

A group of existing State Timber Industry technical bodies have agreed to pool their expertise and cooperatively rationalise their activities to concentrate on particular areas of expertise.

Timber Queensland, Timber Development Association New South Wales, Timber Development Association South Australia, Wood Products Victoria and the Tasmanian Timber Promotion Board have signed an MOU to create Wood Council Australia, each member agreeing to concentrate on particular areas of timber technology and development as "Centres of Excellence" in those disciplines.

The proposed "Centres of Excellence" are as follows:

- New South Wales – Fire and acoustics and post-consumer wood
- Queensland – Codes, standards and regulations
- South Australia – Advisory service
- Tasmania – Design innovation
- Victoria – Sustainability and Education

Wood Council Australia will be led by a Governing Council, comprising the Chairs of the member State Associations. The CEOs of the State Associations will form an Operating Council. Inaugural Council Chairman and the Chairman of TDA(NSW), John Simon, said today: "This initiative will reduce duplication and allow industry to get the best value for money by concentrating and building expertise in particular areas as 'Centres of Excellence'. While State-based technical associations will still deal with local technical issues, they will limit their national involvement to the areas agreed under the MOU".

"Wood Council Australia has the support of National Associations A3P and NAFI as well as Importers, and expects to work closely with Forest and Wood Products Australia, State and Federal Governments and other industry groups to seek funding to underpin the core activities of these Centres of Excellence", John Simon continued.

It is expected that the Council will commence operation by 1st January 2009.