



EXECUTIVE SUPPORT BRANCH

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The release of the Forest Management Plan 2014-2023

The Forest Management Plan is of critical importance to the timber industry as it must ensure long term industry viability and the continued employment of native forest workers over the next ten years.

The Forest Management Plan (FMP) 2014-2023 sets out the requirements to ensure the sustainable management of the State's native forests. While the plan is sound and strongly supported by the Forest Products Commission (FPC), its strict requirements will result in some significant challenges for the native timber industry.

The FMP has been two years in the making, and has involved consultation with government agencies, local government, conservation groups and the forest industry. The draft FMP was released for public comment from August to November 2012.

The FMP is based on long term scientific research, and sets out harvesting limits that are well within sustainable levels. Under the new FMP over 62% of the State's native forests is set aside in reserves, and all areas classified as old-growth forest are reserved and protected. It will see improved monitoring and reporting of forest health and biodiversity and will ensure forests are fully regenerated after harvest.

However, under the new FMP there will be challenges for the native timber industry. One of these will be to ensure that the existing industry has ongoing access to suitable timber for processing and value adding into furniture, joinery and flooring. There will also be higher costs of accessing the forest as a result of the increased protection of conservation values. In addition, areas available for harvesting contain a larger proportion of low yielding forests than under the previous FMP.

On the other hand, there are opportunities for the timber industry to develop with new technology in engineered wood products, biofuels and bioenergy. These initiatives require large investments and will have important regional socio-economic benefit if successful.

In 2012/13 the FPC's operating profit was \$4.6 million and it paid \$3.3 million in dividends to state government. Since becoming a separate entity in 2000 the FPC has made a total operating profit of \$61.3 million.

The native forest timber industry will continue to provide an important contribution to rural communities through the harvesting of a renewable resource. FPC will continue to manage the harvest and sale of forest products to ensure both the FPC and the industry remain profitable and viable in the long term.

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