



### In this issue:

- What's happening — p1
- Master Tree Growers — p1 & 4
- Creswick sawmilling course — p2
- Firewood marketing — p3
- Trees & water — p2 & 3
- Private Forestry update — p4

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AUSTRALIAN FOREST GROWERS - REPRESENTING & PROMOTING PRIVATE FORESTRY

# Mt Lofty—KI AFG Newsletter



## What's happening—absolutely heaps!

1. **Dinner and guest speakers:** Martyn England on **Trees & Water** (p2) and Steve McNamara on **A Firewood Market** (p3) at Buckingham Arms Hotel, 1 Walkerville Tce, Gilberton Thurs July 6; drinks 6pm - smorgasbord dinner (\$20) 6.30pm - followed by speakers (**RSVP** to Joan 8568 5622 or email [barenjoe@bigpond.net.au](mailto:barenjoe@bigpond.net.au) ASAP)
2. Visit to **Bush Timbers** (meet 9.30 am Friday Aug 25<sup>th</sup> at Nairne PO), an in-depth session with CSIRO timber expert, Russell Washusen on **wood properties and processing** (11am Catchment Centre, Mt Barker) followed by a visit to **Pfizer furniture** (~2.30pm at Pfizer's on old road to Hahndorf not farm from turnoff in between Mt Barker and Littlehampton)
3. Spring — Tony Dickson's at Inman Valley for **tractor gadgets for harvesting and pruning**
4. Summer field days, ideally in central and northern areas pending interest — contact Bob or a committee member if you would like to host a field day

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Growers and 'wood-be' growers came from **far and wide** (KI, mid-north and the Murray mallee ... and the Hills/Fleurieu) for the 70<sup>th</sup> 8-day MTG course in Australia (SA's second course). [See pics on page 4]

Everyone really enjoyed the **depth and diversity of experience and interests of the participants** and presenters—from fully commercial bagged firewood production to permaculture and biodiversity.

Expert presenters certainly provided plenty to think about, but the interaction when visiting participant's **properties** and the **classroom** property presentations were most rewarding.

Visiting Bill Evan's property on the 7<sup>th</sup> day seemed to really 'gel' for many—design, growing, silvicultural flexibility, harvesting and marketing and economics following 20 years experience and coming to fruition at last.

Participants went away clearly understanding that there is **no absolute right and wrong way of tree growing**—growers need to choose from many different paths that suit their available time, money, 'risk profile', expectations/aspirations and time frames. Knowing what is needed to actually realise returns from wood sales should help to avoid disappointments further down the track.

Thanks to the sponsors, presenters and participants.

Computershare



## Creswick sawmilling course overview—Barrie Spencer

### Sawmilling Training Program (Certificate III in Forest and Forest Products)

The course is held at the Timber Training Centre at Creswick (Vic) and is directed towards in-forest harvesting and processing of timber using Portable Sawmilling Equipment. Run over 5 or 6 days for between 4 and 8 students at any one time. Our course had 5 students and was conducted over 5 days.

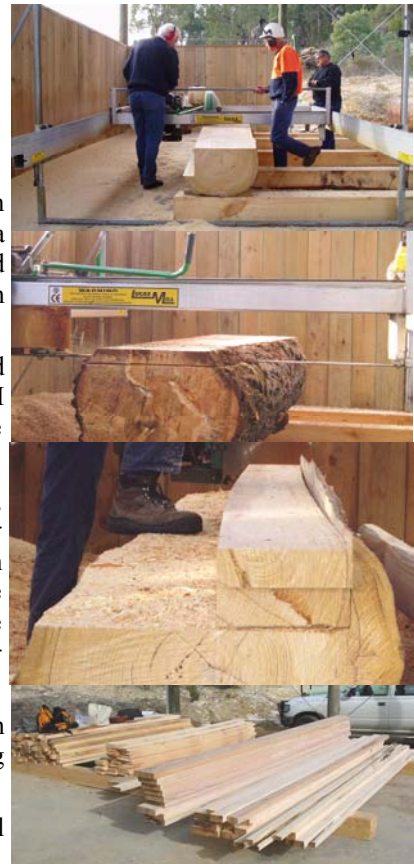
The course structure included an element of basic fixed sawmilling log breakdown procedures, and the theory of large mill automated operations. This element proved a very useful introduction to the principals of log breakdown and the benefits and disadvantages of the two primary milling patterns for log break down. (Back sawn and Quarter sawn logs)

There was considerable time spent explaining stresses present in green timber and methods adopted to relieve those stresses in the milling process. This element I thought was useful as a grower and for tree stand certification. Particularly in the identification of growing induced stresses and log selection.

