



AUSTRALIAN FOREST CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION LTD.

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“The Log” 6 September 2011



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

Last week the AFCA Directors, Col Shipard and myself headed to the lovely Western Australian city of Bunbury for a day long Directors meeting which was followed by a meeting of our members in that area.

Firstly, credit must be given to all of our Directors for the time, money and effort that they put into their roles as Directors of AFCA. These people regularly give up a lot of time from working in their own businesses, and pay their own airfares and accommodation costs, to contribute not only to making sure that AFCA is doing what it has been set up for, but also to help create initiatives that are designed to be beneficial to our sector of the industry and to all of those who work in it.

We thank Colin McCulloch, Greg Coverley, Cheryl Griffiths, Barry Fennell, Ken Padgett, Ian Reid, and Garry Leeson, for their efforts in trying to create the best environments not only for AFCA members, but indeed for all of the harvesting and haulage contractors in our industry.

The Directors addressed a number of issues, some of which will be covered in future editions of “The Log”.

However there were two decisions made that I am pleased to highlight this week. Firstly, we have decided that it would be very beneficial for all contractors if we participated in, and had input into, the organizations that accredit our industry.

To this end, we have now applied to join both the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) and the Australian Forestry Standards (AFS) organisation.

The Directors believe that by taking on these roles, AFCA can better



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monitor industry climates and make sure that all of the Companies and organizations who are seeking to both obtain and maintain their industry accreditations, are indeed keeping up their responsibilities and ‘ticking all the boxes’”



We are already aware of one major company that while claiming they qualify to retain their accreditation, are seriously lacking when it comes to meeting their social responsibilities that are required under their Certificate of Accreditation. By using the old Australian Democrats terminology, of “keeping the bastards honest”, AFCA hopes to raise these situations with the Boards of the Accreditation bodies, to make sure that everyone is treated appropriately and ensure that only those who are playing the game properly are reaping the benefits of industry accreditation.

We have already raised this concern with the Accreditation body and look forward to hearing of the action that they need to initiate against the company involved.

As we progress further with these applications, we will keep you informed of what we are doing in this area.

Another major issue was addressed at the meeting. The Directors discussed the situation that while AFCA is nearing its 10th year of operation, there are still many out there who don’t know who we are or what we do.

To this end, we have decided to try and update our prominence through the introduction of a modest marketing campaign (due to our limited funding) to raise our profile in the industry.



“AFCA for You” will over coming months, endeavor to better highlight what we do, what we are trying to achieve, and how we contribute to our industry. We hope that through this process we will continue to grow, increase our membership and widen our recognition.

Soon you will see some subtle changes to this publication and the introduction of a number of small financially viable initiatives all designed to better highlight our contribution to the industry.

At the Members Meeting which followed the Bunbury Directors meeting, all these initiatives were announced and some very valuable discussions about the industry were held. During these talks, the Contractors who attended renewed their commitment that only by uniting in their efforts, can the best arrangements for all Contractors be achieved.



We have committed to continue our efforts to create a model “Viable Contract” that will contain clauses that are helpful in ensuring that contractors work in a sustainable environment and reap the benefits that they are entitled to in return for their efforts.

This is an ongoing project, but one that we have a renewed commitment to now as a result of the direction given to us by the members at the meeting.

The Members meeting and the dinner that followed was once again sponsored by our friends at Hitachi, and we sincerely thank Kristan Peters for agreeing to once again meeting the costs.

The members present enjoyed a presentation from Kristan about the newest releases from Hitachi and also benefited from chatting with both him and the other Hitachi representatives that came along.

Thanks again to Hitachi for a very enjoyable night.

AFCA is really lucky to have the ongoing support of all of our sponsors and we thank them all, (especially Hitachi in this case) for acknowledging the benefits of being associated with us.

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JOHN DEERE

Nothing Runs Like A Deere

Late last week, we were shocked to hear that the Federal Government's body which funds the Cooperative Research Centre's had decided not to renew the CRC Forestry's application for funding. Irrespective of whether or not we all agree with some of the CRCF's initiatives and directions, it is important that research and development takes place within any viable industry.

The decision has resulted in the following release from the Australian Forest Products Association (AFPA).

"The Federal Government's decision last week to cut support for the Cooperative Research Centre (CRC) for Forestry has received broad criticism. AFPA is extremely disappointed in the Government's lack of support for the forest industry.

In a statement on Friday, AFPA Chief Executive Officer David Pollard said the work of the CRC for Forestry was crucial given the current debate around the future makeup of the industry and climate change. "The Australian forest industry has faced a challenging period as the debate over the future supply of wood from native forests and plantations is carried out," he said.

"The CRC for Forestry is focused on areas essential to the future of the industry such as value-adding to plantation resources, tree species genetic improvement and socio-economic studies. It is one of the only research facilities focused on improving efficiencies in timber transport and harvesting. These are all crucial areas for the ongoing efficiency and productivity of the industry." R&D is also important in maximizing the positive role the forest industry can play in mitigating climate change, he said.

The decision not to support the CRC is equivalent to losing 50 full-time positions and will affect around 40 research partners, companies and universities. "This represents a real threat to forest research capacity. Once it is lost, it is very hard to recoup," said Dr Pollard.

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AFCA is aware that those involved in the current CRC Forestry have already worked on a "Plan B" to try and retain some form of research and development for the industry (all be it on a very reduced level) just in case the application for funding was unsuccessful.

We wait to see what the outcome will be. Perhaps it's just another case of the Federal Government caving in to its Green influence and instructing the CRC funders to get rid of another forestry body. Our industry "Commentator" Senator Richard Colbeck certainly thinks that this may be the case.



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Here are his comments:

“It seems the Federal Government just doesn’t understand the significant contribution made by Australia’s working forests. “At a time when even senior Labor union figures are talking of a manufacturing crisis, this out-of-touch government continue to make anti-industry decisions.

“Our forests not only produce essential wood products for everyday use but they add significant value to local economies, provide employment for tens of thousands of people, and in fact are the lifeblood of some regional areas of Australia

“The funding blow follows on from a number of irrational, negative decisions made by Labor including the exclusion of biomass from renewable energy programs and the recent deal that will cut the Tasmanian forest industry in half.

“Obviously the Government is beholden to Greens anti-forestry ideology and has lost the capacity to make the evidence-based policy decisions that they promised,” Senator Colbeck said.



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

Best wishes
David Drane

