



**Australian Government**  
**Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry**

# FARM FORESTRY

# NATIONAL ACTION STATEMENT

**AUGUST 2005**



Photographs provided by James Gray and Russell Washusen.

## INTRODUCTION

The Farm Forestry National Action Statement (NAS) outlines the objectives and actions agreed by the Australian, State and Territory governments and the forest and wood products industry to develop farm forestry.

## BACKGROUND

The Australian Government established the National Farm Forestry Roundtable from 1998–2000 and it was this forum that identified the need for a Farm Forestry National Action Statement. A workshop of 38 farm forestry representatives from governments, non-government organisations and private enterprise drew up a list of actions for the first draft of the NAS in Brisbane in March 2003. The final NAS was endorsed by the Natural Resource Management and Primary Industry Ministerial Councils in August 2005.

The Australian Government, through the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, will provide leadership and maintain the momentum in implementing the NAS. The State and Territory governments and industry groups will support it through the Private Forestry Consultative Committee (PFCC). The support and engagement of farmer groups and others is also essential to develop a strong farm forestry culture.

## WHAT IS FARM FORESTRY?

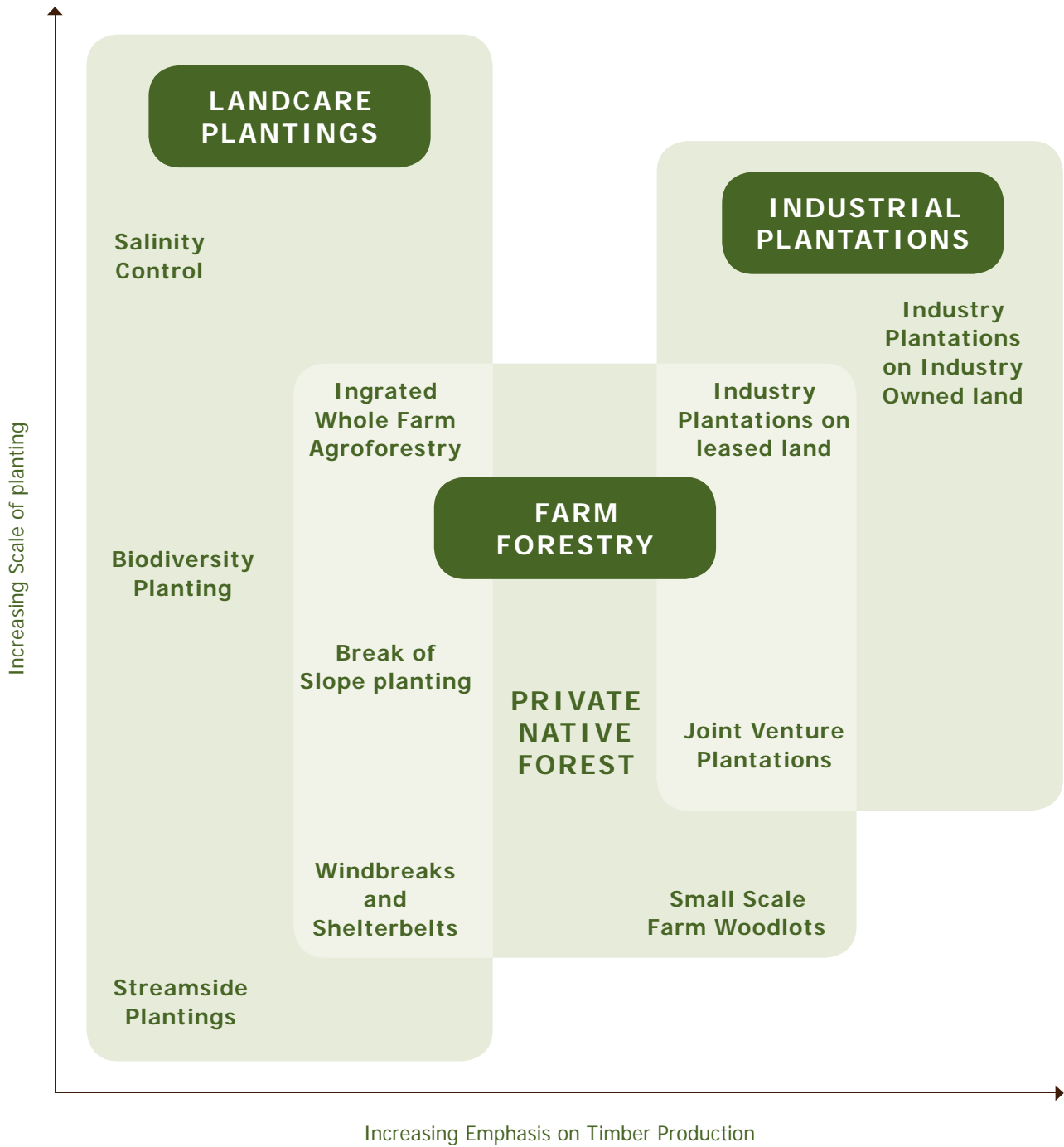
Farm forestry is defined here as the combination of forestry activity with cropping and or livestock production. The focus of the forestry activity is primarily commercial, although there may also be other objectives including shade and shelter for stock or crops, natural resource management including soil and water protection, habitat conservation, landscape and amenity values. Farm forestry can take many forms, including plantations on farms, woodlots, timber belts, alleys, wide-spaced tree plantings and sustainably managed private native forests. Farm forestry plantations are predominantly of a smaller scale than industrial plantations and may have less emphasis on timber or fibre production as primary outputs (as shown in Figure 1).

