

Timber Harvesting in State Forests

Randy Flierman, ATFA CEO.

In recent times you will have seen much publicity and politics about timber harvesting, particularly related to WA and Victoria. As of 1 January this year, harvesting in Western Australian and Victorian state-controlled forests has been ceased, putting undue pressure on manufacturers and the industry more broadly. And it's not over, activists are now targeting Tasmania and New South Wales.

It's not logical we know, but the political sway of many activist groups and the impact that language has on the community is difficult to contend with. The question always to ask an activist – what do you live in???

So here are the facts about native timber harvesting in State Forests:



Australia has 134 million hectares of forest, 17% of the country's land area. **132 million hectares** are native forest.



These forests contain an estimated **10.5 billion tonnes of carbon**, 98.8% of which is held in native forest, dominated by hardwood species.



Of the 132 million hectares of native forest, only **5 million hectares** are available for harvesting (3.7%).



Of those 5 million hectares, only **78,000 hectares** are actually harvested annually – and then **regrown**.



Just **6 in every 10,000** trees are harvested each year.



Harvesting **only occurs in areas** where harvesting was **previously approved**.



40 million new trees were planted last year in NSW alone.

continued »



Addressing the negative messages:

- Native timber harvesting protects native animals with managed wildlife programs in State Forests. State Forest management plans work to reduce feral animal activity, the primary killer of native wildlife.
- Birds and insect life thrive in working State Forests thanks to regrowth programs that create healthy microclimates.
- Timber stores carbon; carbon sequestration typically decreases in trees with age – although timber products such as timber flooring and furniture store carbon for life.
- Timber is renewable, unlike the building alternatives – concrete, bricks and steel.
- Careful forest management in State Forests helps younger trees thrive and become stronger with careful canopy management.
- Microclimates within forests become rich healthy habitats thanks to renewal and regrowth.
- Soil and water runoff are protected with careful State Forest management plans.
- Microclimates and habitats are just the same in plantations.
- The native timber harvesting industry is a strong contributor to the economy – a \$2.9 billion gross revenue in NSW alone.
- State Forestry management practices include improvement of fire mitigation.
- State Forestry and Native Harvesting producers protect job and regional communities.
- Native timber harvesting retains Australian sovereignty in timber supply.
- Managed State Forests provide recreational spaces for everyone to enjoy.
- Australian native timber use means less imports, alternatives and less toxic chemicals.
- The use of Australian timber species keeps prices down, while imports and alternatives drive up the cost of living.
- Imported timber species may have questionable origin and impact protected world rainforests.
- Many downstream industries rely on native timber harvesting – floors, stairs, decks, furniture, rural bridges, power poles, marine and mining structural elements, as well as biomass.
- Native Australian timber species are sought after and provide a beautiful and warm look and feel to a home.
- Federal and State Governments have allocated over \$300 million to support Australia's forest industries over the next four years.

ATFA is currently producing A1 size posters promoting timber harvesting, to display at point-of-sale locations – if you would like a poster for your shopfront, showroom or customer service area, please let us know. Just email admin@atfa.com.au. 