We were then introduced to the latest version of the Lucas Portable Mill. Its set up, breakdown and transport and its use in achieving sawing patterns to either recover timber by quarter sawing or back sawing the log (see photos). A total of 6 logs, 5.4m in length were broken down. Four were Radiata Pine and the other two were Mountain Ash (*E regnans*). Each student was given ample opportunity to use the mill and achieved very good competence levels in the time provided. Timber produced is graded to give students an appreciation of the value of the production.

The key to the use of the Portable Mills is the sawing pattern used and the steps taken to achieve the desired result efficiently. The mill is also capable of producing weather boards and can be used for any number of timber recovery processes.

The Timber Training Centre located at Creswick 18km north of Ballarat is well worth a visit should you be in the area.



## ‘Whiskey is for drinking but water is for fighting over’

That famous may be a quote from a NSW politician, but locally, ‘prescription’ for our region is fast becoming a reality. Both the eastern and the western Mt Lofty Ranges are in the process of being ‘prescribed’, which means that surface and ground water are now going to be ‘accounted for’. No longer can dams be built, or bores put down without having permission ie confidence that this ‘water extraction’ is sustainable and not over-exploited. The accountability is expected to be transparent — with each catchment having a Water Allocation Plan. Well who can argue with, or fight over that?

This process is threatening enough to irrigators of vines, orchards, horticultural crops and pastures. The concern that reforestation may dry up streams and bores is adding to their concerns.

Make no mistake, forests certainly do influence hydrology — just as large-scale deforestation increased stream flows, erosion, water turbidity, nutrient levels, flooding and, in some cases salinity, large-scale reforestation can reduce stream flows, periods of no-flow, groundwater recharge and, in some cases salinity.

There generally does however, have to be more than 20% of the entire catchment re-planted to have a measurable impact on total streamflow.

Hang on a moment, revegetation and other rain-fed perennial crops or pastures such as lucerne have the same effect as reforestation — they all ‘intercept’ water (but they do not ‘extract’ it like the irrigators do).

Now, what makes sense is to make adequate provision for a reasonable level of revegetation, reforestation and establishment of rain-fed perennial crops and pastures in the Water Allocation Plans.

What does not make sense is to require landholders to get a ‘water licence’ for revegetation, reforestation, establishment of rain-fed perennial crops and pastures, just like irrigators will be required to do.

What can you do? Whenever you get the chance to ‘stick your sixpence worth in’ ie socially, through letters to politicians/ editors, any ‘ole soapbox’ etc, point out that:

- ◆ The scale of proposed and likely forestry development in our region is expected to have limited impact on catchment scale ie only minor local impacts are likely.
- ◆ There are ways to minimise impacts of reforestation on hydrology that should be recognised and encouraged eg setting back plantations from swamps. As a matter of fact, swamps will be better protected with buffer (*cont p3*)

## A market for firewood—including thinnings from young plantations

*Enviro Systems* operates a bagged firewood enterprise and is looking to procure locally grown wood. Steve McNamara showed his products and property to those that attended the recent Master TreeGrowers course (see pic).

Product parameters for the purchase of Firewood from local growers.

Bulk wood needs to be:

- ◆ Cut to a length of approximately 300 mm (often referred to as ‘foot blocks’).
- ◆ Un-split rounds from any diameter up to a diameter of 120 mm and then split so as to average an approximate size of 120 wide by 300 mm long.
- ◆ Must be free of all bark and dirt and rodent free. Bark and dirt detract from the appeal of the firewood to the end user.
- ◆ Must be seasoned and tested to have less than 25% free moisture content when delivered.
- ◆ Source product maybe hard wood or softwood – but must burn in a non-toxic manner.
- ◆ Must have a certificate showing its source signed by the landowner or other supporting documents verifying its compliance with the *Firewood Association of Australia’s* Code of Conduct. In particular wood must be sustainably harvested in an environmental friendly way.
- ◆ Must be delivered with a registered weigh note declaring the weight of the product delivered and the moisture content of the tested load.



