

# Forest and Wood Products Australia Outcome of Ballot – April 2006

In March 2006 the Australian forest and wood products industry was asked to vote on a new approach to national research and development and wood promotion and marketing. The proposal involves a number of components:

- Transition of the Forest and Wood Products Research and Development Corporation (FWPRDC) from a statutory body to an industry owned company – Forest and Wood Products Australia (FWPA);
- Increased funding for FWPA from:
  - A levy of 5 cents per m<sup>3</sup> of all logs to be paid by forest/plantation growers and timber plantation Managed Investment Scheme managers; and
  - An increase in the existing hardwood sawlog levy from 22 cents per m<sup>3</sup> to 29 cents per m<sup>3</sup>.

A3P, AFG, ATIF and NAFI engaged the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) to manage the ballot which was conducted between 20 March and 21 April 2006. The ballot was counted on 28 April 2006 in the AEC offices in Sydney.

There were 1,118 eligible voters made up of existing FWPRDC levy payers (including importers) and growers/MIS Managers who registered specifically for the ballot. 434 ballots (40%) were admitted for scrutiny. The results of the ballot are briefly summarised below and provided in more detail in the attached table.

## Question 1 – FWPA Proposal

- As a whole the industry voted in favour of the proposal to establish Forest and Wood Products Australia – 310 votes in favour to 118 against. All sectors voted in favour of the proposal except for the Panels sector, where the vote was evenly split, and the Hardwood Sawlog and Cypress Sawlog sectors who voted against the proposal.

## Question 2 – New/Increased Levies

- The Growers/MIS Managers voted to support the proposal to raise a levy of 5 cents per m<sup>3</sup> – 143 votes in favour, 41 against.
- The Hardwood Sawmillers voted against the proposal to increase the hardwood sawlog levy by 7 cents per m<sup>3</sup> – 22 votes in favour, 54 against.

NAFI members support the establishment of the new entity and there is significant support from NAFI members to increase the hardwood levy.

As a result of the ballot outcome the four industry associations will ask the Minister for Fisheries, Forestry and Conservation, the Hon Senator Eric Abetz to proceed with the introduction of the legislation required to give effect to the proposal.



For Further Information Contact

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NAFI – National Association of Forest Industries  
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FWPA Proposal  
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Category	% FWPA Levy Income	Eligible Voters	Total Votes	Question 1 FWPA Proposal			Question 2 new/increased levy		
				yes	no	informal	yes	no	informal
<b>Growers</b>	26	275	185	163	21	1	143	41	1
<b>Hardwood sawlog</b>	15	168	77	37	39	1	22	54	1
<b>Importers</b>	14	475	103	62	40	1			
<b>Cypress</b>	1	29	12	4	7	1			
<b>Hardwood woodchip</b>	4	12	5	2	1	2			
<b>Softwood sawlog</b>	34	44	13	13	0	0			
<b>Panels</b>	3	9	4	2	2	0			
<b>Plywood and Veneer</b>	2	14	8	15	2	0			
<b>Softwood low grade</b>	2	55	18	12	6	0			
<b>Softwood roundwood</b>	1	38	9	<i>Combined with plywood &amp; veneer for confidentiality</i>					
<b>Totals</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1,119</b>	<b>434</b>	<b>310</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>6</b>			