



Boral Members Update

CFMEU FFPD
Members Update
August 2008



CFMEU FFPD
NORTH COAST
NSW
ORGANISER
BLUEY MENON

Key Messages

- The Walcha Mill has a 20 year wood supply agreement which was supposed to give workers at least 20 years job security
- The Walcha Mill received \$20 million in government assistance to invest in new plant and equipment



CFMEU FFPD Member
from Boral Walcha

BORAL SHUTS WALCHA MILL

The CFMEU FFPD believes that our members; the mill workers and the town of Walcha are worth fighting for

THE UNION IS TAKING UP THAT FIGHT

The CFMEU FFPD has expressed disgust at the decision of Boral to shut its Walcha saw mill operation, making over 20 workers redundant and devastating the local community.

CFMEU Forestry and Furnishing Products Division NSW State Secretary Craig Smith described the company's decision as "appalling" and said the impact on the town of Walcha would be catastrophic.

"Walcha has been near totally reliant on this mill for 100 years and the union is urging the company to reconsider its decision.

"The mill has a guaranteed

log supply for 20 years, given on the explicit understanding it would provide job security at the mill."

"Indeed, just a couple of years ago under the previous owner, the facility was a recipient of millions of dollars in taxpayers money under the forest industry Structural Adjustment Program, to invest in plant and equipment with a view to being able to guarantee job security."

"Given what has now happened, they should give this money back."

Craig Smith said that Boral had made a serious mistake closing the mill and had massively underestimated

the level of industry and community anger their decision would generate.

"Boral's stated reason for the rationalisation, that log prices or royalties are getting higher, is a poor excuse as the same issue confronts every saw mill in the industry and everyone else is accepting of this new reality."

"We need the urgent intervention of the NSW Government with the active involvement of local MP Richard Torbay, to convince Boral to see sense and reverse its decision before this iconic tablelands town dies a needless death."

STRONG SUPPORT FOR WALCHA WORKERS Union Members across the State go into bat for Walcha workers

The following resolution was passed by meetings of Union members at Boral sites in Kyogle, Heron's Creek, Batemans Bay and Narooma.

1. Boral reverse its decision to close the Walcha Sawmill and commit to processing the allocation of logs attached to the sawmill as per the wood supply agreement emanating out of the NSW Governments

Forest Policy and subsequent Regional Forest Agreement. We understand the devastating effect such a decision will have on a small town like Walcha.

2. The NSW Government not agree to let Boral either transfer the wood supply agreement to any of its other facilities or third party operators for processing, or that Walcha be used as a Drop and Take facility.

We understand that Boral bought the Fennings facility with a wood supply agreement attached and we demand that the Government honor the intent of Forest Policy.

This wood supply agreement is a public resource and was intended to give job security for workers in regional communities, not job losses during a corporate restructure.



As employees of Boral Timber and CFMEU members we resolve that;

“Boral reverse its decision to close the Walcha Sawmill”

Boral Narooma workers
(pictured)



Strong response to plight of Walcha 23

The CFMEU FFPD held emergency stop work meetings yesterday to discuss the sacking of 23 workers in the town of Walcha.

A meeting, at Boral’s Koolkhan timber mill near Grafton, called on Boral to reverse its decision to close the Walcha saw mill. The workers reserved the right to refuse to process logs that would have been processed at Walcha, if the decision is not reversed by August 12.

The meeting called on the NSW Government to not allow Boral to move its supply agreement with the government elsewhere and called on both the company and the government to uphold the spirit of Regional Forestry Agreement (RFA) decisions. CFMEU FFPD State Secretary Craig Smith said the entire timber industry was appalled at the Boral decision. “The members at Koolkhan understand the implications

of the Walcha saw mill closure decision, that if Boral are able to get away with this then there are huge question marks over the very future of RFA 20 year term wood supply agreements.” “But equally I have had a number of timber mill owners and managers within the industry express to me their disgust at Boral over the last few days.” The meeting was also critical that the Walcha decision followed so closely behind the closure of Grafton Parquetry, just two weeks ago. Union meetings at Boral facilities will take place across the week, with new requests for meetings coming from across the State.



