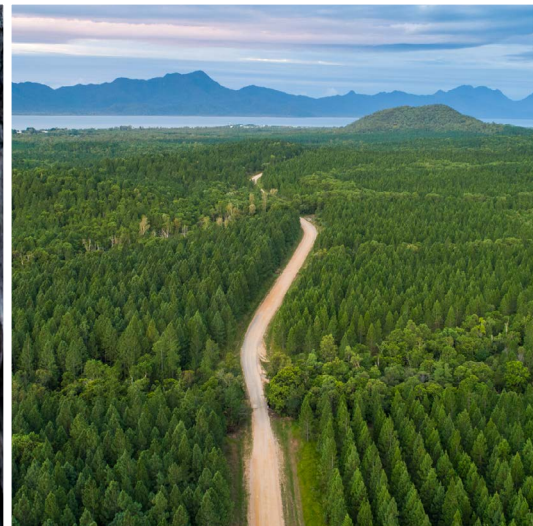




Australian
Forest
Products
Association

AFFPA FEDERAL ELECTION 2025 POLICY PLATFORM

Australian Timber. Australia's Future.



ABOUT AFPA

The Australian Forest Products Association (AFPA) is the peak national industry body representing the Australian forest, wood and paper products industry's interests to governments, the public and other stakeholders on matters relating to the sustainable development and use of Australia's forests and associated manufacturing and marketing of wood and paper products in Australia.

The global timber supply is currently facing a shortage, and it is imperative for Australia to fulfill its domestic requirements. Presently, Australia falls short of meeting its own timber demands. This is distinct from our current extra capacity to supply housing timber, caused by the depressed construction market



In Australia, 80,000 people are directly employed in forestry and forest products, with another 100,000 indirectly employed



The sector is responsible for pumping \$24 billion into the Australian economy every year



We are importing more hardwood timber from overseas because of native forestry bans in Victoria and WA



We need more timber plantation trees planted, and to keep the native forestry areas we have to meet increased future demand in the decades to come



Australia's forestry operations are carbon positive, and our plantations are storing 258 million tonnes of carbon



A tiny fraction of Australia's native forest (0.06%) is harvested for forestry purposes each year, then regenerated by law



Our sector plants around 70 million plantation trees every year, covering an area equivalent to 136,000 football fields



Jobs in the forest and forest products industry cover a variety of roles, including forest planting, management, fire safety, and sustainable timber harvesting. It also involves the transportation of timber and woodchips and the conversion of wood into products like construction timber, fence posts, and railway sleepers. The industry also offers opportunities in paper production, such as cardboard, tissue, and paper towels, as well as in the creation of renewable biopellets for energy. Careers in science and the development of biomaterials and biochemicals from forest resources also play a key role in producing everyday items



THE STATE OF PLAY

Australia is recognised globally for its commitment to the sustainable conservation and management of its forests. In Australia, every tree harvested is replaced with at least another tree and all forestry activities on public land and in downstream processing are certified ensuring adherence to strong environmental regulations. In contrast, many of the world's timber-producing forests are not certified and are at high risk of illegal logging, harbouring poor working conditions and contributing to deforestation as they are not replanted and regenerated.

All Australians, regardless of where they live, benefit from the careful and sustainable management of our timber resources. While the industry has a long and proud history, it is firmly focused on meeting Australia's future needs. Bold and exciting developments mean we can do more with timber fibre than ever before and it also means we have solutions to address many of Australia's challenges. As a future focused industry, we want to partner with government to deliver climate solutions, housing solutions and new job opportunities in communities from our cities to the bush.

