

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE IPF/IFF PROPOSALS FOR ACTION IN AUSTRALIA

REVIEW OF PROGRESS TO 2005



Australian Government

**Department of Agriculture,
Fisheries and Forestry**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Proposals for Action (PFA) arising from the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests (IPF) and Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (IFF) represent the world's highest level political agreement on forest policy. Australia has made a significant contribution to developing the PFA and assessment methodology, as well as with implementing those PFA that are relevant to Australia.

This report is Australia's second assessment of progress against the summarised PFA and highlights changes since 2001. The format has changed slightly since 2001, reflecting the international groupings agreed by the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) and the revised summary PFA developed jointly by Australia and the World Bank in 2003. As a result, Australia's progress is now assessed against 100 PFA.

It shows the linkages with the expanded programme of work on forest biological diversity under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). For consistency, this assessment maintains the same assessment ranking criteria used in 2001.

The report has been compiled from existing information in reports such as *Australia's State of the Forests Report 2003*, Australia's national reports and the previous *National Assessment of Australia's Implementation of the IPF/IFF Proposals for Action*. It also draws on some new information. This approach provides a clear picture of Australia's achievements and progress towards sustainable forest management.

The assessment identifies some changes in priorities since 2001 and highlights progress on PFA that are relevant to Australia. It highlights the start of some actions, reflects substantial progress on others and identifies actions where effort is still required. It also notes new challenges that have emerged. Substantial progress has been made on actions related to: implementation of the national forest programme; developing an economic instrument to facilitate private sector expansion of plantations; reporting against criteria and indicators; developing integrated national policies and programmes to tackle deforestation and land degradation; collecting information on all forest values; protecting important forest ecosystems including old growth forests; and enhancing the involvement of indigenous people in forest management.

Collectively, the assessment shows that 62 of the 100 summarised PFA are relevant nationally. Of these, all of the PFA have either commenced, are well underway or show substantial progress. One of the national actions is listed as having been substantially completed (i.e. certification). Further action is needed in two high priority national and 10 high priority international PFA. Further progress and addressing new issues will be occur over the next few years.

Of the 95 PFA relevant to Australia in the international component, 86 have commenced, are well underway or have made substantial progress. However, overall, the progress is not as good as in the national component. At the national and international levels some

adjustment of priority ratings has occurred as a result of experience. Australia has assisted Fiji in 1999 and Vanuatu in 2003 to conduct their national assessments of the PFA.

REVIEW OF AUSTRALIA'S ASSESSMENT AGAINST PROGRESS IN IMPLEMENTING THE IPF/IFF PROPOSALS FOR ACTION

BACKGROUND

Since 1992 the international community has been engaged in a policy dialogue on the actions that are required to promote the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests. The United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) facilitated these intergovernmental deliberations by establishing the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests (IPF) and the UN Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (IFF).

The IPF and the IFF examined a wide range of forest related topics over a five year period (1995-2000) and recommended more than 270 Proposals for Action (PFA) for implementation at either the international, regional or national levels. The PFA are the world's highest level political commitment on forest policy and relate to themes such as combating deforestation and forest degradation and traditional forest-related knowledge.

The United Nations Forum on Forests¹ (UNFF) was established in 2000 as the permanent intergovernmental body responsible for facilitating implementation of the PFA as well as for enhancing cooperation and maintaining forest policy dialogue.

Australia has made significant contributions to the development of the PFA and the national assessment methodology. In 2001 Australia produced a comprehensive, integrated summary of the PFA. The summary booklet, *Summary of Proposals for Action*, summarises the IPF/IFF PFA into 92 proposals. In 2003, in a joint effort with the World Bank's Program on Forests (PROFOR), Australia produced a booklet² which consolidated the PFA into 100 proposals, linking them to the Convention on Biological Diversity's (CBD's) forest biodiversity work programme and the UNFF's 16 programme elements.

In Australia the responsibility for various aspects of forest management is vested in different levels of government. The Australian Government is responsible for coordinating a national approach to both environmental and forest industry development issues as well as for international policy and cooperation. The State and Territory Governments have primary responsibility for forest management on both public and private lands. Local governments have responsibility for local land use planning which primarily affects private forests.

¹ The United Nations Forum on Forests is a subsidiary body to the United Nations Economic and Social Council and succeeded a five-year period (1995-2000) of forest policy dialogue facilitated by the IPF and IFF.

² The PFA focus on country-level action to be undertaken by national and sub-national governments and relevant stakeholders from the private sector and civil society. To be effective the PFA must be translated into country specific actions that address national priorities and complement existing policy processes. The UNFF Plan of Action calls for systematic assessment of the PFA to identify national priorities and to work consistently towards implementing progress to address these priorities.

Australia undertook its first assessment of its progress in implementing the PFA in 2001³. The 2005 assessment is conducted using the 100 PFA from the Australia PROFOR booklet. The eight “new” PFA in the 2005 assessment are shown in the assessment tables as NA – Not Assessed in 2001. Where assessment ratings can be implied from other PFA, the implied 2001 assessment is shown in brackets, for example (M1).

In both the 2001 and 2005 assessments, the individual PFAs were assessed according to their priority for Australia and our progress with their implementation using the following table:

Priority for implementation	Progress with implementation
NR=Not relevant L=Low M=Medium H=High	0=Not started 1=Programme commenced 2=Programme well under way 3=Substantial progress 4=Substantially completed

The assessment covers Australia’s progress in implementing the PFA within Australia (columns headed “National”) and in international cooperation (columns headed “International”).

The rankings for the international component are based on Australia’s capacity to contribute and ability to influence, rather than on their overall global significance. Setting international priorities has been difficult because Australia does not have an overall forestry sector policy for overseas development assistance. Further, some PFA are specifically directed at international forestry organisations and hence are not relevant for implementation within Australia. These PFA are indicated by “(INT.ORG)” in the assessment tables.

In the assessment tables, descriptions in column 1 (headed under each UNFF element) identify the summarised PFA. References in columns 2 (“IPF”) refer to the relevant PFA arising from the IPF. Those in column 3 (“IFF”) refer to the relevant PFA arising from the IFF. The column 4 references (“CBD”) relate to the expanded programme on forest biological diversity developed by the CBD. The first number refers to the programme element, the second to the goal and the third to the objective – the letter refers to an action. Columns 5 and 6 are the 2001 assessment of Australia’s progress against the PFA and columns 7 and 8 are on the 2005 assessment ratings and the supporting comments.

³ The *National assessment of Australia’s progress in implementing the IPF/IFF proposals for action 2001* was assessed using the 92 summarised PFA.

This assessment is based on information derived from *Australia's State of the Forests Report 2003* (SOFR)⁴, Australia's National Reports to the United Nations Forum on Forests, the previous assessment in 2001 as well as some new information. This approach streamlines international reporting and provides a clear and consistent assessment of Australia's progress towards sustainable forest management.

⁴ The *State of the Forests Report 2003* is available publicly on the internet www.daff.gov.au/stateoftheforests.

1. FORMULATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF NATIONAL FOREST PROGRAMMES

Summary - Australia has developed a national forest policy statement and has continued to implement its key strategies. It has reviewed the PFA and is progressing the priority issues relevant to Australia and the region, in cooperation with neighbouring countries.

Formulating a national forest policy framework (national forest policy, programme or strategy) and implementing it are fundamental steps in sustainably managing a nation's forests. A framework assists a nation to identify strategies that systematically address environmental, economic and social issues relevant to the sustainable management of its forests.

Australia has a national forest policy - *The National Forest Policy Statement (NFPS)* (1992). Several other national policies affect forest management; these include the *National Strategy for the Conservation of Biological Diversity* (1996), and the *1997 Plantations for Australia: the 2020 Vision* (2020 Vision). These are supported by a combination of policies and legislation in all States and Territories, which have responsibility for land management under the Australian Constitution.

All States and Territories have formal requirements for periodically reviewing planning for publicly owned forest. Mechanisms exist in all States and Territories for vegetation management on private land (see SOFR p309 *et seq*).

The focus of attention in Australia in this element of the PFA has been the implementation of the NFPS. The major initiative was the finalisation of 10 Regional Forest Agreements for the long-term conservation and sustainable management of native forests in specific regions. In addition, a comprehensive review of the 2020 Vision was completed in 2002.

Regional Forest Agreements are designed to deliver resource security for the timber industry, as the basis for increasing investment in the timber processing sector. Regional Forest Agreements achieved this by the establishment of a comprehensive, adequate and representative forest ecosystem reserve system complemented by a framework for ecologically sustainable forest management outside reserves.

In 2005 the Australian Government and the State Government of Tasmania signed the *Tasmanian Community Forest Agreement* to enhance protection of Tasmania's forests and facilitate growth in the Tasmanian forest industry. The Governments are committing over A\$250 million to revitalise the timber industry and preserve more than one million hectares of old growth forests.

