



Forest Products Commission
**Guide to forest management planning
for plantations and South West
native forests**



Forest
Products
Commission
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Acknowledgement

The Forest Products Commission (FPC) acknowledges the Noongar Nations that are the traditional owners of the Yued, Gnaala Karla Boodja, Ballardong, Whadjuk, Southwest Boojarah and the Wagyl Kaip and Southern Noongar forests and lands. We respect the Elders past, present and emerging.

Further detail of the FPC's commitment to first Australians is available in the FPC's Reconciliation Action Plan (FPC, 2018).

Feedback

Please refer to the Forest Products Commission's website for information on how to provide feedback on this document.

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Introduction

This document provides an overview of the FPC's role in forest management in plantation and South West native forest operations on both State-owned and private land where the FPC undertakes forest operations. This document should also be read in conjunction with the Conservation and Parks Commission's [Forest Management Plan 2014-2023](#) (FMP) (Conservation and Parks Commission, 2014) and the [FPC's Karri forest management plan](#) (FPC, 2018).

Policy and objectives

The FPC has a Statement of Corporate Intent (SCI), which describes how the agency intends to achieve its financial, industry, environmental and social objectives. The SCI complies with the requirements of the *Forest Products Act 2000* and represents an agreement between the Minister for Forestry and the FPC.

The Statement of Corporate Intent is consistent with the Strategic Development Plan which details a five-year view of the FPC's planning.

Vision and values

The FPC's vision is to build and maintain a sustainable and commercially viable forest products industry that provides economic and social benefits to the people of Western Australia.

The FPC has clearly defined values. These include operating responsibly, ethically and sustainably. The FPC is committed to achieving results and delivering excellent services to its customers, partners, the community and each other.

The FPC also commits to providing a safe workplace for its staff and contractors, and puts the wellbeing and professional development of its people at the forefront of its business.

Forest management policy

The FPC's commitment to implementing forest management practices that are environmentally sound, socially acceptable and economically viable is documented through our Forest Management Policy.

A copy of [Policy 9 - Forest management](#) (FPC, 2018) is available on the FPC website.

Scope

This document describes the FPC's forest management activities within the Defined Forest Area (DFA) for areas that are certified to the Australian Forestry Standard for Sustainable Forest Management (AFS) AS 4708 and Environmental Management System (EMS) ISO 14001.

AFS certification is endorsed by the Programme for Endorsement for Forestry Certification Schemes (PEFC). This certification covers timber species native to South West, Western Australia and Plantation *pinus* species mainly *radiata* and *pinaster*, including those on private property. It also includes exotic mixed eucalyptus plantations on land owned by the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation (DWER) as well as areas mined and rehabilitated prior to 2006. It excludes native sandalwood operations and areas covered by active mining tenements. Further information about the areas excluded and included in our AFS certification is provided in Procedure 55 Defined forest areas (FPC, 2018).

[Maps of our DFA](#), as well as our certificate are available on our website. This document provides an overview of the means in which we ensure we meet commitments under the FPC's [Policy 9 - Forest management](#) (FPC, 2018). It provides an overview of our applicable legal and other requirements, forest values, management objectives, operations, monitoring, resource and inventory and how our forests are managed to ensure ongoing improvement.

Agency obligations and functions

Table 1 outlines the roles and responsibilities for management of areas within the DFA.

Table 1: Roles and responsibilities for managing areas within the FPC's DFA

Land Tenure	Business area	Activity	Agency
State forest	Native Forest (available to the FPC for harvesting)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> harvesting regeneration roading activities 	FPC
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fire management Approval of disturbance activities (online Disturbance Approval System) 	DBCA
State forest	Plantations (available to the FPC for harvesting)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> harvesting regeneration firebreaks roading activities 	FPC
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> fire management approval of disturbance activities (online Disturbance Approval System) 	DBCA
State forest	Native forest/plantations (unavailable for harvesting or handed back to the DBCA by the FPC)	Responsible for managing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> conservation fire roading infrastructure recreation timber production on a sustained yield basis water catchment protection other activities prescribed by the regulations e.g. beekeeping, commercial wildflower picking. 	DBCA

