Independent Forestry Panel

Public submission

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Submission

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My submission is focussed on the naturally grown hardwood stream of the industry in NSW – known as native forestry.

There is a huge need for the NSW native timbers. The panel will have supply and demand data on that. My submission will focus on some aspects that I wish to highlight.

Our NSW native forests are a treasured part of the state environment. They provide essential eco-systems services which we all benefit from, and which no one would even suggest should be discontinued. Professional management of natural forests is needed to mitigate the risk of bushfire, and to curtail invasive weed and pests that take over if unchecked. Those things put biodiversity at risk.

Biodiversity is not put at risk by the existing low amount of timber harvest that occurs under very strict rules. Indeed the existing amount could safely be raised.

We must continue to skilfully manage a sensible proportion of our natural forests not solely for good environmental outcomes but also for obtaining essential hardwood timber materials. Trees are not a finite resource for NSW. To the contrary, trees are arguably an infinite resource, when managed and replanted/regenerated under the stewardship of expert forest scientists and ecologists.

This is a fantastic sector and the NSW government has a fantastic chance to elevate its importance for the good of the future of NSW.

Timber an essential material for life

Every stream of timber production in our State has a central societal role to perform. A big state like NSW needs expanded production across the diverse existing streams of supply, all of which occur under strict regulations. It is a basic tenet to be understood is that timbers aren't a generic material. The native hardwood species growing in the State and National Park forests are natural to Australia and NSW, whereas softwood plantations which may be large scale or farm scale are predominantly radiata pine, which is an introduced species.

A sophisticated engineered wood manufacturing capacity is becoming bigger in Australia, as across Europe and North America and elsewhere. This is enabling wider spread use of timber in skyscrapers and other major buildings as well as in apartments and so on. Wood solutions is

Native species trees are highly resilient, continuously adapting to the harsh and variable Australian climate. They have been at this a lot longer than the human species.

Australian hardwood is needed now and no doubt for well beyond the next hundred years.

It would be negligent to remove the existing footprint of native forest harvesting from supply. It would be negligent to import more and more of our domestic timber needs

which presently are provided from what is a very small footprint in the very vast public forest area.

Australia has world class forest scientists involved in both the management of forests as well as provision of hardwood. We need to listen to them and follow their advice. 'Activist scientists' have had a good run. We need to get serious now.

Deforestation is not a characteristic of NSW forests. Australia's forest area increased by 0.75 million hectares over the five years from 2016 to 2021, a trend that's continued since 2008 (2023 State of the Forests Report, ABARES). It notes virtually no change in NSW forest canopy in the period 2008 – 2023. This validates the Responsible Wood statement on Deforestation and confirms many statements made by agencies, scientists and industry.

Scale - a prime consideration

The Panel will receive submissions which totally ignore the scale of the native hardwood industry. There are some key statistics which the Panel I trust will emphasis to Premier Minns and his Cabinet.

It is uncontentious that NSW already has a very constricted timber supply. I draw to your attention the following statistics which are obtained from Forestry Corporation of NSW website and from major NSW peak industry body, Timber NSW.

- The annual NSW native hardwood State Forest harvest is in the order of 30,000 ha. That is regenerated and does create deforestation (State of the Forests Report ABARES https://www.agriculture.gov.au/abares/forestsaustralia/sofr).
- Our state forest management agency is responsible for the 2 million ha of native forest estate (State Forest).
- Timber harvest may lawfully occur within 1 million ha or 50% of that estate.
- The other 1 million ha half of the State Forest estate is permanently set aside for conservation and cannot ever be harvested.
- The state forest management agency has management obligations across the entire 2 million hectares, whereas the revenue it can earn each year comes from just 30,000 ha of the estate which is selectively harvested for timber.
- The state forest management agency is obliged to manage the entire 2 million ha for multiple outcomes, as enshrined in the NSW/Commonwealth legislative and regulatory framework and providing some of our state's timber supply is just one.
- Management of the entire 2 million ha estate will always cost more than the small amount of revenue coming in from harvesting. Nevertheless the revenue is important to cover some of the cost.
- Total forested area right across NSW is said to be 22 million hectares.

About People

A highly skilled workforce, equipped with leading edge technology is responsible for delivering important environmental outcomes from the **99.7% of State Forests that are not harvested** plus the 0.3% that is harvested annually.

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The professionals in this field have continuous professional development, willingly share their knowledge with others, participate in research and are highly educated.

