



AUSTRALIAN FOREST CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION LTD.

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“The Log” 12 April 2011



Hello and welcome to this week’s edition of “The Log”, the Australian Forest Contractors Association Ltd’s own internal electronic Newsletter for all of our Members and Corporate Partner Sponsors.

Firstly this week we note another positive use for timber that we harvest and haul.

Representatives of the Japanese Government in Australia have approached the National Association of Forest Industries (NAFI) asking for assistance from Australian companies with the capacity to supply temporary dwellings for residents displaced by the recent earthquake and tsunami. The prefabricated units will be purchased under commercial arrangements – rather than as charity donations.

While nuclear safety and food security have been the immediate priorities, Japan is looking to install 30,000 temporary dwellings in the next two months to help offset the estimated 100,000 - 150,000 buildings destroyed.

Similar temporary dwellings were used following the Kobe earthquake (1995). Once vacated, the homes were transported to other South East Asian countries and used in development aid.

Typically, the dwellings required are usually 30 square metres in size and split into two separate homes. The approximate cost of each dwelling is around 4.5 million Yen, or approximately A\$50,000. They are expected to be lived-in for two to three years.

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NAFI Communications Manager, Greg Haraldson, said Australian companies could play a role in helping the Japanese reach their target of 30,000 dwellings in two months. “As a key trading partner, the Australian forest



industry has close links with the Japanese. We're hoping to get the word out that there is an opportunity for Australian companies to supply temporary dwellings," he said.

"Australian mining towns often feature these sorts of dwellings and similar buildings were used to house victims of the Black Saturday Bushfires in Victoria."

Recently, some alarming statistics about the numeracy and literacy skills of the Australian workforce have become public.

It is estimated that approximately 53% of working age Australians have difficulty with numeracy skills; 46% of Australian adults have difficulty with reading skills, and 13% are classified in the lowest literacy category.

As in most other industries, having reading and writing skills is essential in ensuring employees in our industry can carry out their duties effectively and accurately. Failure to do so may not only put the person's long term employment in jeopardy, but also may lead to ongoing problems for the employer.

If we have an employee who suffers from these disabilities, it is essential that we all do not just push the problem under the carpet but rather realise that by taking steps to help them overcome the situation, we will not only ensure a better future for them personally, but also it may mean that we will avert any situations arising that could have been detrimental to our business.

It may be difficult for both the employee and the employer to confront the problem head on, but by taking the hard steps initially, the result will be a win/win for all concerned.



In our industry, Forestworks is taking the lead in being the organisation providing programs and assistance to help address the issue. One way in which they are already working with enterprises to address language, literacy and numeracy skill shortages is through their Workplace English Language and Literacy (WELL) Brokerage role.

The WELL Brokerage role assists enterprises to secure Federal funding for training and supports the establishment of training programs within the workplace. The training is flexible and can be delivered in a number of ways including in the workplace. It is well documented that as enterprises embrace new reporting and certification requirements and technological upgrades, a lack of language, literacy and numeracy skills provides a barrier to productivity and the ability to respond to changing business pressures.

For more information about how to implement a WELL program in your workplace or to find out if there is a Registered Training Organisation in your area that is interested in delivering training, please contact Jenni Oldfield who is ForestWorks Foundations Skills Specialist. Jenni can be contacted at Forestworks by phoning 03 9321 3500.



Recently, the Federal Governments House of Representatives Agriculture, Resources, Fisheries and Forestry Standing Committee launched an inquiry into the Australian forestry industry. We are aware that both NAFI



and Forestworks have made detailed submissions to the inquiry. The ForestWorks submission recommendations included the following:

- Government investment in a secure forest resource and supporting this investment via training for a skilled workforce
- acknowledgement that all sectors of the industry are struggling to provide secure and viable employment under the current policy settings and therefore recognise that changes need to be made
- effective anti-dumping legislation must be developed and enforced to protect employment and investment from unfair competition.

AFCA supports these recommendations and we hope that the inquiry will acknowledge them and encourage Government action accordingly,

AFCA along with the Tasmanian Forest Contractors Association (TFCA), is currently supporting an initiative by the Victorian Forest Contractors Association (VFCA) who are urging the National Transport Commission to recognise the safety and OH&S initiatives that our haulage operators have in place which not only improve our operations but which also help reduce road usage and damage.

Timber haulage operators are either impelled or encouraged through their employment tender processes, to install devices such as CTI tyre inflation, satellite tracking, emergency panic buttons, other equipment which helps reduce the potential for rollovers and brake failures, and variations in trailer configurations which often reduce the amount of “rubber on the road” when travelling unloaded.



All of these initiatives result in reduced road damage and could well be acknowledged by the NTC through reduced registration fees and road user charges.

Our three Contractor organisations believe that “anything that can be done to reduce accidents should be done, and in this case, registration cost decreases for fitting road safety devices would be a step in the right direction”.

(Scott Gentle VFCA)

All three bodies will sign a VFCA initiated letter aimed at getting the NTC to look at the situation and hopefully take action. AFCA is pleased to support this proposal.



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As we all well know, illegal protesters and demonstrators are a universally difficult issue to deal with and regularly cause all Contractors to lose work time and therefore money. Often also, their actions can put contractors and their employees in unsafe working conditions and environments.

For a long time now the Workcover organisations in the various States across the country have refused to acknowledge this situation and will currently not act against protestors saying “it’s not our business”.

There is now an increasing movement to prove to Workcover that this statement is incorrect as legislation surrounding them, universally says that their role is to ensure the safety of all employees.

Attached for your information is a presentation prepared by Mr Peter Rutherford who is a Forestry Manager at South East Fibres in Eden NSW and who is a long time campaigner to get the various Workcover agencies to accept their responsibilities.



It is up to all of us to reinforce to our local Workcover Inspector that it is their responsibility to take action against the “feral” and therefore we seek your support in getting the message across.

Please have a look at the presentation and next time you speak with your local inspector, help to get the message out there. Only through a united action will we succeed in having this problem dealt with

And finally this week, we are pleased to welcome some new subscribers to “The Log” We are pleased to include Mal Windrim who has moved from CJD in Albury NSW to become Australasian Japan and Africa Area Manager for Peterson Forestry Products to our mailing list, and also we welcome Mr Nate Clark, Marketing Manager John Deere Forestry who is based in Illinois USA, on board.

Having met Nate at the recent “Residue to Revenue” Conference, we were honoured to learn that he is interested in learning more about our activities and are pleased to add him to our mailing list.

Another highlight of Nate joining our readership is that “The Log” is now distributed internationally, a humbling honour for me as the writer.

Well, that’s all for this week. Thanks for taking the time to read this edition of “The Log”. We hope you all have a safe and profitable week and we look forward to bringing you some more news from our industry again next week.

Regards to all
David Drane



The “Log” is brought to you from Ulladulla this week. As you can see the weather is beautiful and the fishing wasn’t bad either.