Programs - How, What, Why & When - Part 1

The new section structure for TRL has received a great deal of attention. However, in the new TRL there will be both sections and programs working within a matrix structure. Most of us are aware of the three strategic programs which were proposed last year. Since then a fourth strategic program, namely Occupational Health and Safety, has been added because of its high level of corporate endorsement.

Early this year a number of people were 'fingered' to be program planners and as a result another seventeen programmes were proposed to cover all the other TRL activities. A complete list of programs is given below and is loosely divided into strategic, growth and cost minimisation. Most programs for 95/96 tend be an amalgamation of 94/95 projects identified as continuing into next year. Each program planner has estimated the total resources required and the level to which each section will be involved. Thus an overall view of TRL for 95/96 has been developed. This view is consistent with the section staff numbers shown on Working Party documents.

The planned programs are now being aggregated so that a small number of high-level 'parent agreements' can be signed with senior management of the business units. Once this is done, the project agreements can be prepared in consultation with customers with the knowledge that the funding has been agreed at the higher level. It is anticipated that these project agreements will define why the work needs to be done, the deliverables etc but only indicate approximate resources. Your Branch Manager will announce when this needs to be commenced. It is anticipated that these programs will begin operating on July 1st. More detail about each of these programs is available on the MSmail shared folders under Business Plan 95/00 Strat.Plan for those of you have access.

List of All Programs for 1995/6

Strategic R&D Programs:
Broadband Service Delivery
Mobility Services
Systems & Networks Integration
Occupational Health & Safety
Other R&D Programs: GROWTH
Intelligent Network Capabilities
Customer Access
Voice Interactive Services
Electronic Directory Systems
Cryptographic Security Systems
Market Modelling
Human Factors

Other R&D Programs:
COST MINIMISATION
Broadband Applications & Networks
Mobile & Radio Systems
Network Integrity
Service Assurance
Intelligent Management Systems
Reference Stds & Measurements
Photonic Networks
Transport Networks
Cable Systems
Energy Systems

For further information please contact Doug Kuhn on (03) 9253 6655 or Barbara Armstrong on (03) 9253 6269.

Message from the EOA Co-ordinator

Amanda Jenkins reports on her progress.

During my meetings with staff over the last six weeks, questions have been asked and clarification sought on a number of issues . The response of process owners to these issues and questions raised by you will appear in subsequent issues of FIFO. I am working with the EOS Group to identify these process owners right now.

Simon Berry, TRL Human Resources Manager, will address HR related issues in the next edition of FIFO.

FYI - The total list of issues, raised by staff in section submissions to Jim Park and in recent section meetings attended by me as EOA Coordinator, is contained in the shared folder titled EOA/EOS.

(Let me know if you are unable to access shared folders and I will e-mail this file to you directly.)

I can be reached on (03) 9253 6741.

17 May 1995
ISSUE 4

Telstra

Telecommunications at TRL

Telstra is a voracious consumer of it's own products and services. Measured at market prices, Telstra will use the equivalent of 2.8% of it's total revenue for telecommunications in 1994/95, in pursuit of normal business activity by employees.

The metric commonly used for business usage, is dollars-per-employee-per-year. Within the Research Laboratories, the measured metric is currently $1250 per-employee-per-year, which is just below the budget set in July 1994. Telstra as whole will use considerably more than this amount. Telstra's typical external customer (in a similar business environment) yields a revenue of $1500 per-customer employee-per-year. The difference between internal and external amounts, is perceived to be due to unjustified use of products and services.

The stringent budget goal for TRL telecommunications expense is set by the Director of Research. This has been enforced over a period of years by adherence to a "policy" or set of guidelines for acquisition and use of Telstra's products and services within TRL

The essence of these guidelines is to force approval for telecommunications expense up to a management level, beyond that which applies for other TRL expense commitments.
The "policy" is outlined in the paragraphs below:

Using Telstra Products and Services Within TRL

1. GENERAL

1.1 The policy for acquisition and use of telecommunications products and services within TRL, is as dictated by the Director of Research (DoR) and enforced by TRL's Communications Manager (or National Internal Communications Manager - NICM).

1.2 The TRL policy is subordinate to policies imposed by the higher organisational units of RIT, NTG and Telecom. There is also a variety of minimum designation approval level delegations, imposed by different product/service providers (leadhouse areas).

