

## Indicator 7.1b: Extent to which the institutional framework supports the conservation and sustainable management of forests (2024)



This indicator examines the institutional frameworks that support sustainable forest management. Institutional frameworks provide mechanisms for engagement of the wider community in the process of continuous improvement and sustainable forest management.

### Context and definitions

Institutional frameworks provide mechanisms for policy-making and decision-making in sustainable forest management and processes for continuous improvement. They also promote public and Indigenous participation, and the adoption of voluntary forest management certification schemes and environmental management systems.

### Certification

A process whereby the quality and sustainability of forest management, or of a product supply chain from forest to market, is assessed and certified by an accredited, independent third party, against the criteria and requirements of a credible and recognised forest management standard.

### Australia's forest policy framework

A well-established policy framework, guided by a [National Forest Policy Statement](#), supports the conservation and sustainable management of Australia's forests, both nationally and in all states and territories.

Most state and territory government organisations and agencies responsible for forest management operate under long-term national and state or territory policies, strategies and charters that influence the sustainable management of Australia's forests (see Table 7.1b-1). The extent to which these arrangements provide for conservation and sustainable forest management varies among states and territories. Generally, these arrangements apply comprehensively in public forests, but to a lesser extent in private and leasehold forests (which are generally managed privately).

**Table 7.1b-1: Key non-legislative policies, strategies and charters influencing the conservation and sustainable management of Australia's forests**

Jurisdiction	Non-legislative policy, strategy, charter	Purpose in relation to the conservation and sustainable management of Australia's forests
Australia	<i>Australia's Native Vegetation Framework</i>	Guides the ecologically sustainable management of Australia's native vegetation. Guides government, the community and the private sector, and seeks to engage all Australians, including Indigenous peoples, in native vegetation management across Australia.
	<i>Australia's Strategy for Nature 2019-2030</i>	Describes the vision, shared goals and objectives for managing nature in all landscapes, from cities to rural and natural environments on land and at sea. The strategy sets a national framework for government, non-government and community action to strengthen Australia's response to biodiversity decline and care for nature in our many environments.
	<i>Australia's Strategy for the National Reserve System 2009-2030</i>	Provides national guidance for improved cross-jurisdictional coordination, and supports collaborative action by protected area managers and key stakeholders to enhance the National Reserve System, including through strengthened partnerships and increased community support.

Jurisdiction	Non-legislative policy, strategy, charter	Purpose in relation to the conservation and sustainable management of Australia's forests
	<i>National Forest Policy Statement</i>	Outlines agreed objectives and policies for Australia's public and private forests, based on 11 national goals to be pursued within a regionally based planning framework that integrates environmental and commercial objectives so that provision is made for all forest values, including opportunities for effective public participation in decision making.
<b>Australian Capital Territory</b>		
	<i>Native Woodland Conservation Strategy</i>	Identifies conservation objectives and guides the protection, restoration and adaptive management of woodlands in the Australian Capital Territory for a 10 year period. The strategy aims to inform the ongoing protection and adaptive management of lowland and subalpine woodlands.
	<i>Nature Conservation Strategy 2013-2023</i>	Guides a coordinated and integrated approach to nature conservation for all land management, planning, business and community sectors in the Australian Capital Territory, for the management of open spaces, rural and urban areas, riverine corridors and nature reserves, including strengthening community engagement in nature conservation.
	<i>Forest Management Unit Policy Statement</i>	Commits the unit to complying with all applicable regulations, laws, the Code of Forest Practice and national forest certification standards; managing plantations to maintain and enhance positive social, economic and environmental outcomes; conserving, managing and rehabilitating environmental and ecological values, and limiting impacts by forestry operations.
	<i>Strategic Plantation Management Plan 2017-2022</i>	Supports the sustainable management of the Australian Capital Territory Government's planted forests and outlines a systematic approach to sustainable plantation management.
	<i>Urban Forest Strategy 2021-45</i>	Sets out the vision of the Australian Capital Territory Government for a resilient and sustainable urban forest that supports a liveable city and the natural environment and contributes to the wellbeing of the community in a changing climate. The urban forest is all the trees and other vegetation, and the soil and water that support them, within the urban landscape, including nature reserves.
<b>New South Wales</b>		
	<i>Forestry Corporation of New South Wales Forest Management Policy</i>	Provides a commitment to sustainably manage the public plantation and multiple-use native forest estate to produce a range of forest products and services along with environmental, community and cultural benefits. Through the policy Forestry Corporation acknowledges the positive contribution of stakeholders by proactively creating opportunities to engage with stakeholders to understand their needs and expectations and inform decisions.
	<i>Forestry Industry Roadmap</i>	The New South Wales Government's strategic action plan to build a stronger, more competitive and ecologically sustainable forestry industry. This is based on a vision that New South Wales will have a sustainably managed forest estate that underpins a dynamic, economically efficient forestry industry, which continues to support regional economies and delivers social and environmental benefits.
	<i>NSW Koala Strategy</i>	Sets out the first five-year plan of the New South Wales Government to achieve the long-term goal of doubling koala numbers in New South Wales by 2050 – supporting a range of conservation actions that will provide more habitat for koalas, support local community action, improve koala safety and health, and build our knowledge to improve koala conservation.

