



# AUSTRALIAN FOREST CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION LTD.

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## “The Log” 14 June 2011



Hello and welcome to another edition for 2011 of “The Log”, the Australian Forest Contractors Association Ltd’s own internal electronic Newsletter for all of our Members and Corporate Partner Sponsors.

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Firstly this week we are pleased to bring you some information from our friends at Forest Wood Products Australia (FWPA). A new website – [www.woodsolutions.com.au](http://www.woodsolutions.com.au) is a world-leading online wood products database. The site has been structured to expand over time to become the sector’s equivalent of “Wikipedia”. A second initiative is the result of a partnership with Planet Ark - a television commercial under the Environmental Edge and Wood. Naturally Better.™ brands. The commercial can be viewed at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3lmAAkjIzKs>.

The commercial is a very positive message from the industry. Let’s hope it gets some good air time, especially at the moment when everyone seems to be against us.

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No matter where you look, there always seem to be problems and issues making news about our industry and putting us in a bad light. So with these ongoing issues continuing to rear their heads across the country, in this weeks “Log” we’ll attempt to summarise the situation as we see it currently, and in some cases express our opinions on the situation.

Firstly to Southern New South Wales where we hear that Hyne Timber says a predicted soft market for the remainder of the year makes 35 redundancies at their Tumbarumba sawmill necessary to match current production levels.

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Meanwhile, the CFMEU's Dusty Miller says a major factor in the downturn is the dumping of cheap timber imports. Losing the jobs to us is devastating," said Mr Miller. "A lot of people have difficulty getting other work because they live in Tumbarumba and Hyne is the major employer there,"



"In the timber industry at the moment a lot of frame and truss companies have a yard full of imported timber which they bought cheap and unfortunately our local sawmills have to compete with imported goods. Hyne Tumbarumba is the biggest sawmill in Australia. We have also got a plywood factory in Wagga owned by Ausply, and we've also got sawmills in places like Tumut and Oberon are all facing the same problem," he said.



Mr Miller says it is the Federal Government's duty to ensure the local timber industry is secure to avoid further job losses. We agree, and support any efforts by the CFMEU to put this in front of Government.



On to Tasmania where the circumstances surrounding the Forest Statement of Principles continues to change almost daily with the green signatories first agreeing then withdrawing. Meetings with federal government have provided no certainty for the future and we now await the next step. Who knows what it will be

Meanwhile in Tasmania, it is understood that Bridgewater-based logging contractor Aprin is close to reaching a deal with Gunns to buy the Triabunna woodchip mill, with an announcement likely in the next few days. Lets hope something positive comes out of these discussions and the mill continues to operate and the jobs of the people working there are retained.

Also in Tasmania, activists staged a walk-in on Forestry Tasmania offices in Tasmania's north east recently. Green painted protesters at Scottsdale who are part of 'Code Green' say it is time for Forestry Tasmania to get out of managing Tasmania's forests. Another step by the Greens to ensure the Statement of Principles falls over.

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Talking about "Conservationists", In Victoria, Conservationists say that they have entered an active logging coup in far east Gippsland, highlighting the destruction being caused to the endangered long footed potaroo habitat. Those of us who live in Gippsland really wonder at the authenticity of their claims and the video footage they produce to substantiate their arguments.



And it looks as though everything possible is conspiring together to raise problems for us. As if the gathering of wood by the average grass roots homeowner for the winter hasn't already been made hard enough through the

introduction of a permit system in Victoria, now we hear that wood fires could prove a washout this winter, with firewood supplies slashed by the summer floods in northern Victoria.



In this State we also have the problem of the Green influenced Yarra Ranges Shire Council which is located east of Melbourne refusing to use Reflex paper which is manufactured at the Maryvale Mill because they claim it is made from illegally logged timber. The Council has also tried to influence other Local Government bodies across the State to not use Reflex paper.

In a good positive move, The Victorian Government have announced that they have decided to cancel their original intentions, and will not now relocate the headquarters of VicForests from the City to Healesville which is in the Yarra Ranges Council area.



Reflex paper of course is not made from illegally logged timber, and once again we question the “sanity” of some of the Councillors within the Yarra Ranges Shire Council, especially after having been introduced to their carryings on at other forums and workshops that we have attended over the years where they have also been in attendance.

In fact, I’m off to our local Post Office today to purchase another box of Reflex paper while it’s “on special.” AFCA uses Reflex paper for all of our written material.

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And so on to the Green Triangle region where the chair of the South East Forestry Industry Roundtable claims a blueprint for the industry’s future is critical following the announcement that Gunns Limited was planning to exit the region. Roundtable chair Trevor Smith’s comments follow the first meeting of the eight-member Lets hope some sanity prevails and the industry survives.

There have also been murmurings that Hancock Plantations may make inroads into the region. We await with interest the outcomes of what happens with the sale of the industry by the SA Government.



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So there we are, all in all just another smattering of instances of the industry being in uncertain times. Everyone in authority keeps saying we have a viable future. But the time is well overdue for those in authority to get real and make things happen to ensure our future.

AFCA keeps attending as many meetings etc as possible that we are invited to (and some that we are not), to keep pushing our sector and trying to influence the industry that the harvest and haul sector is a very integral part, but that it is also very dependent upon decisions made by others that are crucial to the future.



NOTE: We acknowledge the various media outlets who contribute to the daily media summary circulated by AFPA that have been referred to during the compilation of this article.

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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