1.3 At present (May 1995) the only published Telecom policy was signed five years ago; while it s principles retain general adherence, it s detail needs review.

. . . total TRL communications costs are not to exceed an amount of $1300 per person per year . . .

The Telecom policy principles cover things such as non-use of competitors' products and market rate transfer pricing. (Multiple attempts at policy review (outside TRL) have failed!)

Also, at present the product/service approval delegations required by leadhouse areas, are not published in any collection. Their level and degree of enforcement varies quite frequently.

1.4 The TRL policy is not a formal policy statement, but is instead, a (stable) collection of practices and approval delegations which are generally more stringent than those imposed by higher organisational policy or by the product/service providers.

2. DETAIL

2.1 Total TRL communications costs are not to exceed an amount of $1300 per person per year. The DoR is accountable for costs and expects the TRL General Managers to protect that accountability.

2.2 Voice Telephones are provided for staff whose duties indicate a need to communicate with others by telephone. Parallel services are provided for low call-volume users.

2.3 Directory numbers are aligned with positions rather than with occupants. Directory number portability is restricted to moves determined to be within the business needs of a Branch.

2.4 Digital voice instruments are only provided for those staff that require calling line indication to perform their duties.

2.5 Handsfree telephone instruments require approval of a Branch Manager, and a demonstrated business need.

2.6 Mobile telephones and Pagers require DoR approval of a justification statement, because of the high costs involved.

Skills Management System (SMS)

Helen Gillies and Simon Berry from HR talk about the implementation of the new Skills Management System (SMS).

The corporately endorsed Skills Management System (SMS) is progressively being implemented throughout the organisation. The system is currently installed in over 170 sites with more than 11,000 employees' skills related information on the database. SMS is a Telstra HR system with a prime focus on ensuring the most effective training and development for our employees.

The potential uses of this system are numerous but include assistance in: determining group/individual training needs, determining training for career path planning, provision of training/skills related reports, forecasting training needs and business planning, identifying skills gaps for effective recruitment, access to information of Telstra Learning's programs.

Telecommunications at TRL (continued)

2.7 Telecards require DoR approval of a justification statement, except that automatic approval is granted for Telecards to be used by approved overseas travelers for activity directly associated with their overseas travel.

2.8 Voicemail is not to be used.

2.9 Keylink is not to be used.

2.10 Austpac NUI are only provided for staff whose duties dictate the need.

2.11 Facsimile services are restricted to one per floor, except where privacy/security issues dictate more.

2.12 Dedicated or switched data services require DoR approval of a justification statement. Project managers are encouraged to have their clients provide and pay, for project based products/services, together with TRL (NICM) coordination.

2.13 Provision of other products/services is subject to ad-hoc decision by the TRL NICM, on the authority of the DoR.

2.14 All existing products/services are subject to ad-hoc scrutiny (by NICM) of the continued need for their provision.

2.15 Branch General Managers (or their delegates) should acknowledge all product/service provision and alteration.

For further information on TRL and telecommunications, please contact Ian Moran on (03) 9253 6194.

Supervisors will have access to information on employees in their area with individual employees restricted to information that pertains to them.

Central to the SMS is a Knowledge Tree or Skills Dictionary. This list of skills is used to quantify the capabilities of employees, and as such it plays an intrinsic part in the integrity of the system. This dictionary is common throughout Telstra, therefore must cater for the needs of all employees, not just those at a local level.

Recently, TRL were given an opportunity to redevelop the Research component of the dictionary, which in its previous form held little resemblance to the current skills of TRL staff. The challenge was the time frame given - just two weeks! However, with the complete co-operation of all section heads and other staff involved, a far superior dictionary was developed on time and submitted to the corporate SMS team, and accepted with little variation. Congratulations to all those involved - a job well done!

. . . a far superior dictionary was developed . . . and accepted with little variation . . .

For further information on the Skills Management System, please contact Helen Gillies on (03) 9253 6520 or Simon Berry on (03) 9253 6441.

Welcome to TRL!

Have you been wondering about those new faces about the place and just who they are? We would like to introduce all the latest additions to TRL:

Pictured (from left to right)
Back row - Rick Field, Phil McDonald, Wilson Lee, Rohan Barton, Andrew Davison
Middle row - Glen Colville, Helen Gillies, Ruth Cameron, David Chatterton, Tony Robertson
Front row - Vivienne Gale, Felizes Sangalang, Stephen Patterson

Rick Field works in FACS on external billing, mastercard and FAMAD issues. He prepares the financial component of the Key Performance Indicators report. Interests include football, tennis, swimming, and he's a big Led Zeppelin fan.