I have no doubt that part of executing your duties, Panel Members will conduct a State Forest hardwood field trip.

I joined the sector as a newcomer. In the past 12 years I have met so many top calibre people working in the forestry and wood processing sector. I have learnt about and observed what roles they perform. Without fail, I come away impressed with the people, their commitment and the obvious love they have for the forest ecology under their care and the respect for timber material. We can learn so much from them.

I'm privileged to have participated and played a role in several of the respected Understanding Forest and Understanding Wood Science courses run by the forest products' national philanthropic educational trust fund – The Gottstein Trust (www.gottsteintrust.org). I've invested in gaining knowledge by attending multiple Forestry Australia conferences which is the professional body for forest scientists and associates. There is a vibrant national and indeed international community of highly experienced and up and coming scientists working in this area – which is both exciting and reassuring.

So many field trips and processing plant visits are further ways I've gained knowledge, and workshops and webinars and so many conversations with industry professionals. I was a Board member of the Australia/NZ Forest Stewardship Council for four years in which deepened my appreciation of the two independent certification systems which verify sustainable forest management – the other being Responsible Wood (PEFC).

I urge policy advisors, bureaucrats and Parliamentarians to make the effort to come out into the forests and meet the professionals so as to become fully informed about how things are done and by whom. This is basic step to become equipped to evaluate what is right for the future. Important nuances cannot be learnt until you are there in a State Forest talking with trained and experienced experts with the knowledge to share.

Social licence

For your considerations I commend to the Panel an independent report commissioned by the NE NSW Forestry Hub, which is one of 11 hubs set up in key timber growing regions of Australia.

These hubs are a Commonwealth initiative funded by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF). Hubs comprise a 'brains trust' of local industry participants who are supported by a professional to form work plans in agreement with DAFF. They commission experts to conduct research relevant to the future of their timber region. The Hubs contain a rich vein of expertise and information that would be of value to the Independent Panel. See https://www.agriculture.gov.au/agriculture-land/forestry/regional-forestry-hubs

The report is at https://nenswforestryhub.com.au/news-reports/reports

Stollznow Report on Forestry's Social Licence to Operate

This is a deep dive social licence study done in 2023 by respected Sydney based StollzNow Research. This is the most thorough research ever done on the topic and sheds a lot of light on community attitudes. A key finding was 69% of NSW people think native forest harvesting is important for NSW. More detail below.

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This is an extract of a key outcome (source page 5):

The future of native forestry harvesting
In the research sixty-nine percent (69%) agreed native forest timber industry is important for NSW. Only seventeen percent (17%) believe the native forest harvesting industry should be closed. This is higher in Greater Sydney (17%) and lower in the North East Region (14%).

Implications of a forced closure of the native forest industry
Participants in the focus groups did not believe this industry could be legitimately closed. The reasons they provided were:

- Timber would have to be imported
- Timber would come from countries that do not have the same harvesting standards as Australia
- Australia would be exploiting the forests in third world countries
- Australia would be destroying the habitats of animals in countries overseas
- It would make Australia reliant on overseas supply.
- Australia would lose its autonomy
- It is unacceptable to import timber and exploit overseas countries because we would have to compromise our own resources
- Local businesses need to be supported
- NSW has the capacity; importing is not necessary
- The impact of less timber being used is:
    - Plastics would be used more
    - Australia might have to use inferior wood
    - Cost of housing will increase
    - Jobs will be lost
    - Forests will not be managed as well
    - Alternative to wood would be used and these might be more harmful

End of report extract.

Related to social license is that the forest management professionals are **owed a duty of care**. I am not at all convinced this is being taken seriously enough by the NSW government. These people suffer because their profession is disparaged. Some even suffer harassment by protestors within their workplace, indeed I am aware this has driven some out of their profession. It is 2024 and that is not ok. State Forest staff are NSW government employees and

Likewise the experienced contractors and truck operators who perform essential duties in the State Forests must be supported to have a safe workplace. Their roles require intense concentration or lives can be at risk. Mill workers must also feel deflated when activists fling untrue information about like confetti. We have reason to be very proud of the NSW timber value chain.

The Premier and Ministers can show respect and turn around the feeling there's a vacuum of interest and leadership supporting this sustainable inspiring industry.

Economic Contribution Study of the NSW hardwood timber industry.