OUR ELECTION POLICY PLATFORM

1. To meet Australia's future housing needs and solve the housing crisis we need to:

- modernise building approvals to encourage greater use of timber and engineered wood products to decarbonise construction
- develop policies to increase the supply of land release and invest in infrastructure to reduce the cost for new housing
- deliver a **Prefabricated and Innovative Housing Summit** and implement policies that encourage greater adoption of modular and prefabricated timber housing, creating Australian jobs
- commit to a **Wood First Policy** in construction in government procurement
- commit to a **Timber in the Built Environment** ACCU Scheme method to incentivise more timber in construction

2. Promote Grown (& Recycled) in Australia strengthening sovereign capability by:

- introducing **Country of Origin Labelling** to allow consumers to choose Australian grown timber
- implementing a \$200 million **Wood and Fibre Innovation, Recycling and Energy Efficiency Program** to grow the recycling and energy efficiency capacity of the timber, pulp and paper sector creating new manufacturing jobs in regional Australia
- removing the regulatory impediments to producing additional energy from waste and in doing so, reduce emissions from transport and create thousands of jobs in recycling and biomass energy generation
- developing a **National Fire Response Plan** for the whole 133.6 million hectares of Australian forests through National Emergency Management Ministers
- training and skills - \$200,000 annually for 3 years to secure the ongoing delivery of forestry tertiary education in Australia
- delivering the bipartisan **One Billion Trees** commitment with a \$200 million extension of the support **Plantation Establishment Grants Program** to boost domestic supply, increase sovereign capability and fight climate change
- developing a **National Timber Security** agreement, where governments commit to replacing/offsetting any timber resources lost to development or government policy decisions, reduce the regulatory burden on tree plantings and ensure a right to harvest

3. Promote healthy and sustainable forestry to provide the timber products Australians need and address climate change with:

- a **commitment to support continuing native forestry** and committing to no more forest lock-ups to meet consumer needs, help tackle climate change and provide economic opportunities for local regional and indigenous communities
- \$40 million to crack down on imports of illegally logged timber
- a **\$20 million public education campaign** to help the public appreciate the need for a sustainable industry to meet consumer needs and tackle the risks of climate change
- a **\$3 million boost to the Forestwatch Australia Annual Program** to protect urban forests from exotic pests
- Establishment of a **market demand mechanism** for the National Nature Repair compliance market that enhances Australia's sustainable timber industry

ADDRESSING OUR FUTURE HOUSING NEEDS

Housing construction is one of the most significant drivers of economic activity in Australia due to its size, reach and multiplier effect. The timber industry and new housing market are inextricably linked.

The extended slump in new home approvals continues to prevent recovery from the economic slowdown. Housing policy settings with timber at the centre can drive the economy AND deliver a climate positive benefit. By promoting the use of timber in housing and adoption of a **Wood First Policy** in construction in government procurement like France's 50% timber public building policy, the benefits are clear.

To meet Australia's future housing needs and solve the housing crisis we need to:

- modernise building approvals to encourage more timber and engineered wood products to decarbonise construction
- increase land supply and invest in infrastructure to reduce the cost of land for new housing
- encourage greater take-up of modular and prefabricated timber dwellings with specifications that allow for economic builds and faster building approvals
- commit to a **Wood First Policy** in construction in government procurement in line with the Australian government commitment under the Forest and Climate Leaders Partnership from the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
- join international leaders like Switzerland and France by linking social housing funding to the states with a **Wood First Policy** and committing to a **Timber in the Built Environment** ACCU Scheme method to incentivise more timber in construction
- hold a **Prefabricated and Innovative Housing Summit**, hosted by the government, inviting industry from across Australia to understand the barriers to adopting, and creating an action agenda to fast-track innovation

New and innovative modular housing concepts exist in many countries around the world, but tangible support from government is required to de-risk the capital investment necessary to stimulate modular housing in Australia. If the Australian government were to underwrite 50% of the cost of new modular housing facilities, thousands of jobs would be created and thousands of homes built at lower cost.

