Bonzer bollards too good to waste

by Tammie Reid

GREAT ideas and inventions come from many areas in CALM.

The latest innovation from Dwellingup is a jarrah bollard lathe, able to turn out finished products from wood that would otherwise be left to rot in the forest, or be poisoned as part of the silvicultural follow-up treatments after logging.

Dwellingup overseer Brian Smith explains:

"The idea grew out of Australian Workers' Union members' dissatisfaction with the practice of leaving behind small but sound jarrah trees after timber-harvesting operations," Brian said.

"In these operations, competing trees are removed within a radius of three metres around selected crop trees, and are left behind with other forest-floor refuse, such as fallen branches and leaves.

As part of the quality improvement process, a team from Dwellingup comprising Ian Freeman, Bill Plenderleith, Mike Tagliaferri, John Chapman, Murray Love and Alf Allen, was formed to evaluate marketable options for waste material produced during jarrah silvicultural operations.

"We already knew how to use lathes to prepare the short jarrah logs for axemen associations to use in log chop competitions," said Brian.

"Our idea involved lengthening these machines and extending the protective cage to cater for longer logs."

The team got together with John and Simon Piavanini of Collie, who designed the log-chopping lathes, and made the modifications and improvements necessary to produce a bollard-making prototype. The machine costs about $12,000.

"At present we are still ironing out the wrinkles in the system, and setting up an efficient production line," said Brian.

The jarrah lengths chosen for bollard-making are 1.2 metres long and 20 to 30 centimetres in diameter.

After debarking and lathing, a metal band is tightened around the end of the log to prevent splitting; the bollard edge is also planed off and the ends are painted with wax as an additional deterrent against splitting.

"We're looking into the metal band system used for power poles, as the steel band fixing system we're using now is clumsy to use and slows us down," said Brian.

"Once these problems have been solved, our production rate should improve on the 110 bollards per day we can produce now."

Forest workman Ralph Staines watches as a jarrah length is transformed into a bollard. Photo by Penny Walsh

Making bollards is a four-man operation, with another four-man crew out in the bush supplying the timber. The lathe runs off tractor power and, according to Brian, the going is tough on the blades, which need to be sharpened once a week.

The Dwellingup team is also looking at ways to use the bark shavings. Currently they just attract magpies hunting for shredded bardi grubs.

One possibility is to use the shavings as rehabilitation material on sand dunes.

"There's a lot of interest among the forest workers here at Dwellingup, so Alf Allen and I plan to run those who are interested through some bollard lathe-training sessions," said Brian.

"Our first order is from the Southern Forest Region for 500 bollards.

If you're interested in this operation or wish to place an order, please contact Steve Raper at CALM Dwellingup, (09) 538 1078.

Job No 2501/1

Another proof handed to Tammie Rich 02/08/95