1. Formulation and Implementation of National Forest Programmes		IPF	IFF	CBD	Nat 2001	Int 2001	Nat 2005	Int 2005
1	Develop and implement a holistic national forest programme, which integrates the conservation and sustainable use of forest resources and values in a way that is consistent with national, sub national and local policies and strategies.	17a 58b(i)		1.2.6.a 1.4.4.g 2.1.2.a 2.1.2.e 2.1.2.g	H3	H1	H3	H1
2	Assess, develop and implement an appropriate institutional and legal framework, including economic instruments and tax policies, for promoting sustainable forest management.		56b 115a 115b 115c	1.2.6.c 1.4.1.d 1.4.1.g 1.4.4.f 2.2.1.a 2.2.1.d 2.2.1.e 2.2.1.f	H2	M1	H2	M1
3	Develop and implement appropriate policies and mechanisms to secure land tenure, promote benefit sharing, recognize access to and use of forest resources by local and/or indigenous communities in order to support sustainable forest management.	29c	56j 64c 64d 115d	1.4.3.b 1.4.4.e 1.5.1.a 2.1.3.a 2.1.3.b 2.1.3.c 2.1.3.e	M1	M1	M2	M1
4	Develop and implement codes of conduct to encourage private sector activities consistent with sustainable forest management.	69a 128c		1.4.1.h 2.1.4.d	H3	H2	H3	H2
5	Conduct a systematic national assessment of the IPF and IFF Proposals for Action involving all stakeholders and plan for their implementation within a national forest programme.		9d		M3	M0	M3	M2
6	Establish a coordinated, integrated and participatory approach, facilitated by a focal point, for the implementation of the IPF/IFF Proposals for Action and the forest-related work of other international instruments.	144	9b 9e 9f		M1	M0	M1	M1
7	Evaluate and review the national forest programme on an ongoing basis, integrating criteria and indicators and implementation experience, and embody intersectoral planning and coordination.	17d	9e		H2	H2	H2	NR
8	Provide general, cross-sectoral and specific advice to countries on national forest programmes, forest policies and the design and administration of economic instruments and tax policies to promote sustainable forest management. (INT. ORG)		115f 140a 142b		NR	M1	NR	M1

Another significant achievement of the NFPS process was the methodology for assessing, and continually improving, sustainable forest management. Australia has developed criteria and indicators (C&I) for sustainable forest management as part of the Montreal Process, and incorporated these tools into forest management to monitor and continually

improve management. Whilst a formal review of the NFPS has not commenced, many elements of policy have been reviewed since 1992.

States/Territories have appropriate legal and institutional frameworks for the management and conservation of forests. Since 2001 taxation policies have been reviewed to ensure that investments in plantation development are treated in a way that is consistent with other agricultural investments. Some partnerships have been established between State agencies and indigenous communities to facilitate their involvement in sustainable forest management.

As an example of an instrument to encourage sustainability of forest management, the Australian Forestry Standard (AFS) has been developed for use in forests where timber is harvested (see element 15 of this report). Most States have mandatory codes of practice that govern the management of operations in native and plantation forests.

A second national assessment of the PFA has been carried out and its findings will be considered by relevant forest policy fora. A UNFF focal point has been established in the Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) to coordinate activities. Australia continues to help regional countries to develop programmes linked to sustainable forest management.

Over a number of years, Australia has been helping neighbouring countries to shape national forest policies and strategies, particularly in Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu and the Solomon Islands, with a focus on sector governance. Australia has also assisted Fiji and Vanuatu to carry out national assessments of the UNFF PFA.

2. PROMOTING PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Summary - There is extensive public participation in forest management issues in Australia — from involvement in forest planning processes to community-based forest establishment and management activities. The National Indigenous Forestry Strategy has been developed to improve the participation of Indigenous communities in the forest sector. The Women in Rural Industries Programme aims to increase the involvement of rural women in a range of activities, including forestry.

Over the past 20 years, public participation in setting the directions for forest management has greatly increased, including consultation during formulation of local forest management plans and active involvement in day-to-day forest management activities. It is especially important where rural communities depend on forest resources for their livelihood. Developing partnerships between government agencies responsible for forest management and rural people and indigenous communities who rely on the forests is an essential step towards the sustainable management of the forests.

2. Promoting public participation		IPF	IFF	CBD	Nat 2001	Int 2001	Nat 2005	Int 2005
1	Establish improved mechanisms to consult stakeholders on the identification of the full range of forest goods and services and to make forest-related information and progress reports widely available to policy makers and relevant stakeholders.	30a 78b 89h	17b 18		M2	M0	M3	M1
2	Involve relevant interested parties in the extension, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of forest research.	17e 94d			M2	M1	M2	M1
3	Enhance Government, community and forest owner financing to facilitate local participation in sustainable forest management.	70c 77f	64f		NR	M2	L1	M2
4	Increase public awareness of the direct and indirect benefits from forests at the regional and global levels. (INT. ORG)		142a	2.3.1.a 2.3.1.g	NR	H1	NR	M3
5	Improve cooperation, coordination and partnerships in support of sustainable forest management within a national forest programme, by involving relevant stakeholders including Indigenous people, forest owners, women and local communities in forest decision making.	17b 17f 17h 17i 40e	19b 64b 66	1.4.3.c 2.1.3.d 2.1.3.g	M2	M1	H2	M1
6	Promote effective participation in forest decision making at all levels in low forest cover countries.	58b(vi)			NA	NA	NR	NR

The Regional Forest Agreement process in several States (see element 1 in this report) has provided extensive opportunities for public participation in all aspects of forest planning. Extensive consultation processes have also been part of State statutory forest planning that implemented Regional Forest Agreements and in areas not covered by the Regional Forest Agreement process.

Substantial progress has been made in terms of informing public policy makers and stakeholders through SOFR and international reports to Montreal Process and United Nations agencies.

Australia is committed to protecting forest values of importance to Indigenous people. In 2003 an investigation was carried out into the opportunities for greater involvement by Indigenous people in the forestry sector, in forest management, processing timber and non-timber forest products. This led to the development of a National Indigenous Forestry Strategy (NIFS), which will progressively increase Indigenous people's participation, enhancing their economic and social independence, while preserving their cultural values.

National programmes, such as the National Landcare Programme, National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality (NAP) and Natural Heritage Trust (NHT), have provided funds to facilitate community participation in natural resource management, including a significant amount of reforestation on private land. Much of this work has been directed to improving water quality and biological diversity and conservation.

The Australian Government acknowledges that women play a fundamental role and are significant contributors to the agricultural and natural resource management sector. Policies and programmes have been developed which support women involved in rural industries, including women in forestry. The Women in Rural Industries Programme aims to improve the recognition of women's contributions to rural industries, increase opportunities for women's decision making in agriculture, fisheries and forestry, and promote wide adoption of best practice models. It works with government, industry and community organisations to assist women.

To assist with public consultation and information about private forestry, 21 Private Forestry Development Committees (PFDCs) have been established in Australia's main commercial plantation regions. The Australian Government and the responsible agency in each State/Territory jointly fund the committees, which include rural stakeholders in private forestry. The roles of the PFDCs vary between regions, but all have a key role in communicating and progressing issues that promote forest-development at a regional level.

3. COMBATING DEFORESTATION AND FOREST DEGRADATION

Summary - Although some clearing of open forest and woodland still takes place for agricultural purposes in Australia, the level is greatly reduced from past years. States and Territories have tight controls over forest clearing and forest harvesting. A national policy for fuelwood harvesting has been developed to ensure that fuelwood collection does not lead to forest degradation.

Deforestation and forest degradation refer to the conversion of forest to other land uses, or the degradation of forest condition by uncontrolled exploitation or by natural or human induced factors. In some countries, illegal logging and shifting cultivation results in ongoing deforestation and degradation. In Australia the underlying causes of deforestation and degradation include agriculture, fire and salinity.

3. Combating deforestation and forest degradation		IPF	IFF	CBD	Nat 2001	Int 2001	Nat 2005	Int 2005
1	Conduct diagnostic studies to analyse historical and underlying causes of deforestation and forest degradation, including the impacts of transboundary pollution, poverty, fuelwood use, and processes outside the forest sector.	27a 27b 27c 31a	64a 121c 122c	1.1.1.h 1.2.3.g 2.1.1.a 2.1.1.b 2.1.1.c	M2	M1	M3	M1
2	Assist countries to study the underlying causes of deforestation and forest degradation management and integrate forest issues into poverty alleviation, food security and related development programmes. (INT.ORG)	31b	144		NR (NA)	M1 (NA)	NR	M1
3	Develop and implement integrated national policies, strategies, economic instruments and mechanisms for supporting sustainable forest management.	29a 29b	115c 115g	2.1.3.h	M2	M1	H3	M1
4	Create awareness of the importance of issues related to deforestation and forest degradation and the multiple values of forests.	30a	64e 142a	2.3.1.d	H1	M0	H2	M0

The causes of deforestation in Australia are well understood and are almost entirely connected with agriculture. Deforestation on publicly owned land is not a major issue in Australia. In the past, forest clearing for agriculture on private land was a major factor in forest loss, but this has been greatly reduced, partly due to economic factors and partly due to the impact of recent legislation.

All bilateral agreements made between the Australian Government and the six State and two Territory governments under the Natural Heritage Trust (NHT) provide for controls on, or the phasing out of, land clearing activities where land clearing impacts on remnant native vegetation or otherwise compromises biodiversity assets.

A strong plantation establishment programme over the past 10 years has seen the area under forest increase in some regions. Several national programmes support improved management of forest on private land and promote public awareness of forest values (e.g. the National Landcare Programme, NHT). Two areas these programmes focus on are protecting remnant native vegetation in agricultural areas and reforestation of riparian zones to improve water quality.

The Australian Government, together with CSIRO, has developed the Commercial Environmental Forestry Program. The Program assists private investors and farmers to achieve commercial forestry outcomes in low-to-medium rainfall areas while delivering long-term environmental benefits, including the reduction of salinity.

All States and Territories have Codes of Forest Practice to ensure that forests are not degraded during timber harvesting. Fire contributes to forest degradation in Australia and this issue is dealt with in Section 6 on Forest Health.

Australia developed a national approach for firewood collection and use in 2001. It aims to ensure all firewood collection, including commercial cutting, is ecologically sustainable and not a major cause of loss or degradation of remnant forests or the habitats of threatened species. The national approach forms the basis for each State and Territory to develop its own firewood collection action plan or strategy. Victoria released a draft firewood strategy discussion paper in 2002. Although firm data on firewood removal from private forests in Australia are not available, SOFR (p123) provides an estimate of firewood use in 2000.

