

TFPA Comments to the Draft Forestry Trade Action Plan 2021

The Tasmanian forestry sector is an integrated industry that encompasses both native forest and plantation resources (both softwood and hardwood); the production of logs, woodchips, hardwood and softwood sawn timber; speciality timbers; pulp and paper production; veneer; fuel wood; and other wood products.

The industry can expand its strong domestic market share with innovation and production efficiencies, which would also increase opportunities for expansion to export markets in South East and North Asia, and other regions undergoing rapid growth.

Export, as it does for other primary industries, has a legitimate role to play in business. An export market helps balance cyclical downturns in domestic markets, diversifies customer opportunities, supports the full timber supply chain, offers alternative markets for products that are not in demand from our domestic customers and offers a channel for salvage from fire or pests, as well as securing ongoing job opportunities.

We understand that a role of the Tasmanian Government is to create a welcoming environment for international investment and to help open doors to expand trade opportunities.

If, the Forest Trade Action Plan 2021, is to be backed by industry we need reassurance that we have resource security and accessibility.

The major barriers for industry to increase productivity and continued investment is a lack of resource security and accessibility, which will have a direct impact on trade with domestic and overseas markets.

Forest product processors need certainty in resource supply to underpin investment in mill upgrades and innovative new products. Plantation managers likewise need certainty of access to markets and supply arrangements to underpin investment in new and existing resource.

Initially, before proceeding further we would recommend that the Government contact those forestry businesses who are exporting to gain a real understanding of how they do it, but importantly where they think government can assist. Another aspect here is to understand that we need to work together as to not impede or hinder current markets inadvertently.

Government can assist businesses to enhance their capabilities to capture more market and supply chain opportunities by supporting downstream processing opportunities towards high value activities by diversifying into high value pre- and post-production processes, and produce highly customised products and services. This is in line with our COVID-19 Forest Industry Priorities that were presented to government last year and understand are high on the agenda for the coming State Government Budget.

An opportunity to explore further is to consider how we promote the benefits of Tasmanian wood and timber products to our domestic and international customers to build trade and expand markets. For example, Tasmania was the first state to implement a Wood Encouragement Policy, to help promote the use of more wood in homes and offices. To gain further benefit from this important policy we suggest an FTE is employed to ensure government agencies, architects, and the building and construction industry take advantage to support buying locally, create employment, develop industry, assist towards mitigating climate change and understand the associated environmental benefits.

This could compliment a whole of industry promotional and marketing campaign targeting our domestic market. From an international point of view, developing marketing collateral that promotes the Tasmanian forest industry that has the capability to be seen (read) and heard (video) in multiple languages is important.

The TFPA understand that trade missions are another critical element of building markets and relationships. Establishing international markets require visits are ongoing and supported at the highest level, and that business is positioned to follow up on potential opportunities.

If the opportunity arises, depending on the current travel restrictions being lifted, we will support government facilitating a high-level delegation to India, which has the potential to grow as an export market in the next 5-10 years.

Lastly, we need to continue to work with key markets, like Japan, on the recognition and acceptance of certification schemes, including Responsible Wood and PEFC. TFPA understands certification of wood and paper products is important in maintaining market access across domestic and export markets, and that consumers are increasingly wanting certification to demonstrate sustainable practices.

The TFPA welcomes further input into the Draft Forestry Trade Action Plan 2021 before it is finalised.

Please contact me if you require assistance in contacting exporting businesses regarding the draft action plan or any clarification to our comments.

Yours sincerely,



Nick Steel
Chief Executive Officer
12th January 2021