Jurisdiction	Non-legislative policy, strategy, charter	Purpose in relation to the conservation and sustainable management of Australia's forests
<b>Northern Territory</b>		
	<i>Territory Natural Resource Management Plan 2021-2025</i>	Provides an overarching five-year strategy for maintaining and enhancing the condition of land and water resources, the productivity of soils and the health of natural habitats and biodiversity across the Territory.
<b>Queensland</b>		
	Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, Forestry, <i>Forest Management Policy</i>	Provides a commitment to a range of measures, including operating its forest management activities consistent with Queensland Government priorities, environmental responsibilities and community expectations.
	<i>Protected Area Strategy 2020-2030</i>	To support the growth, better management and sustainability of Queensland's protected areas, including national parks and private protected areas.
	<i>Native timber action plan</i>	Queensland Government actions towards having an internationally competitive and sustainable industry, balancing both jobs and the environment.
<b>South Australia</b>		
	<i>Blueprint for the Future South Australian Forest and Wood Products Industry (2014-2040)<sup>a</sup></i>	Provides direction for activities to achieve significant economic, social and environmental outcomes, and seeks to build upon key South Australian Government initiatives, including the <i>Cellulose Fibre Value Chain Study</i> , the <i>South East Forestry Partnerships Program</i> , and the <i>South Australian Forest Industry Strategy</i> .
	<i>Carbon Farming Roadmap for South Australia</i>	Guide for government and the private sector in South Australia as they work together to better understand carbon farming, address risks and challenges, develop knowledge and skills, and take advantage of this new and evolving industry.
	<i>Expanding plantations and growing domestic manufacturing: Recommendations from the Forest Industry Advisory Council of South Australia</i>	Provides the State government with recommendations aimed at strengthening and growing the sector in South Australia.
	<i>ForestrySA Sustainable Forest Management Policy</i>	Commits ForestrySA to systematic, sustainable, and safe multiple use forest management in a manner that is environmentally sound, economically viable and socially acceptable.
	<i>Green Triangle Forest Industry Strategic Plan</i>	Commits industry to sustainably growing regional fibre supply by planting more trees, greater utilisation of existing trees, prioritising local processing and generating higher value products.
<b>Tasmania</b>		
	<i>Policy for Maintaining a Permanent Native Forest Estate</i>	A Tasmanian Government policy that aims to maintain an extensive and permanent native forest estate to ensure that Tasmania's native forests are maintained in the long-term for all their various conservation, production and amenity values. The Forest Practices Authority has powers under the <i>Forest Practices Act 1985</i> to ensure compliance with this Policy.
	<i>Sustainable Timber Tasmania Sustainable Forest Management Policy</i>	Commits to continual improvement and to ensuring that the forest resource is managed sustainably through practices that are environmentally sound, socially acceptable and economically viable.
<b>Victoria<sup>b</sup></b>		
	<i>Protecting Victoria's Environment – Biodiversity 2037</i>	A long-term vision for Victoria's biodiversity, supported by two goals – Victorians value nature and Victoria's natural environment is healthy. It sets statewide targets and contributing targets for both goals that will be reviewed and updated every five years.

Jurisdiction	Non-legislative policy, strategy, charter	Purpose in relation to the conservation and sustainable management of Australia's forests
	<i>Sustainability Charter for Victoria's State Forests</i>	Sets objectives for the sustainability of public native forests and of the timber harvesting industry on public land in Victoria, and promotes community involvement in how State forests are managed to enhance their diverse values and uses.
	<i>VicForests Forest Management Policy</i>	Commits to building environmental systems that sustain Victoria's unique Victorian biodiversity. This includes providing the necessary resources to meet its sustainable forest management commitments.
	<i>VicForests Stakeholder Engagement Policy</i>	Commits to engaging with stakeholders who are interested in contributing to its sustainable forest management practices.
<b>Western Australia<sup>c</sup></b>		
	<i>Forest Products Commission Forest Management Policy</i>	Commits the commission to ensuring that renewable timber resources are managed sustainably through the implementation of forest management practices that are environmentally sound, socially acceptable and economically viable. Also commits to liaising with internal and external stakeholders on forest management issues and performance.

<sup>a</sup> A *South Australian Forest and Wood Products Industry Policy Statement* was the first step in implementing recommendations from the *Blueprint for the Future South Australian Forest and Wood Products Industry 2014 to 2040*. The statement reaffirmed the South Australian Government's commitment to the management of South Australia's plantation forests for all South Australians.

<sup>b</sup> The government of Victoria announced on 23 May 2023 the ending of native forest harvesting in Victoria's State forests on 01 January 2024.

<sup>c</sup> The government of Western Australia announced on 08 September 2021 the ending of harvesting in most public native forest from January 2024.

Except otherwise noted, table updated January 2023.

Source: State, territory and Australian Government agencies.