Australia is providing development assistance in a number of countries, including Nepal, China and Sri Lanka. In Nepal, Australia is consolidating a long-term programme to institutionalise community-based forest management. Australia is assisting Chinese authorities to reforest degraded catchments in Qinghai Province.

In East Timor, the Australian aid programme has supported a holistic approach to agricultural development assistance, integrating reforestation and watershed management into programmes to improve food security and alleviate rural poverty.

4. TRADITIONAL FOREST-RELATED KNOWLEDGE

Summary - Australia is actively addressing the complex issues involved in the relationship between intellectual property, and access and benefit sharing in relation to genetic resources and traditional knowledge. A nationally consistent approach contains the principles to be followed, although challenges remain on implementation. A National Indigenous Forestry Strategy has been prepared. Participation continues in several international fora concerned with the issue.

A recurring concern during the IPF/IFF process was the possible loss of traditional forest-related knowledge (TFRK) in many parts of the world. These concerns include the loss of traditional knowledge about medicinal uses of plants, traditional knowledge about forest management and fire management and the equitable return of benefits from using traditional knowledge. This is a complex issue that is not easy to resolve, but the PFA encourage a more equitable and uniform approach by countries.

Australia is a biologically rich country with a high incidence of endemic genetic resources and has an obligation to ensure their protection and sustainable use. Australia has made significant progress in the past decade in meeting its obligations under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). *Australia's National Strategy for the Conservation of Australia's Biological Diversity* aims to bridge the gap between current activities and the effective identification, conservation and management of Australia's biological diversity. The Strategy's primary focus is Australia's indigenous biological diversity.

There is currently no integrated national approach to cataloguing TFRK. Most relevant State and Territory agencies recognise its value and many are undertaking work to catalogue TFRK. However, more coordination is needed to ensure that a comprehensive and appropriate method of gathering data for all of Australia's forests is developed.

The Australian Government in consultation with Indigenous communities and forest industry stakeholders have developed a National Indigenous Forestry Strategy (NIFS). Launched in 2005, the Strategy's aim is to encourage Indigenous participation in the forest industry by forming business partnerships to provide long-term benefits to Indigenous communities and improved involvement in resource management.

In Queensland, the Northern Territory and Western Australia, through the Cooperative Research Centre for Tropical Savannas, work is being done with Indigenous communities to gain a better understanding of their use of fire in grassy forest types. In north Queensland, at Arakoon, there is community forestry decision making with traditional knowledge input into harvesting and conservation management.

Indigenous cultural heritage is now part of field training programmes for forestry officers in most States and Territories. Input from Indigenous communities is regularly sought on forest management and consultative committees.

4. Traditional forest-related knowledge		IPF	IFF	CBD	Nat 2001	Int 2001	Nat 2005	Int 2005
1	Collaborate with and enhance the capacity of Indigenous people to identify, map and promote the understanding and application of traditional forest-related knowledge at the local, national and international levels.	40a 40g 40j 40n	75	1.4.1.a	M1	L1	M2	L1
2	Develop and implement national legislation and policies, including the application of intellectual property rights, to respect, maintain, protect and apply traditional forest-related knowledge.	40c 40d 40p 40b	74d	1.4.3.f	L2	L0	M2	L0
3	Develop and implement policies and mechanisms to support traditional resource use systems and ensure equitable sharing of forest-related benefits, including use of forest genetic resources, with local communities, women and indigenous people and document successful approaches.	40f 40h 40I 40r 40c	56j 64c 66 74b		M1	M1	H2	M2
4	Promote research into and assist networks that promote sharing of traditional forest-related knowledge and include traditional forest-related knowledge in forest management training programmes.	40k 40l 40m		1.4.3.e	M1	L1	M2	L1
5	Facilitate work under the Convention on Biological Diversity and other relevant organizations (World Intellectual Property Organization, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development) to compile and implement measures to recognize, respect, protect and maintain traditional forest-related knowledge including the application of intellectual property rights, <i>sui generis</i> or other systems for its protection.	40o 40q	56j 74a 74c 75	2.3.1.c 2.3.1.f	NR	M1	NR	M1

Arrangements to protect Indigenous knowledge on biodiversity were adopted by all Australian governments in 2002⁵. These arrangements provide for legislative and administrative action by all Australian governments to implement the National Strategy for the Conservation of Australia's Biological Diversity and the 2002 Bonn Guidelines.

Australia actively participates in several international forums where TFRK issues are being discussed. They include the World Intellectual Property Organization

⁵ These arrangements are outlined in the *Nationally Consistent Approach for Access to and the Utilisation of Australia's Native Genetic and Biochemical Resource*.

Intergovernmental Committee on Intellectual Property and Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Folklore (WIPO IGC), the Conference of Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity, Food and Agriculture Organization's Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and the International Convention for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants. Australia has made significant contributions to the WIPO IGC process, including supporting and providing input into a survey on traditional Indigenous knowledge protection.

5. FOREST-RELATED SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE

Summary - Forest-related research takes place in many institutions in Australia, including government agencies, universities, forest industry companies and specialised research organisations, such as CSIRO. There is an increasing emphasis on cooperative research programmes. Nationally, the National Forest Inventory and other federal agencies collate and analyse forest-related data from States and Territories.

Adequate scientific knowledge is a basic requirement for sustainable forest management. The span of forest research programmes has widened because of the need to fill knowledge gaps about ecological processes and integrate forest management into regional natural resource management. The development of criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management has shown the need for further development of monitoring and assessment techniques to provide cost-effective and efficient data on significant forest attributes.

Australia conducts scientific forest and forest products research in public research institutions, universities and companies in a wide range of disciplines. More detail is available in SOFR (p355-356). The results are disseminated through publication in scientific journals and research reports, at professional meetings and through extension programmes. Specialist non-government organisations, such as the Institute of Foresters of Australia, National Association of Forest Industries, Australian Plantation Products and Paper Industry Council and Australian Forest Growers, play an important role in this respect. Mechanisms exist for national-level coordination of forest research programmes and the Cooperative Research Centre (CRC) system fosters inter-organisational cooperation.

The Australian Government encourages research organisations to cooperate with industries, government and clients to ensure collaborative research focuses on needs. There are currently five CRCs that incorporate forest issues, including plantations, wood innovations, bushfire, water and tropical savannahs.

The CSIRO's Forestry and Forest Products Division conducts research to support better management of native forests, industrial plantations and forests on farms. It also provides science to guide effective harvesting and utilisation of logs for solid wood and a range of other forest products. CSIRO Sustainable Ecosystems conducts research on the protection and management of biodiversity in native forests and woodlands.

The Forest and Wood Products Research and Development Corporation (FWPRDC), funded by Government and industry, commissions wide ranging research that supports the development of a sustainable forest industry in Australia.

5. Forest-related scientific knowledge		IPF	IFF	CBD	Nat 2001	Int 2001	Nat 2005	Int 2005
1	Identify and prioritise interdisciplinary forest research needs at the national and eco-regional levels.	94a	96a	1.1.1.g 1.4.4.a 2.1.3.f	M2	M1	M2	M1
2	Strengthen forest research by formulating national policies, programmes and strategies and by coordinating the implementation of research programmes with country consent.		96a 96d		M2	M1	H2	M3
3	Mobilize resources, foster public and private sector joint ventures, build capacity and strengthen research institutions, networks and consortia to extend forest research at the local, national and international levels.	94a 94d	96b 97b 97d	1.3.1.c 1.4.4.c 3.3.1.a 3.3.1.b 3.3.1.d	H3	M1	H3	M2
4	Further develop and enhance widespread access to forest research and information systems making best use of existing mechanisms and networks.	94a	97c		M2	M1	M3	M2
5	Improve the linkages between forest science and forest policy and planning processes.	17e 58b(vii)	96c		H3	M2	H3	M2
6	Improve support for forest-related research programmes, strengthen linkages between forest policy and research and explore the possibility of a global forest information service. (INT.ORG)	40k 94c	98a 98b 98c		NR	H1	NR	M2
7	Promote research and analysis by forest-related Conventions to address gaps in existing knowledge. (INT.ORG)	94b		1.2.3.a 1.2.3.e	NR	M1	NR	M1
8	Extend research into forest inventory and monitoring techniques, as well as the development of efficient methods for the valuation of all forest goods and services, and for the identification of costs and benefits of sustainable forest management.	89c 104c	107b 107c	3.1.1.a 3.1.1.b	H2	H1	H2	H1

Government forest agencies employ scientifically and technically trained people who apply the results of research, as do the larger private sector forest and plantation owners. There is now a growing forestry consultancy sector that provides services to growers, industry and government agencies.

The Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR) contributes to Australia's aid programme by developing partnerships between Australia research organisations and developing countries with a strong focus on the establishment, management and sustainable utilisation of forests. For example, ACIAR funded projects have included examining the impacts of administrative and regulatory decentralisation of sustainable forest management in India. ACIAR's work with other countries has addressed native forest management, inventory, plantation development (domestication, silviculture) and forest health surveillance.

6. FOREST HEALTH AND PRODUCTIVITY

Summary - While air pollution is not a significant damaging agent in Australian forests, wildfires, pests and diseases have important effects on forest health and productivity. The number of severe wildfires in recent years may reflect changing climatic conditions and standards of forest fire management.

The primary focus of this element of the PFA is the adverse impacts of air pollution on forests in many parts of the world. However, there are other factors that also have serious adverse effects, such as wildfire, insect attack and forest pathogens. Inappropriate forest management on nutrient-poor soils can also reduce forest productivity.