### Delivery

There is a certified weighbridge at the *Farmhouse Rural Supplies* site at Verdun. Deliveries maybe weighed on the entry, and weight certified at this point.

Freight can be supplied by the grower or arranged by *Farmhouse Rural Supplies*. If a commercial transport company is used, loading and volume are an issue. Most trucks are high sided so as to achieve economic volumes between 60 and 100 cubic metres; loading with out a conveyer can be difficult and slow.

Transport can cause a cost blow out and must be fully resolved prior to sale. The cost of freight is in addition to sale price. It is anticipated that deliveries will come in smaller volumes than current Red and Blue Gum deliveries which come in 30 to 40 tonne loads. Thus handling and management time for staff will increase.

### Price

Premium grade firewood price at the farm gate is \$90 per tonne plus GST but this is dependant on species, quantity and quality. *Farmhouse Rural Supplies* will pay \$135 per tonne plus GST for mixed hardwood loads, that are delivered and that comply with the advised specifications.

### Marketing

The local product as delivered, will be different to the products presently sold, being Red Gum and Blue Gum.

*Farmhouse Rural Supplies* will have to market the local product in a different manner. It will have to sell at the same retail price as Red Gum and Blue Gum as it is difficult to differentiate the product for weighbridge purposes, (although this is done for sand and metal products).

The holding time will be longer, the quality will vary as there will be a number of different suppliers and the market will have to be educated.

The price differential (with interstate supplies of red gum delivered for ~\$150/t) is needed to cover the additional marketing, handling and holding time.

***Enviro Systems Renewable Resources Pty Ltd*** Telephone: 1300 136 800 Email: [tracy@enviro.com.au](mailto:tracy@enviro.com.au)

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(cont from p 2) plantings and by exclusion of grazing than if left to agriculture.

- ◆ *Adelaide Blue Gum* has clearly demonstrated commitment to invest in the region and should be catered for in the same way as landholders who have demonstrated a genuine prior commitment to invest in irrigated enterprises.
- ◆ How about a more efficient use of the water by irrigators before curtailing forestry?
- ◆ State and Federal governments have policies encouraging reforestation for well-documented social, economic and environment net benefits — the very triple-bottom-line approach espoused for natural resources management investment.
- ◆ Hence, there needs to be adequate provision in Water Allocation Plans to enable partial reforestation and perennial vegetation without the penalty of having to apply for a water licence, just like an irrigator.
- ◆ To get more of an understanding, come along to Martyn England’s talk at the Maylands Hotel (see page 1).

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Mt Lofty Ranges PF



[www.mlrfp.asn.au](http://www.mlrfp.asn.au)

Welcome to Tony Dickson as the new AFG representative on MLRPF. Thanks to Richard for his input over the last few years.

Ensuring that there is adequate provision for forestry development in the Water Allocation Plans for the E and W MLR is currently a priority for MLRPF.

An imminent visit to Minister in conjunction with AFG will endeavour to reinforce this message and to encourage adequate resourcing for the new forest policy and private forestry development unit in Primary Industries & Resources SA—and developing a strategy that improves market access.

Private Forestry, KI



During April, two well attended **farm forestry field days** were run on KI — *Pruning and Thinning* coordinated by PFKI and *Salinity* by Rural Solutions SA. Bob Hingston, a specialist from *Trees South-west* in WA, led the *Pruning and Thinning* field day and covered technical aspects of growing eucalypt sawlogs under a wide-spaced regime. At the *Salinity* field day, a variety of landholders and professionals spoke about options for managing salinity including trees, perennial pastures and whole farm planning. Thanks to Paul Olive, Chantelle & Anthony Johnson and Lloyd & Christine Berry for hosting the sites.

**Farewell** to Sandy Farquhar who has left PFKI to attend to personal matters. Thanks to Sandy for her efforts and good luck for the future.

Master TreeGrower Course



Woodyard visit (note loader bucket design) 'Chainsaw Bob' Hingston Old SA blue gum & sugar gum pln Terry Harmer (ABL)  
Dusan Kotasek measuring Barrie Spencer's spotted gum Barrie Spencer's B4 n after photos



Clockwise: Ben Harris; Chris Kaczan; Clem Tynan; Heather Solly & Louisa Daveriadams; Andrew Sandall; Gordon Smith.