

Planes to be powered by straw and timber.

Here's an article that appeared in Friday Offcuts a couple of weeks ago. This could be a very good partial solution to reduced availability of fossil fuels.

Australia could be fuelling aeroplanes with waste from crops and plantation timber within three to five years according to a key research institute reports ABC News. The Future Farm Industries Cooperative Research Centre (CRC) is part of an international researcher's team aiming to make five per cent of the world's aviation fuel out of biomass by 2020.

Executive director of the CRC, John McGrath, says this will require a new level of biomass production in Australia. "The growth potential is quite large," he said. "If we think back to the aviation targets, we're talking five per cent requiring four to five million tonnes of dry biomass and that will require new resources.

The CRC is working with Virgin Australia, Airbus and General Electric as well as biofuel industry processors around the world on the biomass-to-jet-fuel project. While the project was initially focussed on mallee trees grown in Western Australia, Mr McGrath says the project hopes to broaden its scope to include straw and plantation timber from across Australia.

Name Change

Forests NSW has had a name change. It is now known as Forestry Corporation of NSW. This should have no real effect on us except to say that government policy at all levels has been to make money whenever possible so there is increasing pressure on entities like Forestry Corporation to turn profits. This may be a step towards a full sell off of our State's forests so stay tuned

Workshop Happenings.

If you have been looking for benchtops or other workshop jobs over the past month you would be aware we have had some delays as the workload has been very high. A number of larger jobs all landed at once as well as a good rise in our general work. This has been encouraging as the year started a little slow. So far in 2013 we have made timber seats and panels for Canberra Airport, windows and doors for Parliament House, exposed timber framing for a toilet block in Kings Park and a truck load of timber tops and step treads. These larger jobs were all detailed and quite interesting. Some of our domestic jobs have been pretty interesting too. We have been building torsion box bench tops to give the appearance of 80mm thick while keeping the weight down and managing timber movement issues. One top alone was destined to be over 400kg but by changing the construction it now weighs in around 250kg. Still very heavy but more manageable.

Student Exhibition.

Regular readers will know we ran a competition for our school students last year. Check out the winners on our facebook page and better still, drop in to see a few of the pieces in our showroom. Well done to all who participated and guess what? We are doing it again this year so to all you teachers, make sure your charges are taking lots of photos to enter our competition.

With our students in mind we have just taken delivery of a few new cost effective timbers. Check out our Utile, Celtis and my favourite, Yaya!! All from Africa and guaranteed to give you a good bang for your buck.

That's all for this month. *Regards Shaun*



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