

Each month TimberTrader News' editor Helen Hatty will take a look at one aspect of the Chain of Custody topic.

CARBON - AND CoC

As we all become more aware of our own 'carbon footprint', due primarily to increased publicity in daily media, we all look at what we can do to reduce carbon emissions and diminish climate change pressures.

Once the domain of the 'green groups', switching to low wattage light bulbs, turning appliances off at the wall and even recycling are now common place in Australian households; although it must be said that some are more aware - and co-operative - than others.

Just about everything we use has been manufactured and produced using large amounts of energy, causing the emission of carbon dioxide.

We use a computer, drive a car, and even in some instances, use these products to build our homes.

Yet when do we take the time to promote what has been described as the only renewable resource to lock away carbon and store it for literally hundreds of years.

According to NSW DPI forest research scientist, Dr Fabiano Ximenes, "Growing trees absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere through photosynthesis and store the carbon in their tissues.

"Carbon is released back into the atmosphere only when vegetation is burned, or broken down by bacteria in a decaying process."

As the frontline of the timber industry, the merchant and roof truss and wall frame fabricator will undoubtedly become the target for questioning about issues on carbon and timber, and ultimately how we justify cutting down trees to make wooden products.

Do you have the answers? Do you have the information at hand, or better still memorized, to justify why you're selling a piece of timber when some other product could easily be used?

For example did you know that the Australian Government's "State of the Forests Report (2008)" estimates that Australian forests store around 6.56 billion

tonnes of carbon, which is equivalent to keeping 24 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere.

As the Forest & Wood Products Australia (FWPA) "Wood. Naturally Better." campaign gathers momentum and industry members become licensed partners, a lot of these questions will be answered.

You will all by now have received a copy of the "Fast Facts on Wood" booklets attached to the cover of our June 2009 edition, or from other sources - keep them handy!

However we believe that the next step in defending our industry will not only come from the 'carbon footprint' justification but from Chain of Custody (CoC).

Not another acronym, you say!!! Not another front on which we have to defend the use of wood!!

CoC is basically a means by which we can justify to consumers that that carbon is locked away in wood which comes from sustainably managed forests that have been checked and rechecked by authorised organisations set up to ensure we - the



forest and timber industry - is doing the right thing.

This issue can be complex in content as those 'authorised organisations' themselves come under fire in their testing and certification methods.

You have all at least heard of the Australian Forestry Standard (AFS) and Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), and maybe even the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC) but like so many, do you REALLY understand what all this means?

Should a customer come into your store asking if the piece of 30mmX19mm Tas oak moulding he or she is about to buy came from a certified renewable forest; or if the 150mmX45mm pine beam has similar certification, would you have the answer?

If you say pine comes from a plantation and it doesn't need certification, don't be fooled - if the green groups had full control of the situation, we wouldn't even be planting plantations!

In the coming editions of *TimberTrader News* we intend to provide you with as much information as possible (in simplified terms) to help you, and your staff, to better understand what CoC is all about.

We will endeavour to make contact with as many of the parties as possible and offer unbiased reporting so that you can make up your own mind on forestry certification and what is required in CoC - right down to YOUR business.

In the meantime we offer a new set of acronyms for you to familiarize yourself with. As we become aware of other parties involved, we'll add these to the list.

ACRONYMS

AFS	Australian Forestry Standard
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CIFOR	Center for International Forestry Research
ENGO	Environment Non-Government Organisation
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organisation
FSC	Forest Stewardship Council
GBCA	Green Building Council of Australia
NGO	Non Government Organisation
PEFC	Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification
SFM	Sustainable forest management
UNEP	United Nations Environment Program
WWF	Worldwide Fund for Nature