Land Tenure	Business area	Activity	Agency
State forest	Section 62 Forest Conservation Zones (The objectives for areas of State forest classified under section 62 of the CALM Act as Forest Conservation Zones prohibit timber production)	Responsible for managing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • conservation • fire • roading infrastructure • recreation • timber production on a sustained yield basis • water catchment protection • other activities prescribed by the regulations e.g. beekeeping, commercial wildflower 	DBCA
Timber reserve		The management intention to set aside the land for utilisation of the timber resource. The management objectives for indigenous 'timber reserves' and timber reserves planted with exotic species are identical to those for State forest.	DBCA
National Park		Manage to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fulfil the demand for recreation which is consistent with conservation of natural values • maintain and restore the natural environment, including protection of water catchments and rivers • protect indigenous flora and fauna • preserve features of archaeological, historic or scientific interest (including Aboriginal heritage sites). 	National parks with vesting through the CALM Act are managed by the DBCA
Conservation park		Conservation parks have the same management objectives as national parks and are managed identically to national parks.	DBCA

Land Tenure	Business area	Activity	Agency
Nature reserve		<p>Manage to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> maintain and restore the natural environment protect, care for and promote the study of indigenous flora and fauna preserve any feature of archaeological, historic or scientific interest, including Aboriginal heritage sites. 	DBCA
Section 5(1)(g) and 5(1)(h) reserves		No set purpose applies but 'recreation or conservation' is a common purpose applied to several section 5(1)(g) or 5(1)(h) reserves that reflect management for these purposes. Management objectives are written for each reserve depending on their purpose e.g. promotion of recreation and conservation of natural values.	DBCA
Freehold land held in the name of the CALM Act CEO	Much of the freehold land is specified in section 131 of the CALM Act as previously held by the Conservator of Forests.	No formal purpose is required with freehold. Management objectives will depend on the use to which the land is put. Predominantly this land has been used to grow exotic tree species, largely pine. Whilst not bound by any management objectives in the CALM Act, DBCA manages the plantation freehold land in association with the FPC for the optimum yield in production similar to the State forest and timber reserves planted with exotic species.	DBCA
Unallocated Crown Land		No formally assigned management purpose. Land not specifically allocated to a Government department.	Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage
Land in which water agencies have an interest		Includes freehold land, land vested under the Land Act or Land Administration Act where water is listed as a purpose, catchment reserves coincident with State forest, and areas declared under the main water supply acts.	Department of Water and Environmental Regulation

Land Tenure	Business area	Activity	Agency
FPC freehold land	Plantations	Purchased to add to the plantation estate, the forest to be managed within the fence line of the property including all environmental features within the property.	FPC
Sharefarms (1)	Plantations	To manage the planted forest asset only (Deposited Plan)	FPC
		To manage firebreaks and non-plantation features	Landowner
Sharefarms (2)	Plantations	To manage the planted forest asset, firebreaks and internal environmental features (Deposited Plan)	FPC
Forests managed by the FPC but not under contract	Synergy Afforestation project Synergy	Planting the sites and measuring the sites for their contribution to the Carbon Farming initiative.	FPC
		Owner of the property, trees and Carbon Credits (ACCU's)	Synergy

Legal and other requirements

The FPC is governed by the *Forest Products Act 2000* and sections of the *Forest Management Regulations 1993*. Section 12 of this Act requires the FPC in undertaking its activities to ensure:

- i. the long-term viability of the forest products industry; and
- ii. the principles of ecologically sustainable forest management are applied in the management of indigenous forest products located on public land.

The FPC also operates in accordance with a wide range of legislative and other compliance requirements, including the FMP which covers the South West native forests and plantations in State forest and timber reserves.

The FMP is a 10 year plan developed in consultation with key stakeholders across industry and conservation groups, within government, local government and the community. It is the key policy framework for managing forests as this plan identifies goals and performance targets and proposed management activities to achieve these goals. The FMP is developed in accordance with the principles of ecologically sustainable forest management (ESFM) and the requirements of relevant State and Commonwealth legislation.

