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AUSTRALIAN FOREST GROWERS – REPRESENTING & PROMOTING PRIVATE FORESTRY

Mt Lofty—KI AFG Newsletter

AFG 2005 AGM & Policy Forum—President Bob Long



Peter Bulman, Anthea Howard and I attended the AFG policy forum and AGM in Melbourne over two days. There was a solid and detailed debate about the various policy priorities identified by branches and agenda committees. It sounds boring, but I found it informative and was impressed with the democratic process. The Policy committee (includes

Anthea Howard) will develop a second edition Policy Statement booklet—to give even greater political credibility to AFG.

At the Policy Forum dinner, Peter Bulman was one of the three awardees presented with the Forestry Tools Presidents Award for his services to the National Council, chairman of the magazine committee and local branch support. Congratulations Pete.

AGM

The big blue tarp kept the rain away from a relaxed yummy BBQ washed down with our Ballarat wine.

Bob Long was re-elected President, Joan

Spencer took on the Secretary/Treasurer role, Peter Bulman the newsletter (and asked members to contribute more articles), Tony Dickson, Anthea Howard (in absentia) and Richard Bennett (in absentia) on Committee.

Email pbulman@bigpond.net.au for the President's report and meeting minutes.

The brief overview of the China forestry tour talk can be found in *Grower* Vol 27 No 4.



Master Tree Growers Course—register now!

The **first session** is planned for **Sunday 19th March 2006**, but as the course will need to be limited to 20 participants, it will be 'first-in best-dressed', so you'll need to register to ensure getting a slot. Those who have already attended a course are also welcome—they will no doubt get heaps more out of it second time round after having chalked up some experience in the interim. If the course is not already filled by early March, there will be an information night on Wednesday 8th March outlining what is involved for those interested:



- ♦ **Mastering trees on farms** (1 day) — designing for shelter, controlling land degradation, wildlife habitat and generating income
- ♦ **Trees for conservation and profit** (3 days) — reviewing prospects for timber and non-wood products, carbon, biodiversity and environmental services
- ♦ **Integrating trees on our farms** (3 days) — field tours and expert presentations on opportunities for multi-purpose tree growing on participant's properties
- ♦ **Shaping future landscapes** (1 day) — review regional R & D needs and more

Sponsorship from Computershare's E-tree via Landcare Australia will keep costs down to \$100-150 per person or per property. Contact Geoff Hodgson 8391 7500 or

hodgson.geoff@saugov.sa.gov.au to register. Visit www.mtg.unimelb.edu.au.

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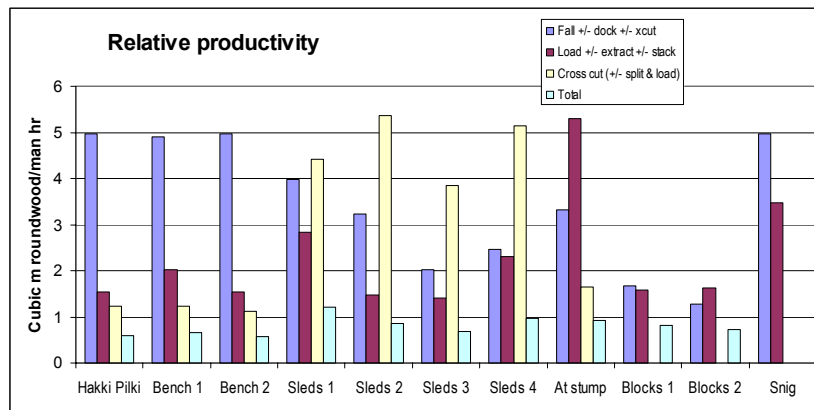
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Mt Lofty Ranges PF—small-scale harvesting trials phase 2



This included more sled runs, cutting blocks (for a benchmark) and snigging logs.
Download the report (2Mb) from www.mlrfp.asn.au.



Experiences marketing firewood—the first of a series (#1 Tony Dickson)



The importance of being able to either extract some value from the labour of thinning or of reducing the length of rotations and so hastening cash flow, is significant to many of us with adolescent forests. The difficulties in doing so mainly revolve around efficiencies of conversion and market resistance to low-density wood. I believe it is the latter of these, which presents the greater challenge.

The product that I am marketing in 200 litre drums is a mix of old-growth eucalypt and plantation-grown acacia, with a little eucalypt sapwood. I do not sell this by weight because I am primarily selling a service, in the same way that a restaurant does not price by weight. I individually pack the drums to the client’s specification and then pander to the eccentric whims of my predominantly elderly customers with obsequious charm.

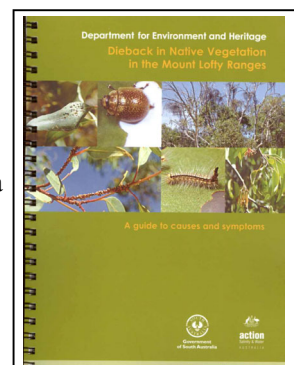
The purpose of such endeavour has been to add as much value as possible to a very limited amount of product. Next year however, I shall be in a position to sell some bulk sapwood to both wholesale and/or retail markets. It remains to be seen how the market responds, but I am optimistic that it can be educated for two reasons.

Firstly, the increasing costs of importing wood from interstate will hopefully allow a margin for a modest discount. Secondly, I have observed that my retail customers seem to have a plethora of priorities of greater moment than the density of the wood. Length, diameter, spiders; some want it split so the wood can’t roll out of the heater, others want rounds to avoid splinters. Generally speaking, however, there is a preference for smaller sized wood than one gets from the wood yard. Many people cannot or will not chop wood.

It should also be noted that if a sizeable percentage of the market is willing to pay over \$500/t for bagged sapwood, \$200 for a ‘very large’ tonne of bulk wood should be achievable. Drums are \$25 delivered which works out to about \$300 per tonne.

However, despite the heavy emphasis on the ecological advantages of plantation firewood in my advertising, it is, sadly, very clear to me that this dimension is of no interest to the general public.

[Future issues—experiences of Barrie Spencer, Bill Evans and perhaps those of the Lanes]



Track down this DEH 20p booklet if you are interested in dieback of native vegetation—I got mine free from ForestrySA.