This report was done by **Ernst & Young** and is considered to be the most thorough on the topic. It can be found at https://nenswforestryhub.com.au/news-reports/reports . It found that $2.9 billion of economic activity directly results from the NSW hardwood sector and there are 8,900 jobs as a result of the sector. Many of those jobs are in the Sydney, three well known examples being RIFCO, Mint Flooring, Abbey Timber.

The report's findings are highly relevant to the Panel's considerations because the heart of the NSW hardwood industry aligns with the proposed great koala national park. That area has a unique footprint. Indeed the North East NSW Region has the largest hardwood industry in NSW, even with the vast areas set aside already from any harvest under conservation. https://woodcentral.com.au/ernst-young-report-exposes-folly-of-labor-greens-plan-for-nsw-koala-park/

The Australian Research Council Advance Timber Hub

(https://www.advance-timber-hub.org/) is a stellar initiative which "aims to develop the resources, enablers, and drivers to advance sustainable timber, as a natural resource, to be the material of choice, leading towards a net zero future for Australia's built environment. It intends to support the transformation of Australia's timber and construction sectors by:

- stimulating growth in innovation,
- increasing the uptake of sustainable timber products used in buildings, and
- establishing a roadmap for change.

The expected outcomes will kickstart the change process, supported by growth in advanced manufacturing across the value chain.

This should provide significant benefits in stimulating an opportunity for regional development and resource diversification whilst helping Australia's timber and construction sectors transition to a circular and net-zero economy."

Essential societal role of native timbers

The NSW native hardwood and in native cypress (not refereeing to softwood radiata) industries play a significant and essential role in our society.

Among the timber species that grow naturally in NSW forests are Blackbutt, Spotted Gum, Sydney Blue Gum, Tallowwood, Brushbox, Ironbark, White Cypress and River Red Gum. These species have incredible timber properties. They have outstanding durability and strength and are visually beautiful.

These timbers can be used for many diverse construction applications, including:

- Flooring
- Decking and pergolas
- Panelling
- Joinery
- Domestic - furniture, benchtops, kitchen and bathroom units
- Fences
- Utility poles
- Marine piles
- Bridge girders and other industrial purposes.

Hardwoods are vital home grown material used constantly. It's plain that NSW hardwood timbers fulfil an essential societal role.

Specialist timber reclaimers and recyclers are living proof of the longevity of timber as a building material. Solid hardwood timber, due to its inherent durability and longevity, is highly suited to repurposing. The south coast Eden Port is a great example: https://www.woodsolutions.com.au/case-studies/eden-port-welcome-centre

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Native forest management nuances

It is usually passed over that most hardwood timber comes from native regrowth forests that were harvested before and regrown and sustainably managed for over hundred years. I implore the Panel to absorb that fact and really think about what that means.

A set of very short videos at: https://nenswforestryhub.com.au/forest-resources/native-forests/state-forests is very informative. A Senior Forest Planner speaks on camera with first-hand information about the planning ahead for harvest, on growing new trees and other aspects of NSW State Forests.

The content is highly relevant to your considerations and I encourage the Panel to view them. Filmed by the NE NSW forestry hub in its infancy, the videos aren't professionally produced.

Research and development is significant

There is a rich ecosystem of research and development in the forestry products space. This is important context because our NSW forests are not 'all alone' left to the mercy of whatever and whoever comes along.

Many universities are heavily involved with forward initiatives and solving sector challenges.

NSW can be proud of our own highly respected forest science unit of the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD),which has deep expertise. The NSW Forest Science team has published over 300 peer reviewed scientific publications. Yet, to date, to me the government appears to be taking insufficient counsel from that specialist unit. I strongly appeal to the Panel to address this.

This team's expertise must be central during considerations about the future of our forests and the future supply of essential forest products. They are about robust science not ideology.

"The Forest Science team provides evidence-based forest research services that underpin sustainable use of NSW's native forests and productive plantations. The unit also has extensive technical expertise and capability in field based research, biometrics, spatial modelling, Geographic Information System (GIS) and cost-benefit analysis. The Forest Science team provides research and development services to the forestry sector and a number of stakeholders including contracted research projects that assist the Forestry Corporation of NSW in its sustainable management of 2.2 million hectares of publicly-owned State forest." (https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/forestry/science also refer to https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0016/1302901/Forest-Science-Brochure-2023.pdf)

Nationally, the Australian government has delivered a $100 million boost with a brand new initiative **Australian Forest and Wood Innovation**.

