

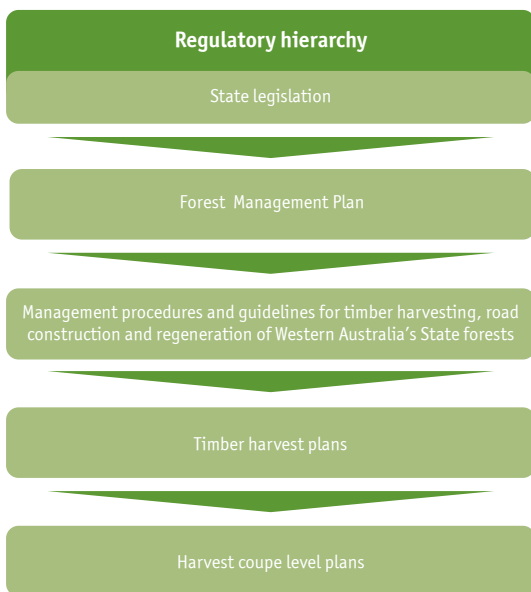


Information sheet 3 of 6

# Forest management in Western Australia

Sustainable timber harvesting in Western Australia’s South West native forests is governed by a comprehensive legislative framework and management procedures.

The diagram below illustrates the regulatory framework associated with the management of our South West forests by the State Government and its agencies. Across the planning framework there are several opportunities for public engagement through formal and informal consultation processes.



The Forest Management Plan (FMP) provides a framework over a 10-year period for the sustainable management of our South West native forests for a range of environmental, social and economic uses. The FMP is developed by the Conservation and Parks Commission in consultation with the community and experts in forestry, botany, wildlife biology, catchment management, water resource management, cultural heritage and recreation planning. It is reviewed by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and approved by the Minister for Environment.

The Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) and the Conservation and Parks Commission are the regulatory bodies overseeing compliance with the FMP. The Forest Products Commission (FPC) is responsible for conducting commercial forest operations through sustainable practices and operates under the *Forest Products Act 2000*.

The 2014–2023 FMP covers approximately 2.25 million hectares of native forest within the geographic areas of the Swan, South West and Warren regions. The FMP adopts three scales of management: whole of forest, landscape and operational. Our forests support multiple uses without compromising unique ecosystems.

The area of native forest estate under the FMP is divided into two broad categories:

- land that is protected in formal reserves, national parks and other areas not available for timber harvesting (approximately 1.4 million hectares<sup>1</sup>); and
- mixed regrowth forest available for harvesting (just over 850,000 hectares<sup>1</sup>).

Strict volume limits are also stipulated in the FMP to ensure the amount of timber removed is sustainable, through natural regeneration and growth of trees throughout the forest.

Within the areas available for timber harvesting, additional zones are excluded to further ensure biodiversity protection. These zones include:

### Informal reserves

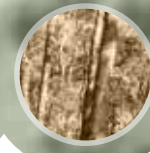
Informal reserves cover various types of forest including old-growth forest; rivers and stream zones; travel route zones; diverse ecotype zones (DEZ); less well reserved vegetation complexes and forest ecosystem and Regional Forest Agreement accredited linkage zones. Most timber harvesting operations are excluded from informal reserves except for some travel routes in the Warren Region.

### Fauna Habitat Zones (FHZ)

FHZs are areas of forest specifically managed for the conservation of flora and fauna during each timber harvest rotation. Areas classified as FHZs form a network designed to complement existing conservation reserves and ensure biodiversity recovers between one timber harvesting rotation and the next. Within the zones fauna populations are maintained to permit recolonisation of nearby areas following timber harvesting.



1. Australian Forestry. 2011. A regional journal of forestry science and forest management - special issue: FORESTCHECK, Vol 74, no. 4.



## Timber harvesting plans

Under the FMP, DBCA develops three-year rolling harvest plans. These plans specify locations, type and volume of timber to be harvested based on the FMP sustainable yields. This allows the FPC to plan ahead and ensure all the relevant checks and approvals are sought prior to harvesting.

The FMP also requires the FPC to develop annual harvest plans. The annual harvest plan is based on DBCA's three-year harvest plan and identifies the forest coupes which are intended to be harvested during that year.

The DBCA and FPC work collaboratively in producing the three and one-year harvest plans. The FPC makes the one-year plans available to the public for comment.

**Harvest coupe level plans** are the very detailed operational documents under which the FPC and its harvesting contractor must operate. These are developed by the FPC and approved by DBCA.

## High environmental standards

The FPC is committed to sustainable forest management to the highest standards. It is certified to the Australian Forestry Standard (AS4708:2013) and the international standard for Environmental Management Systems (ISO 14001:2015). These certifications are received after rigorous, ongoing auditing and assessment by an external, licensed and independent auditing firm to ensure our business meets the requirements of the regulatory framework.



## Management procedures and guidelines

Manuals for timber harvesting and road construction have been developed by the FPC in accordance with the Code of Practice for Timber Harvesting and the FMP, as well as legal and specific operational provisions. The manuals offer more detailed direction to FPC staff and contractors with regards to carrying out harvesting and road construction operations and associated activities.

In addition, operational guidelines and procedures have also been developed by DBCA. Silvicultural guidelines relating to each of the main forest-types (jarrah and karri) detail the management requirements such as habitat retention, regeneration and rehabilitation following harvesting. Soil and water management guidelines are also prepared by DBCA to lessen the likelihood of damage to soils from the use of heavy machinery in wet soil conditions and to maintain water quality and quantity.

