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Tasmanian Industry Assistance Programmes update

In November 2005, the Australian and Tasmanian Governments called for applications for assistance under three programmes designed to help the Tasmanian forest industry adjust to changes arising from the Tasmanian Community Forest Agreement. The programmes are the Tasmanian Forest Industry Development Programme (TFIDP), the Tasmanian Country Sawmills Assistance Programme (TCSAP) and the Tasmanian Softwood Industry Development Programme (TSIDP).

The TFIDP and TCSAP received 84 applications for funding. An advisory committee is assessing the applications and expect to recommend the first batch of applications to Senator Eric Abetz, Australian Minister for Fisheries, Forestry and Conservation, and Bryan Green, Tasmanian Minister for Infrastructure, Energy and Resources, for approval in February 2006.

The Governments will continue to accept applications under the three programmes while funds are available. Applicants should submit expressions of interest as soon as possible to ensure their proposals are considered while funds remain available.

For further information contact Charles Body on (02) 6272 4196 or charles.body@daff.gov.au.

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Establishment of New R&D Entity

In December 2004, the then Australian Forestry Minister, Senator Ian Macdonald, chaired a high-level workshop, attended by key industry stakeholders, state agency representatives and DAFF staff, to determine the best transition to and structure of the new industry-owned company, Forest and Wood Products Australia (FWPA).

The proposed establishment of FWPA would convert the Forest and Wood Products Research and Development Corporation (FWPRDC) to an industry-owned company, allowing it to undertake marketing and promotion while continuing to provide market driven research and development (R&D), currently provided by the FWPRDC, to Australia's forests and wood products industry.

Throughout the workshop Senator Macdonald highlighted the need for an integrated forestry entity to undertake targeted R&D and communicate a positive image of the forest industry and the sustainability of timber as a resource.

To fund the expanding role of the FWPA, a new grower levy of \$0.05/m³ is proposed, in addition to current levies paid by the processing industry. An increase in the hardwood sawlog levy is also proposed to bring it to the same level as the softwood sawlog levy of \$0.29/m³.

The Australian Government is maintaining its commitment to matching industry levies spent on eligible R&D, dollar for dollar.

A postal ballot will soon be conducted enabling levy payers to vote on the new levy and the proposal to set up FWPA.

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National Forest Inventory Workshop on Monitoring Forest Extent and Condition

The National Forest Inventory (NFI), in partnership with States and Territories, convened a workshop on 'remote sensing for forest extent and condition'. The workshop was attended by 45 forest researchers and inventory specialists to consider the technical needs of the proposed Continental Forest Monitoring Framework.

The workshop agreed that a national monitoring framework was needed to meet Australia's domestic and international forest reporting needs because current approaches using periodic map compilations are not adequate to report on change in forest extent or condition.

The workshop covered a wide range of forest monitoring issues and a short report summarising the workshop outcomes is available at www.daff.gov.au/nfi

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5th meeting of the Asia Forest Partnership

The 5th meeting of the Asia Forest Partnership (AFP) was held in Yokohama, Japan from 13-15 November 2005. The meeting's focus was on law enforcement and governance within the Asia-Pacific region and included presentations on Japan's proposed Government procurement policy for wood and wood products; ITTO's activities on forest law enforcement; the Malaysian Timber Certification Scheme; Asia Forest Law Enforcement and Governance; illegal logging in Indonesia; forest law enforcement in China; and illegal logging in East Russia.

Discussion on forest law enforcement and illegal logging was informative, entertaining and frank with a strong message from Indonesian officials of the Indonesian Government's commitment to reduce illegal logging.

The AFP was launched at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002 and consists of governments, civil societies and international organisations. Its key areas of interest are illegal logging, good forest governance and law enforcement, forest fires, capacity building and rehabilitation of degraded forests in Asia and the Pacific.

The AFP does not fund project work but provides a forum for partners to discuss continuing and potential new work programs. Partners form alliances to fund and carry out activities consistent with AFP's areas of interest.

For further information contact Malcolm Jamieson on (02) 6272 5918 or malcolm.jamieson@daff.gov.au.

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United Kingdom Government Timber Procurement Policies

The Australian Forest Certification Scheme (AFCS), which incorporates the Australian Forestry Standard (AFS), is one of five national schemes currently being audited by the Central Point of Expertise for Timber Procurement (CPET), the United Kingdom's agency responsible for carrying out the United Kingdom Government's timber procurement policy.

The audit is to assess whether or not the national schemes comply with the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification Scheme's (PEFC) requirements, with a February decision expected.

Acceptance of the PEFC meeting the sustainable and legal requirements of the United Kingdom Government's procurement policy is conditional on PEFC member schemes meeting revised PEFC guidelines.

For further information contact Malcolm Jamieson on (02) 6272 5918 or malcolm.jamieson@daff.gov.au.

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Japanese Government Timber Procurement Policies

The Japanese Government expects to introduce a new timber procurement policy from 1 April 2006. While there has been little information released on the Japanese policy, a new implementation agency is expected to be set up, with the legal sourcing of wood and wood products the policy's priority.

For further information contact Malcolm Jamieson on (02) 6272 5918 or malcolm.jamieson@daff.gov.au.

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39th Session of the International Tropical Timber Council

The International Tropical Timber Council (ITTC), the key decision making body of the International Tropical Timber Organisation (ITTO), held its 39th session in Yokohama, Japan from 7-12 November 2005.

At the session 12 projects and 12 pre-projects received voluntary funding worth \$US 5,393,201 and \$US 107,600 respectively. Australia agreed to co-sponsor four ITTO projects in the Asia-Pacific region, pledging:

- \$US 25,000 to conserve forest and provide sustainable management in the Adelbert Range region of PNG;
- \$US 15,000 to establish a plantation in Bali of indigenous species;
- \$US 4,000 to provide an information system for the wooden furniture industry; and
- \$US 4,000 to improve forest fire monitoring including the use of remote sensing technology.

The ITTC also adopted the ITTO biennial workplan for 2006 and 2007, which will cost \$US 10,171,300 over the two years. Importantly, the workplan includes activities worth \$US 800,000 focusing on illegal logging, forest law governance, timber tracking and forest certification.

For further information contact Malcolm Jamieson on (02) 6272 5918 or malcolm.jamieson@daff.gov.au.

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Call for experts for ITTO project assessment panel

The Australian Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) is calling for interested Australian forestry experts to register to serve on the International Tropical Timber Organisation's (ITTO) expert panel for the technical appraisal of projects and pre-projects.

ITTO projects fall broadly into the areas of forest management, conservation, forest economics, marketing and the forest industry. Experts will be specialised in one or more of these areas. International forestry experience, especially in tropical forestry and working with international organisations, such as the ITTO, is useful.

Panel members serve for two years (with the possibility of a one-year extension) and meet in February and August each year (four panels in total).

Currently, no Australians are serving on the technical panel but it is likely Australia will fill a position in 2007 or 2008.

Suitably qualified professionals should email expressions of interest to malcolm.jamieson@daff.gov.au by Monday 27 March 2006. DAFF will finalise the names to go forward to the ITTO, with all applicants to be notified of the outcome.

For further information contact Malcolm Jamieson on (02) 6272 5918 or malcolm.jamieson@daff.gov.au.

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