Phil McDonald's interests include bushwalking and cross country skiing. He said, "In ICSS I try to keep up with the developments of Set Top Units for video on demand."

Andrew Davison graduated in Computer Science at Monash Uni. and is working with Network Analysis Section while completing a Ph. D in Image Processing.

Helen Gillies has worked for Telecom for over 10 years, mainly in HR roles. She is a part of the National HR team for R&IT, but is now permanently located in HR at TRL, and will be focussing on Training and Development activities for TRL.

Ruth Cameron works in the Finance /Accounts department. She is completely new to Telecom and has come from a private firm of accountants. Her interests are playing sport, reading, walking her Rottweiler, going out with friends and generally having fun.

David Chatterton graduated in Computer Science at Monash Uni. and is working with Network Analysis Section while completing a Masters degree in Image Processing.

Tony Robertson has a B.Sc (Hons) & a B.E. (Hons). He works in ICSS/CSSB on DAVIC and Media Server related tasks. His interests include Christianity, learning Chinese, swimming and travel (especially to China).

Vivienne Gale entered Telstra through the graduate leaders program, and was placed in C&C. She has recently transferred to TRL and she is now working with Geoff Willis. She has a degree in computing and is just about to finish her MBA in Technology Management.

Felizes Sangalang works in CSS in the ICS section, doing modifications and designing the user interface of a mulitmedia application for the State Film Centre. Her interests include modern dancing and ballet, and singing in a choir.

David Bednall (not pictured). Previously Head of Research at the Australian Broadcasting Tribunal, and Market Research Manager of Australia Post, David joined Telstra after a stint at Monash Uni where he taught a number of marketing subjects. His training is in communications research.

API Sports Carnival

The first API Research Branch sports carnival was held in 1982 with at least one being held every year since. It provides a chance for staff to staff to take part in some active, healthy activities and encourages people to have a go in sports they might not otherwise do. There is a congenial atmosphere of friendly rivalry with most participants anxious for the next carnival. We hope to hold two this year giving staff even more chance to participate.

Activities held at the recent carnival were - Ten Pin Bowling, Golf, Badminton, Fun Run, Indoor cricket, Tennis, Volleyball, Squash, Chess, Darts and Table Tennis. The carnival concluded with a BBQ held on 12th April with a large attendance due in part to the good weather.
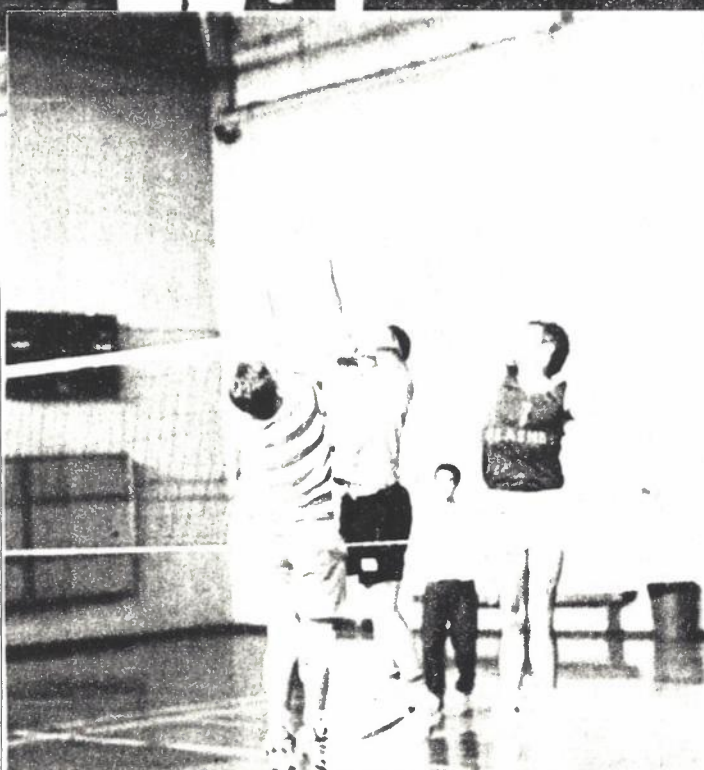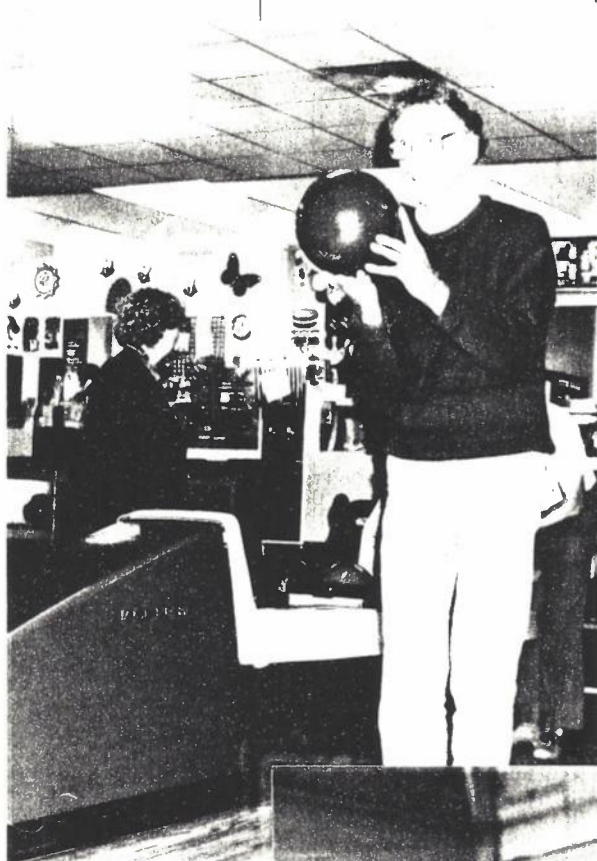
Thanks to all those who participated, and if you didn't, make sure you don't miss the next one.