6. Forest-health and productivity		IPF	IFF	CBD	Nat 2001	Int 2001	Nat 2005	Int 2005
1	Develop national assessment and monitoring methods, extend regional programmes for monitoring impacts of air pollution and provide factual information about transboundary air pollution.	50c 50d 27c		1.2.2.a 1.2.2.b 1.2.2.c 1.2.2.d	NR	NR	NR	NR
2	Strengthen international cooperation and action with respect to reducing long-range air pollution.	50b 50e			NR	L1	NR	L1
3	Adopt a preventative approach to the reduction of damaging air pollution.	50a			L2	NR	L2	L1

In Australia, through the strict application of emission regulations, impact of air pollution is generally not an issue for sustainable forest management. The principal factors affecting forest health and productivity in Australia are high-intensity wildfire, pathogens, animal pests and weeds.

Major wildfires in the period 2002 to 2005 caused extensive damage to native and plantation forests, mainly in south eastern Australia. Major inquiries by the Australian Parliament's House of Representatives Select Committee, the Council of Australian Governments and State forestry agencies have concluded, among other things, that insufficient resources were available for an adequate level of fire management. Additional investments have since been made in fire suppression equipment. Concerns remain about the adequacy of forest fuel management programmes and fire management in some areas.

Drought can also impact on forest health particularly in plantations in marginal areas and the incidence may increase under climate change. In dryland forests, periods of below average rainfall can cause extensive tree and understorey death. However, these forest types are well adapted to these climate variations and normally regenerate themselves well, if not subjected to other disturbances.

Australia has periodic outbreaks of insect defoliation that usually seem to be correlated with climatic conditions. In southern Australia, dieback due to either insect attack or root diseases is a problem in some forests. In localised areas, mining operations and grazing also have adverse impacts, although most mining companies are now legally bound to rehabilitate the land after mining ends.

The progressive implementation of the National Weeds Strategy is addressing the control of nationally significant weed species, some of which occur in forested land.

Improved site management and better genetic stock are being used to increase plantation productivity. Further, health is monitored in many plantations, and intervention taken (e.g. spraying for *Dothistroma*, needle blight) when required.

The long term impacts of fossil fuel-induced climate changes on forest health and productivity are as yet unknown.

7. CRITERIA AND INDICATORS FOR SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT

Summary - Australia continues its active involvement in the Montreal Process and is expanding the use of the criteria and indicators framework for internal, as well as international, reporting. Apart from ensuring consistency in data collection, it makes best use of available forest-related data.

There are several integrated processes that have developed criteria and indicators (C&I) for sustainable forest management. Australia has participated in the Montreal C&I Process, which covers most of the world's temperate forest types, although some countries in this group may include both temperate and tropical forests. The C&I are intended to provide an objective means of assessing the extent to which a country or region has progressed toward the goal.

7. Criteria and indicators of sustainable forest management		IPF	IFF	CBD	Nat 2001	Int 2001	Nat 2005	Int 2005
1	Further develop, field test and promote the use of criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management, including appropriate criteria and indicators for traditional forest-related knowledge and air pollution, and support efforts to harmonize associated concepts and definitions.	17d 40l 50d 115a 115b 115c 115d	17d	2.1.2.c 3.2.1.a 3.2.1.b	H2	H1	H3	H2
2	Encourage, within the work of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the development of biodiversity indicators that are complementary to existing forest criteria and indicators. (INT.ORG)	115f		1.1.1.b 1.1.1.c	NR	M1	NR	H2

In Australia, Forestry and Environment Ministers endorsed forest sustainability criteria and indicators developed for use at a sub-national (regional) level in 1998. The Montreal Process Implementation Group for Australia (MIG), which coordinates national and State implementation of sustainability criteria and indicators, has overseen research and development activities on the more difficult-to-measure indicators.

Participation in annual Montreal Process Working Group and Technical Advisory Group meetings since 1993 reflects Australia's active engagement in developing global measuring, monitoring and reporting indicators for sustainable forest management. Australia has also submitted reports on its progress in developing C&I for sustainable forest management for the scrutiny of the Montreal Process countries. Australia has been involved in significant scientific and technical cooperation with member countries on all issues of C&I reporting.

Australia has increased its focus on the use of C&I in recent years with the publication of *Australia's State of the Forests Report* (SOFR) in 2003. Structuring the SOFR on a nationally agreed C&I framework provided a logical organisation and a basis for measuring future progress towards sustainable forest management. This identified shortcomings and overlaps between some of the indicators and highlighted the potential value of harmonised reporting. A review of the national indicators commenced in 2005.

Progress with PFA 7.2 has been slow. Australia's ongoing position is that the Montreal Process C&I be used for international reporting and implementation of forest biodiversity indicators for the Convention on Biological Diversity.

8. ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL ASPECTS OF FORESTS

Summary - The social and cultural aspects of forests are important to Australians through recreational, conservation and production values. Forest and wood products industries contribute over A\$18 billion to the Australian economy each year and work is being done to quantify environmental services.

The economic, social and cultural benefits of forests are as important as the environmental benefits, but their significance is often not fully appreciated, due to the lack of relevant information. To support balanced decisions on forest planning and investments in forest management, most countries require better information.

Forests provide many economic, social and cultural values for society. These values and the social impacts of land-use change were intensively studied during the Regional Forest Agreement (RFA) processes. Preliminary work has been conducted on a life cycle analysis on forest products and is important in terms of recycling, disposal of treated wood and land fill. Some values, such as timber production, have considerable economic importance, whereas others do not necessarily involve consumption of a tangible product.

A new partnership between the Australian Government and the forest and wood products industries has been formed to develop a Wood and Paper Industry Growth Strategy. The Strategy will identify the actions needed to facilitate investment and growth of Australia's forest industry.

Over the nine years to 2001-02, the value of wood and wood products to the Australian economy increased from A\$5.9 billion to A\$6.6 billion. Although the value increased, the contribution to gross domestic product during this period remained relatively stable, between 1 and 1.3 per cent (SOFR). In terms of turnover (sales by each forestry manufacturing class), in 2002-03, the value for the forest and wood products industries was A\$18.105 billion (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2003).

It is well recognised that water derived from forested water catchments has a high economic value and research into methods of valuing ecosystem services and biodiversity has commenced, including investigation of the economic value of carbon and biodiversity credits derived from forests.

Indigenous people have close ties to their land, and forests are an integral part of their cultural, social, religious and spiritual expression. For non-Indigenous Australians, forests also contain many places of cultural value in addition to non-consumptive uses, such as recreation. These uses and their derived benefits are difficult to measure (SOFR pp270 – 78).

Over the past 10 years, there has been a boom in private investment in plantation establishment, which is now beginning to translate into increased timber production, mainly pulpwood for export. Market prices for various timber products are regularly collected and published to assist private forest growers with marketing decisions.

8. Economic, social and cultural aspects of forests		IPF	IFF	CBD	Nat 2001	Int 2001	Nat 2005	Int 2005
1	Improve the collection and exchange of information on values of all forest values, including environmental and social impacts of from forest use changes, to assist forest policy and investment decisions.	58b(vii) 89h 104a	107a 107c	1.1.1.8 1.2.6.b 2.2.1.b 2.2.1.c	H1	M1	H3	M1
2	Prepare information on methods and data requirements for forest valuation and build capacity for their use. (INT.ORG)	104b	107d	2.3.1.b	NR	M1	NR	L0
3	Undertake systematic collection and analysis of forest sector financial flows data to assist informed policy decisions. (INT.ORG)		30d		NR	M1	NR	L0
4	Undertake reviews of contemporary forest revenue collection systems and the relation of land tenure to deforestation and forest degradation. (INT.ORG)		67 115e		NR	M1	NR	L0
5	Explore ways to establish full cost internalisation of wood products and non-wood substitutes, as well as externalities, and share information on findings and implementation.	134a 134b			M1	L0	M1	L0
6	Improve data collection and information dissemination on the supply and demand of wood and non-wood products including the prices of these products and their substitutes.	28a 131a	121a 121c 121d		H2	M1	H2	M1
7	Analyse the full life cycle costs and benefits, including environmental impacts, of forest products and their substitutes as a basis for reviewing policies that affect their relative prices and for developing incentives to support sustainable forest management and combat deforestation and forest degradation.	58b(iv)	41c 41d 41e 64h 121d 122f		M1	L0	M1	L1
8	Implement policies to secure land tenure and achieve equitable benefit sharing for local communities, forest owners and Indigenous people from sustainable forest management.	29c	64c 122b 122d		NA (MI)	NA (MI)	M2	M1

9. FOREST CONSERVATION AND PROTECTION OF UNIQUE TYPES OF FORESTS AND FRAGILE ECOSYSTEMS

Summary - Australia has a comprehensive, adequate and representative forest reserve system in place for most regions, as a result of the Regional Forest Agreement (RFA) process. Sustainable management of some reserves is a challenge, especially following recent damaging wildfires. Australia's main challenge is to rehabilitate large areas of former dry forests in the Murray-Darling Basin and in Western Australia to reduce salinity.

In the IPF/IFF process and in the Convention on Biological Diversity, there is considerable emphasis on the need to protect and conserve the full range of forest values within and outside protected areas and to protect unique forest types and fragile ecosystems from disturbance. Australia has demonstrated its commitment to the representative protection and conservation of forest values through its RFA process.

The area of forest in conservation reserves has increased by 22% since 1998 and Australia now has nearly 21.5 million hectares or 13% of its forest protected in formal conservation reserves. Representative protection and conservation of forest areas has been well progressed through the RFA process, and national and State and Territory biodiversity strategies.

