

# Forest Resources' annual conference voted best yet

ORGANISERS of this year's State Forest Resources Business Unit Conference had no idea just how strategic the event would turn out to be.

On the eve of the signing of the Regional Forest Agreements (RFA), the three-day conference of more than 60 people gathered to review achievements, look to the future and strengthen work commitments.

"After months of uncertainty about the RFA outcomes and the future of CALM, we had the decisions and outcomes hot off the press," said conference organiser Liz Blee.

Guest speakers included Federal Minister for Forests Wilson Tuckey, CALM's Executive Director Dr Syd Shea and Forests Director Don Keene; and Forest Industries Federation of Western Australia, Executive Director Bob Pearce.

The main message was of a continued State and Federal government commitment to a viable timber industry, based on sustainable native forest manage-

By Tammie Reid

ment practices.

"The RFA will ensure that both conservation reserves and multiple-use forests in WA remain among the best managed in the world, while WA's unique timbers are put to the most profitable and innovative use," Mr Tuckey said.

The main change for the Department was the announcement by the State Government of a significant overhaul of the State's two conservation and forest agencies following the signing of the RFA.

The overhaul will mean that all conservation lands, including multiple-use State forests will be vested in a single State Conservation Authority, while a new Forest Production Commission will be responsible for commercial negotiations for timber and other native forest produce.

A third new agency, The Forest Industry Advisory Board, will be formed to advise State government on issues concerning the



*This year's Forest Resources Conference organising committee comprised of Liz Blee, Bill Towie, Todd Brittain and Neville Holland, seen here with the Federal Minister for Forests Wilson Tuckey (centre). Photo by John Clarke*

timber industry and timber communities.

The new arrangement would remove CALM's current native forest commercial responsibilities and

ensure forest management and the commercial operations were more transparent and accountable.

The message from CALM's Executive

Director Syd Shea and Forests Director Don Keene reinforced that CALM remain an integrated conservation and land management agency,

and that the Business Unit would continue to play a significant part in this work.

The conference was considered by many to be

the best yet—which leaves next year's organisers with their work cut out to be as timely and as controversial as this year's event proved to be.



photo by: John Clarke

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Bill Towie  
Liz Blee  
Wilson Tuckey  
Neville Holland  
Todd Brittain

State Forest Resources Division  
Unit Conference Organizers

at the dinner presentation  
when Tuckey spoke, ~~was~~  
conceding with the  
signing of the  
RFA.