

# Questions for consideration

## Vision and objectives

1. What should the vision be for the forest products sector in the coming decades?

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Provide response here

recognising the significance of a diverse sector that has long value chains which has a presence in every state and territory, and which has great future potential for job creation, import substitution, export expansion, and one which can make a great contribution to carbon performance and accountability. To undertake a major industry promotion campaign, across all media platforms including social media, to promote the industrial, economic, social and environmental benefits of the full spectrum of the timber industry from source to end user.

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2. What specific objectives should underpin this vision?

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Provide response here

to provide major long-term industry plans that have genuine, measurable, and enforceable 'Durability' with adequate trigger mechanisms which require audited remedial action by governments. Engage with local groups that may and also may not have affiliations with other industry associations. Seek and evaluate their specific interests and concerns, and integrate them into action plans.

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## Issue 1: Market trends and pressures

3. What forest products does Australia have a local and/or international competitive advantage in producing?

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Provide response here

Premium hardwoods that are highest in provenance, quality, consistency, strength, and durability, but also a range unique Special Timbers that only are available in very small quantities, but which are available in finished products in the realm of art and design, and which are the equal of anything from anywhere on the planet.

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4. What is the potential demand for forest products in the coming decades?

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Provide response here

The potential demand is huge, and greater than most would have anticipated, entirely due to the developments in high-rise buildings (both commercial and residential) in structural plywood, in CLT, and as carbon sinks in a carbon-conscious world.

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5. How can Australia best position itself for this demand, both nationally and internationally?

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Provide response here

Australia can best position itself by embracing a "wood first" policy at all levels of government, with a system of benefits and penalties, and the preparedness to re-write building codes, by-laws, planning schemes, procurement policies, etc. It must also run informative media campaigns.

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6. What are the other drivers or disruptions that will potentially affect supply and/or demand?

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Provide response here

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Limit the power of green groups, protest groups, etc. to oppose timber harvesting or processing, or to engage in market campaigns. Take punitive action where possible, and engage in media campaigns criticising and condemning them where necessary.

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## **Issue 2: Emerging uses and markets**

7. Which emerging forest products have the greatest potential for Australia?

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Provide response here

Structural plywood, CLT, premium hardwood sawn timber and moulded/finished timber for both domestic and export markets. High quality high value finished products in Special Timbers, although in limited volumes. Examples: wooden boats, art furniture, musical instruments, kitchen/tableware

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8. What are some of the barriers to the development and/or uptake of these emerging forest products in Australia?

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Provide response here

High Australian dollar, cheap imports, actions by green groups.

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9. What opportunities exist to better utilise wood resources?

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Provide response here

A proper investigation into engineered timber, and into uses where engineered timber products could be substituted for metals, plastics, etc. Residues from all sources of timber harvesting, including from native forests, plus from all sources from processing must be included in the consideration of the RET.

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## **Issue 3: Forest resources**

10. What is required to ensure the plantation estate is able to meet future demand for forest products?

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Provide response here

Stronger zoning and land use management arrangements at state and local level, coupled with a Good Neighbour policy, and an effective code of practice. A thorough review of the MIS disaster, with a view to put in place a better, co-ordinated investment encouragement scheme. Governments will have to play a role in this.

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11. What is required to ensure the native forest estate is able to meet future demand for forest products?

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Provide response here

Make the RFA's more durable, and less susceptible to political sabotage. Stronger legislation, greater penalties, and a proper public information campaign. Stop the green groups, no more WHA extensions, ensure the proper protocols around the RFA and the National Heritage List are observed. Expose and root out the corruption in the regional branches of the IUCN.

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12. What opportunities are there to increase wood supply from farm forestry, private native forestry and Indigenous owned and managed lands?

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Provide response here

I am sure there are significant opportunities from all three, but it has to be better demonstrated, and maybe after an initial state-sponsored assessment, some up-front money could initiate works, and be

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deducted from sales or charged at point of use, plus a reward payment upon successful initiation of regeneration.

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#### **Issue 4: Innovation, research and development**

13. What are the future research and development needs for Australia's forest products sector, and which of these needs are specific to strengths and opportunities in the Australian context?

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Provide response here

It appears multi-storey timber construction could be quicker and cheaper, and costs-in-use could be cheaper through greater insulation value (ie less heating and cooling costs), so a demonstration of this information through a public information campaign with links to design models, suppliers, etc. would be helpful.

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14. What are the current inhibitors to private sector investment in research, development and extension and what role, if any, does the Australian Government potentially have in addressing these?

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Provide response here

The perception of how difficult it is to get new concepts approved and accepted. Maybe if a public initiative that gave rewards like star ratings was in place for engineered timber, and a legislative and regulatory clearing house was established to smooth the path, more investors would be attracted. Local government approval processes are excessive, complex, illogical, and expensive. If a total systems approach to timber engineered buildings with a star rating were in place, together with local government agreement, the industry would flourish.

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15. How can the framework for coordinating Australian forestry research and development be strengthened?

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Provide response here

If there was a longer time horizon on funding packages, and better oversight by a strengthened peak research & development body, with a linkage to investors through a tax rewards incentive scheme, the sector would flourish.