Codes of forest practice and other regulatory mechanisms provide for conservation of forest biodiversity. Partnerships or consultation mechanisms are in place to assist in planning and management in many conservation reserves across Australia (e.g. Advisory Committees for National Parks in New South Wales). The Australian Government jointly manages parks such as the Kakadu National Park with the traditional Indigenous owners.

Scientific studies of the effectiveness of protected forest areas and their management are limited and many State and Territory agencies are documenting the need to monitor and assess conservation effectiveness in their management plans. Recent damaging wildfires in south eastern Australia have raised concerns about the sustainability of the strict protection paradigm.

In Australia the over clearing of forests for other land uses has created some environmentally sensitive areas, particularly in the Murray-Darling Basin which extends from southern Queensland through New South Wales, Victoria and into South Australia. Over time, this has resulted in erosion, salinity, remnant tree dieback and declining water quality. All States and Territories have recognised the need to control clearing, retain existing native vegetation, implement improved management and, where necessary, foster regeneration or establish a replanting programme. Since 2001 national programmes have funded baseline data collection and promoted community-based approaches to rehabilitation of critical areas.

9. Forest conservation and protection of unique types of forests and fragile ecosystems	IPF	IFF	CBD	Nat 2001	Int 2001	Nat 2005	Int 2005
1 Develop and implement appropriate planning and management strategies for the representative protection and conservation of the full range of forest values on an ecosystem basis within and outside protected areas.	46c 58b(v)	85a 85b	1.1.1.a 1.1.1.b 1.1.1.i 1.2.1.a 1.2.1.b 1.2.3.b 1.2.4.a 1.2.4.c 1.2.4.d 1.2.4.e 1.2.4.f 1.2.4.g 1.2.4.h 1.2.5.a 1.3.1.a 1.3.2.a 1.3.2.b 1.4.4.b 1.4.4.h 3.3.1.c	H3	H3	H3	H3
2 Develop and implement partnership mechanisms to engage forest owners, private sector, Indigenous people and local communities in the planning and management of forest conservation areas.		84 85b 85c 85d	1.4.3.d 2.1.2.f	M1	M1	M2	M1
3 Develop and implement innovative mechanisms and improved coordination of donor activity for effectively financing, encouraging and implementing integrated cross-sectoral policies to support forest conservation.		85f 90	1.3.3.a 1.3.3.b 1.3.3.c 1.3.3.d 1.3.3.e 1.3.3.f 3.1.3.a	M1	M0	M1	M1
4 Develop and implement methodologies and criteria to assess the adequacy, consistency, condition and effectiveness of protected areas and their management.		85e 88 89		M2	M2	M2	M2
5 Establish joint protected areas and guidelines for collaborative management of ecologically important or unique transboundary forests.		86		M3	M0	M3	M1
6 Encourage cooperation and coordination of activities concerning forests and trees in environmentally critical areas, including systematic data collection and analysis.		129a		L2	M1	H2	M1
7 Give high priority in national forest programmes to the rehabilitation and sustainable management of forests and trees in environmentally critical areas.		129b		L2	L1	H2	L0

Under the National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality and the Natural Heritage Trust, the protection or restoration of native fauna and flora is identified as a priority in the integrated regional natural resource management plans developed for the two programmes.

Australia is an island continent but has some national transboundary issues. These include migratory fauna, pests and diseases and atmospheric pollution. At the sub-national level, transboundary issues are relevant across State jurisdictions, for example, the Australian Alps National Park, which straddles New South Wales and Victoria, protects 1.6 million hectares of forest and alpine ecosystem. Sub-national management arrangements have been developed for the Central Eastern Rainforest Reserves which cover 366,000 hectares in New South Wales and Queensland. Australia has nine forest related World Heritage properties, totally 6.5 million hectares, conserving Australia's natural, Indigenous and historic heritage.

10. MONITORING, ASSESSMENT AND REPORTING: CONCEPTS, TERMINOLOGY AND DEFINITIONS

Summary - The data available for monitoring forest management are variable. They are most reliable for forests where timber harvesting takes place and least reliable for private forests and conservation reserves. The National Forest Inventory collates and analyses data collected collated in States and Territories.

This element of the UNFF PFA is concerned with improving the completeness, accuracy and harmonisation of forest-related data to enable more comprehensive and useful global reporting on the state of the forests. It involves commitment to better data collection and periodic reporting according to internationally agreed formats.

State and Territory agencies, and private forest owners and managers collect primary forest inventory data in Australia. The frequency and scope of forest inventory varies across the States and Territories and between different land tenure. Some States and Territories only undertake inventories when new data are required, while others have on-going programmes. The inventories are based mainly on spatial inventories, underpinned by remote sensing and verified through ground-truthing and surveys. For all public commercial forests, inventories are undertaken on an on-going basis for management purposes and to monitor performance.

Nationally, a team in the Australian Government's forestry department coordinates data collection and analysis through several programmes. The National Forest Inventory, which is a partnership between the Australian Government and all State and Territory Governments, collects data from all forest types and tenures across Australia. The Forest and Vegetation Sciences Programme analyses forest and vegetation data and reviews forest management systems and performance to facilitate industry development and encourage ecologically sustainable forest management. The National Forest Inventory is progressively extending the range and improving the quality of forest data collection, with a stronger focus on meeting international reporting obligations.

The most comprehensive reports produced by the National Forest Inventory are the five-year publications of the national SOFR. The first was released in 1998 and the second in 2003. Data contained in SOFR are aligned with all other national and international reporting requirements, i.e. the same regional (sub-national) Criteria and Indicators (C&I) framework is used to complete the State of the Environment and Montreal Process reporting requirements.

However, data are far from comprehensive. Most assessment has focused on areas managed for commercial timber production. Consequently, the principal gaps in Australia's forest information are for privately managed forests and non-timber production areas such as conservation reserves. The statistical reliability of forest inventories, assessments and monitoring, as well as their frequency, varies across the

country. The highest statistical reliability occurs in plantations where there is consistent annual monitoring. Additional information can be found in SOFR (pp342-52).

10. Monitoring, assessment and reporting; and concepts, terminology and definitions	IPF	IFF	CBD	Nat 2001	Int 2001	Nat 2005	Int 2005
1 Report on the assessment and implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action.		17c		M2	M0	M3	M1
2 Contribute national data on timber and non-timber values to the FAO Global Forest Resource Assessments.	89d			NR	M2	NR	M2
3 Participate in the international development of global guidelines for consistent national interpretation and implementation of IUCN categories of protected areas.		89		NR	M2	NR	M2
4 Develop harmonized, cost-effective, comprehensive national forest reporting formats and data systems incorporating relevant criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management. (INT.ORG)	89g 115e	19a 142c	2.1.2.b	NR	H1	NR	H1
5 Consult with countries about forest assessment definitions as well as the collection and analysis of forest information, including the global forest resource assessment, and provide feedback on the results. (INT.ORG)	89e 89f	18 122a	3.1.1.c 3.1.2.a	NR	M2	NR	H2
6 Monitor, evaluate and report widely on implementation progress of a national forest programme, incorporating the use of criteria and indicators to assess trends in the state of the forests and progress towards sustainable forest management.	17a 17d 89a 115a	17b 17d 19a	3.1.2.c	H2	H2	H3	H3
7 Prepare national information on sustainable forest management, including forest resource assessments and forest statistics on consumption and ownership of wood and non-wood forest products and services.	89b	17a 121a 121b	3.1.2.b 1.4.4.d	H3	M1	H3	M1
8 Contribute to a global and regional comprehensive assessment of the current status of protected forest areas, to assist in the establishment of bio-geographically balanced protected area networks.		85g	1.2.3.a	M2	M1	M2	M2

Internationally, Australia has assisted countries in the South Pacific region to conduct national assessment of the IPF/IFF PFA, with assessment of forest resources and with implementation of the PFA. National assessment of the PFA was conducted in Vanuatu in 2003 and Fiji in 2005.

Australia participated in the 2003 FAO Forest Resource Assessment (FRA) National Correspondents Training Workshop. The workshop agreed on a set of definitions and technical details for national FRA reporting to improve harmonisation of global C&I processes. Australia has also proposed forming a team of specialists for the Asia-Pacific region, similar to that for the European countries.

11. REHABILITATION AND CONSERVATION STRATEGIES FOR COUNTRIES WITH LOW FOREST COVER

Summary - Australia is not a country with low forest cover, but a large part of its forest estate is dry open forest and woodland and extensive clearing has occurred in the past. The need to rehabilitate large areas of degraded land in this zone has raised its public profile and stimulated activities to restore forest cover in many areas.

Although Australia is not classified as a country with low forest cover, several PFA in this element are relevant to our situation. The eucalypt and acacia woodlands in the drier regions of the country form the largest proportion of the national forest estate. The rehabilitation of dryland forests in agricultural areas is particularly important, as large areas suffer from land degradation.