Australia's system of Rural Research and Development Corporations (RDCs) help drive agricultural, forestry and fisheries innovation. This is a legislated strategic national initiative of some 40 years standing, whereby Australian government and primary producers, including the forest products sector, co-invest in research and development (R&D). **Forest and Wood Products Australia** (FWPA) is the not-for-profit industry services company which delivers the R&D under the arrangement. https://fwpa.com.au/

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I would confidently bet that Forest Corp, the NSW State forest manager, would be involved in some way in every relevant R&D initiative going on in the vibrant national scientific ecosystem outlined above. It also has its own research management people. It can be seen how farcical it is for some activists to portray the fine people working here as environmental vandals. A better description would be fine people who support myriad R&D activities for the good of the forest ecosystems.

High technology is a game changer

The adoption of technology in forests and indeed advanced timber processing is hugely significant. It is a game changer in assisting those who have the stewardship of our NSW state forests to observe, track, monitor and manage the forests. Indeed this area is undergoing a revolution. Dr Christine Stone, former leader of the DPIRD, Forest Science is a recognised authority in this field and I am confident she could support the Panel with additional information.

A wealth of high-technology is employed in the field by and that is not going to change back to old ways of doing things. For example a staff member was last year awarded a prestigious Gottstein Trust Fellowship to pursue an international study tour relating to the refinement of LiDAR for application in NSW native forest planning, monitoring and management. This Fellowship project is called "Current and emerging techniques, technologies and priorities for accurate and precise single tree multi-use inventories in forested landscapes." Late in 2024 it will be freely available to download at https://gottsteintrust.org/projects-reports

Student attitudes

It is a sad thing that ENGOs spread untruths about our world class timber sector. However, the traction such continuous misleading, highly emotive online campaigns have in the real world is not substantial.

Researchers asked over 1,100 students on their knowledge and perceptions of a range of primary industries. **65 per cent considered that Forests can be managed to produce wood at the same time as protecting the environment.**

The Panel will be interested that evidence of positive school student attitudes towards timber production from forests, is reported in 'Food, Fibre and Our Future 2020' which was commissioned by the respected Primary Industries Education Foundation Australia. https://www.piefa.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/piefa_student_survey_final_report.pdf

Among many valuable initiatives funded by Forest and Wood Products Australia (thus co-funded by industry levies and Commonwealth) is the excellent ForestLearning initiative. This makes available professionally developed learning material about forestry related activities, that fits into the curriculum across a range of subjects and age groups. These accurate materials are instructive and can be found at https://forestlearning.edu.au/

Virtual Reality is provided for teachers to use in their classroom to provide a real world experience for classrooms and I commend this to anyone on the Panel and their support team who has not any first-hand experience of the sector. The ForestVR show various forest environments (for example spotted gum) and forest products processing mills and display end uses of these renewable forest products in buildings, flooring and everyday items like paper and board.

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The major NSW peak industry body Timber NSW coordinated recent Sydney high school talks, where students were extremely interested and enthusiastic to hear about forestry and careers. https://woodcentral.com.au/fancy-a-tree-change-sydney-students-flock-to-jobs-in-forest/

Closing comment

I trust this provides insights on what may be some lesser known things.

I'm a total fan of the NSW native hardwood sector. Coming into the sector from elsewhere – it was truly a wonderful revelation. I think it's the best kept secret in Australia.

It is plain that under no circumstances is it wise to make smaller or shut down this vital source of native forest timber supply for our great state. It can and does and will continue to operate in way that's entirely compatible with biodiversity and healthy forest ecosystems in perpetuity.

I thank the Panel for the opportunity to make this submission.

Responsible Wood Statement on Deforestation & Forest Degradation

Responsible Wood stands for the principle that certified forests remain as forests and the products derived from these forests can be managed sustainably for generations to come.

Managing Forests Sustainably for a Resilient Future

In an era marked by environmental consciousness, the impacts of climate change and concerns about deforestation and forest degradation, we have prepared this statement to outline our commitment to developing globally recognised standards for the certification of sustainably managed forests.

It is imperative to dispel the common misconception that logging of certified forests, (the harvesting of trees) equates to deforestation and forest degradation. Rather, through the Responsible Wood Certification Scheme (RWCS) we promote the implementation of forest management practices that prioritise the longevity and health of forests.