Prior to the FMP's implementation it is reviewed by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and approved by the Minister for Environment. More information about the development of the FMP is available on the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) [website](#). The DBCA and the Conservation and Parks Commission oversee compliance with the FMP.

The FPC also manages plantations on private property, although not subject to FMP requirements, are subject to the relevant State and Commonwealth legislation, as well as Local Government by-laws. Our private property plantations are referred to as sharefarms and operate through profit-a-prendre arrangements.

Figure 1 (DBCA, 2019) provides an overview of the legislative framework governing both South West native forest and plantations (including private softwood plantations under sharefarm arrangements).

The FPC undergoes routine surveillance audits for AFS and EMS in accordance with the standards requirements. Further information about these standards is available on the FPC's [Independent Certification web page](#). On request we provide members of the public with copies of our summary AFS audit reports.

Western Australia's Forest Management System

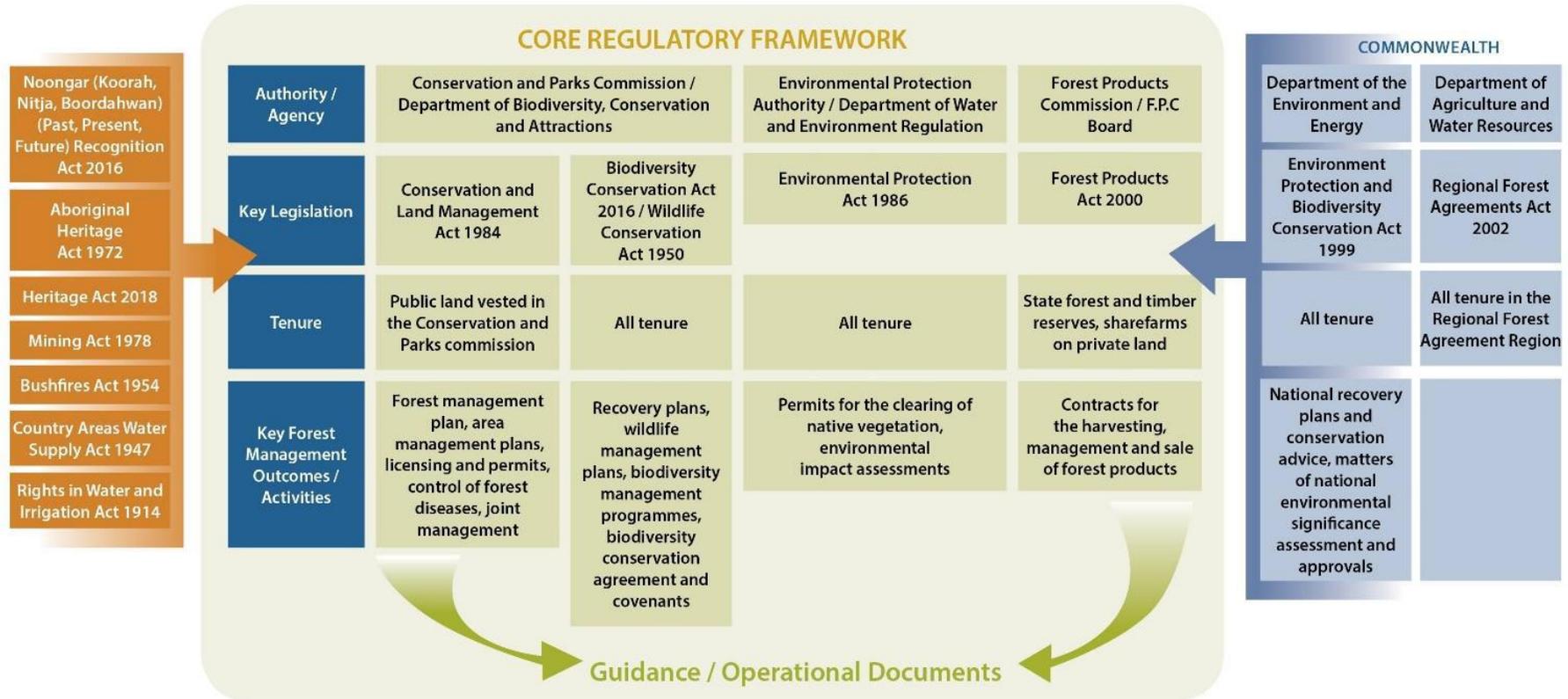


Figure 1. An overarching view of our legislative framework for forest management (DBCA, 2019)

Forest values

The basis of forest management under the FMP stems from the principles of ecologically sustainable forest management (ESFM). The FPC must abide by the requirements of the FMP for land vested in the Conservation and Parks Commission. For other land such as plantations on sharefarms, the FPC must adhere to legal and other requirements. Accordingly, all our forests are managed to ensure the protection of a range of values.