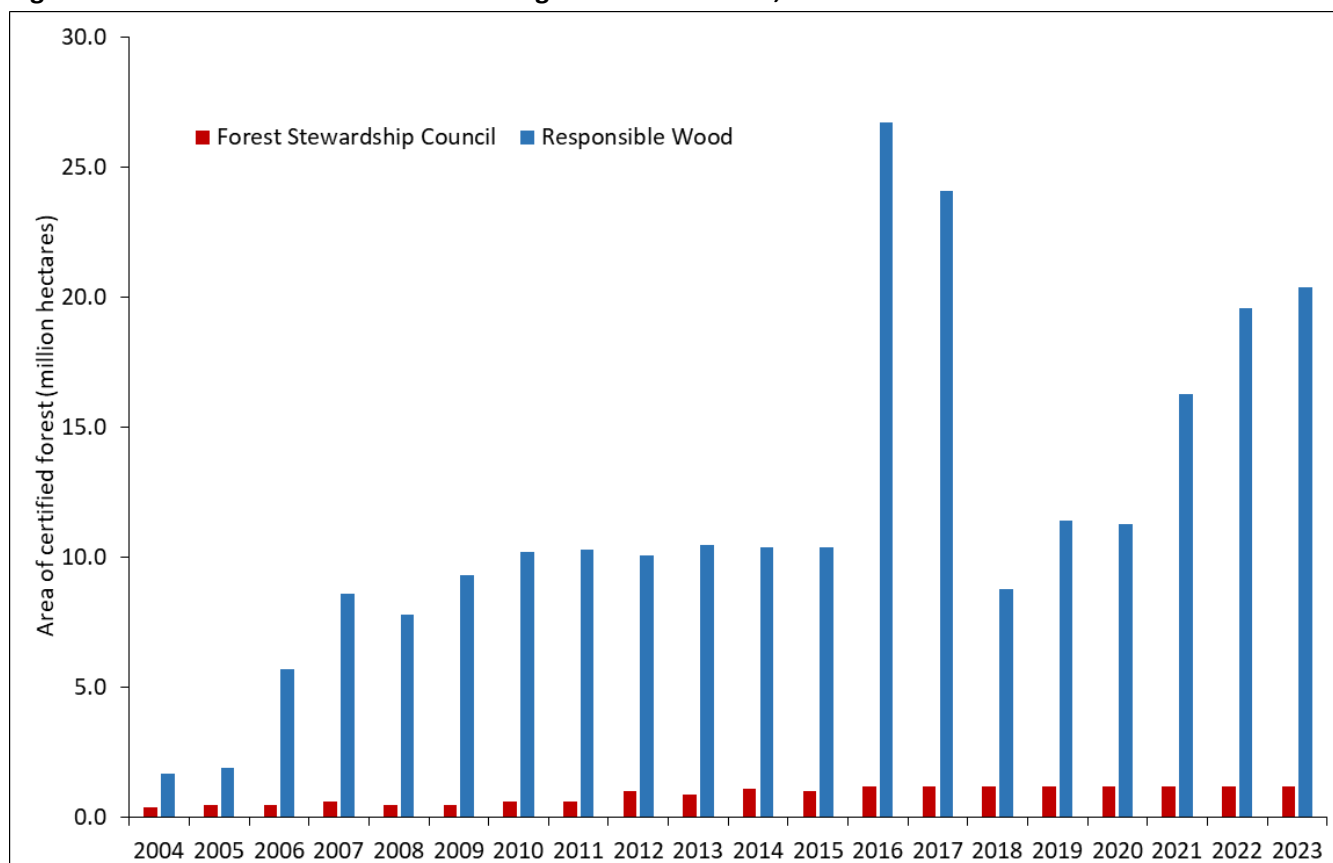
More information on Australia's forest policy framework is available in [Supporting information for Indicator 7.1b](#). This includes information on Australia's *National Forest Policy Statement*, public and Indigenous participation in forest management planning, the monitoring of compliance with forest management codes and systems, and the future of public native forest harvesting.

## Certification of forest management

The area of certified forest management in Australia at June 2023 was 20.4 million hectares under the Responsible Wood certification scheme, and 1.2 million hectares under the Forest Stewardship Council scheme (see Figure 7.1b-1). The area certified by Responsible Wood increased in 2021 and 2022 mainly due to additional areas of forest being certified by VicForests and the Western Australian Forest Products Commission. Almost all multiple-use public forest is certified under at least one certification scheme.

The total area certified at any point in time is difficult to determine accurately, as some forest areas are certified under both schemes; in addition, certificates are issued or cease at differing times, and the '[defined forest area](#)' upon which certificates are based can be updated. The area of Australia's forest certified by both the Responsible Wood scheme and the Forest Stewardship Council scheme was estimated at 1.06 million hectares in mid-2023.

**Figure 7.1b-1: Area of certified forest management in Australia, 2004-23**



Forest Stewardship Council areas are from the Forest Stewardship Council database and at 01 July for each year. Responsible Wood areas are for June each year.

The Responsible Wood areas for 2016 and 2017 are considered anomalous, resulting from certification then removal of largely non-forested areas.

Source: Australian Forestry Standard Limited, Responsible Wood, Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification, Forest Stewardship Council (International). Responsible Wood areas from 2003-04 to 2014-15 were supplied by the office of the Australian Forestry Standard Limited.

[Click here for a Microsoft Excel workbook of the data for Figure 7.1b-1.](#)