WALCHA WORKERS GET SOLID SUPPORT FROM UNION MEMBERS ACROSS THE STATE

CFMEU FFPD Members and employees of Boral Walcha passed the following resolutions.

We request that our Union make representations on our behalf to the NSW State Government that express our concern and anger at the announcement of the closure of our sawmill yesterday made by our employer, Boral Timber.

Further; we do not accept that our mill is unviable and request that the NSW Government do not allow Boral to transfer logs that are guaranteed to this mill under a wood supply agreement to another Boral facility. These logs belong to this mill and this community.

To this end we request that representatives of the Government meet with our Union to discuss this issue.

As this closure impacts on the whole of the community that we live in we also request that our union liaises with all levels of Government including our State and Federal Representatives to stop this action by Boral that will devastate our local community.

We do not believe that a multinational company simply wanting to restructure its business is reason enough to devastate the lives of the people who work in the mill and live in the wider community. The resource that Boral

intend to take from us is a public asset, this makes Boral publically accountable and we demand that the NSW Government make Boral exactly that, publically accountable”.

Koolkhan and Herons Creek Workers at these sites also passed the following;
That no workers currently employed at Koolkhan have their jobs cut to make way for workers from any other plant and further ask Boral to explain why workers from Grafton Parquetry where not offered the same jobs.

We reserve the right to refuse to process any logs that would otherwise have been processed at Walcha if this decision is not reversed by the 12 of August.

Jobs to go in timber mill closure - ABC News

Thursday, July 31, 2008

Twenty-three people stand to lose their jobs when work at the Boral timber mill at Walcha is suspended in two weeks.

Boral Timber say the cost increases in raw material and the weak house market were the reasons behind the closure.

Boral Timber's executive general manager, Bryan

Tisher, says the company realises the impact the decision will have on the town.

"It's a huge impact, and personally I find it very disappointing," he said.

He says if the market improves, the company will consider reopening.

The 23 workers will be offered jobs at Boral's other plants, such as Port

Macquarie and Grafton, or they can accept a redundancy package.

But the Member for the Northern Tablelands, Richard Torbay, says it will be hard for workers to move.

"[It's] very difficult to relocate more than 22 and a half hours away or in some cases beyond," he said.



Stakeholders discuss timber mill's future - ABC News

Friday August 1, 2008

A meeting is being held in Sydney to try and determine the future of the timber mill at Walcha, after its owner, Boral Timbers, announced its imminent closure.

Boral says the mill will close in two weeks because of a weak housing market and increased costs, but say it may reopen if the market picks up.

However, the union, Walcha council and the

Member for the Northern Tablelands, Richard Torbay, say those are not adequate reasons.

After an emergency meeting between stakeholders yesterday and today in Sydney, they hope to work out what to do with the company's valuable wood supply contract.

Mr Torbay says Boral must not be able to keep the contract if it shuts the mill.

"If Boral are not going to do something with that

site we think it should be opened up for other opportunities," he said.

A spokesman for the Department of Primary Industries, that takes in Forests NSW says it is keen to work with the company.

A spokeswoman for Boral says it is inappropriate for the company to comment while negotiations are ongoing, but its position is unchanged.



"This wood supply agreement is a public resource and was intended to give job security for workers in regional communities, not job losses during a corporate restructure."

Boral Walcha CFMEU
FFPD Members
(pictured above
and below)

Timber Workers threaten industrial row over Walcha decision - ABC News

Tuesday August 5, 2008

Timber workers employed by Boral have signalled the start of industrial action over the company's plans to mothball its Walcha mill.

Members of the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union employed by Boral's Koolkhan mill near Grafton have agreed to call on the company to reverse its decision. They say if it is not

reversed within seven days they will not process logs that would have been processed at Walcha.