Management of the forests according to the principles of ESFM takes into account the range of forest values including environmental, economic, social and cultural values. Forest values should not be considered in isolation, as they also overlap with each other. For example, protecting soil and water resources is important for biodiversity and productive capacity. Also, the conservation of soil and water is important for preserving the value of the land for the culture and heritage of Noongar¹ people. Water also provides an essential commodity for the community.

It is important to consider the diverse needs of societies. As part of achieving a balance between these needs and values, effective stakeholder engagement is important.

The following provides a summary of forest values relevant to South West native forest and/or plantation areas. Further detail about each of these values are included in the FMP and in the [Karri forest management plan](#) (FPC, 2018).

Our South West native forests and plantations are managed whilst ensuring the protection and maintenance of the following:

- **Biological diversity** – Forests are managed to maintain a range of biological values including threatened and priority species, ecological communities and old-growth forests.
- **Ecosystem health and vitality** – This includes protecting the forest from damaging agents such as weeds, pests, diseases and fire.
- **Soil and water resources** – This includes measures to limit soil disturbance and ensuring the protection of soil and water quality.
- **Productive capacity** – This relates to ensuring the forests are managed to ensure we sustain ecosystem processes to provide for goods and services over the long term.
- **Natural and cultural heritage** – Heritage in forests includes both cultural and natural values related to the biophysical expression of forests. Forests must be managed to ensure we identify and protect cultural heritage that is valued by Noongar and other Australians.
- **Socio-economic benefits** – There are a wide range of benefits the forests provides and this is not limited to providing jobs and renewable forest products. Other values society places on the forests include clean air and water, biodiversity protection and carbon sequestration.

¹ The term Noongar refers collectively to the Noongar community who are the traditional owners of the South West of Western Australia.

Carbon stocks

In managing the forests to protect the above values, forest management must consider other impacts such as a changing climate and global carbon cycles.

Indicative estimates of the above and below ground carbon stocks in live standing trees within the major native forest types were provided in the Draft FMP (Conservation and Parks Commission, 2012b). In this analysis, it was projected that at the whole of forest scale, the quantity of carbon stored in live trees in the forests would increase by between three and five per cent during the plan's 10-year period (Conservation and Parks Commission, 2013).

The indicative estimate of the total above and below ground carbon in the live standing trees in the south-west forests projected to 2014 is 164.1 million tonnes, of which some 44 per cent (or 72.8 million tonnes) occurs on formal reserves and forest conservation areas (Table 5) (Conservation and Parks Commission, 2012b, page 92).

Table 5: Indicative estimates of the above and below ground live tree carbon stocks to 2014 in major native forest types (Conservation and Parks Commission, 2012b, page 92)

Major forest type	Biomass carbon Mt C	
	Formal reserves and forest conservation areas (tonnes)	State forest and timber reserves (tonnes)
Jarrah	47.8	74.0
Karri	15.5	14.3
Wandoo/other	9.5	3.0
Total	72.8	91.3

Notes:

1. These estimates are for the 2.25 million hectares of south-west forests within the RFA boundary on lands vested in the Conservation Commission.
2. These estimates have been compiled from inventories that vary in sample intensity and geographic coverage, and the relative precision of the estimates therefore varies markedly between vegetation types and tenure categories.
3. These estimates do not include litter, coarse woody debris and shrub components.
4. Other forest types are bullich, peppermint and coastal heath, shrub, herb and sedgeland, ecosystems.