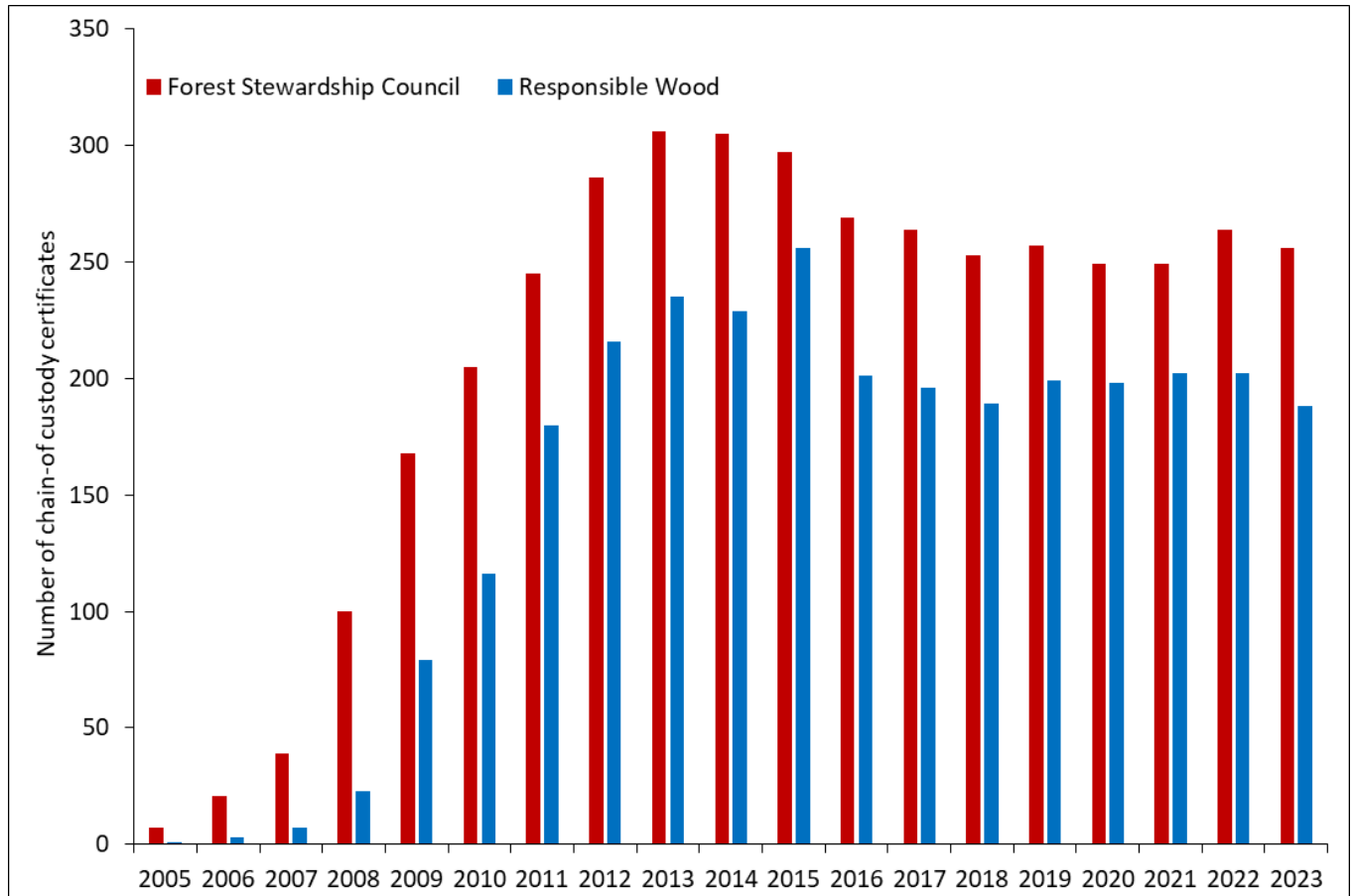
Forest management certification is the voluntary, independent assessment of forest management activities and operations in a particular area of forest against a credible standard that has criteria, requirements and indicators encompassing environmental, economic, social and cultural values. Two forest certification schemes operate in Australia: an international scheme operated by the Forest Stewardship Council, and the Responsible Wood certification scheme, endorsed by the international Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification. Both schemes have forest management standards and chain-of-custody standards.

Certification of the management of a forest area is carried out by an accredited, third-party certification body against standards set out by a forest certification scheme. Certification schemes can require forest management practices to be more stringent than required by law alone. Forest certification can provide assurance to consumers, governments and enterprises that the forest and wood products they buy are legally harvested from sustainably managed forests. It also provides for community consultation in the management of forests covered by certification.

## Chain-of-custody for forest products

Chain-of-custody standards have criteria and requirements for assessing and tracking wood and forest products originating in certified forests through all phases of ownership, transportation and manufacturing, from a defined forest area to the final product delivered to the consumer. The number of active chain-of-custody certificates in Australia has remained relatively stable in recent years (Figure 7.1b-2).

**Figure 7.1b-2: Active chain-of-custody certificates in Australia, 2005-23**



Forest Stewardship Council numbers are from the Forest Stewardship Council database and as at 01 July for each year. All Responsible Wood numbers are for June each year.

Source: Australian Forestry Standard Limited, Responsible Wood, Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification, Forest Stewardship Council (International).

[Click here for a Microsoft Excel workbook of the data for Figure 7.1b-2.](#)

## Education and training

A range of options for education and training continues to be available in Australia across areas relevant to sustainable forest management. The levels of education and training available include undergraduate, graduate and postgraduate degrees, coursework certificates and diplomas, and operational competency certificates.