11. Rehabilitation and conservation strategies for countries with low forest cover	IPF	IFF	CBD	Nat 2001	Int 2001	Nat 2005	Int 2005
1 Analyse and take into account the related social, economic and environmental implications, costs and benefits of non-wood substitutes and imports of forest products.	58b(iv)	41h		NR	NR	NR	NR
2 Establish and manage plantations to enhance production of forest goods and services, taking into account relevant social, cultural, economic and environmental considerations in the selection of species, areas and silviculture systems.	58b(ii)			NR	L1	NR	L1
3 Promote research into the rehabilitation and extension of dryland forests as well as into traditional forest-related knowledge with the full involvement of Indigenous peoples and local communities.	40k 46g			M1	L1	L1	L1
4 Consider the needs of developing and low forest cover countries, support forest programmes and integrate forest-related aspects into poverty, population, food and environmental programmes. (INT.ORG)		143 144		NR	M1	NR	L1
5 Undertake integrated and coordinated actions to address dryland forest issues at the international, national and local levels.	46a 46f			M2	L1	M2	L1
6 Develop and support partnerships that include Indigenous and local communities and management approaches, including those that embody traditional lifestyles, to reduce pressures on dryland forests and promote their sustainable management and regeneration.	46d 46e			M2	L1	M2	L1

In most States of Australia dryland forests are no longer under threat from clearing, however, large areas of agricultural land are at risk from dryland salinity. In the Murray-Darling Basin at least 200,000 hectares are grossly affected by salinity and over one million hectares are at risk. Integrated, co-ordinated large-scale activities are being planned and implemented at the local, sub-national and national levels to address these important changes. Revegetation is a key element of the integrated catchment management strategies that have been developed.

Locally, community Landcare groups and non-government organisations (NGOs), such as Greening Australia, are playing important roles in rehabilitating degraded land. At a larger scale, regional natural resource management bodies and State and Territory agencies have initiated revegetation programmes to address salinity. Western Australia, for example, is using tree planting as a key method to control saline water tables in the Wellington catchment of the Collie River.

Most States and Territories have established species trials on agricultural land. Establishment programmes have begun with support from rural communities and the private sector. A high priority is given to assessing and rehabilitating environmentally significant areas. State agencies, NGOs and other organisations, such as the Murray-Darling Basin Commission, are raising awareness and disseminating data on the ecological, social, cultural and economic contribution of trees.

12. REHABILITATION AND RESTORATION OF DEGRADED LANDS AND THE PROMOTION OF NATURAL AND PLANTED FORESTS

Summary - Australia is actively promoting reforestation of degraded lands and the expansion of its plantation estate with more than 535,000 hectares of new forests established between 1998 and 2004. Private investment in short rotation plantations has been facilitated by a supportive taxation arrangement. The Australian Government is working with China and Vietnam to assist with forest industry development and reforestation of degraded catchments.

Most countries have a significant area of degraded land that requires some rehabilitation. In many instances, reforestation with native or exotic species is an effective approach. Establishing plantations on already degraded land to provide the benefits rural communities require can often reduce the pressures for degradation of natural forest.

12. Rehabilitation and restoration of degraded lands and the promotion of natural and planted forests		IPF	IFF	CBD	Nat 2001	Int 2001	Nat 2005	Int 2005
1	Enhance the role of plantations as a mechanism for reducing deforestation and forest degradation of natural forests.	28b	64g		H3	H1	H3	H1
2	Take positive action towards reforestation, afforestation and conservation, using native species where appropriate, including regeneration of degraded forests, management of plantations and trees outside forests and the expansion of protected areas.	58b(ii) 58b(iii) 58b(v) 58c	30b 122a 129c	1.3.1.b	NR	L1	H1	L1
3	Raise awareness and disseminate data on the ecological, social, cultural and economic contributions of planted and natural forests in the rehabilitation and sustainable management of forests in environmentally critical areas.		129d		L2	M1	H2	M1
4	Analyse past experiences and monitor trends in dryland forests, including biophysical, social, economic and institutional factors.	46b		1.2.4.b	L2	L1	L2	L1

This element of the PFA is particularly relevant to Australia. Rehabilitation of degraded agricultural land and protection of existing native vegetation are major parts of a national government and community natural resources management programme. Already Natural Heritage Trust (NHT) projects have rehabilitated 789,000 hectares of degraded land including 230,000 hectares of revegetation. All bilateral agreements between the Australian Government and the six State and two Territory governments under the NHT provide for controls on, or the phasing out of land clearing activities where land clearing impacts on remnant native vegetation or otherwise compromises biodiversity assets.

Australia has developed a plantation strategy, *Plantations for Australia: the 2020 Vision*, which aims to triple the area of plantations to three million hectares by 2020. A supportive taxation arrangement has resulted in approximately 535,000 hectares of new plantations being established on cleared lands with private sector capital during the past eight years. Another factor encouraging private investment has been legislation recently passed by some States to enable sale of carbon rights from forests.

Much of the plantation establishment activity has focused on short-rotation pulpwood crops, either for export or to supply new pulp mills in Australia. More recently, interest has risen in establishing longer rotation plantations and undertaking more intensive management to produce sawlogs and peeler logs to supplement declining log supplies from native forests. The rapid growth in the plantation estate has prompted some adverse reaction from some rural communities who fear loss of amenities and services with the demographic changes that follow conversion of farmland to forest.

In some areas, the water used by large areas of plantations has also become a matter for debate.⁶ Comprehensive socio economic research has been conducted in plantation regions and shows that plantation expansion can contribute to stable economic growth in regional areas⁷. The results of this research are being disseminated across Australia.

The Australian Centre for International Agriculture Research(ACIAR) and other agencies have assisted countries to develop new industries based on wood and non-wood products providing major economic benefits as well as environmental benefits, for example acacia hybrid work in Vietnam and eucalypts in southern China. Australia is assisting Chinese authorities to reforest degraded catchments in Qinghai Province.

⁶ *The National Water Initiative Intergovernmental Agreement* (2004) provides a framework for dealing with land use change activities that may intercept significant volumes of water. Large-scale plantation forestry is highlighted as an example of an activity that may need to be considered in relation to water use at a catchment scale.

⁷ *Socio-economic impacts of plantation forestry: Summary report 2005*

13. MAINTAINING FOREST COVER TO MEET PRESENT AND FUTURE NEEDS

Summary - Australia has specific forest policies to maintain and extend forest cover to meet present and future requirements for forest products and services. Mechanisms exist for Indigenous people to gain access to some resources on public land. The Plantation 2020 Vision programme has considerably increased private investment in plantation establishment.

Governments have a responsibility to ensure that a country's forest estate is adequate to serve community needs. This requires long-term planning and the creation of a policy and legal environment, together with the necessary implementation mechanisms that will provide the capacity to maintain the required area of forest.

13. Maintaining forest cover to meet present and future needs	IPF	IFF	CBD	Nat 2001	Int 2001	Nat 2005	Int 2005
1 Implement public and private sector policies and programmes to sustainably meet increasing demands for wood and non-wood products and services from natural and planted forests and trees outside forests.	28a	122a 122b 122d	2.2.1.g	M3	M1	M3	M2
2 Incorporate information and strategies, including extension programmes for women, on the supply and use of fuel wood and the use of efficient wood energy technologies in the planning of forestry, agriculture and energy programmes.		56n 121c 122c	1.4.2.b	NA	NA	NR	M1
3 Implement progressively measures to recognize and respect legitimate property rights, access to and sustainable use of forest resources for local communities and Indigenous people.		64d 115d		NA	NA	M2	L1
4 Implement strategies for the protection of the full range of forest values, with particular regard to continued integrity of biological diversity.		85b	1.1.1.d	NA (H3)	NA (H1)	H3	L1

The National Forest Policy Statement (NFPS) provides the overall directions for meeting Australia's present and future needs for forest products and services. Although it sets no targets, the NFPS includes a commitment to maintain a permanent native forest estate and to establish Regional Forest Agreements to protect the full range of forest values.

In 1997 Australia, developed a public and private sector plantation policy: *Plantations for Australia: the 2020 Vision*. It provides the national framework for the sustainable expansion of Australia's plantation resource, including reducing pressure on the nation's

native forest resources. The policy was reviewed in 2002 in consultation with industry representatives, plantation growers and processors, investors, landholders, local governments, researchers, farmer associations, unions, Landcare groups and others with an interest in natural resource management and the environmental benefits of plantations.

Since 1997 over 535,000 hectares of new plantations have been established using private sector funds under a supportive taxation arrangement, taking Australia's plantation estate to 1.7 million hectares at the end of 2004.

Since 2001 most Australian jurisdictions have amended or implemented new legislation relating to native vegetation conservation and management. Most jurisdictions have set a timeframe to end broad scale land clearing and conversion of native vegetation (with varying criteria and exemptions) as part of their commitment to national natural resource management strategies and plans. Queensland, Western Australia, South Australia, Victoria, New South Wales, and the Northern Territory have generally amended regulations to prevent broad scale clearing unless the overall effect is to improve or maintain the environment. Tasmania has agreed, under the 2005 *Tasmanian Community Forest Agreement* with the Australian Government, to phase out broad scale forest clearing by 2010 on public land and 2015 on private land.

On lands to which Indigenous people hold no formal land title access, the use of resources may be determined under the Commonwealth's *Native Title Act 1993* and Indigenous Land Use Agreements (ILUAs) made under the same legislation. Native Title is the recognition in Australian law of the rights and interests of Indigenous Australians in land and waters, according to their traditional laws and customs. Native Title may be claimed on any Crown land, including leasehold land but not freehold (private) land.

The Federal Court determines whether Native Title exists and the ILUA specifies parameters for the exercise of Native Title rights (SOFR p307). Increasingly, parties are seeking ILUAs or other forms of agreement to provide clarity and certainty about the future management of lands and waters within an agreement area. In addition to procedures for land rights claims, there are several other mechanisms that provide for Indigenous people's rights and interests in the land (SOFR p294).

14. FINANCIAL RESOURCES

Summary - Australia utilises both government and private sector funds to implement sustainable forest management, with a supportive taxation arrangement facilitating the development of plantations. Australia provides assistance to governments in the Asia-Pacific region to promote an enabling environment that will encourage private sector investment in sustainable forest management.

This element of the PFA mainly considers the issue of providing financial resources to less-developed countries to help them improve management of their forests. The PFA are partly concerned with steps that governments might take to create an internal policy environment more conducive to investment in sustainable forest management, and partly with improving the effectiveness of donor programmes for forest management.