The 2018 carbon estimate for the FPC's softwood plantation estate (77 304 ha) is 4 897 550 tonnes of Biomass Carbon. This Carbon estimate was calculated for above and below ground Biomass Carbon using formulas derived from Snowden *et al* (2000)

Forest operations and silviculture

Forest operations and silviculture take place after extensive planning to ensure the protection of forest values such as threatened flora, fauna and cultural heritage. Further information is provided in the FMP, [Karri forest management plan](#) (FPC, 2018) and the native forest timber harvesting planning manual (FPC, 2018) .

An overview of the South West native forest planning process is provided below:

1. Rolling [three year indicative harvest plans](#) are prepared by the DBCA in consultation with the FPC.
2. Indicative [one year harvest plans](#) are prepared by the FPC and approved by the DBCA. These are released for public consultation and notices are provided through local newspapers.
3. The online Disturbance Approval System (DAS) form is completed and submitted to the DBCA for approval. The FPC must receive a letter of approval prior to operations commencing.

An overview of the Plantations and sharefarms planning process is provided below:

1. One year rolling plantations harvest plans are developed for the central forest region, and the northern forest region. These plans are stored in the 311 estate plantations GIS drive in Bunbury. In addition, Geomaster has information about the woodflow data based on modelling. This is used to identify areas for harvest over plantation rotations.
2. For plantations on State owned land, site level plans are developed, and disturbance activities commence only after a valid DAS has been approved by the DBCA.
3. For plantations on sharefarms, site level plans are developed, and disturbance activities only commence after the completion of the FPC47 – Planning checklist for disturbance activities on sharefarms (FPC, 2018).

Silvicultural guidelines are applied depending on the forest type and considering extensive scientific research. For example, in native forest, silvicultural guidelines have been developed considering an independent expert panel review process (refer to [Calculating the sustained yield for the South-west native forests of Western Australia](#) (Ferguson et al. 2013)).

In addition, current guidelines consider the outcomes of the [Review of silviculture in forests of South West Western Australia](#) (Burrows et al. 2011). Key documents that provide the rationale for our silvicultural regimes in native forest are listed in Table 1. Our native forest and plantation operations are tailored to suit a number of silvicultural objectives that take into account one or more factors such as current forest health, stand productivity, biodiversity, water resources, market conditions and resource capacity.

Table 1. Documents providing a rationale for our silvicultural regimes in native forest

Reference material	Guideline document
Reference material for jarrah forest Silviculture (Bradshaw, 2015)	Silviculture guideline for jarrah forest (Parks and Wildlife, 2014)
Reference material for karri forest Silviculture (Bradshaw, 2015)	Silviculture guideline for karri forest (Parks and Wildlife, 2014)
	Silviculture Guideline for Wandoo Forest (Parks and Wildlife, 2014)

Records on silvicultural treatments in native forest are stored in the silvicultural recording system (SILREC), which is managed by the DBCA's Forest Management Branch.

In terms of softwood plantations, silvicultural regimes, such as thinning are determined based on the outcomes from woodflow modelling and information stored in Geomaster. Other silvicultural management such as fertiliser and weed control are also undertaken as required. There are a range of Technical specifications relevant to silvicultural regimes within plantations.

The harvest and production levels are managed through formal contracts, and log deliveries are captured in the Logging Operations Information System (LOIS). This enables the management of log removals within sustainable harvest limits and provides an accurate record of what we have harvested.

Management of wildfire

Our forests are managed to prevent the spread of wildfire. Uncontrolled spread of large wildfires can have a substantial impact on both the environment and our business. However, fire is also a useful silvicultural tool. Appropriate fire regimes in native forest ecosystems help to promote natural regeneration, ecosystem health and vitality and biodiversity. The DBCA has primary responsibility for managing fire within areas covered by the FMP, and part of this involves prescribed burning to reduce fuel build up. Within private sharefarm areas, the Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES) has primary responsibility for emergency fire management.

The FPC work in close cooperation with the DBCA, the Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES) and private forest management companies to plan and deliver fire mitigation measures designed to protect Western Australia's productive forests. FPC staff participate in joint agency emergency response arrangements.

More information about fire management is also included in the FMP.