Importantly, farm forestry is practiced by farmers and other landholders, using the resources and knowledge available to them. The farmer or landholder makes the critical decisions, from establishment and management to marketing of products and services.

## WHY IS FARM FORESTRY IMPORTANT?

Farm forestry is important because it not only provides income diversification for farmers and resources for regional industries, but it can also improve the condition and sustainability of natural resources by addressing resource degradation issues such as water quality, soil erosion, loss of native habitat and fragmentation of tree cover. Re-establishment of trees in the landscape also sequesters atmospheric carbon. The commercial aspect of farm forestry provides an economic incentive for improved natural resource management.

**Figure 1** Farm forestry's relationship to other forms of forestry



## FARM FORESTRY IN AUSTRALIA

The National Plantation Inventory<sup>1</sup> estimated the total area of farm forestry plantations at about 67,000 hectares or 4.5% of the national plantation area at September 2000. About 39 million hectares (24%) of Australia's native forests are privately owned and another 76 million hectares (46%) are privately managed under leasehold<sup>2</sup>.

The National Land and Water Resources Audit has identified more than 5 million hectares of land at risk of, or affected by, dryland salinity. Some of this land and adjacent areas may be able to support commercial tree crops to help manage salinity<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Wood, M.S., Stephens, N.C., Allison, B.K., and Howell, C.I. (2001). *Plantations of Australia - A report from the National Plantation Inventory and the National Farm Forest Inventory*. National Forest Inventory, Bureau of Rural Sciences, Canberra.

<sup>2</sup> National Forest Inventory (2003). *Australia's State of the Forests Report 2003*. Bureau of Rural Sciences, Canberra.

<sup>3</sup> National Land and Water Resources Audit (2000). *Australian Dryland Salinity Assessment 2000*. National Land and Water Resources Audit, Canberra.

## POLICY CONTEXT

The NAS will complement the strategy, *Plantations for Australia: the 2020 Vision* (the 2020 Vision), which aims to enhance regional wealth creation and the international competitiveness of Australia's forest and wood products industry through a sustainable increase in Australia's plantation resources. The 2020 Vision's notional target is 3 million hectares of commercial tree plantations by 2020.

The 2020 Vision aims for large-scale industrial plantations on public and private land. However, the NAS will complete the spectrum by encouraging enhanced native forest management and smaller scale plantation development integrated into agricultural landscapes on private land.

The NAS will also complement the regional natural resource management planning and investment framework defined by the *National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality* and the Natural Heritage Trust.

