



social review

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Social Review

The Commission is working to ensure that Western Australians benefit from a range of positive social outcomes as well as the financial returns of forest products. As we establish further plantations, regional WA will see enhanced employment opportunities, industry development and improved infrastructure.

We are committed to ongoing consultation and engagement with stakeholders, including communities and the forest industry. As we maximise returns from plantation products we consider value-adding opportunities and the long-term sustainable management of our timbers.

In keeping with our responsibility to our people and the broader community, we regularly review opportunities for development of staff in areas such as occupational health and safety, leadership and development.

Regional development and employment

This year we continued to expand the State's resource of plantation timbers in regional areas to bring economic, social and environmental benefits to Western Australians.

Following several years of consultation and negotiation, Western Australia joined the National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality (NAP) enabling an injection of \$316 million of joint State and Federal Government funding into Natural Resource Management, with \$64 million available for the Strategic Tree Farming project. Most of the funding will be delivered through the Regional Catchment Councils which have developed strategic plans outlining priorities for the management of natural resources in the regions. The Commonwealth Government allocated priority funding of \$5.9 million directly to Strategic Tree Farming (Infinitree) for 2004/05, with the remaining \$58 million to be distributed over three planting seasons.

Industry and community consultation has taken place to ratify regional Tree Farming and Industry Development Plans which leverage employment opportunities in four major areas: Mid-West and Perth region (maritime pine); Esperance (maritime pine); Central South West (eucalypt sawlogs) and South West (radiata pine). The plans provide a framework for funding secured through the NAP and the State's commercial operations.

The Commission's propagation nursery produced approximately 9.3 million seedlings during the year. It is anticipated that production will significantly increase in the next financial year with the commencement of the Premium Plantations 2005 project and plantings flowing from the NAP. Significant investment has occurred to upgrade the growing system to maintain best practice at the nursery. A quality control system is being implemented and greater emphasis is being placed on research and development to improve nursery products.

Employment opportunities have been invigorated by substantial growth and developments at regional sawmilling companies. Whittakers Limited sawmill at Greenbushes has built a new small log line sawmill this year with new kilns and equipment that will add high value to the product and boost employment at the site. Pemberton's Auswest Timbers is completing new kilns, processing sheds and moulding equipment and plans to increase the quantity of value added sawn timber products. One of the highest employers in its area, Nannup Timber Products, has also improved its sawmilling recovery, kiln drying, dry timber storage and moulding operations.

Social Review cont'd

The Commission's timber supply contracts are awarded on the basis of a demonstrated value-added chain as well as a commitment to the ongoing enhancement of employment opportunities in South-West communities.

AREA OF PLANTATIONS ESTABLISHED

Plantation establishment straddles the financial year, therefore areas of establishment reported in this Annual Report are those established during the calendar year of 2004.

Areas established achieve a range of environmental, social and economic benefits and will supply the existing industry, develop resources in new areas for future regional economic benefits and provide multiple landcare protection purposes such as salinity amelioration, carbon sequestration and other biodiversity benefits.

	Second Rotation pine species (ha)	First Rotation pine species (ha)	Eucalypt species (ha)	Sandalwood (ha)	
Target	1,500	4,000	1,100	50	
Total Area established	1,391	1,178	739	80	
Note:	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	
Purpose	Sustain existing industry*	1,391	579	-	-
	Regional development*	-	599	739	80

Note: * Salinity, water quantity and landcare purpose is delivered concurrently with timber production

Areas established against targets:

Notes:

(1) Second rotation pines

Target: 1,500 hectares

- Re-establish all areas clearfelled and ready for replanting (1,391 hectares). Logistical and contractual issues led to a seven per cent shortfall on the target planting area.

(2) First rotation pines

Target: 4,000 hectares

- To sustain softwood resource in the Perth and Mid-West region, plantations are being established on farmland to replace areas to be clearfelled at Gnangara (approx. 23,000 hectares). Since 1995 a total of approximately 10,239 hectares have been established; and
- Final goal for various regional cells (Katanning, Esperance, Albany) are being resolved as part of detailed planning for a coordinated approach to tree farming in Western Australia. Gaining access to land through sharefarming has proven to be difficult. Alternative measures have been pursued by the Commission and are proving fruitful.

Audited key performance indicator

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(3) Eucalypt species

Target: 1,100 hectares

- Eucalypt sawlogs - This program is developing well. Agricultural product values are still competing strongly with tree planting options and therefore land availability for tree planting is at a premium.

(4) Sandalwood

Target: 50 hectares.

- The area planted was 80 hectares. This is a newly developing project with good prospects.

Promotion and consultation

The Commission is an active participant in the promotion of finished timber products. We proudly support numerous industry events and activities and are committed to educating the public about the uniqueness and value adding opportunities available with Western Australia's native forest and plantation timbers and finished products.

Furniture Industry

The Commission supports the enterprise and initiative of the Furnishing Industry Association of Australia, Western Australian branch (FIAA WA), as its furniture manufacturers continue to develop their leadership in design, manufacture and exporting.