For some years we have managed to provide the sports carnival at no cost to API members, but this may be dependant on funding in the future. Due to a lack of "Best of Health" activities at TRL in recent years, this is the only opportunity for some to increase their fitness levels in such an enjoyable way.
Some results were -

Golf: 14 participants
Longest Drive: A) John Kelly, B) John Semple
Nearest to Pin: Tony Fleming
Best Net Score: A) Brian Booth, B) John Semple

Bowling: 32 participants
Highest score: Bert Borg, Peter Dalliston (tie)

Chess
Team 1: 4 points: Team 2: 7 points
M6 has won again the results were as follows

The two teams were;
Team 1   M5
1.   B. Starkie
2.   D. Tate
3.   G. Rochlin
4.   H. Trinkle

Team 2   M6 + M8
5.   R. Exner
6.   S. Dale
7.   A. Lynch
8.   C. Frost

Indoor Cricket - the Purple Report

During the latest API Sports Carnival Carnival Indoor Cricket was played on three occasions, all at the Notting Hill Centre. The captains were Michael Dale and myself, mainly because we were the only ones willing to do so. We had a nice turnout of players who were new to the game as well as those with some experience, and everyone seemed to have a fairly good time, even when they were being hit around the ground or bowled every second ball.

Due to a number of last-minute cancellations and replacements, resulting in major team adjustmetns, the first two games were fairly one-sided, with my team winning by about 60 runs the first week, and Mike's by a similar margin in the second.

The deciding game looked to be a lot more promising, due to the smaller number of people dropping out (I believe the threat of physical injury was the major incentive), even though we only had 13 people instead of the 15-16 of the previous fortnight.

My team batted first, with Adrian and Hung deciding to be true gentleman by giving the opposing team a head-start by getting out about 5 times each in their four overs (you lose 5 runs every time you get out). The weren't helped by Matthew's bowling skills, as he took 3 wickets for 11.

David and Ross then put on a very professional batting display to score 53 runs in their four overs, the partnership of the match, which took our score to 32. Herman and Simon then kept up the good work with a partnership of 29 to take us to 61. I teamed up with 4 different people for each of my overs and this gave us a score of 82 overall. Mike's team then strode in, full of confidence. After the first four overs Matt and Rocky had managed 41 runs, half of our total in only a quarter of the overs.

After I pulled out my horsehair whip and shouted encouragement at my team members they perked up noticeably, and started fielding with great enthusiasm. Our beginners like Hung, Adrian and Ross started leaping at everything that moved, with some great catches being made, surprising everyone (especially the catchers). The team was set alight after the ball was slammed into Ross, bounced off the side-net and was then taken gmillimetres off the ground in a diving catch by Simon.