14. Financial resources	IPF	IFF	CBD	Nat 2001	Int 2001	Nat 2005	Int 2005
1 Explore and expand innovative financial mechanisms including concessional lending, debt relief initiatives and an investment promotion entity and enhance community financing to support sustainable forest management and national forest programmes.	17c 67e 67g 71c 70c	30e 64j		NR	H0	NR	H0
2 Encourage private sector investment and reinvestment of forest revenues into sustainable forest management and environmentally sound technologies, through appropriate policies, legislation, incentives and mechanisms.	69b 69c 69d 69e 70b 77d	30c 56b 115a 115b 122b		NR	M1	H3	M1
3 Identify and prioritise resource needs for sustainable forest management, including the implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action.	67b 67c 30b 133b	17e 30b		NR	H0	NR	H1
4 Strengthen transparency of decision making in international financial institutions and ensure their policies and structural adjustment programmes support sustainable forest management. (INT.ORG)		65 115g		NR	H1	NR	H1
5 Improve information systems to enhance coordination and data sharing on ODA programming and the provision of public and private sector financial resources for the implementation of national forest programmes. (INT.ORG)	78a			NA	NA	NR	NR

14. Financial resources		IPF	IFF	CBD	Nat 2001	Int 2001	Nat 2005	Int 2005
6	Create or strengthen partnerships and international cooperation to facilitate the provision of increased financial resources to implement sustainable forest management and the IPF/IFF Proposals for Action, including forest conservation and protected area management. (INT.ORG)	17c 67a	9a 9c 9g 30a 84 87 97a 129e	2.1.2.h	NR	H1	NR	H1
7	Enhance coordination and collaboration between donors, international institutions and instruments related to forests and explore appropriate indicators for monitoring and evaluating donor funded forest programmes. (INT.ORG)	71a 71b			NR	M2	NR	M2
8	Support coordinated deployment of resources for sustainable forest management through national forest programmes to improve efficiency and effectiveness of available funds. (INT.ORG)	70a 70d 17g	30a		NR	M1	NR	M0

Most of the PFA in this element are not relevant nationally but have relevance for Australia's international programmes. The forest, wood and paper products industry is an important industry in Australia with an annual turnover in excess of A\$18 billion.

All forest operations in Australia must comply with sustainable forest management practices, which are enshrined in legislation, as well as codes of practice which have been developed in all States and Territories.

The principle strategy for generating new investment in the Australian forest industries is through supportive policy and taxation regimes. Approximately A\$4 billion of new investment in the establishment of plantations has occurred since 1997 under the provisions of a supportive taxation arrangement, which allow immediate deductions for 100% of the plantation establishment costs. In addition, there has been about A\$1.5 billion of private sector investment in new processing facilities over the same period. Revenues generated from the utilisation of public native forests and plantations are used to implement sustainable forest management programmes, including regeneration and replanting after harvesting.

National programmes, such as the National Landcare Programme, National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality and Natural Heritage Trust, have provided funds to facilitate community participation in natural resource management programmes,

including a significant amount of reforestation on private land. Much of this work has been directed to improving water quality, biological diversity and conservation.

The Australian Government is working with the governments of Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka and East Timor to help establish the regulatory environment and governance arrangements to encourage private sector investment in sustainable forest management. The Australian Government continues to work to improve governance through our positions on the boards of international financial institutions.

15. INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT

Summary - Australia is actively promoting international trade, including trade in forest products, through the removal of tariff barriers. Forest owners are increasingly adopting ISO 14001 environmental management systems and forest certification schemes, such the Australian Forestry Standard, to certify that timber products are derived from sustainably managed forests. Australia is also considering options for addressing the trade in illegally and unsustainably managed timber and wood products.

During the IPF/IFF process there was concern about the potential for international trade in forest products to contribute to unsustainable forest management as well as tariff and non-tariff barriers restricting market access for forest product exports. There is a need for a balance between the requirements for sustainable forest management and the need for less-developed countries to utilise and trade their forest resources. However, countries need to ensure that international trade in forest products does not increase the incidence of pests and diseases, which could have catastrophic consequences for economic activities and biological diversity.

Over the past decade, Australia has taken a market-oriented approach to its economic and trade reform, with a general aim of increasing efficiency in the allocation of resources. This has resulted in reductions in production subsidies for various industries, particularly in the primary sector.

Australia supports a policy that will lead to the removal of tariffs for wood and wood products. Australia's wood products industries are linked to international markets. Since the early 1990s, the forest sector has attracted over A\$6.6 billion in domestic and foreign investment.

Australia participates in various multilateral trade fora, such as the World Trade Organization (WTO) and its Non-Agricultural Market Access (NAMA) negotiating group. Australia is also pursuing trade initiatives through Free Trade Agreements (FTAs), bilateral agreements and various regional groups and contributes to the International Tropical Timber Organization's (ITTO's) project work on trade, market access and sustainable forest management issues. The Australia–New Zealand Closer Economic Relations is one of the world's most comprehensive FTAs. In 2004-05, New Zealand provided nearly half of Australia's imports of sawn wood and about two thirds of our imports of paper products.

For countries not party to multilateral or bilateral treaties, Australia's tariffs on imports of forest and forest products range from zero to five per cent. Australia, however, grants preferential tariff treatment for products from developing countries under the Australian System of Tariff Preferences for Developing Countries, the Papua New Guinea–Australia Trade and Commercial Relations Agreement and the South Pacific Regional Trade and

Economic Cooperation Agreement. The average tariff rate for products from developing countries is 3.9 per cent. From 1 July 2003 Australia has allowed duty-free and quota-free access for all goods originating in Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and East Timor.

15. International trade and sustainable forest management	IPF	IFF	CBD	Nat 2001	Int 2001	Nat 2005	Int 2005
1 Study the environmental, social and economic impacts of trade-related measures affecting forest products and services.	128a			L3	M2	L3	M2
2 Undertake measures to improve market access for forest goods and services, including the reduction of tariff and non-tariff barriers to trade, in accordance with existing international obligations and to promote a mutually supportive relationship between environment and trade.	128b	64i	1.4.3.a	L1	H2	M3	H1
3 Improve market transparency for trade in forest products and services and consider measures to reduce illegal trade in wood and non-wood forest products.	135a 135b	41e 41f	1.4.2.a 1.4.2.d 2.1.4.a 2.1.4.b 2.1.4.c 2.1.4.e 2.1.4.f	NR	M2	H1	M2
4 Implement policies and actions, including codes of conduct, to facilitate trade in wood and non-wood products from sustainably managed forests, consider community rights, and to minimize negative effects of short term market changes.	128c	41a 41g		H2	M1	H3	M1
5 Undertake further cooperative work on voluntary certification and labelling schemes, including studying their link with criteria and indicators and their effectiveness in promoting sustainable forest management and exchange information and experience on these schemes.	133a 133b 133d 133e 133g	41b		H1	H1	H3	H2
6 Support the application of accessibility, credibility, equivalence, cost-effectiveness, transparency and participatory concepts to certification and labelling schemes and ensure they do not lead to unjustified obstacles to market access.	133c 133f	41b		H1	H1	H4	H2
7 Intensify efforts and implement policies to promote the sustainable use of all economically viable lesser-used species in domestic and international markets.	132a 132b			L1	L2	L1	L2

To protect itself against pests and diseases, Australia is committed to ensuring quarantine standards and regulations that are consistent with the WTO agreements.

Most forestry operations in Australia are governed by codes of practice and many forest owners implement environmental management systems to ISO 14001 standard or are certified under the Australian Forestry Standard (AFS) or the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) scheme. Australia currently has 5.7 million hectares of forests covered by forest certification schemes.

The AFS is based on internationally agreed criteria and includes performance requirements that support continuous improvement in sustainable wood production and is applicable to all forests managed for wood production (SOFR p20). A Chain of Custody standard has been developed to track the movement of wood from certified forests through various processing stages to various end markets. The AFS has achieved mutual recognition with other forest certification schemes by alignment with the Programme for Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC).

The Australian Government is committed to eliminating imports of illegally sourced wood and non-wood forest products, but recognises that a long term strategic approach is necessary to achieve this and that there are numerous issues to be dealt with in this context. The Australian Government is working closely with stakeholders to develop a whole-of-government strategy for addressing this problem.

16. INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN CAPACITY BUILDING, TRANSFER OF AND ACCESS TO ENVIRONMENTALLY SOUND TECHNOLOGIES FOR THE SUPPORT OF SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT

Summary - Australia plays an important leadership role in promoting the adoption of sustainable forest management amongst countries in the Asia-Pacific region. Australia cooperates with other donors and regional governments through the delivery of both regional and country specific programmes designed to address issues of relevance to the forest sector in the region.

This element of the PFA seeks to encourage the more effective use of international cooperation in forest management in developing countries. It recognises that effective forestry assistance programmes depend on building up local management capacity and transferring appropriate technology to enable recipient countries to work towards sustainable management of their forests.

Most of the PFA in this element are relevant to Australia's international assistance programmes. Australia has ongoing forestry programmes in the South Pacific and has several other broad capacity-building programmes, some of which have a forestry component. A recent example of the latter was the India-Australia Capacity-Building Project, which supported improvements to forest fire management in Sikkim. There is a successful, ongoing forestry project in Nepal that has achieved outstanding results in increasing forest cover, strengthening community management of forests and increasing rural education levels, especially of women.

Australia has a forestry project in the Solomon Islands, with A\$14 million of assistance to strengthen capacity in the forest sector, assist with policy and legislative reform, support community reforestation and the implementation of a Code of Logging Practice. Australia also has a smaller forestry project supporting the Papua New Guinea Forest Authority to implement reforms in corporate management and information management.