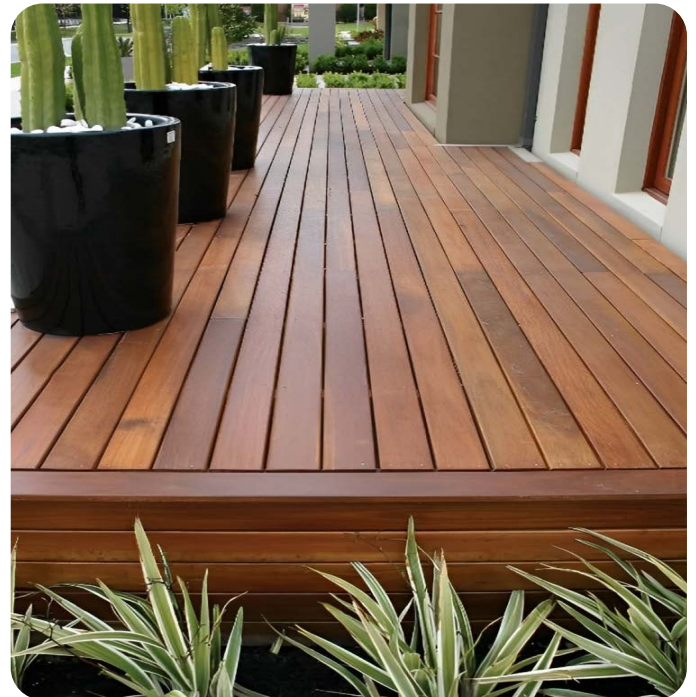
Not only is timber a solution to reducing the carbon/energy intensity of housing, but it also contributes an environmental one as half of the weight of wood products is stored carbon. Forestry plays a unique role in climate change mitigation as timber represents an economic carbon capture and storage instrument which works at scale. Encouraging and promoting **Timber in the Built Environment** ensures timber framing and panels are a permanent, or long lived, store of carbon.



For example, the choice of wood or steel by a homebuilder makes the difference between starting with either a healthy CO² credit or deficit. A typical timber house frame stores 9.5 tonnes of CO² from the atmosphere. When other timber and wood furnishings like floors, decking and furniture are included the figure can grow to 25 tonnes of CO².

Our industry has the capacity to supply an additional 50,000 new homes worth of timber per year than we currently do. By growing our plantation estate to meet our future construction needs we can help mitigate climate change and by providing **Country of Origin Labelling** consumers can opt to choose climate friendly Australian grown timber. Investing in innovative wood processing can reduce the emissions footprint, increase recycling, increase the yield of wood products from existing timber supplies and use residues to grow our biofuels industry.

With high demand in Australia and globally for hardwood products for applications such as floorboards, staircases and furniture, maintaining our sustainable native forest industry is critical to avoid a significant increase in imports from countries with weaker environmental regulations, including those where tropical rainforests are logged unsustainably and illegally.



GROWN (& RECYCLED) IN AUSTRALIA

Despite having 133.6 million hectares of forest, Australia is still a net importer of timber. Improving our self-reliance on timber products will benefit not only the 180,000 Australians who are employed in Australia's forest and wood-fibre industries, but also deliver economic, social, environmental and cultural benefits for every Australian. Obviously the best way to avoid illegal timber and reduce our dependency on imports is to buy Australian grown and manufactured timber so supporting the industry that supports Australian jobs and communities is an extremely worthwhile investment.

We also want to encourage Australia's next recycling revolution. Only 1% of Sweden's trash is sent to landfill, another 52% is converted into energy and the remaining 47% gets recycled. In contrast over 40% of Australia's waste goes to landfill. Australia's pulp, paper and bioproducts businesses are eager to do more to convert some of this material bound for landfill sites into recycled products and energy, particularly as energy costs increase, putting Australian manufacturing jobs and businesses at risk. Waste to Energy technology has developed in recent years so there is now far less pollution compared to landfill and the reliability of the energy generation is excellent.

In conjunction with waste education, recycling and a move to circular economies, Waste to Energy technology has enormous potential to help Australia meet its GHG targets with a few small policy changes and leadership from the Australian government. As acknowledged by ARENA, the uptake of Waste to Energy technologies in Australia is impeded by commercial readiness and regulatory factors. A national approach is urgently needed.