## VISION

The NAS vision is to increase the adoption of commercial tree growing and management as a widely accepted part of Australian farming and as a component of regional natural resource planning for the production of wood and non-wood products, and natural resource management benefits.

## ACTIONS

To achieve the vision, the Australian, State and Territory governments and the forest and wood products industry need to progress 16 actions, grouped under four action imperatives:

1. Develop appropriate, integrated and consistent Australian, State, Territory and local government policies for farm forestry
2. Coordinate actions and build relationships to support farm forestry
3. Recognise and, where possible, quantify farm forestry's economic, environmental and social benefits and costs
4. Promote the development of markets for farm forestry products and services.



## 1. Develop appropriate, integrated and consistent Australian, State, Territory and local government policies for farm forestry

*Integrated farm forestry policy, including linkages with natural resource management, provides a framework for governments to take action to encourage the adoption of farm forestry. Collection of data on resources and landholders provides a basis for improved planning and policy.*

- 1.1 Ensure national, state and local government policy priorities reflect farm forestry's potential to deliver regional economic, environmental and social benefits.
- 1.2 Undertake regional surveys of farm forestry resources (hectares of trees under management) for improved policy and planning outcomes.
- 1.3 Undertake regional surveys of landholders to identify and analyse their willingness and capacity to adopt farm forestry, and identify impediments.
- 1.4 Develop state and regional farm forestry strategies that integrate with natural resource management frameworks.



## 2. Coordinate action and build relationships to support farm forestry

*Development of relationships provides a means of sharing knowledge and experience, and identifying research and skill development needs to support the adoption of farm forestry.*

- 2.1 Encourage partnerships between existing agencies at national, state and regional levels.
- 2.2 Facilitate commercial partnerships between industry and landholders to increase the area of trees under active management and the supply of farm forestry outputs.
- 2.3 Facilitate improved communication to transfer knowledge to and between landholders.
- 2.4 Support farm forestry research and development that will promote commercialisation of new species and development of new products, investment frameworks and production systems.
- 2.5 Improve the capacity of landholders and regional planners to implement commercial farm forestry, which is integrated on-farm and in-landscape, to meet commercial and natural resource management objectives.

### 3. Recognise and, where possible, quantify farm forestry's economic, environmental and social benefits and costs

*Recognising the benefits and costs of farm forestry provides a basis for farmers to evaluate farm forestry options, and for regional natural resource bodies to incorporate farm forestry in regional investment strategies. It also helps ensure recognition and support for farm forestry's potential for improving the sustainability of land management.*

- 3.1 Promote the economic, environmental and social benefits of farm forestry to landholders, government agencies, local governments, regional natural resource management groups and communities.
- 3.2 Seek to ensure that regional natural resource management investment plans recognise the potential of farm forestry as a tool for addressing regional natural resource management priorities.
- 3.3 Promote liaison between relevant State/Territory government agencies, regional and catchment water managers and landholders to identify and manage the potential impact of farm forestry on water resources.
- 3.4 Prepare financial analyses for representative farming situations in each region to provide landholders with data on realistic economic returns from farm forestry.
- 3.5 Promote forest certification and best practice forest management for farm forestry.

### 4. Promote the development of markets for farm forestry products and services

*Economic incentives provided through markets for farm forestry products and services are essential for the increased adoption of farm forestry.*

- 4.1 Facilitate better access to competitive markets through cooperatives, marketing agents or other structures suitable to regional and local circumstances.
- 4.2 Encourage development of markets for the environmental services provided by farm forests, including carbon sequestration.





## IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING AND REVIEW

The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry will provide leadership for the implementation of the NAS, with the active support of State and Territory and industry bodies, including through the Private Forestry Consultative Committee (PFCC). Appendix 1 contains an implementation plan to achieve each of the 16 actions.

Monitoring the progress of the NAS is critical for achieving meaningful outcomes for NAS stakeholders. The PFCC will monitor progress on implementing the NAS and prepare an annual progress report. It will also undertake a review of the NAS two years after the strategy's adoption and report to the Forestry and Forest Products Committee.



