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**Forest Friendly Timbers Book**

In April 1999, Alan Gray and Anne Hall launched their book *Forest Friendly Building Timbers* which outlines alternatives to native forest timbers.

The National Association of Forest Industries (NAFI) dispatched legal threats to the authors and BBC Hardware, which was selling it. NAFI claimed the book contained false and misleading information and was in breach of the Trade Practices Act.<sup>1</sup>

Following the legal threat, BBC Hardware withdrew the book from sale, which pleased NAFI.<sup>2</sup>

NAFI's success was short-lived. After obtaining quick legal advice, the authors went public. After media coverage of the threats and questions about whether the threats themselves might be in breach of the Trade Practices Act, Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) Chairman Professor Alan Fels announced that the ACCC may investigate the legal threats made by NAFI.

Suddenly NAFI was on the defensive. National media coverage focused on the possibility that NAFI might be investigated.

In the weeks of coverage that followed, the book got publicity of which most authors dream.

While the ACCC decided not to pursue a formal investigation of NAFI's legal threats, the small booklet had turned into a bestseller. NAFI has not made legal threats against anyone else in the years since.

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- 1 Dr Robert Bain, "Forest Friendly book untrue and misleading", National Association of Forest Industries, 6 April 1999.
  - 2 Dr Robert Bain, "NAFI welcomes BBC decision to remove book from sale", National Association for Forest Industries, 8 April 1999.