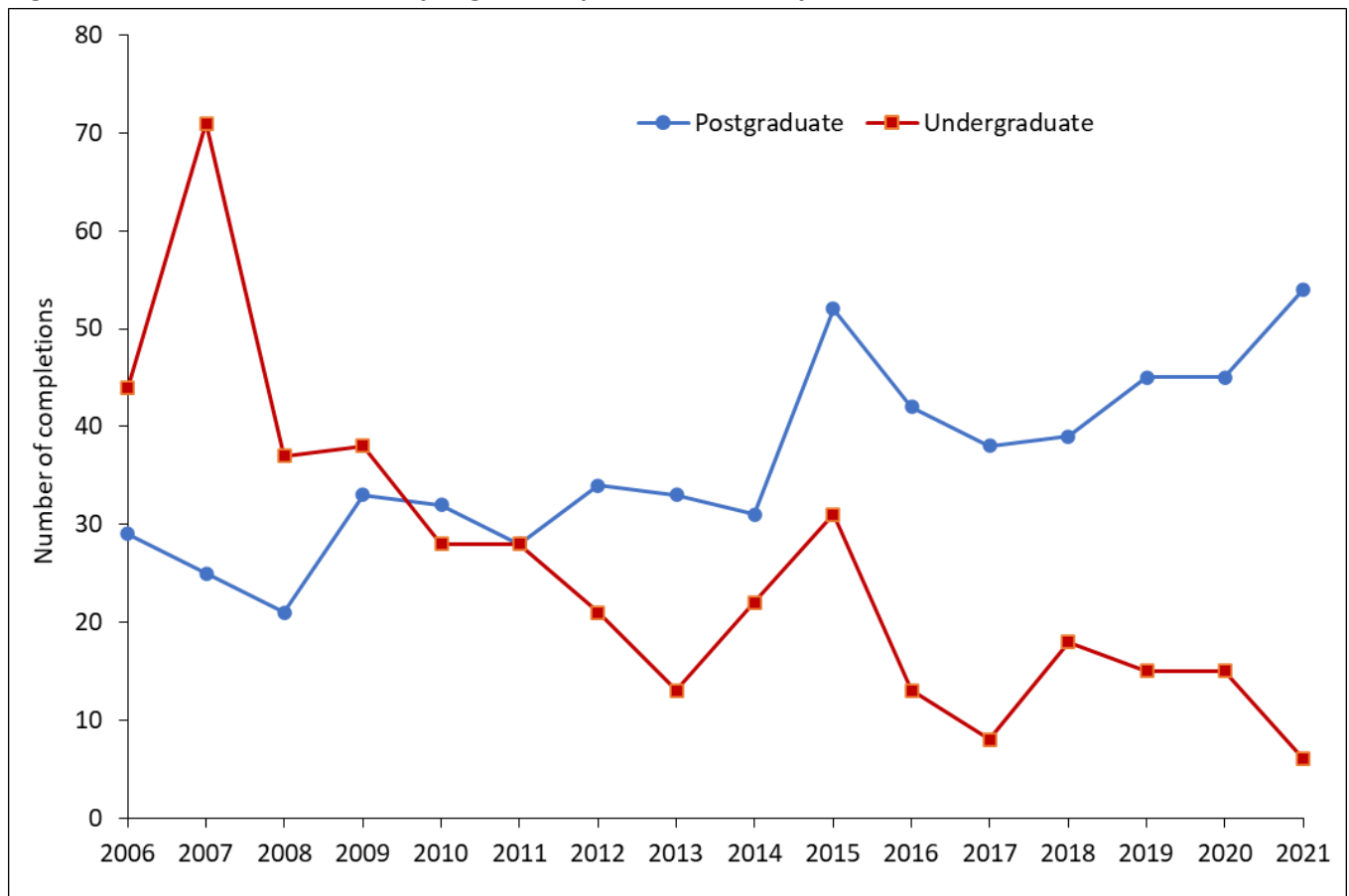
### Tertiary education

A decreasing trend in undergraduate degree completions in forestry and forest-related studies, and an increasing trend in postgraduate degree completions occurred over the last two decades (Figure 7.1b-3).

An undergraduate forestry degree is offered at one university in Australia. Other universities offer forestry or forest-related topics as part of science and environmental science undergraduate and postgraduate degrees. These degrees, along with graduate diplomas, continue to deliver graduates in forest-specific and forest-related study areas.

Fellowships, grants, and awards are available for professional development opportunities to those working in wood products or forestry industries or studying towards a career in wood products or forestry industries. The Joseph William Gottstein Memorial Trust Fund is a national educational trust fund promoting the development of Australia's wood products and forestry industries in this way.

**Figure 7.1b-3: Australian university degree completions in forestry and forest-related studies, 2006-21**



All values are indicative because the Department of Education relies on providers to supply data.

Source: Australian Government Department of Education, Higher Education Statistics Collection.

[Click here for a Microsoft Excel workbook of the data for Figure 7.1b-3.](#)

### **Vocational education and training**

The Forest and Wood Products (FWP) and Pulp and Paper Manufacturing Industry (PPM) training packages offer vocational education and training in technical qualifications at certificate level and at diploma level, to support the forest, wood, and paper products industry sectors.

