



We are the national peak body representing forests services businesses across Australia. Our members are engaged in all operations of active forest management from land preparation, civil works, tree planting, silviculture, ecological thinning, forest health, dangerous tree removal, fire preparation and response, to harvesting, log haulage and site regeneration.

Support we provided our members and the broader sector in the last year has included:

- negotiating five-year Forest and Fire Services Agreements with the Victorian Government
- rolling out the world-leading ForestFit™ Standard and Certification Scheme
- delivering the Professional Freight Task Management Program nationally.

# Election Platform 2025

A secure future for specialist forest operations

## SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

Forests services businesses fill an essential role within forest products value chains. Every part of Australia's \$24 billion annual forest products industries relies on sustainable, efficient and safe forestry operations turning trees into timber and then replanting, regenerating and protecting for future generations.

Forest services businesses are generally small, multigenerational enterprises operating highly specialised equipment with an incredibly skilled and experienced workforce.

As small businesses within the chain they are vulnerable to market volatility, environmental disruption, increasing regulatory burden, challenges recruiting and retaining qualified staff and the contract management approaches of much larger partner organisations.

Every year we:

- Plant an estimated 70 million plantation trees.
- Regenerate native forest areas that subject to harvesting operations to ensure forests are maintained in perpetuity.
- Harvest and transport more than 27 million cubic metres of saw and pulp logs.
- Provide stable, quality jobs for more than 5000 people mostly in rural and regional areas.
- Protect biodiversity, high value conservation areas and waterways through carefully controlled, managed and regulated activities.
- Undertake fire preparation and response to protect environmental, community and private assets.

## FORESTRY MULTIPLIER IS 2.5

The World Bank states that the forestry industry provides an economic multiplier of 2.5. For every dollar generated by the forestry industry 2.5 times the amount is activated in the economy.

Forestry is geographically located which means the economic impact is concentrates in local communities supporting thousands of families in rural, regional and remote areas where other opportunities are limited.

Forestry operations offer highly skilled, specialist jobs in rural and regional areas. These roles offer an earning capacity than is two and a half times higher than an average job in hospitality.

## CARBON POSITIVE

Australia's forestry operations are carbon positive. Our plantations store more than 258 million tonnes of carbon.

Between 2000 and 2021 native forests managed for timber production increased carbon storage by 120 million tonnes of carbon.

Over the same period native forests managed for conservation decreased carbon storage by more than 250 million tonnes.

*Source: ABARES, State of the Forests Report Criterion 5 (2024)*



## ELECTION POLICY PLATFORM

### ACTIVE FOREST MANAGEMENT INCLUDING SUSTAINABLE NATIVE TIMBER HARVESTING

All forests need to be managed to maintain forest health, limit the impact of invasive species, disease, fire and climate risks.

Managed, regulated and sustainable timber harvesting in forests where this is suitable and appropriate is an effective way to pay for the management of our forests, sequester carbon, support and enhance biodiversity, maintain rural and regional communities and provide sustainable products we all need.

### CAPACITY BUILDING FOR BETTER BUSINESS OPERATIONS

Forest services business owners and staff are under enormous pressure and increasing scrutiny as part of day-to-day activities.

AFCA's Right-Sized Management Systems project will work with small groups of business leaders to assist the development of management systems and processes that are fit-for-purpose and the right size for the operation. This will support improved business, safety and environmental performance.

### FORESTFIT™ CERTIFICATION FOR NATIVE FOREST SERVICES BUSINESSES

Our businesses operating in native forests are targeted for protester action and have been exposed to volatility and uncertainty for too long.

As a sign of confidence and support for the sector and to provide community assurance backed by independent third-party verification, we are seeking support for forest services businesses working in native forests to become certified to AFCA's world-leading ForestFit™ standard.

### FAIR TRADING AND COMMERCIAL CONDUCT SAFEGUARDS

Small businesses need affordable, effective and timely mechanisms to protect their fair trading position when undertaking activities. We welcome the extension of unfair trading provisions to protect small businesses.

We have seen the effects of city-based decisions on the availability of financial and banking services for rural and regional businesses, particularly in native forestry. Governments need to continue working with and ensuring businesses have access to the services they need.

### FUNDING FOR 3G REPLACEMENT COMMUNICATION DEVICES

There are significant safety and productivity issues for many forest services businesses following the closure of 3G mobile networks.

The next government must implement the finding of a recent Senate inquiry to fund boosters for buildings and equipment, provide access to satellite services where ground-systems are no longer adequate, and fund replacement of equipment rendered obsolete.

### FORESTRY VALUE CHAIN CARBON FOOTPRINT ANALYSIS

This project will fill in knowledge gaps in the value chain to identify complementary and conflicting areas for action and ensure those who are contributing to any emissions reduction (ie forest services businesses) are being rewarded.

### WORKFORCE DATA SERVICES

Better labour and workforce data is required from government to support industry and improve policy making. We support a recommendation from Jobs and Skills Australia to establish a dedicated workforce data unit within the Australian Bureau of Agriculture and Resource Economics and Sciences (ABARES).



#### CONTACT US

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