

# 8 Key Industry Asks

Supporting industry, supporting jobs.



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**FIFWA**  
FOREST INDUSTRIES FEDERATION (WA) Inc.

# Building Back Better with Local Timber.

## CoVid-19 recovery

Building with locally sourced timber has many benefits, as outlined in the State government's Wood Encouragement Policy, however by far the greatest advantage during these uncertain economic times is supporting the 6,000 jobs of Western Australian timber workers across the supply chain.

### Recommendations:

- Retain housing construction stimulus until self-sustaining recovery emerges.
- Continue to bring forward State and local government civic and community construction and renovation projects.
- Encourage the uptake of sustainably sourced and locally produced timbers for use in construction and fit out through government procurement processes.



## Environmentally friendly buildings

Wood is a key renewable building material. It is the sustainable and environmentally responsible choice for building.

- ✓ Improved air quality by moderating humidity
- ✓ Improved emotional state and self-expression, reduce stress
- ✓ Helps to connect with nature
- ✓ Long term store of carbon, helping fight climate change
- ✓ Low energy used in production = less CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere



The multi award-winning Pingelly Recreation and Cultural Centre is built from locally grown timber and has been commended for the use of timber as an alternative to steel or concrete, demonstrating how timber can excel aesthetically while providing shade, ventilation and natural light.

"A beautifully detailed, technically innovative, sustainable timber building that draws from Pingelly's community spirit and long history of Indigenous AFL players." Australian Institute of Architects jury panel.

Photo credit Peter Bennetts

# Rewind the Decline.

## More trees in the right places at the right scale

The majority of the softwood estate is owned by the State government and was established during the early 1960s to 1990s. The base estate attracted significant investment in local processing facilities including the Wespine sawmill, Wesbeam LVL (laminated veneer lumber) plant and Laminex particle board facility.

Due to a combination of factors (fires, drought, State government decisions not to replant the Gngara Plantation) the softwood plantation estate has declined significantly and is expected to diminish further to 40,000 hectares within the next 20 years.

To support the existing industry the softwood plantation estate must return to its original size of 90,000 hectares. Rebuilding the plantation estate is a key strategic priority of the Djarlma Plan (WA Forestry Industry Development Plan, 2019-2030) and recognised as necessary to support local processing and jobs.

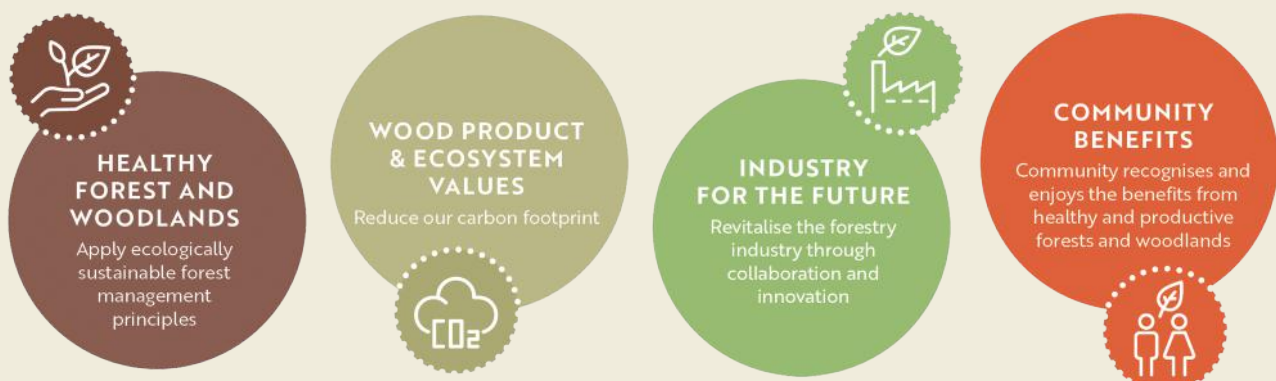
The State government has invited market-led proposals to support a 50 000 ha expansion of softwood plantations over a period of up to ten years and the forestry industry keenly awaits the outcome of this process.