AFPA's election policy platform promotes Grown (& Recycled) in Australia, strengthening sovereign capability by:

- the introduction of **Country of Origin Labelling** to allow consumers to choose Australian grown timber
- a \$200 million **Wood and Fibre Innovation, Recycling and Energy Efficiency Program**. The timber manufacturing sector is Australia's 6th largest and due to the uncertain manufacturing environment has struggled to attract adequate investment. Allowing manufacturers to upgrade their machinery to recover more resource from the timber or recycle new materials is vital to reduce our dependence on imports
- addressing the restrictions on use of renewable materials and transportation of waste around Australia that currently deter the generation of energy from wood and recycled waste. As numerous European countries and New Zealand have successfully demonstrated, we can reduce the volume of waste going to landfill each year in Australia by removing the outdated and onerous restrictions on use of waste feedstocks (including wood waste from wood processors). In doing so we can increase the source of energy from renewable sources and create hundreds of jobs
- developing a **National Fire Response Plan** for the entire 133.6 million hectares of Australian forests through National Emergency Management Ministers. According to estimates, the devastating Black Summer bushfire season emitted over 700 million tonnes of carbon dioxide – more than 1.5 times the total reported emissions for all other sectors combined that year
- investing in **Professional Forest Management Training and Skills** - \$200,000 annually for 3 years to secure the ongoing delivery of forestry tertiary education in Australia
- delivering the bipartisan **One Billion Trees** commitment with a \$200 million extension of the **Support Plantation Establishment Grants Program** to help supply our future needs, increase sovereign capability and fight climate change. To meet our targets we need to plant more than 18,000 hectares of timber each year
- a **National Timber Security Agreement**, where the federal, state and territory governments will commit to replacing/offsetting any timber resources lost to development or government policy decisions

HEALTHY AND SUSTAINABLE FORESTS TO ADDRESS CLIMATE CHANGE

Forestry practices have evolved overwhelmingly in recent decades and forests are now acknowledged globally as foundational to climate change mitigation and adaptation solutions, as well as the restoration and conservation of nature. Australia's forests, whether they be native or plantation, are receiving recognition for their economic and environmental benefits.

The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation recently confirmed that Australia has recorded the second-highest rate of reforestation globally, an increase of 4.4 million hectares of forest area for the decade from 2010 to 2020. This is welcome news, but with our high environmental and labour standards and commitment to sound and positive environmental outcomes, Australia should not need to source timber and wood fibre from other countries with lesser standards. An urgent crack down on overseas illegally logged timber entering the Australian market is required. Improvements in science and technology have meant we can now identify precisely where timber has been sourced from.

Sustainable, renewable production forestry is critical to meeting national carbon goals as well as addressing our needs for timber and wood fibre products. The science is unequivocal – growing and renewed forests achieve better climate outcomes. This is because growing trees sequester carbon at a greater rate than mature ones, and harvested timber continues to store carbon long after it has been removed from the forest. Ensuring Australia maintains healthy and productive forests that provide an ongoing supply of timber and decarbonise our economy is a win/win for all. Diminishing sovereign production capacity in Australia will only result in increased reliance on imports from countries with lower environmental standards.

AFPA's election policy platform will promote healthy and sustainable forestry to provide the timber products Australians need and address climate change with:

- a **commitment to support continuing native forestry** and committing to no more forest lock-ups. This will provide the products consumers need to decarbonise the economy and provide economic advancement opportunities for local regional and indigenous communities
- \$40 million to crack down on imports of illegally logged timber in accordance with new Australian government legislation
- a **\$20 million public education campaign** to ensure the public understands and appreciates the need for a sustainable industry to meet consumer needs, tackle the risks of climate change and provide opportunities for farm forestry (income diversification and offset farm emissions)
- a **\$3 million boost to the Forestwatch Australia Annual Program** to protect urban forests from exotic pests
- Establishment of a **market demand mechanism** for the National Nature Repair compliance market that enhances Australia's sustainable timber industry