Our standard *AS/NZS 4708-2021 sustainable forest management* has been developed through an open process of consultation and consensus in accordance with international norms, which contains clearly defined cultural, economic, environmental, and social criteria and indicators in line with established environmental management systems such as *AS/NZS ISO 14001:2016*, the Montreal Process criteria and indicators, and the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC) standard for sustainable forest management (*PEFC ST 1003:2018*).

When consumers purchase products with the Responsible Wood label, they can be assured that their product is sourced from a well-managed forest.

Defining Terms: Deforestation and Forest Degradation

As identified by the United Nations specialised agency, the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) forest degradation is difficult to quantify but is a serious global problem.

The term "logging" often gets wrongly associated with deforestation, contributing to a misunderstanding of the forestry and forest products industry. *AS/NZS 4708-2021* requires that the harvesting of forest products involves carefully planned and executed harvesting activities (*AS/NZS 4708-2021 Section 6)*, followed by meticulous regeneration efforts (*AS/NZS 4708-2021 11.1.5)*. In contrast, deforestation is the permanent clearing of a forest, which results in a land-use change for non-forest purposes, such as urban expansion and infrastructure development.

When it comes to the harvesting, sourcing and use of forest products (like timber, cardboard and paper for example) we do not support products that have been harvested from land subject to deforestation or harvested inducing forest degradation. Our Standard sets requirements preventing conversion (*AS/NZS 4708-2021 11.1.4*) and rehabilitating forest degradation (*AS/NZS 4708-2021 11.2.9*).

When a forest is degraded it still exists as a forest (the land use hasn't changed), but over time the primary functioning of the forest has changed or been adversely affected. Depending on the context of the forest, this could present a range of symptoms whether it is poor health (through invasive species and disease), reduced productivity, a change to species dominance or damage to other ecological and biodiversity indicators.

Illegal logging and poor forest management are frequently identified as leading global causes of forest degradation. In addition to the most obvious consequences of forest degradation, such as the impacts on forest biodiversity, the impact on the health of soil and water in the forest and surrounding landscapes can be significant; resulting in soil erosion and the pollution of waterways.

Forest products can be harvested in a variety of ways using a range of tools from chainsaws to state-of-the-art modern machinery. Sometimes forests are selectively harvested with trees retained for habitat, seed sourcing and ground cover and other times forests are clearfall harvested, not dissimilar to an agricultural crop. Importantly, products from sustainably managed forests have been sourced from forests (whether they are selectively harvested or clear-felled) that identify, protect and monitor Significant Biodiversity Values (SBV)s and other important features to control and minimise impact on these ecosystem values. It goes without saying that these forests stay forests.

When it comes to forest degradation AS/NZS 4708-2021 has strict requirements around protecting and enhancing the protective functions of soil and water (*AS/NZS 4708-2021 11.4.2 & 11.4.3*). There are also strict requirements around operational control (*AS/NZS 4708-2021 8.1)* and forest health, including invasive species (*AS/NZS 4708-2021 11.2)*. We support sustainable forests and their products through independent third-party certification. We do not support Illegal logging and poor forest management.

Industry-Leading Standards: PEFC Endorsement

Under the requirements of PEFC endorsement, we must adhere to stringent processes for the development of sustainable forest management standards that transcend industry practices and regulations.

Our commitment to sustainability is captured in our adherence to the PEFC International standard for sustainable forest management (*PEFC ST 1003:2018*). The global endorsement and mutual recognition of our standard ensures that we have prohibitions on land conversion, requirements to protect biodiversity, soil, and water, and mandates for successful regeneration post-harvest. Organisations that are certified to AS/NZS 4708-2021 are subject to annual audits by independent qualified experts to ensure conformity with these requirements.

Addressing Global Threats: Urban Expansion and Infrastructure Development

While our focus remains on sustainable forest management, it's crucial to acknowledge the dominant global threats to deforestation: land clearing for urban expansion and infrastructure development. The balance between economic development and environmental preservation is delicate, and our standard strives to demonstrate a pathway that supports the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Our certification standards are an important tool needed to stop deforestation and protect biodiversity; however, we do acknowledge that certification is not designed to solve issues like deforestation and forest degradation by itself.

