



**Construction Forestry Mining & Energy Union.
Forestry and Furnishing Products Division**

Submission to the Senate Select Committee Inquiry into the Forestry Marketing and Research and Development Services Bill 2007 and Forestry Marketing and Research and Development Services (Transitional and Consequential Provisions) Bill 2007

The Construction Forestry Mining and Energy Union, Forestry and Furnishing Products Division (FFPD) and its predecessor the Australian Timber Workers Union has actively contributed to every inquiry, submission, investigation, report, and/or analysis that has been carried out within the Forest and Wood Products Industry over the last three decades. This includes the active representation and participation on Industry councils, or such other structures intended to advance and secure the interests of the Forest and Wood Products Industry and its workforce.

Such participation includes the Forest and Forest Products Industry council (FAFPIC) in the mid eighties the Wood and Paper Industry Council (WAPIC) in the mid nineties and the Forest and Wood Products Council early 2000's. The aforementioned peak bodies chaired by the relevant Federal Minister of the respective Government of the day were all responsible for the development of Industry strategies and/ or strategic action plans.

Major initiatives which underpinned such strategies include resource security, expansion of the plantation base, sustainable forest management , research and development facilities, skill development, job security, value adding, marketing and promotion of the industry and its environmental and economic values.

The Forest and Wood Products Industry has been compelled to reappraise its current and future position as it has regularly been the subject of controversy and ill founded criticism over the last three decades. In most instances the attacks have been unjustified and often expressed by the extremist or uneducated views of organisations and individuals who have no interest in the maintenance of a Australian Forest and Wood Products Industry.

The abovementioned comments have to be considered in order to give the appropriate weight of importance to the government and industry initiative to establish the Forest and Wood Products Australia Company.

The transferring of research and development initiatives from the Forest and Wood Products Research and Development Corporation to the new entity continues the important work that has been previously undertaken and that which is envisaged for the future.

Of significant importance is the opportunity for the long overdue marketing and promotion of the Forest and Wood Products Industry to now be formally and strategically undertaken.

Two imperatives must be addressed in our submission for the maximisation and success of this new valued strategic role of the new entity.

Firstly, the marketing and promotion strategy must be about the enhancement, growth and promotion of all the relative sectors that constitutes the Forest and Wood Products Industry

eg: Forest Growing and Management

Harvesting and Haulage

Sawmilling and Processing

Timber and Engineering Products Manufacturing

Wood Panel /Board Production and Manufacturing

Pulp and Paper Manufacturing

Timber Merchandising

The relevance of advocating at least in some part a generic approach to the marketing and promotion of the Forest & Wood Products Industry is to raise the level of understanding of the integrated nature of the industry and the environmental values that occur as a wood product is processed. The alternatives to wood products that are impacting significantly on the Industry are steel, plastic, and aluminium, all products that are environmentally inferior in their production and use. A whole of Industry approach can derive a whole of Industry benefit. The selective marketing and promotion of the respective sectors of the Industry can still be progressed by the new entity or the relevant sectors with linkages to the new entity strategy.

The second imperative must be in the appropriate representation of the Forest Wood Products Australia Board. In our submission the Board must be broadly representative of stakeholders of the Industry. It is not appropriate for Board representation to be simply predicated on those who have made a levy contribution. It is our submission that in order for our first imperative to be met it must require a broader representation than forest growers, saw millers and paper producers dominate at a Board level.

We understand that it has been advanced that a number of committees will be established by the Board whose role will be to report to the Board from a sectoral, state or special issue position. This may be relevant and appropriate in some circumstances; however, such a proposal should not be at the expense of

representation of principal key stakeholders on the Board. In the absence of identifying such stakeholders the Forest and Wood Products Australia Company will not be embraced by the broader Industry, a position that must be achieved if the new entity is going to be successful.

Accordingly the CFMEU, FFPD advances its own representation expectation on the basis that it is a major organisation and stakeholder that has represented and continues to represent all workers in all sectors of the Forest and Wood Products Industry. We believe we would take to the new entity Board a history of robust committed action and views to protect and advance the Industry and its workforce. The CFMEU has a demonstrated affinity to Regional Communities who have a vested interest in the long term security of the Forest and Wood Products Industry; accordingly the CFMEU recognises the merit of Timber Communities Australia seeking representation on the new entity Board

Trevor Smith

CFMEU Forestry & Furnishing Products Division

5/6/2007