### Recommendations:

- **State government to bolster the supply of plantation timber by actively encouraging investment in long rotation softwood plantations to rebuild the declining plantation estate.**
- **Retain the Farm Forestry Assist program; and support South West Timber Hub initiatives to grow private forestry estates.**

## STRATEGIC OUTCOMES OF THE DJARLMA PLAN

The Djarlma Plan sets out four interdependent strategic priorities the Western Australian forestry industry will follow to maximise its contribution to the social, economic and environmental well-being of the state by promoting forests for future generations and maintaining a vibrant and profitable industry. All four strategic priorities aim to integrate traditional knowledge with scientific knowledge.



# Pursuing a State Plantations Policy.

## Consistent planning processes for plantation development and expansion

Plantations (softwood, hardwood & sandalwood) drive employment and economic development for regional WA and revenue for the state. They also leverage multiple benefits for society in terms of carbon sequestration, biodiversity and improved water quality and soil condition.

Currently the State lacks an overarching State Plantations Policy to underpin these multiple benefits. Industry is seeking a State Plantations Policy which reflects whole-of-government recognition of the benefits of the industry through support for plantation development and expansion.

### Recommendations:

- **The State government to develop with FIFWA a State Plantations Policy.**
- **A complementary WA Planning Commission Statement of Planning Policy for plantations which ensures consistency of planning processes at the state and local government levels.**



## Social benefits

The industry supports a wide range of community events, initiatives and organisations such as: regional agricultural shows and festivals; local sports teams, horse riding clubs, Men Sheds, community gardens, nature playgrounds, foodbanks, and soup vans; community groups like local bushfire brigades, the Bunbury Model Railway group and the Brunswick Community Resource Centre; functions like the ECU Bunbury Graduation Awards and Dardanup Art Spectacular Youth Awards; Newton Moore SHS student scholarships; the South West Marine Research Program; sporting events like the Collie to Donnybrook & Return Cycling Classic; and education outreach opportunities. Even the Duyfkin replica features four WA timber masts donated by the forestry industry.



# Rolling in Resource Security.

## Grow the forest and the jobs

The Forest Management Plan (FMP) is the key policy instrument of the state to determine the sustainable allocation of timber resources from native forests. The FMP is defined in 10-year terms, yet it is based on a much longer calculation of the non-declining, sustained yield, which reflects the true long-term nature of native forest management.

The absolute stop-start administration of the FMP and the resulting lack of certainty regarding future timber allocations severely undermine confidence to invest in innovation and employment in this industry sector. Worse is that timber volumes contracted to the industry are often eroded and the integrity of the FMP further diminished through out-of-cycle disruptions to harvest plans.

To achieve meaningful innovation and value-adding investment, the industry needs confidence by way of a commitment from the State for a long-term, sustained level of timber production from well managed native forests.

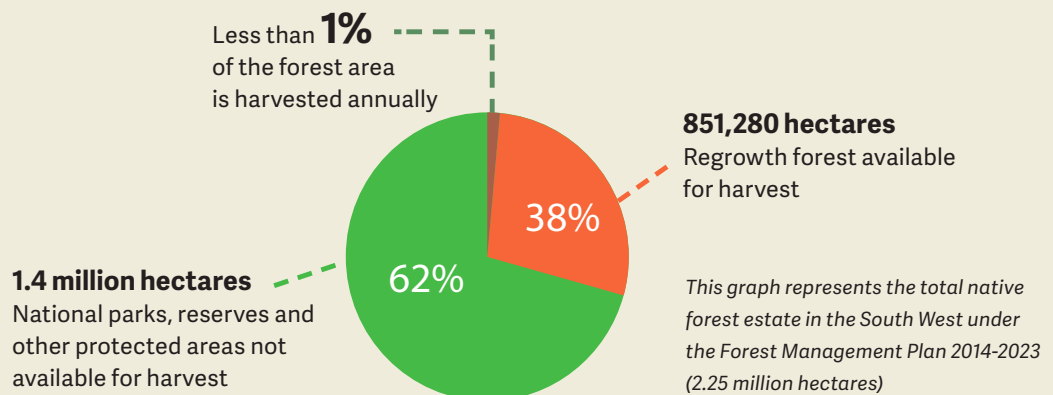
### Recommendations:

