



# SECURING A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE FOR AUSTRALIA'S WOOD PRODUCTS INDUSTRIES

Producing good wood and paper in the new economy.

Sustainable plantations, farm forestry and recycled fibre coupled with innovation and processing are the solution to meeting our wood product needs. The Greens want to see a thriving wood products industry in Australia that does not source timber from destructive native forest logging practices. With vision, we can complete the transition to a strong, plantation-based industry.

Australia's wood products industries have been in transition for over 50 years. The latest Australian government figures<sup>1</sup> show 85% of wood production already comes from plantations.

Plantation hardwood has tripled production in the last ten years in Australia. Double the amount of eucalypt hardwood logs come from plantations than native forests.

As our remaining native forest ecosystems face dire threats from logging and bushfire, the writing is on the wall. It is time to let our native forests produce wildlife, carbon, tourism jobs and water. We can grow the wood products industry entirely from plantations and farm forestry.

Logging our native forests destroys complex ecosystems, endangers wildlife, pollutes waterways and depletes carbon stores. Customers don't want a timber or paper product which has destroyed native forest wildlife habitat. It's time to end the conflict.

The Regional Forest Agreements (RFAs) that are currently in place as the primary management regime in our forests are not working and aren't a sustainable economic plan for the future.

The Greens want to see an end to industrial logging of our native forests and transition the remaining small portion of the industry out of native forests into plantations and farm forestry.

## > PLANTATIONS WILL SECURE AUSTRALIA'S WOOD PRODUCTS INDUSTRY

A 21<sup>st</sup> century wood products industry is one which meets domestic and international market expectations of high environmental standards.

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[http://data.daff.gov.au/data/warehouse/9aaf/afwpsd9abfe/afwpsd9abfe20160526/afwpsOverview20160526\\_v1.0.0.pdf](http://data.daff.gov.au/data/warehouse/9aaf/afwpsd9abfe/afwpsd9abfe20160526/afwpsOverview20160526_v1.0.0.pdf)

The native forest logging industry has historically relied on exporting large volumes of woodchips at a cheap price. But even that market is now 85% from hardwood plantations.

Wood and paper production needs to follow the rest of us into the 21st century by completing the transition out of native forests to be fully sourced from plantations, farm forestry, recycled wood and fibre and potentially other fibre crops, tailored to the market's demand for sustainable products.

There is significant potential to increase the value of products coming from our plantation estate. This includes the use of wood for hardwood eucalypt plantations for sawn timber products, and cross laminated softwood timber products.

The Greens will commit to this transition through the following measures:

- \$20 million over the forward estimates for planning and research and development for the wood products industries. This will fund a plan for the future of a plantation based industry and contribute to research and development to promote innovation, efficiency and sustainability in plantation wood and fibre production and processing.
- \$3 million seed funding to contribute to the establishment of a national farm forestry cooperative for farmers.
- Development of a comprehensive plan for the management of our forests, ensuring the long-term economic future for regional communities.

## > A NATIONAL WOOD AND FIBRE PLAN

The Greens will commit \$20 million to planning and research & development to ensure the production and processing of wood products best meet our needs, make the most effective and sustainable use of wood from plantations and that plantations are managed to the highest of environmental and community standards.

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We will develop a national wood and fibre plan in collaboration with industry and the community that will outline a future for the wood and paper industries based on plantations, farm forestry, recycled fibres and potentially other fibre crops.

It would assess the existing plantation, farm forestry and recycled and other fibre resource and determine the adequacy of the resource to meet Australia's requirement for fibre and for wood and engineered building products. It would consider import replacement and export opportunities.

In particular it would focus on opportunities to develop high value products from our plantation resource.

This plan would be regularly reviewed in order to be informed by an increased body of research into innovation, efficiency and sustainability in plantation wood and fibre production and processing.

The Greens support the call for further investment in wood products research and believe that CSIRO is well placed to lead increased collaborative research efforts. The Greens have committed an additional \$306.5 million over the forward estimates in the CSIRO<sup>2</sup>, which could include further resources into wood products research.

Research support will lead to advances in production processes to ensure our plantation sector can meet the market demand for Australian softwood and hardwood products, without compromising on environmental standards.