Forests in the Climate Change Equation

As governments and private enterprises worldwide move towards net-zero targets, the role of forests in capturing and storing carbon becomes paramount. Well-managed forests actively sequester more carbon than unmanaged ones. When this premise is challenged dissenters frequently disregard the advantages associated with active management in lessening vulnerability to wildfires, pests, and diseases, as well as offering economic incentives that discourage the conversion of forests into urban developments.

Timber from sustainably managed forests, used in construction and other products, also offers a lower embodied carbon footprint compared to alternatives like concrete and steel.

Certified sustainable forests have multiple dimensions of sustainable development. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) recognises that sustainable forest management of both natural and planted forests is essential to achieving sustainable development. It is a means to reduce poverty, reduce deforestation, halt the loss of forest biodiversity, reduce land and resource degradation, and contribute to climate change mitigation. The IPCC recognises that in the long term, a sustainable forest management strategy that maintains or increases forest carbon stocks, while producing an annual sustained yield will generate the largest sustained mitigation benefit. Our Standard sets requirements for both carbon (*AS/NZS 11.1*) and growth and yield estimates (*AS/NZS 11.5*).

Protecting Significant Biodiversity Values in Sustainable Forestry

Our standard has requirements to identify, maintain and prevent adverse impacts to SBVs, (*AS/NZS 11.3.1*). AS/NZS 4708-2021 recognises the regulatory frameworks, databases, evidence-based scientific information, expert knowledge, and research, that support forest inventory and the mapping of forest resources. Many certified organisations have embraced cutting-edge technologies, and employ advanced software, datasets, and survey methods to support the identification of SBVs. These tools are pivotal in identifying, protecting, and monitoring forest values throughout their lifecycle. From pre-operational field assessments to active management and post-operation monitoring, our commitment to supporting precision and preserving ecologically important features is paramount.

Global Collaboration and Regulatory Compliance

Acknowledging the immense diversity in forest ecosystems worldwide is fundamental to our approach when it comes to standards development. From natural forests to planted forests, or from plantations to native forests (depending on where in the world you're from), the spectrum is broad. It's also important to recognise that trees outside traditional forest definitions play a pivotal role in ecological balance. We acknowledge that the strategic management approach changes from region to region, based on a whole range of factors including forest type, species, climate, soil types, land ownership and the available markets for forest products.

We also echo the sentiments of the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), recognising the significance of sustainable forest management in ensuring a delicate balance between economic, social and environmental values of all types of forests for the benefit of present and future generations. Sustainable forest management aims to ensure that forest products are managed and sourced in ways that meet both present-day and future needs, whilst contributing to the sustainable development of communities.

Our standard is intended to support the regulatory framework within which a forest manager operates, at the local, regional, national and international levels. We support strong governance and regulatory frameworks. We do not support illegal logging and the associated negative impacts on forest ecosystems, communities, and economies. Under Australian law, illegal logging means 'the harvesting of timber in contravention of the laws of the country where the timber is harvested' (refer to *Illegal Logging Prohibition Act 2012* and the Illegal Logging Prohibition Regulation 2012). This includes a wide range of activities, such as the logging of protected species, logging in protected areas, logging with fake or illegal permits, and using illegal harvest methods.

Our commitment to sustainable forestry aligns with Australia's well-established legal framework governing the sourcing of forest products. Certified organisations operating within this framework, must adhere to stringent requirements aimed at ensuring responsible and ethical practices. Particularly noteworthy are the additional regulations about the protection of important biodiversity in areas where timber is sourced. These regulations underscore our dedication to not only meeting legal standards but exceeding them in our efforts to safeguard the significant biodiversity of the regions in which certified organisations operate.

Chain of Custody: Due Diligence and Controlled Sources

Our standard *AS 4707-2021 Chain of Custody of Forest and Tree-based Products* sets requirements for the sourcing of forest and tree-based products. Organisations that are certified to our standard must meet requirements relating to sourcing products from certified suppliers, and the fair treatment of workers. There are additional due diligence requirements for organisations that source products that are not certified; these are called controlled sources.

Organisations certified to our chain of custody standard must ensure that forest and tree-based material is sourced from controversial sources (*see AS 4707-2021 1.3.12*). These requirements include ensuring the capability of forests to produce a range of wood and tree-based forest products and services on a sustainable basis is maintained and that harvesting levels do not exceed a rate that can be sustained in the long term. There are also requirements around the preservation of ecologically important features, carbon stock and activities where native forest conversion occurs.

For More Information on the Responsible Wood Certification Scheme

Please contact Responsible Wood

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