- **The State to announce a commitment to a long-term, sustained level of timber production from well-managed native forests.**
- **The State to support a rolling 10-year FMP maintaining the same 5 yearly audits and 10 yearly reviews. However upon the completion of the mid-term 5 yearly audit, the term of the FMP should be extended out by a further 5 years, and an additional 5 years post the 10-year review, to avoid an absolute stop and restart of the FMP every 10 years.**



## Sustainable Industry

Careful management and comprehensive policy ensures WA's timber industry is sustainably managed. Less than 1% of WA's total native forest area is harvested annually, **and all is regenerated**. Some of our major parks and reserves – Lane Poole, Big Brook, Boranup – are regrowth forests successfully regenerated for everyone to enjoy.





# Bees and Trees.

## Maximise shared values

WA's multiple-use State forests enable a variety of recreational activities, in addition to supporting industries like forestry and beekeeping - both producing renewable resources from these forests. With only 38% of the State forest estate available for timber production and beekeeping, our industries aim to maximise our shared values.

Currently there is significant government support for recreation in State forests, with popular trail running and bike riding events also providing a boost for local tourism. The forestry industry would welcome policy changes that give beekeepers access to inactive log landings in a manner compliant with the stringent ecologically sustainable forest management practices in place in WA.

### Recommendation:

- Investigate a system that would enable beekeepers to use approved timber harvesting log landings as apiary sites.



# Future proofing the forests.

## Embrace ecological thinning

Ecological thinning is the practice of mechanically removing smaller trees from regrowth forests to reduce standing tree density and help larger trees thrive in a drying climate. Ecological thinning also reduces fuel loads which in turn reduces wildfire intensity and lowers risk for local communities.

Adopting thinning techniques across the State forest estate and embracing commercial markets for wood fibre will promote healthy forests, reduce fuel loads and offset management costs. Ecological thinning is a key theme of the state's Djarlma Plan.

In addition to State forest, there is approximately 330,000 hectares of privately owned native forest in WA. Currently native vegetation regulations take no account of landholders wishing to manage private native forests for ecological health and economic productivity. Regulations only recognise 'clearing' and not ecological thinning.

### Recommendations:

- Remove barriers to ecological thinning and encourage active management of all forests to ensure long-term healthy forests for future generations.
- State Government environmental regulations to recognise ecological thinning as a sustainable forest management technique, with a clear distinction between clearing and ecological thinning.





# No Fuel, No Fire.

## Use all the tools in the fire mitigation toolbox

Fire is an existential threat to forestry, the magnitude of which was illustrated starkly during the 2019-2020 national bushfire crisis. The forestry industry is a leader in collaboration, resource sharing and training to manage the risk of wildfire.

Fuel loads should be managed at a 'tenure-agnostic' landscape level for the best outcomes for both risk reduction to local communities and forest health. Mechanical fuel reduction (a type of ecological thinning) should be a key operational tactic in the fire mitigation toolbox, especially because of the benefits to other forest users and local communities from reduced smoke haze compared with traditional planned burns.

### Recommendations:

- **Retain the State's enhanced prescribed burning program.**
- **Embrace forest thinning and mechanical fuel reduction as fire mitigation techniques in strategic locations.**



# Rev-up the RAV permit process.

## Improve efficiencies for safe transport

The freight task in forestry has come to be dominated by the very efficient road train configuration which requires Restricted Access Vehicle (RAV) permitting from Main Roads Heavy Vehicle Services (MRHVS).

In recent years, following a determination of the State Solicitors Office, routes which had been established to service the forestry industry, so-called forestry routes under the control of the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation & Attractions (DBCA), were deemed to require RAV network assessment. This has led to a significant backlog of route assessments for permits and has resulted in a portion of the forestry haulage task migrating to the less efficient semi-trailer configuration, requiring more vehicle movements to shift the same volume of freight and creating a perverse road safety consequence.