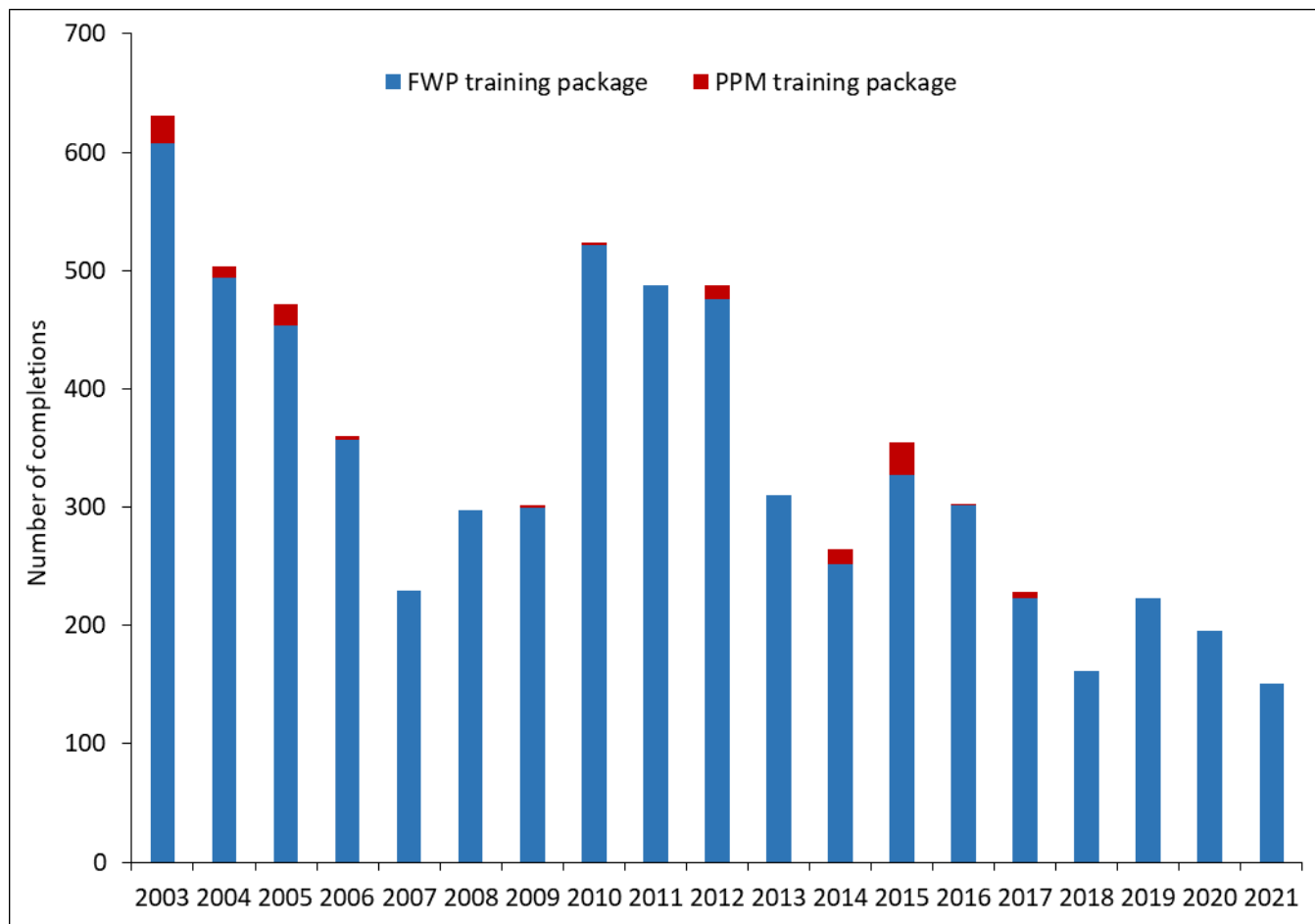
National completions in government-funded forestry-related vocational education and training (VET) have remained low since 2017 in the FWP training package, whereas no completions in the PPM training package have been reported since 2017 (Figure 7.1b-4).

The increase in national completions in 2010, 2011 and 2012 may be attributed to a boost in Australian Government funding at the time through the National Workforce Development Fund and the Skills Connect Fund. The decline in VET training completions since 2012 was in line with an overall decline in apprenticeships and traineeships across all industries in Australia. Tighter budgets led to reduced demand for accredited qualifications, and more focus on informal in-house approaches to skill development not requiring external payments to service providers. Industry also developed an increased preference for fee-for-service short courses and training in a broader range of skills than the technical skills previously delivered by registered training organisations. Such types of training are not captured by the National Centre for Vocational Education Research data collection (ForestWorks 2016).

The number of Indigenous completions has remained relatively steady since 2012 (after large numbers of completions were reported in Queensland in 2010 and 2011) (Figure 7.1b-5). Since 2012, Indigenous completions as a proportion of all national VET completions has varied between 2.3% (in 2016) and 7.6% (in 2019).



**Figure 7.1b-4: National completions in government-funded forestry-related vocational education and training, 2003-21**



FWP, Forest and Wood Products training package; PPM, Pulp and Paper Manufacturing Industry training package.

FWP includes the former Forest and Forest Products Industry (FPI) training package.

PPM includes the former Pulp and Paper Manufacturing Industry (FPP) training package.

