Bridging the gap in engineered wood supply
Timber import changes to lower biosecurity risks

PROPOSED changes to timber import conditions by plant import operations of the federal Department of Agriculture and Water Resources have been welcomed by the Australian Timber Importers Federation.

ATIF general manager John Halkett said the planned changes would simplify present mechanisations and documentation related to timber product imports.

“Pleasingly, changes to the present ‘21-day rule’ that ATIF has been advocating will be made, extending the current 21-day period to six months. In particular, this will provide an improvement and benefit for timber product imports from North America and Europe.

Mr Halkett said the department supported the proposition that a longer allowable period to treat goods prior to export would benefit industry, lower biosecurity risks and reduce non-compliance.

Changes to timber product import conditions would streamline and simplify existing processes, reflect the changing nature of some categories of timber product imports, and incorporate revised biosecurity treatment methodologies and processes.

The likely continuing increase in the volume of timber products imported into Australia, particularly increases in engineered wood products, including mass panel products, such as CLT, glulam and prefabricated building components would benefit from the revision of import conditions.

“Imported timber products are also essential because of their cost and utility benefits, or because there are simply no Australian-produced substitutes available in the quantities or specifications demanded for residential and commercial building applications,” Mr Halkett said.

He acknowledged the valuable contribution that the Customs Brokers and Forwarders Council of Australia and Australian Furniture Association had made to the deliberations on timber product import condition changes and in working with the federal department.

The intended changes, that include extending the time between treatment to export from 21 days to 6 months, also introduce a new requirement of a manufacturer’s or supplier’s declaration about appropriate storage after timber product

CONT P 4

CONT P 4
Queensland cypress sector considers group certification

PROCESSORS in the western Queensland cypress sector are considering a low-cost group chain-of-custody certification scheme following a presentation at Dalby by Australian Forestry Standard CEO Simon Dorries.

There are around 2.5 million ha of cypress-dominated forests in Australia, including cypress in forests mixed with eucalypts.

Management practices by both the Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries and the Forestry Commission NSW are certified under the AFS standard AS 4708.

“The group AFS scheme can reduce certification costs by 60-70% for individual processors,” Mr Dorries said.

Timber Queensland is helping to facilitate the scheme for cypress division members, which tracks certified wood through their businesses.

“Reception to the scheme was very positive,” TQ CEO Mick Stephens said.

Mr Dorries said the scheme would get off the ground after group meetings with cypress producers and some random audits.

“There will be lot of cost savings here and it will allow cypress mills to use the AFS-Australian Made logo on products stamped with AFS certification compliance,” Mr Dorries said.

“It’s a simple, yet rigorous system that covers all steps in the supply chain.

“Increasingly, consumers are demanding that the wood products they buy are made from timber that can be traced back to a sustainable and legal source.”

The group certification proposal mirrors a successful scheme in Tasmania, managed by Fine Timbers Tasmania, which covers more than 40 sites ranging from the smallest user of high-end specialty timbers building custom guitars to the largest sawmilling enterprises and wood fibre exporters.

Mark Leach, the driving force behind the scheme in Tasmania, was awarded the 2016 Richard Stanton Memorial Award for Excellence in Forest Management and a $2000 bursary to assist in future work in sustainable forest management.

Inquiries about chain-of-custody certification can be directed to AFS Ltd on (07) 3359 1758 or email Simon.Dorries@forestrystandard.org.au

– JIM BOWDEN

CONSUMERS WANT WOOD PRODUCTS THAT ARE LEGAL

Mr Dorries said the scheme would get off the ground after group meetings with cypress producers and some random audits.

“There will be lot of cost savings here and it will allow cypress mills to use the AFS-Australian Made logo on products stamped with AFS certification compliance,” Mr Dorries said.

“It’s a simple, yet rigorous system that covers all steps in the supply chain.

“Increasingly, consumers are demanding that the wood products they buy are made from timber that can be traced back to a sustainable and legal source.”

The group certification proposal mirrors a successful scheme in Tasmania, managed by Fine Timbers Tasmania, which covers more than 40 sites ranging from the smallest user of high-end specialty timbers building custom guitars to the largest sawmilling enterprises and wood fibre exporters.

Mark Leach, the driving force behind the scheme in Tasmania, was awarded the 2016 Richard Stanton Memorial Award for Excellence in Forest Management and a $2000 bursary to assist in future work in sustainable forest management.

Inquiries about chain-of-custody certification can be directed to AFS Ltd on (07) 3359 1758 or email Simon.Dorries@forestrystandard.org.au

– JIM BOWDEN