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#### **Issue 5: Consumer and community engagement**

16. How can domestic and international consumers be better engaged on the environmental, economic and social credentials of Australian forest products?

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Provide response here

Have a look at the Chain of Custody system for fine Tasmanian timbers. It is linked to AFS and PEFC, and enables a lot of small suppliers, manufacturers and retailers to participate in a group scheme. Every product is labelled, and every aspect can be inspected online, and it is a feast for the eyes. See [www.chainofcustody.com.au](http://www.chainofcustody.com.au) That could be taken to another level through assistance to participate in trade fairs within Australia and overseas, but more overseas buyers could be attracted to Australian events.

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17. How important are consumer awareness programs to the future prosperity of the sector?

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Provide response here

There has been very good feedback to the Chain of Custody system mentioned above. The international success of the Woolmark symbols is something the Australian timber industry should aspire to creating.

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18. Can forest certification be better leveraged to achieve stronger demand and better prices for Australian forest products and, if so, how?

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Provide response here

Again, see the labelling and promotion achieved by Fine Timbers Tasmania through its Chain of Custody system, all with a surprisingly small amount of assistance, but years of hard work by volunteers. Some recognition would be fantastic.

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### **Issue 6: Strengthened regional approaches**

19. How could forestry hubs better utilise resources and promote greater efficiencies and innovation?

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Provide response here

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20. What have been the barriers to the establishment and efficient operation of forestry hubs to date, and what might be the role of the Australian Government in addressing these?

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Provide response here

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21. If additional forestry hubs are to be established, where would they best be located?

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Provide response here

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### **Issue 7: Infrastructure**

22. What infrastructure will be required to respond to future demand for Australian forest products?

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Provide response here

There is no export woodchip port facility currently available in Southern Tasmania, and it is putting the viability of the entire industry in the south of the state in jeopardy. This needs to be fixed as a matter of urgency. There is no effective current facility available through which to process residues from native forest harvesting and processing in southern Tasmania, and little elsewhere in the state, and yet Tasmania is the most heavily forested state.

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23. What can be done to ensure better recognition and understanding of the sector's infrastructure needs?

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Provide response here

Conduct regional forums with an opportunity for speakers to nominate, but run by a steering committee nominated by industry groups and convened by the minister for forestry in each state. Only supportive groups could nominate, no green groups welcome, power of veto over those attending.

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### **Issue 8: Industry skills and training**

24. What are the skills and training needs of the sector over the coming decades, and where are the current gaps?

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Provide response here

There is a serious gap in species recognition, and in quality determination by harvesting contractors and their employees in areas of mixed forest in Tasmania that contain our unique Special Timbers species.

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There is a lack of understanding of the value of unusual timber, of burls, and of such features as fiddleback, the Blackheart in Sassafras, or the 'tiger' grain appearance in Tiger Myrtle. There is a lack of understanding of the needs of artistic wood turners and sculptors, or the preference by boat builders for grown knees in certain species. The production of weatherproof visual aids and species guides would be of great assistance, together with a rewards and recognition system for participating contractors.

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25. Are Vocational Education and Training and university training providers well-positioned to meet the future skills and training needs of the sector?

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Provide response here

No. There are gaps in current practice, and no specific opportunities in place for exchange of information between some groups. There are gaps in some skills training areas, and I would be happy to elaborate further with a suitable opportunity.

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26. What improvements are required at an enterprise level to support the recruitment, development and retention of the sector's current and future workforce?

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Provide response here

The Special Timbers sector in Tasmania has iconic status in the social and cultural landscape, and iconic status within the tourism and visitor experience through boutique retailing, and it puts more than \$70 million through sales into the Tasmanian economy annually, and that has growth potential as the tourism T21 objective is to grow visitor numbers from the current 1 million per year to 1.5 million by 2020, but the industry is about to fall off a cliff due to a dramatic cut in supply arising from the disastrous 2013 Tasmanian Forest Agreement legislation, and the lack of success in removing Special Timbers forest from the World Heritage Area extension, coupled with the fact that the current highly skilled workforce, mainly represented through single-person businesses (artisans), are approaching retirement age, and serious guarantees on future timber supply together with some business training as well as skills development training are needed to encourage recruitment for what can be a personally rewarding career.

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Additional information:

The arts-based Special Timbers manufacturing sector in Tasmania is an iconic signature for the state, and it needs to be better understood, and better provided for, and it can lend greater kudos to the whole timber industry if given the chance.

As a participant in this industry as a downstream processor, I am always keen to acknowledge everyone before me right up the supply chain to the forest managers and the harvesting contractors, and am keen that they see the value of their work, right down to the point of sale of some of the products we make.

I urge you to look at the attached image files, and share them relentlessly so that many others can see our work, and hopefully relate it all the way back to the good work done by the forest managers....

<http://www.scribd.com/doc/212366382/Exotic-Timbers-There-is-no-substitute>

<http://www.scribd.com/doc/234874919/207339341-My-Furniture-in-Glass-and-Timber>

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/muir-wilson/>

<http://designtasmania.com.au/>