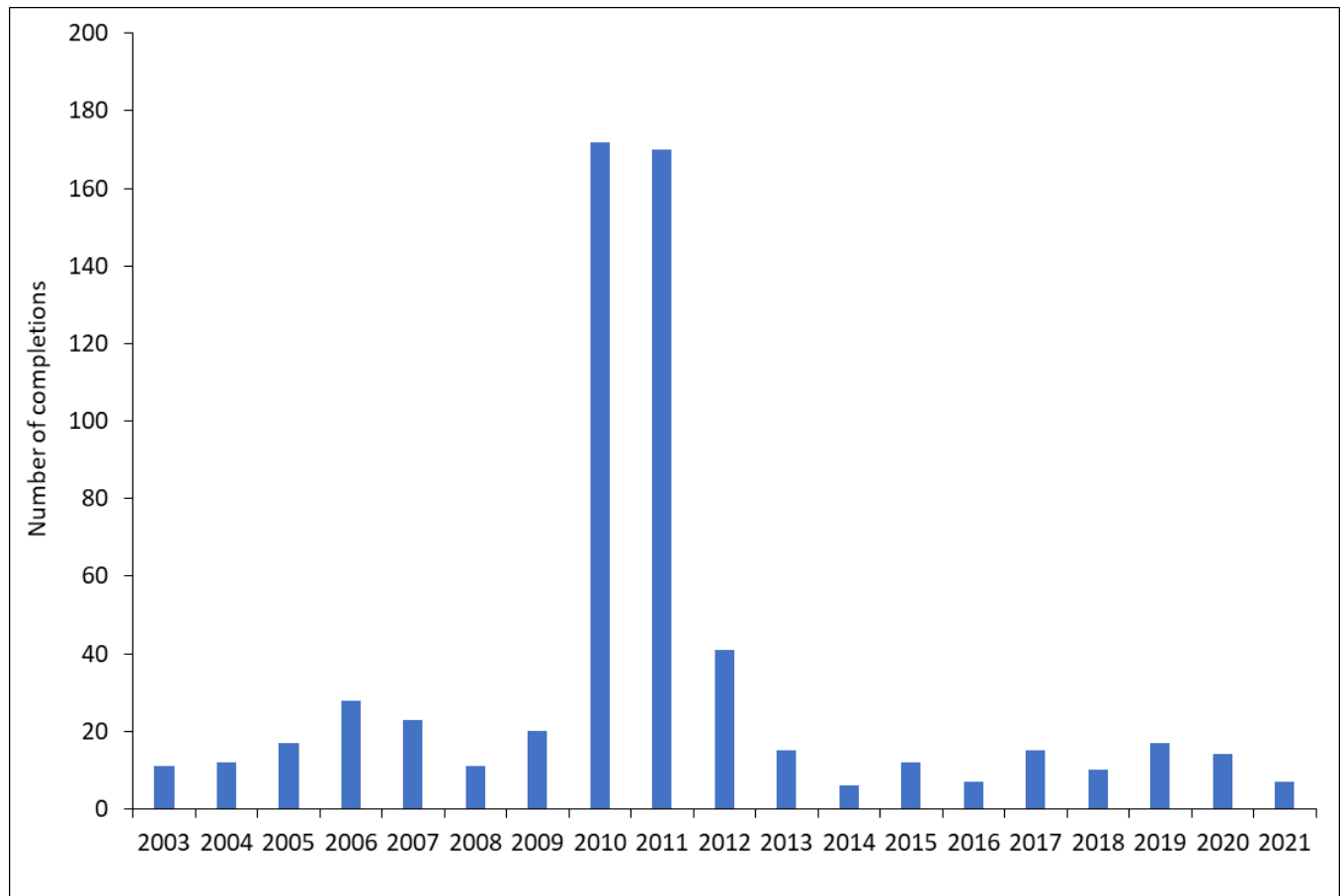
Completions are for all awards (Certificate level I to IV, Diploma or higher).

All values are indicative because the National Centre for Vocational Education Research relies on providers to supply data.

Source: National Centre for Vocational Education Research, VOCSTATS, VET program completions database.

[Click here for a Microsoft Excel workbook of the data for Figure 7.1b-4.](#)

**Figure 7.1b-5: National Indigenous completions in government-funded forestry-related vocational education and training, 2023-21**



Completions are for all awards (Certificate level I to IV, Diploma or higher) in the Forest and Wood Products training package (FWP), which includes the former Forest and Forest Products Industry (FPI) training package, and in the Pulp & Paper Manufacturing Industry training package (PPM).

PPM includes the former Pulp and Paper Manufacturing Industry (FPP) training package.

Indigenous PPM completions only occurred in NSW in 2004 and 2005 and there were two completions in each year.

All values are indicative because the National Centre for Vocational Education Research relies on providers to supply data.

Source: National Centre for Vocational Education Research, VOCSTATS, VET program completions database

[Click here for a Microsoft Excel workbook of the data for Figure 7.1b-5.](#)

## Supporting information for Indicator 7.1b: Extent to which the institutional framework supports the conservation and sustainable management of forests

### Australia's National Forest Policy Statement

The management of Australia's forests is guided by the [National Forest Policy Statement](#). The statement outlines 11 broad national goals. The three goals most relevant to Indicator 7.1b are integrated and coordinated decision-making and management; employment, workforce education and training; and public awareness, education and involvement. Through this statement and other policy mechanisms, Australia's national, state and territory governments are committed to the sustainable management of all Australia's forests, whether the forest is on public or private land, or within a conservation reserve or a production forest.

Through the *National Forest Policy Statement*, the governments of Australia agreed to *Forest Practices Related to Wood Production in Native Forests: National Principles* (Attachment A to the [National Forest Policy Statement](#)) and [Forest Practices Related to Wood Production in Plantations: National Principles](#). The governments agreed that the principles should be applied to the management of all public and private native forests and plantations in Australia. These principles provide for a consistent and scientific basis for sound forest management to which all states and territories are committed.

### Public participation and awareness

Much of Australia's production native forests and plantation forests are owned and/or managed by large public or private organisations. The operations of these organisations are usually conducted through recognised forest management systems, using policies, guidelines, protocols and other instruments that promote the sustainable management of forests and the engagement of the wider community. Their policies are stated publicly, generally relate to sustainability, forest stewardship and environmental awareness, and guide forest management planning and operational practices.

