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Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

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Forestlinks

An eNewsletter from Forest Industries Branch

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Tasmanian Forest Industry Assistance Packages announced

The Australian Minister for Fisheries, Forestry and Conservation, Senator Ian Macdonald, and the Tasmanian Minister for Infrastructure, Energy and Resources, Bryan Green, have released guidelines for three Tasmanian forest industry assistance programmes.

The programmes will assist the industry to adjust to changes in timber resources following the Tasmanian Community Forest Agreement, signed by the Prime Minister and the Premier of Tasmania on 13 May 2005.

The three programmes are:

- the \$42 million Tasmanian Forest Industry Development Programme to help the hardwood industry upgrade equipment for timber harvesting, haulage and processing
- the \$4 million Tasmanian Country Sawmills Assistance Programme to assist country sawmills rely less on mature logs and to use more smaller regrowth and plantation logs
- the \$10 million Tasmanian Softwood Industry Development Programme to help existing softwood businesses retool to improve efficiency and competitiveness of the softwood sector.

The programmes will provide grants of 25–50 per cent of the total costs of projects which meet their objectives and priorities. The first closing date for applications or expressions of interest under the two hardwood programmes is 18 November 2005.

Applications or expressions of interest under the softwood programme may be lodged until 20 January 2006 but will continue to be received until all funds are committed.

For further details, contact the Tasmanian Department of Economic Development's Business Point (1800 440 026) or the Programmes' Secretariat (02) 6272 4196. Guidelines and application forms are also available on the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry's website www.daff.gov.au/tcfa.

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Australia's Montreal Process Implementation Group

A three-day workshop in July to streamline Australia's sustainable forest management indicators has made significant progress.

Australia's Montreal Process Implementation Group (MIG) hosted the workshop to review Australia's 74 sustainable forest management indicators, remove duplication, ambiguity and gaps between indicators, and ensure that they have national and regional relevance.

Following the workshop, the MIG held its 18th meeting on 6 and 7 September to review and endorse new indicators for most criteria.

The MIG will meet again in December to consider the remaining indicators. It is expected that at the conclusion of the process Australia will have a smaller number of more focused indicators that will help us monitor sustainable forest management in a more effective manner.

Changes to the criteria and indicators will be used to prepare Australia's State of the Forests Report in 2008.

The MIG will also submit the revised indicators to the International Montreal Process to contribute to the international review of indicators now underway.

The MIG was formed in 1996 to co-ordinate Australia's input to the international Montreal Process Working Group.

Its role is also to co-ordinate activities and to liaise with Australian Government and State/Territory agencies and other stakeholders working towards the domestic implementation and reporting of the Montreal Process Criteria and Indicators.

For further details, contact MIGSecretariat@affa.gov.au

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Australia/New Zealand Bilateral Environment Consultations

The annual Australia/New Zealand Environment Consultations alternate between Australia and New Zealand and serve as relationship-strengthening exercises.

The aim is to give counterparts an overview of issues of mutual interest and allow an exchange of views.

The Australian Government Department of the Environment and Heritage hosted this year's consultations, which were held in Canberra on 8 and 9 September.

Representatives from several Australian Government departments and agencies attended, including the departments of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Foreign Affairs and Trade, and the Australian Agency for International Development.

The consultations included forestry-specific topics important to both countries, including the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF), illegal logging and the International Tropical Timber Agreement (ITTO).

The discussions recognised that illegal logging remains a significant issue in sustainable forest management. Both governments said they are continuing to work to find a solution to the problem.

Australia and New Zealand will also continue to work together in the lead-up to the next UNFF meeting early next year, and to take a joint approach to key ITTO issues.

For further details, contact: Andrew Wilson at andrew.wilson@daff.gov.au

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Private Forestry Development Committee Workshop

A Workshop for Private Forestry Development Committees (PFDCs) at Katanning WA in September focussed on integrating trees into dryland agricultural systems to meet environmental and sustainability objectives.

The Commonwealth and the responsible agency in each State/Territory jointly fund the 21 PFDCs in Australia's main plantation regions through the Natural Heritage Trust Extension's private forest activities.

PFDCs work closely with local and regional stakeholders, industry and government to assist with regional forest industry development. Their roles vary from region to region, but all play a role in communication and addressing issues that hinder forest development.

Some committees focus on co-ordinating farm forestry activities, providing opportunities to farmers, industry development or helping industry and government communicate with each other about mutual concerns.

For further information contact Tony Nicholson at tony.nicholson@daff.gov.au or on (02) 6272 4739

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FIB helps restore Canberra's forests



DAFF Forest Industries Branch staff recently contributed to the ongoing effort to regenerate ACT forest areas devastated in the January 2003 bushfires.

The exercise was a joint effort between ACT Forests and Greening Australia.

Over 3000 volunteers have registered to replant trees, and 37,400 trees have been planted so far.

During the afternoon the staff planted a mix of 400 native species as part of a project to engage communities and corporate bodies in revegetating forest areas burnt by the fires.

It was a good opportunity for those involved to "get their hands dirty" and experience some important aspects of forest management programs.

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