Chemical use

The FPC minimises the use of chemicals where possible, but they are often necessary to control weeds and damaging insect pests and diseases within a plantation environment. The FPC only uses Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) approved chemicals and has a process for ensuring their safe and environmentally responsible handling and use, in accordance with relevant legislation.

Forest types

A brief description of each of the forest types the FPC operate within the DFA is as follows:

1. Northern Jarrah dominant forest – *Eucalyptus marginata* (Jarrah) dominates this dry sclerophyll eucalyptus forest, which is uneven aged. *Corymbia calophylla* (marri) occurs throughout the jarrah forest. *Eucalyptus wandoo* (wandoo) and *Eucalyptus accedens* (powderbark wandoo) can be found on the drier eastern range and *Eucalyptus patens* (blackbutt) in moister sites.
2. Southern Jarrah dominant forest - *Eucalyptus marginata* (Jarrah) dominates this dry sclerophyll eucalyptus forest, which is uneven aged. *Corymbia calophylla* (marri) occurs throughout. The cooler southern forests can comprise a mix of *Eucalyptus diversicolor* (karri) and *Eucalyptus guilfoylei* (yellow tingle) and *Eucalyptus jacksonii* (red tingle).
3. Karri dominant forest – *Eucalyptus diversicolor* (karri) dominates this wet sclerophyll eucalyptus forest, which occurs in the lower South West of Western Australia. This forest regenerates after removal of the dense understorey (naturally through fire). Some areas of forest are described as ‘pure karri’, with other areas containing *Corymbia calophylla* (marri), and a smaller portion contains *Eucalyptus marginata* (Jarrah).
4. Softwood plantations – Our softwood plantations mainly comprise of the pine species *Pinus radiata* (radiata pine) and *Pinus pinaster* (maritime pine), but also include small amounts of other pine species.
5. DWER Mixed eucalyptus plantations – These plantations comprise of a range of exotic eucalyptus species. Once harvested, the FPC plans to plant these areas as pine plantation.

For South West native forests, the FMP provides information on the available resources for timber harvesting. It also includes information on the sustainable yield with specific information on the annual harvest limits. The FMP provides full detail on how the allowable harvest levels are calculated, which also allows a safety margin to account for various risks such as the impacts of a drying climate and wildfire. Information about sustained yield is provided in the FMP. Inventory information on the native forest species in areas available for harvest is maintained by the DBCA.

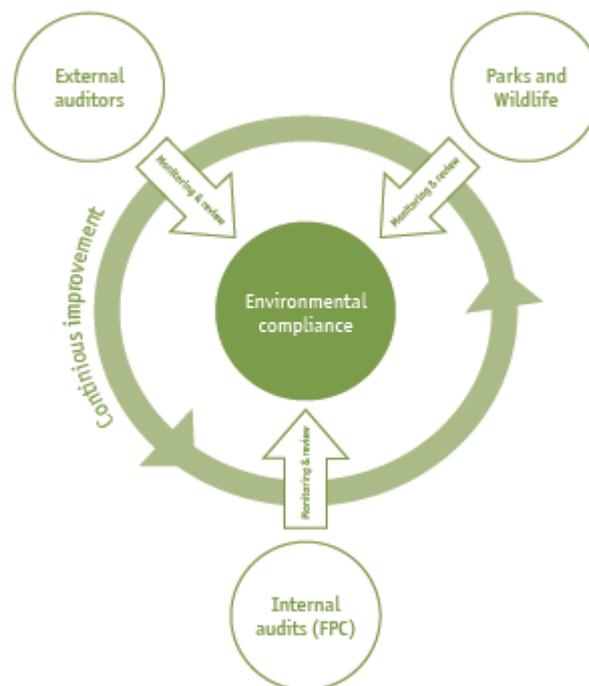
Geomaster is the repository for all softwood plantation standing resource information and future volume predictions. Geomaster is also used to ensure accurate reporting for our [Annual Report](#) (FPC, 2019).

Each year the FPC publish an [Annual Report](#) (FPC, 2019) detailing the forest products that are harvested by species and product type. This includes forest products from both plantations and native forests.