## APPENDIX

ACTION	WHAT (Examples of activities)	WHO	WHEN	MEASURABLE OUTPUTS
<b>1. Develop appropriate, integrated and consistent Australian, State and Territory and local government policy for farm forestry</b>				
1.1 Ensure national, state and local government policy priorities reflect farm forestry's potential to deliver regional economic, environmental and social benefits.	Aust Govt, State and Territory Govts and Local Govts endorse NAS	Govt. PFCC members FFPC Australian Local Government Association (ALGA)	Within 1 year	NAS released as public document
1.2 Undertake regional surveys of farm forestry resources (area of trees under active management).	Develop regional survey projects	Aust Govt. through Bureau of Rural Sciences (BRS) State agencies Private Forestry Development Committees (PFDCs) * (data collection)	Within 5 years	Data presented for main priority regions
1.3 Undertake regional surveys of landholders to identify and analyse their willingness and capacity to adopt farm forestry, and identify impediments.	Develop regional survey projects, including attempting to identify management intent Continue BRS/ABARE routine surveys of landholders which collect data relevant to farm forestry	Aust Govt. through BRS, Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics (ABARE) PFDCs * (data collection)	Within 2 years	Regional reports outlining attitudes and impediments (to feed into regional strategies (see 1.4)
1.4 Develop state and regional farm forestry strategies that integrate with natural resource management frameworks.	Develop strategies that highlight issues within each region within the State context	State agencies PFDCs * Regional natural resource management (NRM) bodies	Within 2 years	State and regional strategies developed
<b>2. Coordinate action and build relationships to support farm forestry</b>				
2.1 Encourage partnerships between existing agencies at national, state and regional levels.	Expand membership of PFCC (e.g. ALGA)	All	Ongoing	PFCC membership and meetings
	Hold national farm forestry conferences / workshops (eg. AFG biennial conference, PFDC National Workshop)	All	Ongoing	Number of conferences / workshops
	Hold state and regional conferences / workshops (e.g. Greening Australia workshops)	All	Ongoing	As above

ACTION	WHAT (Examples of activities)	WHO	WHEN	MEASURABLE OUTPUTS
	<p>Support farm forestry networks and publications</p> <p>Utilise existing State, regional and local Landcare networks</p> <p>Strengthen relationships between PFDCs * and regional NRM bodies</p> <p>Develop partnerships with environmental non-government organisations (ENGOS) (e.g. World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF)) to promote the NAS</p> <p>Support partnerships to promote improved communication of R&amp;D from Joint Venture Agroforestry Program (JVAP) and research providers to landholders and regional planners</p>	<p>All</p> <p>PFDCs * Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF)</p> <p>PFDCs * DAFF</p> <p>All</p> <p>JVAP</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Within 1 year</p> <p>Within 1 year</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Number of extension services and publications</p> <p>Number of commercial farm forestry projects facilitated by Landcare groups</p> <p>Degree of cross-memberships of PFDCs * and regional NRM bodies</p> <p>Number of joint projects</p> <p>Participation by ENGOS in conferences / workshops</p> <p>Communication strategy document</p>
<p>2.2 Facilitate commercial partnerships between industry and landholders to increase the area of trees under active management and the supply of farm forestry outputs.</p>	<p>Build awareness between timber processors and forest growers within each region to ensure farm forestry is market driven</p>	<p>PFDCs *</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Number of partnerships between timber processors and forest growers</p>
<p>2.3 Facilitate improved communication to transfer knowledge to and between landholders.</p>	<p>Maintain, and where possible, enhance farm forestry extension programs</p> <p>Develop a national communication strategy</p>	<p>PFDCs * State agencies Greening Australia</p> <p>Australian Forest Growers (AFG)</p> <p>All</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Within 1 year</p>	<p>Number of extension activities</p> <p>Communication strategy document</p>