Adrian then surprised everyone with a great bowling spell, managing to get 4 for 13 when previously he was generally belted for 20 or 30 runs each over. Daniel and Keith then came in and were held well, and after the 8th over Mike's team were at 43. The pair starteed playing defensively to

avoid wickets, scoring only a few runs here and there, and managed to take the total to 66 after the 12th over, with Mike and Ian coming in to steer their side home. Several players reported at this point, that they saw Mike talking with the umpire and passing him something.

Ross then bowled well to take 3 for 4 and place my team ahead in the comparative scores for the first time in the innings, leaving Mike's team three overs to score 21 in. Herman bowled 1 for 4, keeping them well pinned down, and they only managed 8 runs off David's over, leaving them 9 to win.

The hall was hushed when Mike and Ian each managed a quick single, and then unfortunately the Umpire called 3 of the next 4 balls wide (each wide/no-ball being worth 2 runs and having to be rebowled). Obviously the objects that Mike had passed the Ump had been money, or perhaps compromising photos.

This left the game tied up with four balls to go. Ian swiped widely at the ball, and was lucky as it bounced just over the wickets. A hasty swing just managed to connect on the next ball, saving the wicket and posting a run in the process. This put Mike's team a run ahead with two balls to go - a wicket was needed by us to bring their score down again.

So, as in all good movies, Mike swung and missed at the first ball, which kissed the stumps on the way past without bringing them down - he was safe. And then on the last a dramatic shot, certain to be a six, was leapt at by Simon, who in a prodigious display managed to take it one handed two metres above his head - leading to a win for our team!!!

Well, actually this is all bull, because this isn't a movie. What actually happened is Mike, a seasoned player, stood there like good old (boring) Geoffrey Boycott, and blocked the last two balls with his body and bat, leading to a one run victory by Mike's team.

So, all in all, a satisfying way to end the series. I hope to see you all, and more, next carnival.

Peter K. Campbell aka Purple

Editor's note: Unfortunately the only photo we had from the cricket was a bit too fuzzy to use!

Participative Approach Briefings

Chris Rowles tells us about the Participative Approach Briefings for Management.

As many will be aware, Telstra is holding Participative Approach briefing sessions for managers over the period of March to May this year. The purpose of these is to give management an awareness and understanding of the Participative Approach framework and its implications. They follow briefings held by the Unions for their members, and further briefings are planned for other employees.

After viewing an introductory videotape which provides background on the Lorne Conference, these management briefings start with a one hour talk by Frank Blount on the competitive pressures on Telstra and the opportunities these present us for the future. While most people would have some awareness of the many of the issues, Frank presented the details unvarnished, outlining the threats and how these could be translated into opportunities for Telstra. In total, the challenges are significant and need a joint commitment from management, unions and staff if we are to prosper beyond 1997.

Ian McPhee then spoke for around 30 minutes on Telstra's industrial relations past and the clear need for change, not just to ensure Telstra's success but also to improve decision-making, employee satisfaction and the work environment. The results of the EOS clearly demonstrates this.

The majority of the remainder of the day was spent in syndicate groups discussing the implications of the Participative Approach and obstacles to its implementation. Each syndicate was then charged with finding solutions to different obstacles, and following a plenary presentation, the results were collected for later use in policies and guidelines.

On reflection its difficult to think of anything especially tangible resulting from the Briefing, but I guess a greater awareness of the Approach and related issues was really its main aim. It is only the beginning of an ongoing cultural change in Telstra after all, and given the history of employee relations in Telstra maybe one should not expect too much too soon. Probably the strongest points I left with were the impression that Frank Blount has a good handle on where Telstra is and where it needs to go, and some closing words by Jeanette Enright. Here Jeanette pointed out that in Telstra managers are used to obtaining agreement with other managers, whereas unions are driven by the 'grass-roots' - it's not enough just to talk to union managers, the staff need to participate as well.

For further information, please conatct Chris Rowles on (03) 9253 6241.

Formulating TRL's Affirmative Action Plan

Nicole Davis tells us about the new EEO strategy working group.

A Equal Employment Opportunities (EEO) strategy working group has been established to design a workable Affirmative Action Plan for TRL.