They have warned their jobs should not be cut to make way for the workers who will be displaced when it closes later this month.

The members also agreed to call on the Government not to allow Boral to transfer its wood supply agreement

to any of its other operations.

Boral has a 20 year government contract to extract logs from state forests.

Boral says a downturn in the industry and increased costs are behind the closure of the Walcha mill.

The union is holding meetings with its members at other Boral operations in New South Wales in coming days.



Hérons Creek workers tipped to back Walcha campaign - ABC News

6 August 2007

The forestry workers' union is stepping up its campaign against Boral over the closure of its Walcha sawmill.

Workers at Boral's Koolkhan Mill near Grafton say they will not process logs that would have been

processed at Walcha.

Today, workers at Boral's Herons Creek mill, near Port Macquarie, will hold a meeting.

The Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union's Craig Smith says he expects they will refuse to process logs from Walcha as well.

"They have always supported their fellow workmates, wherever they are located within the Boral Timber Group, in any fight they are having," he said.

"I'm reasonably confident that those workers will stand shoulder to shoulder with their fellow workmates."

Fears for mill jobs on coast *The Northern Daily Leader - Tamworth* BY ANGELA ROCHE

BORAL mill employees in Grafton have held their first meeting regarding the plan to close Walcha's sawmill, with further action likely if the mill closes next Tuesday as planned.

Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union (CFMEU) North Coast organiser Arturo Menon said the union would hold a number of meetings before Tuesday.

Workers at a site near Grafton met yesterday to discuss the Walcha closure.

The union understands logs harvested from the area near Walcha would first be taken to the Walcha facility, and

later to Herons Creek south of Wauchope to be processed, rather than processed at Walcha as is the case now.

Mr Menon said the workers had reached three main conclusions. The workers had asked the company not to transport the logs to Herons Creek, and to reconsider the decision to close the mill but keep local timber contracts.

Mr Menon said a number of North Coast employees were also worried casual employees at other mills would lose their jobs to make way for relocated Walcha employees.

"Those casuals would be basically sacked to make way for operators

from Walcha," Mr Menon said.

"Come August 12, if matters haven't been resolved, they are going to meet again."

The union had heard "not a peep" regarding planned talks between Boral and the State Government body responsible for supplying the wood, Forests NSW.

"Nobody is telling us anything," he said.

"We are of the understanding that the intention of the Regional Forests Agreement (which governs the use of State forests) was to give security to regional communities."

Mr Menon said a meeting would be held at Herons Creek tomorrow.

Local MP supports calls for timber milling to continue in Walcha

Member for Northern Tablelands Richard Torbay has welcomed the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union's (CFMEU) call for Boral to continue its Walcha timber operation.

"Mothballing the Walcha mill but retaining the government contract to extract logs from the local state forest should not be an option," he said.

"If Boral does not want to continue at Walcha, it should not be in a position to prevent other operators from taking up contract.

"I would have thought that was against the spirit of National Competition Policy as well as being detrimental to the future of the 23 local workers who will lose their

jobs and the Walcha business and general community."

CFMEU members at Boral's Koolkhan mill near Grafton have given Boral seven days to reverse its decision to close down the Walcha operation this month.

Otherwise they will not process logs that would have been processed at Walcha.

The Union has also agreed to call on the Government not to allow Boral to transfer its wood supply agreement to any of its other operations.

At the site meeting last week Walcha employees requested the Union to make representations to the State Government expressing concern and anger at the proposed closure of the sawmill.

"These workers strongly believe the mill is viable and have asked that the government not allow Boral to transfer logs that are guaranteed to this mill under a wood supply agreement to another of its facilities," Mr Torbay said.

"They do not believe that a multinational company simply wanting to restructure its business is reason enough to devastate the lives of the people who work in the mill and live in the wider community.

"The resource that Boral intends to take from Walcha is a public asset and I strongly support the workers' demands that the company be held accountable on this issue."

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