Plan implementation and management

Our forest management is monitored and continually improved. This is achieved through our IFMS, which ensures that all legal and other requirements are identified and managed under a corporate governance framework. The framework provides the basis for strategic planning, ongoing development of procedures and work instructions, measurement of performance and review for ensuring improvement. As part of maintaining and improving our system, both internal and external reviews as well as internal and external auditing takes place.

External auditing includes auditing by the DBCA to assess our performance against FMP compliance requirements, as well as auditing by independent environmental and forest management certification bodies.



Aspects/ Impacts, objectives and targets, monitoring and measurement

The FPC identifies the aspects of our activities that can have an impact on a range of forest values. Impacts are rated in terms of their significance. Aspects of our operations are rated considering each impact's likelihood of occurrence and likely consequence, to identify the level of potential risk. The Aspects and impacts register is made available to all FPC staff and reviewed periodically (at least annually).

Significant aspects are related to those activities that can cause one or more impacts which, for example:

- may result in detrimental impacts on flora, fauna and biodiversity;
- may result in detrimental impacts to the productive capacity of the forests;
- generate soil movement, and accordingly the potential for sediment generation to surface waters;

- result in alterations to the soil structure, for example, alterations to the soil profile, and to bulk density;
- may result in contamination of soil and groundwater, for example, spills and leaks, and off-target application of herbicides;
- may contribute to contamination of surface waters by chemicals, for example, agricultural chemicals and machinery fuel or oil and sediment;
- may impact on air quality, for example, through dust and smoke;
- can affect health and safety of humans;
- can tarnish good relationships with stakeholders and the community; and
- have the potential to negatively impact cultural or natural heritage.

Objectives and targets are monitored regularly, and periodic performance evaluations are completed. Objectives and targets can also be set to pursue opportunities for positive impacts.

The way in which we use rankings to determine our significant environmental aspects is included in Procedure 86 Risk management (FPC, 2017). This procedure also provides information on our forest monitoring and measurement against our objectives and targets. In addition, Procedure 83 Integrated Forest Management System and corporate governance framework (FPC, 2019) outlines how our aspects register relates to our Corporate Governance framework and the development of our [Strategic Plan 2017 – 2021](#) (FPC, 2017) and [Statement of Corporate Intent](#).

The FPC's [Policy 9 – Forest management](#) (FPC, 2018) states that the FPC will, in conjunction with other relevant authorities '*Set objectives and targets to ensure a continuous improvement approach to both management performance and managing environmental, economic, social and cultural impacts and outcomes including the prevention of pollution*'.

Objectives and targets are important for meeting the environmental policy commitments and how overall organisational goals are developed. The process considers such things as significant aspects, applicable legal and other requirements, views of interested parties, financial, operational and organisational considerations, findings from internal and external audits, as well as possible effects on the FPC's public image.

There is a monitoring and measurement program that addresses roles, responsibilities, processes, resources, timeframes and actions necessary for achieving the environmental objectives and targets. Results are recorded in Content Manager and these record numbers are recorded on the monitoring and measurement register, as per the reporting timeframe set for each objective and target.

Incident management

Incident management is an important part of the FPC's IFMS, and the FPC has robust incident management procedures and practices in place. The FPC's procedures provide guidance for reporting incidents and managing the process through to closure. The FPC has in place a process for determining the root cause of incidents and implementing appropriate corrective actions, as well as implementing system improvements.

Incident data is periodically analysed for trends, incident recurrence and to determine the effectiveness of prescribed actions.

Stakeholder engagement

Ongoing engagement with stakeholders is essential and can help us to improve our forest management. There are a number of opportunities for stakeholders to [engage with us](#) including, but not limited to:

- the release of [indicative harvest plans](#);
- during the preparation of site level (coupe or plantation specific) plans;
- through [operational specific notifications](#);
- through our [feedback and complaints process](#);
- via feedback on information materials, or plans such as the [Karri forest management plan](#) (FPC, 2018); and
- through providing feedback on any other materials that are available on our website including the information contained on our [Independent Certification](#) page.
- Through provision of field tours of FPC operations for interested stakeholders

Please refer to [Policy 54 - Stakeholder engagement](#) (FPC, 2019) and our stakeholder engagement [web page](#).

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