

17 April 2003

Dear Stakeholder

RE: NATIONAL INDIGENOUS FORESTRY STRATEGY PROJECT

We are writing further to the attached letter from AFFA and ATSIC introducing the National Indigenous Forestry Strategy project. The purposes of this letter are to:

- Inform you of the objectives and anticipated outcomes for the National Indigenous Forestry Strategy;
- Introduce the project team and outline the consulting process we are using to arrive at the National Indigenous Forestry Strategy; and
- Encourage your input into the Strategy and advise you as to how you can contribute to the process.

This letter has been sent to a wide range of stakeholders identified by the National Indigenous Forestry Strategy Steering Committee and BDO Consulting.

Objectives and Anticipated Outcomes

The objectives of the National Indigenous Forestry Strategy are to:

- Provide a national strategy and framework for encouraging greater Indigenous participation in the forest and wood products sector;
- Identify the opportunities for Indigenous people to participate in the growth of Australia's forest and wood products sector;
- Outline the means and support for Indigenous people to participate in these activities, especially where they promote the economic independence of Indigenous communities, the sustainable management of forest resources and improve the outcomes for existing industry participants;
- Provide a link to key Government policy areas and industry strategies, thereby providing a structure for Indigenous people to assist with the development of Australia's forest and wood products industry; and
- Establish an effective management, monitoring and review plan for the National Indigenous Forestry Strategy.

The outcomes sought for the National Indigenous Forestry Strategy include:

- Economic independence for Indigenous communities through active participation in the forest and timber industry;
- Provision of input into regional, State and National forest management, policy development and industry activities; and
- Improved management of forests and plantations for all of their economic, social and environmental benefits.

Consulting Process

The consulting process involves six stages across a twelve month time frame, namely:

STAGE ONE – PREPARATION – APRIL TO MAY 2003

- Meet with the Steering Committee;
- Gather and review relevant information ;
- Publicly notify stakeholders of this project; and
- Contact identified stakeholders directly to advise them of the project and how they can make submissions into the process.

STAGE TWO – CONSULTATION – JUNE TO JULY 2003

The objective of this stage is to gain an understanding from both the Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander communities and the forestry industry around Australia as to how they can work together to create economic, social and cultural benefits for both parties. We aim to ensure all interest groups are given the opportunity to participate in the development of the National Indigenous Forestry Strategy. Amongst other things the purposes of this consultation are to:

- Investigate the existing forest and wood product industry structure;
- Determine the level of current Indigenous involvement in forest and wood product industry activities;
- Consider impediments to further Indigenous involvement in the forest and wood product industry;
- Consider the level of education, training and support required for adequate participation in the forest and wood product industry;
- Identify demonstration models and commercial opportunities; and
- Identify the need for any research and development activities.

In conjunction with the Steering Committee we have identified the following eight sites around Australia to visit and discuss various aspects of the forest and wood product sector:

1. Hobart, TAS
2. Mt Gambier [Nunga Links] and Portland / Heywood, SA/VIC
3. Barmah, NSW/VIC
4. Cairns, QLD
5. Tiwi Islands, NT
6. Grafton–Lismore, NSW
7. Manjimup, South West WA
8. Gingin, South West WA

In addition we will meet with forest and wood products industry participants in the capital cities during the consultation process.

We considered the following factors in selecting the eight sites:

- Broad and representative cross section of Indigenous communities and forestry sector locations;
- Location adjacent to existing forest and wood products industry activities;
- A balance between natural / planted forests and wood / non-wood products and activities. Non-wood activities can include heritage management, eco-tourism, salinity management and control;
- Maximum involvement potential for Indigenous communities. Consideration was given to a mapping exercise which overlaid the location of Indigenous owned and controlled land and forested areas; and
- High potential for success.

STAGE THREE – DESKTOP RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS OF RESULTS – JULY TO AUGUST 2003

This stage involves analysing the outcomes of our consultation and conducting further desktop research as required.

STAGE FOUR - STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT – SEPTEMBER TO OCTOBER 2003

This will involve a major workshop with the Steering Committee and, if necessary, additional representatives from the forest and wood products industry and the Indigenous community. The participants will discuss our findings from the consultation process, alternative strategies and make recommendations on the critical factors that need to be of the highest priority within the National Indigenous Forestry Strategy.