The need for strong commercial relationships between sawmillers and local furniture manufacturers continues to take high priority and the Commission has played a role in assisting these relationships.

The Commission was again the 'Platinum' sponsor of the FIAA West Australian and Australian Furniture of the Year Awards in 2004. Just Jarrah continued to show excellence in design by winning the Best of the Best award with its Majestic dining suite.

Australian School of Fine Wood

The Forest Heritage Centre and the Australian School of Fine Wood in Dwellingup are supported by the Commission. The Centre offers education and training for the fine wood furniture industry, forest management and interpretation and sales of fine wood products.

The school has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Curtin University to provide those students of the Australian School of Fine Wood with a continuing avenue of study, and Curtin with a cohort of international students for identified course programmes. The centre is planning new buildings and infrastructure to enhance its capabilities and attractiveness to wood workers and the tourism industry.

The Commission contributed to the salary and vehicle running expenses of the Centre's General Manager.

Timber Advisory Centre

The Timber Advisory Centre at the Home Base Building Expo at Subiaco is a valued alliance for the Commission as it offers information on timber use and projects and educates the broader public, architects, builders, designers and tradespeople.

Social Review cont'd

The Commission contributed \$20,000 towards its management, promotion and upkeep and is represented on the Centre's council. The Centre is due to be remodelled at the end of 2005 to reflect product and market changes.

Furniture manufacturing and exports

The Commission's Timber Technology and Industry Development branches continue to provide technical information on the characteristics and qualities of our timbers for application in newly designed and manufactured timber furniture for Australian and international markets.

In particular, work is being undertaken to demonstrate how to mill, kiln dry and process plantation-grown eucalypt hardwood sawlogs for joinery, furniture and flooring.

Allies in research

Considerable progress has been made towards the development of a Joint Venture Agreement between the Commission and UWA (Faculty of Architecture, Landscape and Visual Arts) to carry out timber technology research. The initial priority will be to undertake work turning short length low-grade jarrah into high value products, and research into karri targeted at new high value added products and markets for furniture, flooring and joinery. Future research will mainly focus on identification of new markets for hardwood and softwood timber with particular emphasis on design and manufacturing of furniture in Western Australia.

The Commission is a partner in the Cooperative Research Centre for Wood Innovations which is working on microwave technology and high value-adding of timber. Research into bending of timber continued, and staff are also involved in projects on timber preservation and drying as well as editing of reports.

Commission staff have participated in sawmilling trials of Western Australian plantation-grown timbers in association with ensis (formerly CSIRO Forestry and Forest Products).

Community education

The Commission has participated in the following events in an effort to further educate the broader community about its objectives, the State's timbers and the many value adding uses of our timber products:

- WA Farmers Federation annual conference;
- Wagin Woolarama;
- Working with Wood Show;
- WA on Show;
- Dowerin Field Day;
- Perth Royal Show;
- South West Horticultural and Forestry Expo;
- School of Wood end of year student exhibition;
- Agricultural shows at Mt Barker, Albany and Gingin; and
- numerous field days.

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The Commission responded to more than 500 enquiries on wood properties and timber use in the financial year. These enquiries include wood identification, botanical advice, movement of timber in service and other aspects relating to utilisation.

Community consultation

The Commission consulted a range of stakeholders in regard to its native and plantation harvesting plans. Stakeholder groups included the public, property owners, indigenous representatives, shires, parliamentary members, corporations, conservation groups, students and government agencies.

The Commission ensured prior notification was provided via media notices and direct mail when required. Detailed coupe maps, educational tours and follow-up contact was also provided by Commission staff on request.

Committee communication

The Commission joined representatives from industry, government and community on the Native Forest Products Ministerial Advisory Council and the Plantation Industry Ministerial Advisory Committee, which provides an important forum for communication on the development of the industry. A major activity for the Committee was the preparation of the draft State Strategy for Plantations and Farm Forestry.

The Commission also participated with the Private Forestry Development Committees (Trees South West, Timber 2020 and South East Forest Foundation) on matters of mutual interest, gave presentations at various strategic planning forums and regularly contributed to the local branch of Australian Forest Growers (the national private forestry body) and the WA Agroforestry Working Group.

Staff also met with regional Natural Resource Management Groups (the Northern Agricultural Catchments Council, Avon Catchments Council, South West Catchments Council and the South Coast Regional Initiative Planning Team) on their NRM Strategies and Investment Plans. At a State and national level the Commission participated in a range of NRM committees ranging from the peak State Natural Resource Management Council, the State and Commonwealth Joint Steering Committee, Senior Officers NRM Group, State Investment Committee and the Fast and Efficient Review Panel.

Social Review cont'd

Our people

The Commission has 67 employees working from the corporate headquarters in metropolitan Rivervale and 140 in 13 regional offices around the State. This represents an increase of five staff on the previous year and is mainly due to the recruitment drive for entry level field staff.

The Commission's employees are committed to working closely with industry in a dynamic environment that holds enormous potential for the entire Western Australian community.