ACTION	WHAT (Examples of activities)	WHO	WHEN	MEASURABLE OUTPUTS
2.4 Support farm forestry research and development that will promote commercialisation of new species and development of new products, investment frameworks and production systems.	Increase support for farm forestry R&D, e.g. JVAP	Aust. Govt. through DAFF Industry	Ongoing	Level of investment by research providers Number of farm forestry R&D projects
	Promote developments which underpin confidence in decision making and investment in farm forestry – eg, decision support tools, adoption of Australian standards for forest valuation, collection, development and publication of forest inventory data and models	All	Ongoing	Number of tools, models, data publications
	Sponsor/commission regionally relevant R&D projects	PFDCs *	Ongoing	Number and value of regional R&D projects
2.5 Improve the capacity of landholders and regional planners to implement commercial farm forestry, which is integrated on-farm and in-landscape, to meet commercial and natural resource management objectives.	Increase engagement with NRM bodies Develop benchmark of regional NRM body-funded farm forestry projects Increase farm forestry extension programs	PFDCs * Aust. Govt. State agencies State agencies Greening Australia AFG	Within 1 year	Number of regional NRM body-funded farm forestry projects Number of extension activities
<b>3. Recognise and, where possible, quantify farm forestry's economic, environmental and social benefits and costs</b>				
3.1 Promote the economic, environmental and social benefits of farm forestry to landholders, government agencies, local governments, regional natural resource management groups and communities.	Develop decision support tools, promotional material Develop processes that will allow objective measurement and comparison of economic, environmental (including biodiversity) and social benefits and facilitate more effective land use planning Develop a national communication strategy	All All All	Within 1 year Within 2 years Within 1 year	Tools developed, promotional material published Established data collection and modelling techniques Communication strategy document

ACTION	WHAT (Examples of activities)	WHO	WHEN	MEASURABLE OUTPUTS
3.2 Seek to ensure regional natural resource management investment plans recognise the potential of farm forestry as a tool for addressing regional natural resource management priorities.	Increase engagement with regional NRM bodies Promote inclusion of farm forestry in regional NRM investment strategies	PFDCs * DAFF PFDCs *	Within 1 year	Number of regional NRM body-funded farm forestry projects
3.3 Promote liaison between relevant State/Territory government agencies, regional and catchment water managers, and landholders to identify and manage the potential impact of farm forestry on water resources.	Develop a framework for identification and management of the potential impact of farm forestry on water resources	Regional NRM bodies  State/Territory governments	Within 2 years	Framework in place
3.4 Prepare financial analyses for representative farming situations in each region to provide landholders with data on realistic economic returns from farm forestry.	Develop regional data, decision support tools, case studies	PFDCs *, state agencies	Within 2 years	Tools developed, promotional material published
	Coordinate research nationally to prevent undue duplication and ensure standard data collection methodologies	JVAP, BRS, ABARE	Ongoing	National farm forestry R&D documentation (annual reports, project reports, etc).
3.5 Promote forest certification and best practice forest management for farm forestry.	Develop and review state codes of practice	State agencies	Within 2 years	Codes of practice published
	Continue development of small grower certification	AFG	Within 1 year	Number of small growers prepared for certification
<b>4. Promote the development of markets for farm forestry products and services</b>				
4.1 Facilitate better access to competitive markets through cooperatives, marketing agents or other structures suitable to regional and local circumstances.	Examine grower co-op vs. broker type arrangements for small growers	DAFF AFG PFDCs *	Within 2 years	Published study report

ACTION	WHAT (Examples of activities)	WHO	WHEN	MEASURABLE OUTPUTS
	Support and further develop forestry market reporting mechanisms for collection and dissemination of market information	All	Ongoing	Published forestry market reports
4.2 Encourage development of markets for the environmental services provided by farm forests, including carbon sequestration.	Continue Commercial Environmental Forestry (CEF) Project, particularly Market Based Instrument (MBI) component	DAFF National Association of Forest Industries (NAFI)	Within 2 years	CEF project reports, no. of transactions for environmental services
	Develop environmental services policy and guidelines, particularly in terms of public-private co-investment for both commercial and NRM outcomes.	CSIRO Australian Govt State agencies	Within 1 year	Published policy statements and guidelines

\* In jurisdictions or regions where PFDCs are not established, responsibilities will be undertaken by appropriate committees / agencies.



