

## Questions for consideration

### Vision and objectives

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

The most important forest products are clean and plentiful water, carbon sequestration and storage and resilient biodiversity. These economic value of these products have not been considered when discussing forestry.

It's time the public forests were managed for the public good. What would that look like? What public good do forests provide?

1. Letting our forests grow old in peace is the most significant thing we can do to guarantee long-term reliable water supply.
2. Growing back our rainforests will help both bring/make rain as well as provide a natural buffer to fire.
3. Allowing forests to get old provides more habitat for the unique animals that live in them.
4. It takes really old trees to get nesting hollows for cockatoos, parrots, owls and gliders
5. Older trees provide more nectar keeping bees alive as well as many species of birds and gliders.
6. Koalas prefer bigger trees too.
7. Trees store carbon, older trees store more carbon.
8. Trees take CO<sub>2</sub> from the atmosphere and breathe out oxygen.
9. Older forests with larger trees are more resistant to wildfire.
10. Rivers that come from forests have colder water and are better for fish breeding
11. The deep root networks of forests soak up rain and help prevent flooding.
12. Forests are places where we humans can go to appreciate the wonder and beauty of nature.

2. What specific objectives should underpin this vision?

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The values of plentiful clean water, resilient biodiversity and maximum carbon sequestration and storage as well as fire resistance, all increase with forest age. The key objective of forest management in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century should be aging the forest.

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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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As an organisation based in northern NSW, one of the main forest products is koala tourism. Koalas are in serious decline in our region and the demand to see koalas, particularly in the wild is high. The proclamation of a network of Koala National Parks, where koala well-being is a primary management objective could bring sustainable economic benefit to our region, without the economic and environmental destruction that is currently being wrought by the logging industry.

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**Submission in response to *Meeting future market demand: Australia's forest products and forest industry — a strategic directions issues paper***

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

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With global temperatures increasing exponentially, the need for maximum sustainable water production is the most valuable forest product. Any management activity which prejudices water yield, as does current logging, is irresponsible and places in jeopardy the ability of coastal communities dependent on forested water catchments.

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

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Australia needs to recognise that our forests are unique, many of the species that live in them are unique, and Antarctica aside, we are the driest continent on earth. We need to build a smarter economy which is not one based around trashing our environment in an effort to supply world markets with low-value fibre such as woodchips.

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

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There has been no genuine recognition either from the Australian Government or the logging industry of the serious implications of climate change for our nation. Climate change, if current trends continue, will disrupt all aspects of our society. Clearly prevention is preferable. Preventing carbon release from logging native forests would both decrease Australia's emissions while improving the chance of our forests surviving into the next century. Current logging practices, which dry out and degrade our forests, will almost certainly lead to their collapse.

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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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Nature based tourism and water production.

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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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Governments that insist on propping up unsustainable industries with subsidies and anti-competitive trading practices, while refusing to consider that ecosystem services and values that intact forests provide.

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9. What opportunities exist to better utilise wood resources?

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Better plantation management and planning including mixed species woodlots that over time will provide sawlogs via a light selective logging process.

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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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Stop subsidising public land logging.

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Better plantation planning, so they are not having unintended impacts on regional water supplies in terms of both water use and contamination as a result of chemical applications or slope run-off.

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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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Allow it to grow old. This will increase both water yield and carbon storage capacity, both far more valuable products than the current logging industry creates. There is also the potential for significant employment and training opportunities in forest restoration.

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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 recognition for ecosystem services. This would increase the interest in allowing forests to grow or regrow. When healthy forests get economic recognition then timber will be more highly valued and well-managed forestry operations will become a more desirable activity to engage in.

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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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Research is conclusive in support the assertions made in this submission, although more work could be done by baseline studies and then monitoring over time of the impact of forest aging on water yield, carbon storage including soil formation, fire resistance of older forests, biodiversity increase etc.

Research is also needed into plantation impacts on regional water catchment yields and better planning to ensure there are no unintended negative impacts on local communities due to truck movements etc.

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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

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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

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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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As long as intensive logging of Australia's native forests, particularly on public land continues, there will be lack of credibility for the claims of the logging industry about sustainability. In our region, koala habitat is being logged for floorboards.

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

Consumers want forests protected and to source wood from sustainably managed plantations.

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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?

The Australian Forestry Standard certifies clearfelling and the destruction of oldgrowth and threatened species habitat. As such it is tainted and unlikely to have the credibility to leverage stronger demand.

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

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

The opportunity for greater innovation was lost when the industry chose the woodchipping option and when foresters failed to recognise both the need to maintain connectivity of the forests in a largely intact and natural state, and failed to manage for the full suite of forest values particularly water and biodiversity.

Thus the opportunities to now access quality timber are limited...all those thousands of trucks taking logs to the chipper... if those trees were still standing.... there would be opportunities.

Attached is a paper describing the history of over-cutting in north-east NSW

[https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/ncec/pages/44/attachments/original/1427105796/The\\_Battle\\_for\\_Sustainable\\_Yields\\_is\\_Lost.pdf?1427105796](https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/ncec/pages/44/attachments/original/1427105796/The_Battle_for_Sustainable_Yields_is_Lost.pdf?1427105796)

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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?

The Australian Government's subsidies to the logging industry and attempts to interfere in the market via the tax breaks of the MIS scheme have left thousands of Australians seriously out of pocket and this market failure undermined public confidence. The logging industry needs to transition to sustainably managed, multi-species woodlots, where, like any business, they have to pay for their inputs and don't get a free ride. It is ironic that the Government is still trying to prop up this failing industry and yet takes every opportunity to undermine the wind and solar renewable sectors.

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

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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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Well-maintained walking and cycle trails to foster nature based tourism.

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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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A proper assessment of the cost to local infrastructure; ie: roads & bridges.

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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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In some instances those few workers still working in native forests could be retrained in forest restoration techniques or in establishing better planned woodlots or plantations

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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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The TAFE sector was well placed to meet the training needs of the sector until it was largely defunded.

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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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To envisage a forest future that involves repair rather than ongoing damage and restoration rather than exploitation.

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