The Australian Government's development assistance programme requires that gender issues are addressed and appropriate strategies are developed for each programme/project to ensure appropriate participation of women and that women receive an equitable share of benefits. Under the Commonwealth's *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*, all international assistance must satisfy Australia's domestic environmental protection requirements. AusAID's *Environmental Management Guide 2003*⁸ provides the framework for the aid programme's environment management system.

⁸ http://www.ausaid.gov.au/publications/pdf/Environmental_Management_Guide.pdf

16. International cooperation in capacity-building, transfer of and access to environmentally-sound technologies for the support of sustainable forest management	IPF	IFF	CBD	Nat 2001	Int 2001	Nat 2005	Int 2005
1 Support developing countries to expand their forest cover, increase downstream processing and community based processing of non-wood and timber forest products, including utilization of lesser used species.	58c 131b 132c			NR	M2	NR	M2
2 Assess, taking into account gender disaggregated data, the technological requirements necessary to achieve sustainable forest management.	77b	56c 56o		NR	M1	NR	M1
3 Enhance cooperation and financing to promote access to and transfer of environmentally sound technologies.	77a 77c	56a 56i 56e 56l 56g 56h 77d 129e		NR	M2	NR	M2
4 Support national forest programmes and capacity building to implement sustainable forest management and the IPF/IFF Proposals for Action, including strengthening and supporting institutions involved in forest, plantation and protected area management, forest research and supporting Indigenous people, local forest dependent communities and forest owners.	17g 28a 58b(vi) 70a 70e 77e 77f 89b 115c	17a 19b 56d 64e 64i 87 97b 107d 143	1.4.1.c 1.4.1.e 3.4.1.a 4.1.2.i	L3	H2	L3	H2
5 Assist with the dissemination and interpretation of information on sustainable forest management to countries and stakeholders.	78b			NA	NA	NR	H3
6 Promote the dissemination and sharing of environmentally sound technologies to end-users, particularly in local communities, including through efficient use of extension services.	77e	56f 56h		L3	M1	L3	M1
7 Strengthen education and training for women in community development programmes including the growth and use of fuelwood and the use of energy efficient cooking technology and ensure women benefit from the transfer of environmentally sound technologies.		56m 56n		NR	M1	NR	M1

8	Support the forest work undertaken by international and regional organizations and under relevant international instruments and encourage them to contribute to forest policy dialogue and to support inter-agency cooperation on the implementation of the outcomes of UNCED and the IPF/IFF processes.	146a 146d 146e	139a 139b 141a		NR	H2	NR	H2
9	Clarify the forest-related roles of international institutions and instruments to improve integration and coordination and eliminate duplication of their efforts.	146b 146c	139c		NR	H1	NR	H1
10	Strengthen national arrangements to provide guidance to multilateral forest-related organisations.		140b		NR	M1	NR	M1
11	Continue collaborative work to support the implementation of the IPF/IFF Proposals for Action, reporting and the provision of information to assist the forest sector. (INT.ORG)	78c 145	17e		NR	H1	NR	H2
12	Develop institutional synergies with other partners and prepare a comprehensive directory of organizations and instruments engaged in forest-related activities. (INT.ORG)		141b 141c		NR	M1	NR	M1

Australia supports a number of regional initiatives, including through the South Pacific Regional Initiative on Genetic Resources (SPRIG) and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community. The Australian Government is also placing priority on enhancing whole-of government approaches to provide guidance to multilateral forest-related organisations.

Australia has made a significant contribution to collaborative work that supports implementation of the PFA by working with World Bank's Program on Forests (PROFOR) to develop a summary of the IPF/IFF PFA. This booklet was published in 2003 and has been translated into French and Spanish to assist a wider awareness of the PFA.

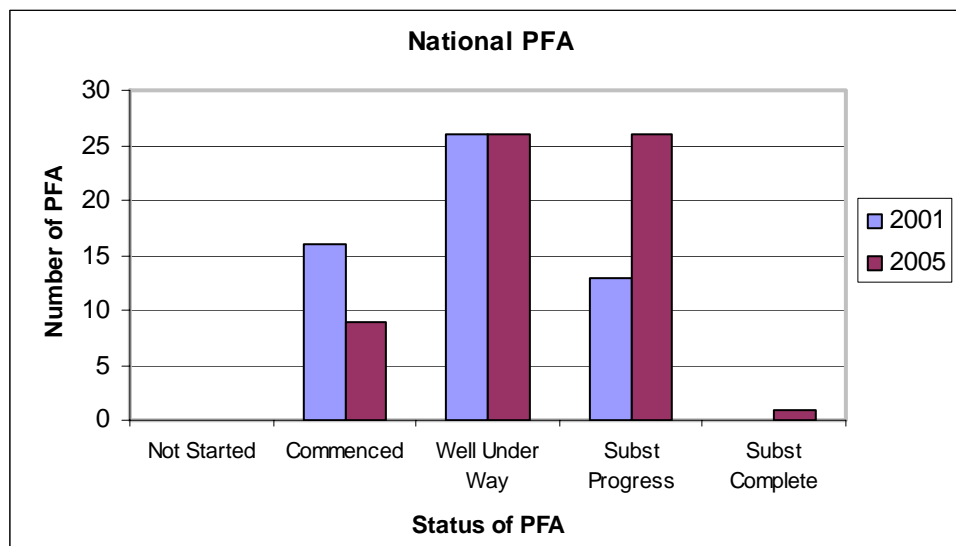
Australia actively contributes to a range of forest related forums (e.g. United Nations Forum on Forests, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, the Convention on Biological Diversity, the International Tropical Timber Organization, the Montreal Process) to encourage greater cooperation, coordination, elimination of duplication of efforts and streamlining of monitoring, assessment and reporting.

CONCLUSION

Australia has continued to work steadily toward implementing the IPF/IFF Proposals for Action (PFA). In 2001, 55 PFA were judged as relevant to this country. Due to changed clustering and interpretation of the PFA, 62 were judged relevant in 2005.

Australia has made significant progress with implementation of relevant PFA in the past three years. The changes are shown in more detail in Figure 1 below. There were also a number of adjustments to the priorities of the PFA. Nine PFA received a higher priority rating and only one had its priority reduced.

Figure 1. Changes in the implementation status of national PFA 2001-2005



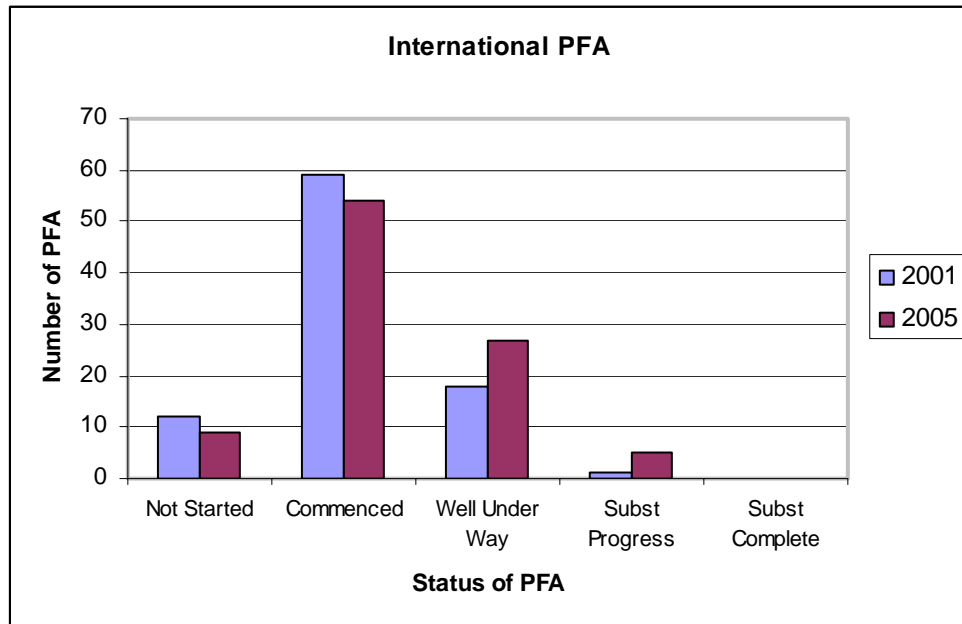
Significant progress has been made in several areas, mainly in the development of certification schemes and codes of practice, an increase in private investment in plantations and greater involvement of Indigenous people in forest management. New challenges have emerged from the plantation programme's success and the increase in the conservation reserve system such as the impacts of land use changes (from agriculture to plantation forestry) on rural communities and the potential effect of plantations on water supplies.

Australia remains committed to actively supporting the UNFF PFA and other international forest-related initiatives, such as the Montreal Process. The requirements for international reporting on forest issues have become a significant issue and, therefore, Australia is currently looking at ways to streamline data collection and reporting processes.

In 2001, 89 PFA were judged relevant to Australia's capacity to provide assistance through Australia's international programmes. In 2005, 95 PFA were judged relevant to Australia's international programmes due to changed clustering and interpretation.

There has been useful progress with many of the relevant PFA in the international arena, mainly in the South Pacific and South East Asian regions. The progress made with the international PFA is shown in more detail in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2. Changes in implementation status of international PFA 2001-2005



Australia has strongly supported the IPF/IFF process and made useful contributions to the development of and assessment methodology for the PFA, which are the basis of this report, and in linking the PFA to the relevant provisions of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

Overall, the data indicate that Australia has made good progress on implementing the UNFF PFA within Australia but slightly less progress on international assistance in implementing the PFA.

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