### Recommendation:

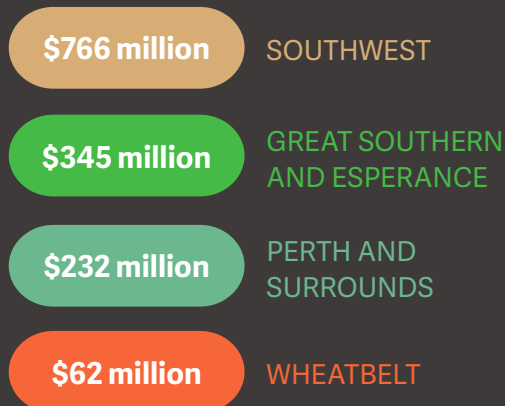
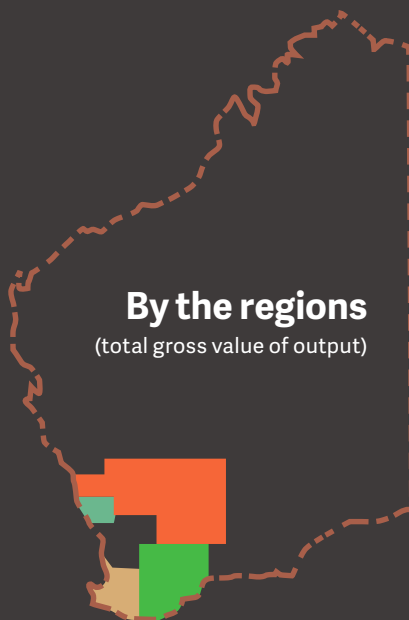
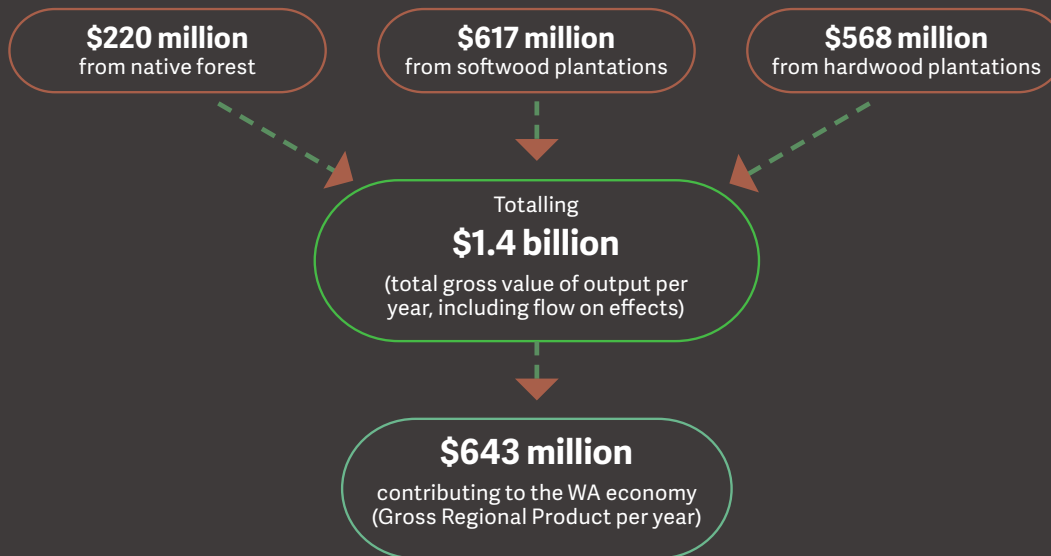
- **In the first year of government develop a "Regional Freight Transport Strategy" identifying key haulage routes (pre-approved and RAV accessible) and including funding support for road upgrades as required.**



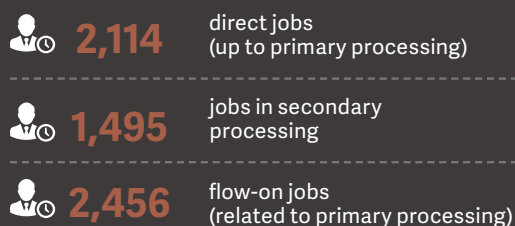
# TIMBER

## growing WA's economy

The timber industry is a key driver of economic activity and jobs in Western Australia.



### The timber industry creates about 6,000 jobs in WA



### Where the jobs are (direct jobs)