The group consists of Branch and Union representatives, these are Carol Wilson, Ian Moyes, Margaret Turner, Neil Bradford, Nicole Davis, Pam McNamara, Peter Ostojic, Simon Chalk, Gayle Banik and Greg Rochlin.

The group is using the 1994 Affirmative Action Plan as a base to design realistic goals TRL should achieve in 1995. It is assumed that the components of the Telstra EEO strategy that are not explicitly addressed by this AAP still apply.

If you have not yet seen the proposed Affirmative Action Plan and would like to comment on the objectives please contact any member of the working party as soon as possible. If your comments are general they are also welcomed for inclusion in future EEO plans. Note all comments will be treated in a confidential manner.

For further information please contact any of the group's members listed above.

Come to the WIN Self Development Forum

On Tuesday 23 May, WIN (Women in Networks) is holding the first of a series of presentations. The topic is Self Development, and the key speakers will be:

Trish Ritman - National Manager NTG EEO
Annemicke Heigden - Project Manager Telstra Learning
Diana Morgan - Training Consultant
Sandra Morris - Manager Succession Planning

Where and when?
Theatrette, 1st Floor 242 Exhibition Street, Melbourne - 23 May 1995, 10 am -12 noon.

Come along! All welcome.

For further information about this presentation or about WIN, please contact Nicole Davis on (03) 9253 6437 or Carol Wilson on (03) 9253 6274.

Have Your Say

If you have a question or an issue you'd like to raise, send it in to FIFO.

We had quite a response to the piece run in this column in the last issue (Amanda Jenkins on recycling). This week we hear from Roger Hall and Carlos Escobar with their responses to Amanda's article.

I have to disagree with your assertion that "electronic transmission limits the amount of graphics and photos which can be reproduced"and that Email would have been used to distribute it all.

1. I would suggest that in the current issue you have generated the entire document was done in a electronic publishing/document package, as even your own photo was scanned (can see the b&W dithering). The other 'graphics' are 'beautifiers' and not requirements for content and in any case are easily rendered in electronic form.

2. I suggest you put the original electronic source (eg. in postscript form and some other formats eg. word for windows format etc..) online as a World-Wide Web page and pointed to by the labs-wide WWW Home page.

In this way, everyone both Unix and PC can access this document/image via the available WWW-browsers Mosaic/Netscape/HotJava). Mosaic and Netscape are avaialble on PC and all are available on Unix systems on site.

THIS IS THE BEST WAY TO RECYCLE PAPER - DON'T USE ANY IN THE FIRST PLACE.

FOR THOSE INCAPABLE or UNWILLING TO USE THIS ELECTRONIC FORM - THEN GIVE THEM, AND THEM ALONE A PAPER COPY...

Telstra might as well give up being an 'electronic superhighway' vendor right now, if this sort of attitude prevails - especially in the so-called future looking Research Labs.

Roger Hall

In FIFO 3: Have Your Say, you wrote: "OK FIFO comes out on paper (we plan to use recycled paper ASAP)."

I believe your excellent publication can be delivered electronically using text only. I don't think you will miss any really important information.

You then said, "Two reasons why we don't send it electronically: electronic transmission limits the amount of amount of graphics and photos which can be reproduced."

There many different ways to convey image information on Email. I will suggest that for special graphical issues to use the web (WWW). I think everybody has access to web browsers in TRL.

For more info on the web see the TRL page. In X window (UNIX) use 'netscape http://www-nfs/'. Brian Keck b.keck@trl.oz.au) is the best to talk to.

You also said, "people get so much email it's easy to lose email in the shuffle of sorting through a long list."

That's a very poor and not very professional excuse. My mail reader has anything from TRL marked as priority ONE. Then again that's my personal choice.

I would love to see your publication delivered electronically. I believe it's much more efficient. It could be also another example on how smart we use technology at TRL.

You can always deliver what your customer wants. Like you I just hate to see so much paper wasted around TRL.

Well done. Keep up the good work.

Carlos Escobar

The FIFO newsletter

FIFO is a fortnightly newsletter for all TRL staff. It is produced by the Promotion & Communication section at TRL. We welcome your feedback and contributions.

The editorial team consists of Tanya Waterson-Clark, Science Writer (03) 9253 6704 and Amanda Jenkins, Employee Action Co-ordinator (03) 9253 6741. Our offices are on 1/M8.