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This years program

At a recent telecom, the committee resolved to organise **four practical events** for members based on demonstration sites and/or experts:

- ♦ Autumn—Master TreeGrowers course and dinner/forum
- ♦ Winter—Tony Dickson’s at Inman Valley for tractor gadgets for harvesting and pruning
- ♦ Spring and Summer field events in central and northern areas—please contact Bob or a committee member if you would like to host a field day and get the opportunity to pick the brains of the collective wisdom

Another idea is to collaboratively hold a **community forum** focusing on redressing some of the misinformation being disseminated on issues such as forestry and water.

Visit www.afg.asn.au for your entry and info on the Lannen **Tree Farmer of the Year** award. Your feedback and suggestions would be appreciated.

Bob Long, President Tel: 8251 1217 Email: rjlong@ozemail.com.au

Grower levy for R&D and promotion

Members may receive voter registration ballot forms in the post to be able to vote to:

- ♦ Convert the *Forest and Wood Products R&D Corporation* in to an industry-owned R&D and marketing **and promotion** company
- ♦ Raise a **grower levy 5c/m³** on sawlogs (presumably not firewood) harvested for domestic processing or export

Our national office has supported this initiative to expand from the previous levy that was largely limited to R&D on processing.

Your registration and support for the new levy should help timber to keep/gain market share. [May you pay heaps of levy as that will mean you will get ‘squillions’ for your logs. Ed]

Master TreeGrowers Course—past participants welcome



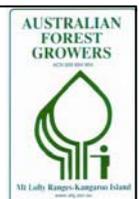
Even if the course is ‘fully subscribed’ at 20, past participants may have missed a session in the inaugural course or just wish to pick up more on a particular topic. A course dinner is also anticipated and could turn out to be an excellent forum to discuss a range of issues affecting growers — and will be an ‘AFG event’ for members. So, the program will be emailed to members and put on the MLRPF website as it is developed and past participants are welcome to attend for a nominal contribution, probably \$10/session.

Fifteen registrations received by mid February—leaving five positions, so the information night will proceed on Wednesday 8th March outlining what is involved but only for those who are not familiar with the course (others just roll up on the 19th). Complimentary pizza and beverages will be provided from 6.30pm at the Catchment Centre, corner Mann and Walker Streets, Mt Barker. Phone 0408 395 055 if you can’t find it on the night—it’s a bit tricky first time.

The course begins with the first session on Sunday 19th March 2006 at the same venue.

Contact Geoff Hodgson 8391 7500 or hodgson.geoff@saugov.sa.gov.au to register and visit www.mtg.unimelb.edu.au for more info.

Promote AFG by showing that you are proud to be a member and displaying a gate sign on your property. Signs are available at every meeting.



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COMMITTEE CONTACTS

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Mt Lofty Ranges PF



One current priority for MLRPF is to help private forestry to be better understood and supported by the community. The effective anti-forestry publicity to date is reflected in the Liberal, National and Labour candidates common opposition to partial reforestation in Finnis electorate—Dean Brown’s seat.



Apart from interviews and media releases, a two-page leaflet (download from website) addressing the key concerns is about to be targeted. The leaflet makes the case that our community is much better off socio-economically and environmentally with a local private forestry industry.

Private Forestry, KI



After eight months now as EO, Sandy Farquhar is finding KI to be a beautiful and interesting place which also faces many challenges. Sandy brings experience on cattle stations in N Qld, macadamia research with CSIRO and a PhD in chemistry from UNE in NSW.

She is enjoying the challenges and rewards that come from working with a progressive and dynamic industry — learning the practicalities and politics of growing trees as she goes and is about to set up a **web site for PFKI**. Tel: 8553 0330 Email: sfarquhar@hotmail.net.au

Firewood marketing concept for member consideration *and feedback*

A number of growers have hardwood thinnings that might be sold for firewood. At least a couple, including Tony Dickson as per the last Newsletter, are already advertising and selling privately. Clare Buswell wonders if there might be a role for collective marketing and has ‘collected’ her thoughts as follows:

1. We appoint either a voluntary or remunerated (commission?) coordinator
2. We place an advert in the *Courier* in March stating: **Firewood for sale** — plantation-grown locally by *Australian Forest Growers* — providing only one contact number
3. The coordinator matches the grower and buyer by location, knowing how much/type of wood each grower has, so that equity issues can be managed
[Suggestions are needed on how to deal with variations in wood quality (density, moisture content and assurance of sale by weight), communication confusion regarding delivery arrangements/directions and disputes]
4. The customers are told when they first ring that the wood will be delivered/collected on say Saturday only, what the cost is (\$180/t plus say \$15/t delivery?) and that we only accept cash — growers **must** be available

The idea is to use the AFG brand as our marketing brand and reduce advertising costs. Should we use some of our branch funds to pay for the adverts?

We could provide a one-page leaflet about the virtues of our wood.

Should we run a trial for say six weeks? How much wood would make it worth it?

Please provide your thoughts and suggestions to Clare via the President rjlong@ozemail.com.au or the Editor pbulman@bigpond.net.au — and indicate if you have wood for sale this year or next year and the quantity/quality.

Premium firewood

‘Sovereign Hill’ at Ballarat purchased 1000 tonnes of **sugar gum** firewood for their boilers. The head of steam operations at Sovereign Hill is impressed with the quality of sugar gum firewood. Even used straight from the plantation it outperformed their normal native forest firewood for heat output, and the boiler operators have had to reduce stoking rates to compensate.