## > A BOOST FOR FARM FORESTRY

We will commit \$3 million of seed funding to contribute to the establishment of a national farm forestry cooperative for farmers, to expand the potential for farm forestry to contribute to supply of plantation wood products.

## > ENVIRONMENTALLY RESPONSIBLE PROCUREMENT

Under the Federal Government's "ICT Sustainability Plan" all office copy paper used by federal government departments was to be mandated as produced from 100% recycled content from 1 July, 2015.

The Abbott-Turnbull Government did not act on the plan.

The Greens will reinstate the requirement for government paper to be 100% recycled.

## > RIGOROUS CERTIFICATION STANDARDS

The Greens want to see strictly enforced and applied certification standards for Australian wood products, to ensure

ensure ecological standards are upheld and to provide consumers with accurate information about the impact of the products they are purchasing.

Two certification systems are in place for Australian wood and paper production: Forests Stewardship Council (FSC) and Australian Forestry Standard – the Australian Version of PEFC – (Programme for Endorsement of Forest Certification Schemes (PEFC)).

The Greens will require FSC certification for all wood and paper products purchased by federal government agencies.

This will mean removing the current requirement that does not allow government agencies to discriminate between the two certification systems.

FSC certification is the only acceptable certification to protect biodiversity, climate and water.

AFS certification is an industry self-approval, which allows industrial native forest logging practices like clearfell logging of old growth forests.

Worldwide Fund for Nature, who were initially involved in the development of the AFS and then withdrew from the process stated at the time<sup>3</sup>:

*WWF withdrew when it became clear, that despite repeated interventions on our part, that the AFS was to be implemented despite being wholly inadequate in key areas that go to the core of the credibility of a forest certification system. WWF's initial analysis of the AFS during its development has been borne out, and we believe the interim AFS to be inadequate in relation to its governance arrangements, standards setting procedures and certification assessment requirements. Consequently WWF does not currently support the AFS as a credible forest certification system;*

No native forest logging operations on public land in Australia have FSC certification. In contrast, most Australian plantations have FSC certification.

AFS certified Victorian and Tasmanian forestry operations have applied for FSC certification but have failed because they fail to protect conservation values of forests.

## > A NEW WAY FORWARD FOR OUR FORESTS

The Greens will develop a comprehensive plan for our forests and regional communities. This plan will:

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<sup>2</sup> [www.greens.org.au/research](http://www.greens.org.au/research)

<sup>3</sup> The Wilderness Society *Certifying the Incredible – The Australian Forest Standard 2005*

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- facilitate the rapid transition of logging from native forests.
  - recommend management regimes which ensure the restoration and protection of native forests for habitat, carbon, water, tourism and recreation.
  - make recommendations on the economic sustainability and long-term jobs for communities living in our forest regions, including in forest management and recreation and tourism.

The Greens' full native forest protections package will be announced in the coming weeks.

## > STOP BURNING NATIVE FOREST WOOD FOR ENERGY

Our native forests have been clearfelled and woodchipped over decades, but the market for native forest woodchips is declining. Instead, the woodchip industry is looking for an alternative market, and burning our native forest products for energy and heat is a "solution" being pushed by vested interests.

A rapid transition of logging from native forest would mean that the production of this so-called 'wood waste' would stop.

The Greens do not support this environmentally destructive burning of native forests for energy. Our energy future lies in real renewables like wind and solar, as outlined in our Renew Australia plan.<sup>4</sup>

## > SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC FUTURES FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES

The Greens will support a broad range of sustainable economic activities to ensure jobs and stability for regional and rural communities situated near our forests.

For example, we have committed \$3 million for tourism innovation and development in Victoria's Central Highlands forest region<sup>5</sup>, a regional hotspot for forest and nature tourism just 90 minutes from Melbourne's CBD.

We have also committed funding to sustainable agriculture, renewable energy production and better health care in our rural and regional communities.

We want to see 21<sup>st</sup> century economic sustainability for our regional communities, instead of last century's 'cut it down, ship it out' approach which has not provided long-term secure jobs.

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<sup>4</sup> [www.greens.org.au/renew](http://www.greens.org.au/renew)

<sup>5</sup> [www.greens.org.au/central-highlands-tourism](http://www.greens.org.au/central-highlands-tourism)