As at 30 June 2005, staff numbers and their locations were:

	Full-time salaried staff	Part-time salaried staff	Wages employees	Total	Men	Women
Albany	15	-	-	15	12	3
Bunbury	18	3	-	21	13	8
Collie	9	2	-	11	6	5
Esperance	2	-	-	2	2	-
Gnangara	12	-	-	12	9	3
Harvey	20	3	-	23	16	7
Kalgoorlie	2	-	-	2	2	-
Katanning	4	-	-	4	4	-
Kununurra	1	-	-	1	1	-
Manjimup	17	-	-	17	15	2
West Manjimup Nursery	14	2	2	18	8	10
Nannup	12	-	-	12	10	2
Rivervale	62	5	-	67	36	31
Wanneroo	2	-	-	2	1	1
Total	190	15	2	207	135	72

All employees are committed to the Commission's values and act with integrity, professionalism and understanding. The Commission management seeks to develop the skills of its employees and build on the personal commitment of each member of the team with a targeted program of professional development.

The Commission has outsourced its human resource transactional functions to the People Services Branch of CALM under a Service Level Agreement. These arrangements are reviewed annually.

Recruitment

During 2003/04 the Commission identified the need to ensure access to a pool of entry level field staff with career aspirations in the forestry sector.

In 2004/05 the Commission continued to recruit entry level field staff from a pool of readily available forest officers for immediate deployment as a result of successful investment strategies or other strategic outcomes.

Training

The Commission has continued the development of a training program for entry level field staff. This program is intended to deliver courses designed to address the particular requirements of the Commission and its employees. In accordance with this, those Commission courses identified as having relevance are currently being reviewed in order to ensure that they meet the requirements for delivery by a Registered Training Organisation (RTO).

A Training and Development Committee has also been established to provide direction and coordination to the staff training effort within the Commission. The committee is adopting a two-phase approach to the development of training programs. Phase one will focus on operational and field-based staff, with phase two incorporating training programs for administrative and management staff. Work has commenced on phase one to develop a 'career pathway' for each category of operational and field-based staff.

Growth Development Leadership Program

During 2004/05 the Commission implemented the second Growth Development Leadership program, designed to provide staff and the organisation with an ongoing development and leadership program. The program, with an initial group of 17 participants, commenced in February 2005.

Participants nominated from across the Commission have been involved in the development of a number of projects selected for their input to the Commission's strategic objectives. These projects are due for completion in the latter half of 2005.

Occupational Safety and Health (OSH)

The Commission's forestry operations were audited by Worksafe WA in 2004/05 as part of a national worksafe project on forestry. Worksafe inspectors visited Commission-controlled harvesting operations including our pines and native forests in the South-West and sandalwood operations in the arid forests around Kalgoorlie. Worksafe was generally impressed with the priority that OSH has in our operations. A healthy partnership has developed between key commission staff and the Worksafe inspectors responsible for forestry. Worksafe will be releasing a report of this project for the Commission.

The Commission has and continues to play a key role in the revision of the Plantation and Hardwood Safety and Health Code which should be finalised before Christmas.

Major initiatives undertaken in 2004/05 included the drafting of the Commission's first Safety Management Systems Manual. Priority training of Safety and Health Representatives (SHREPS), a complete review of our Emergency Response Plans and obtaining legal advice and making necessary adjustments in regards to our duty of care requirements to our contractors. Ergonomics training was provided in several work centres.

There were two Lost Time Incidents (LTI), which resulted in a total of seven days lost, and 16 Minor Treatment Incidents (MTI) in 2004/05. The LTI's were an eye injury and occupational overuse syndrome. These statistics demonstrate an improvement in our OSH performance for 2004/05.

Social Review cont'd

Disability Services Plan

The Commission continued to operate in accordance with its existing Disability Services Plan.

Equal Employment Opportunities

The Commission's yearly Equal Employment Opportunity Management Plan for the period ending 30 June 2005 reflected the following outcomes:

- Representation of women within the workforce has increased from 34.6 per cent to 38.6 per cent;
- Number of employees who are from indigenous backgrounds has decreased from 0.4 per cent to nil;
- Number of employees who have disabilities has increased from 0.9 per cent to 2.9 per cent;
- Number of employees from culturally diverse backgrounds has increased from 7.5 per cent to 15.9 per cent;

The Commission has continued to seek to create part-time employment opportunities for those staff with family responsibilities, and regionally based employment opportunities wherever possible.

Code of Conduct

The Commission complies with the Public Sector Code of Ethics and has its own Code of Conduct for employees, which has been in place since July 2001.

The Code of Conduct addresses issues including conflicts of interest, corruption, discipline, confidentiality, freedom of information, security of records, equal employment opportunities and diversity, disability services and grievance resolution.

Feedback opportunities are available through internal and external mechanisms and staff are regularly surveyed.

There was one complaint received under the Commission Code of Conduct and disciplinary action taken.

There were no reported breaches of the Public Sector Standards lodged against the Commission during 2004/05.