaded since July 2012.

Project No.	Project title
PNB041-0708	Four year inspection of a comparative trial of accelerated H3 decay test method
PRA245-1112	A Review and Update of Emerging Technologies in Residential Timber Construction
PRC281-1112	Operational deployment of LiDAR in Australian Softwood Plantations
PNA243-1112	The case for renewed development in plantations identifying forest values and the constraints to attainment - Stage One
PNC135-0809	Active genetic conservation and utilisation of native radiata pine germplasm
PRC174-0910	A Review of the science of public native forest management for sustainable timber production in Victoria

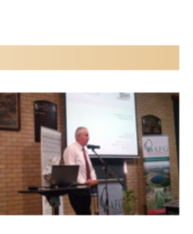
New projects

Each issue of *ForWood* will list the latest approved projects. Below are projects that have been approved since July 2012.

Project *(Research Provider)*	FWPA invests	Total budget
Wood Solutions Decorative Wood Veneers Design Guide *(Uni Melb)*	$25,000	$25,000
Revision of the IBP for the Plantation Industry *(Plant Health Australia)*	$25,000	$40,000
Incident Recording Information System (IRIS) for workplace health and safety (WHS) reporting *(Australian Forest Products Association)*	$40,000	$84,400
Wood Collection Curation *(CSIRO)*	$15,000	$45,000

EDUCATION & CAPACITY

FWPA AGM delivers again!



The R&D presentations following FWPA's annual general meeting always delivers interesting and relevant R&D information, and this year was no different. Held during the recent 2012 Australian Forest Growers Biennial Conference in Gympie Queensland, the AGM featured three key timber industry research leaders speaking about R&D projects that are bringing real benefits to our industry.

Andrew Dunn, chief executive of the Timber Development Association, spoke about topical FWPA research into *Emerging technologies and timber products in residential construction*. 49 new technologies, including construction systems, material developments, and integrated design and delivery systems, were identified that may have economic significance to the Australian timber market.

Dr Keith Mackie, CEO of Solid Wood Innovation (SWI), presented two major research projects delivering value for wood processors. The first is the Cant Tool, used by structural manufacturers to obtain more structural lumber from the forest resource. The second project is the extensive work on Drying, including steaming work and dynamic kiln scheduling.

Rob McGavin, from the Forestry Science unit of the Queensland Government's Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, detailed the impressive capabilities of the Salisbury Research Facility. This facility can do research at a semi-industrial scale, vital for demonstrating to industry that wood science delivers financial results. Rob also discussed recent research findings using mid rotation hardwood thinnings in rotary veneer production. These new options may increase profitability for hardwood plantations.

STANDARDS COORDINATION

Proposal-for-change: National Construction Code

A proposal-for-change has been submitted by FWPA to the Australian Building Codes Board for consideration. It seeks to amend the Building Code of Australia (Volume 1) and extend the concession currently given to timber structural building systems for Class 2 buildings (apartments) to include three-storey Class 3 buildings (boarding house; residential part of a hotel, motel or school; accommodation for the aged, children or people with disabilities).

Currently, designers/developers wishing to build Class 3 timber buildings greater than two-storeys are required to comply with the National Construction Code (NCC) using an Alternative Solutions pathway. A time consuming, expensive and uncertain process, which has no guarantee that the application will be successful.

The proposed change to the NCC would enhance the range of compliant building products and systems available to the construction sector for low rise Class 3 buildings (up to three- storeys) and FWPA-funded research shows it would not compromise the fire safety performance. It would also help reduce compliance costs to developers and builders associated with submitting, accepting and the inspection stages during construction as the designs would be deemed-to-satisfy the NCC. But most importantly, the change would help promote the use of lightweight timber systems in buildings other than residential housing.

Image:
Construction of a 10-storey residential building using cross-laminated timber (CLT) by Lend Lease.
Forte is located in the Docklands (Melbourne, Victoria).
Photographer: Keith Webb
Image courtesy of Lend Lease Australia

Bushfire Attack Level (BAL) software

AS 3959 Construction of buildings in bushfire-prone areas provides two methods of determining the Bushfire Attack Level (BAL) appropriate for a particularly building: a deemed-to-satisfy approach (Section 2); and, Appendix B – Detailed Method for Determining the Bushfire Attack Level (BAL) – Method 2.

The deemed-to-satisfy approach, by its nature, is more conservative and potentially requires houses to be built to a higher bushfire level. The detailed method uses building site specific inputs to determine the appropriate BAL for the site.

FWPA has funded the development of a BAL software package to provide designers and building authorities with a more accurate approach to the assigning of BALs and remove some of the unnecessary penalties and associated costs, with building in bushfire-prone areas. The software package is being developed as an online tool and will be available via the WoodSolutions website. It will enable the user to input the appropriate site data and obtain a printout of both the input and output results.