The purpose of this workshop is to bring the key stakeholders together and discuss the Strategy platform and recommendations. Strategies will be developed along the following lines:

- To define the means and support required for Indigenous people to participate in the forest and wood products industry particularly where it promotes:
 - The economic independence of Indigenous communities;
 - Advancement of the forestry industry through Indigenous community involvement;
 - The utilisation of Industry networks and the development of business relationships between existing Industry participants and Indigenous people and communities;
 - The development of business relationships between Indigenous people and communities with financial institutions and the financial sector;
 - The development of relationships between Indigenous people and communities with Government and industry organisations that develop Industry policy; and
 - Improved and sustainable management of forests and plantations to maximise the economic, social and environmental benefits to all stakeholders (including existing Industry participants);
- Suggest links to existing Government policy, programs and Industry strategy, thereby providing a structure for Indigenous people and communities to assist with the development of the Industries;
- Provide an effective management, implementation, monitoring and review plan for the Strategy, including measures for ongoing support of Indigenous people and communities.

STAGE FIVE – DRAFT REPORT

We will document the findings from the above stages into a draft report. This will be the first draft of the National Indigenous Forestry Strategy. The draft report will be presented initially to the Steering Committee for comment and feedback.

The Terms of Reference requires that we undertake further consultation with earlier participants regarding the Draft Report to provide an opportunity for all stakeholders to comment on the draft strategy.

STAGE SIX – FINAL REPORT

Final alterations will be made to the Draft Report after the consultation outlined in Stage Five. This final report will then be presented to the Steering Committee.

Consulting Team

The consulting team for this project consists of representatives of BDO Consulting, part of the international BDO organisation with a network of resources in over 600 offices in 90 countries across the globe, and Forest Professionals a leading consultant to the wood fibre industry in Australia and overseas. The project is being undertaken by the following personnel from these organisations:

David MULLER (B.Acc. FCA AIA) – Director, BDO Consulting (SA)

David Muller is leading the project and will be primarily responsible for the Indigenous aspects of the project.

David specialises in Industry Planning, Strategic Planning and Business Planning, Feasibility Studies, Finance Raising and Business Acquisitions. David has specialised in Corporate Advisory work for 15 years. David's major skills include:

- Facilitation of workshops dealing with complex subject matters;
- Working with Indigenous communities and understanding the need to balance economic, social and cultural issues;
- Assessment of commercial opportunities;
- Project management.

Gerard MOORE B.Sc. (Forestry), MACFA, MIFA) – Director, Forest Professionals

Gerard will be primarily responsible for the forestry aspects of the project.

Gerard Moore is a professional forester with over 25 years experience in the forest and wood products sector in Australia, New Zealand and South East Asia. Gerard has significant understanding of the things that matter in establishing and managing plantations, estimating future woodflows, harvesting and marketing the woodflows, and the interface between wood sellers and wood buyers. He has extensive knowledge of Australia's rural forest environment. Gerard's major skills include:

- Understanding tree growing projects and opportunities;
- Implementing wood supply arrangements for growers and buyers;
- Day to day operational management of forest operations;
- Day to day operational management of wood supply operations; and
- Understanding Legislative and OH&S requirement in the forestry industry.

Your Input

This letter is being sent to you as part of Stage One of the consultation process. We are seeking your input in two ways, namely:

1. To participate in discussions at any of the eight nominated sites and / or with the forest and wood product sector visits. Please advise us if you would like to be involved in these discussions or workshops so that we can provide you with details as to dates and venue locations.
2. Written submissions responding to a survey form dealing with the aspects shown above in more detail. To be included in this survey please contact us to register your interest. In the written submissions we are seeking to identify opportunities that may be investigated once the National Indigenous Forestry Strategy is completed that are outside of the eight target sites. Importantly, please advise us if you are aware of any opportunities that may be relevant to the outcomes of the National Indigenous Forestry Strategy.

Contact details to register your interest in having an input into the National Indigenous Forestry Strategy are:

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We look forward to hearing from you on this project, which we believe will have a significant impact on the involvement of Indigenous communities within the forest and wood products sector industry around Australia.

Yours sincerely



David Muller
Director