Australia has well-established non-legislative mechanisms for public participation and for raising awareness of forest management planning, in addition to those prescribed in legislation (see [Indicator 7.1a](#)). These non-legislative mechanisms include the provision of information on forest resources, impacts, uses and values; discussion papers on alternative plans; invitations to provide comment or written submissions; and discussion forums and public meetings. For example, extensive public consultation occurred during the creation of each of the ten [Regional Forest Agreements](#).

At the national level, the Australian Government coordinates the [Australia's State of the Forests Report](#) and the [Australia State of the Environment](#) report, which provide status updates to the wider community based on available information. Key online sources of national forest information include the [Forests Australia website](#), the [Forest Learning website](#), and the [Forest Education Foundation website](#).

All public forest management agencies publish forest-related information, such as annual reports and technical papers on research and matters of interest, and seek community engagement on issues of community concern. Some states and territories also publish their own state-of-the-forests (or equivalent) reports (see [Indicator 7.1d](#)). Many public forest management agencies also provide forest education and awareness resources, and maintain visitor information centres promoting public participation, education and awareness.

## Indigenous community participation and awareness

Across Australia, 21 million hectares of forest (as at 2023) is managed by Indigenous peoples and communities. A further 11 million hectares (as at 2023) is co-managed by Indigenous peoples and communities under a formal, legally binding agreement to include Indigenous input in the process of developing and implementing a management plan. The level of Indigenous community participation varies between states and territories and organisations.

The Forestry Corporation of New South Wales employs an Aboriginal Partnerships Liaison Team to work with Indigenous communities throughout New South Wales State forests, to conserve the qualities and attributes of places that have spiritual, historic, scientific or social value. The Forestry Corporation of New South Wales works in partnership with local Indigenous communities to undertake activities including: cultural burning as part of the regular hazard reduction burning program; cultural heritage surveys; joint management of culturally significant sites; delivery of firewood to elders; and provision of forest products for cultural purposes, such as bark for canoes (see also [Indicator 6.5d](#)).

The New South Wales National Parks and Wildlife Service also works in collaboration with local Indigenous groups to manage New South Wales national parks and reserves. One example is through Aboriginal joint management of national parks and reserves, sharing responsibility for management by having the opportunity to participate in planning and decision making. Many New South Wales national parks and reserves are now managed in this way, with Indigenous management facilitated by an Aboriginal Joint Management Network.

## Monitoring of compliance with forest management codes and systems

The highest levels of monitoring of compliance occur for wood harvesting in Australia's multiple-use public forests. State agencies responsible for wood production from native forests give high priority to compliance with legislation, regulations, management plans, and codes of practice in their management of multiple-use public forests. Accordingly, compliance is generally high. The monitoring of compliance with forest management codes of practice, and with the regulatory framework deriving from state and territory legislation, is generally conducted by regionally based officers and field staff within an agency that has responsibility for enforcement and compliance: for example, the Environment Protection Authority in New South Wales, and the Forest Practices Authority in Tasmania.

The following sub-sections, by state, contain information as supplied by states in addition to the information presented in the Key information for Indicator 7.1b.

### New South Wales

#### New South Wales Environment Protection Authority

The New South Wales Environment Protection Authority (EPA) regulates compliance of native forestry on both private and public land. This includes regulation of the compliance of Crown forestry operations with Integrated Forestry Operations Approvals (IFOAs) made under the *Forestry Act 2012*, and of the compliance of private forestry operations with the Private Native Forestry Codes of Practice. This is achieved through operational inspections, audits, and investigations. Regulation of private forestry operations is supported by education and training. The EPA takes a risk-based approach to regulation and targets annual assessment of 95% of native forestry operations assessed by the regulator to be 'high risk'.

Table 7.1b-2 summarises the number of native forestry operations on public land issued with a compliance action (regulatory correspondence mostly) over the five-year period from 2016 to 2021. In 2020-21, the EPA assessed

43 forestry operations on public land for compliance, with 32 operations issued with compliance actions consisting of five penalty notices and 27 pieces of regulatory correspondence.

**Table 7.1b-2: Native forestry compliance actions taken on public land**

Year	Number of operations issued with compliance actions
2016-17	18
2017-18	22
2018-19	25
2019-20 <sup>1</sup>	22
2020-21 <sup>2</sup>	32

The numbers in the table are the number of forestry operations issued with a particular type of compliance action. Compliance actions may have been issued to several parties associated with each operation. Each compliance action may also relate to several breaches. Compliance actions may include advisory letters, directions (voluntary), show cause letters, formal warnings, official cautions, clean-up notices, stop work orders, penalty notices, prosecutions commenced (for 2020-21 financial year) and prosecutions completed.

<sup>1</sup> Most forestry operations were suspended from November 2019 to February 2020 because of the 2019-20 bushfires.

<sup>2</sup> The data for 2020-21 financial year includes prosecutions commenced. Not all prosecutions proceed to completion.

Source: New South Wales Environment Protection Authority.

[Click here for a Microsoft Excel workbook of the data for Table 7.1b-2.](#)

Table 7.1b-3 summarises the number of forestry operations on private land issued with a compliance action (regulatory correspondence mostly) over the five-year period from 2016 to 2021. In 2020-21, the EPA assessed 36 forestry operations on private land for compliance, with 17 operations issued with compliance actions consisting entirely of regulatory correspondence.

**Table 7.1b-3: Native forestry compliance actions taken on private land**

Year	Number of operations issued with compliance actions
2016-17 <sup>1</sup>	24
2017-18 <sup>1</sup>	53
2018-19 <sup>1</sup>	18
2019-20 <sup>1</sup>	29
2020-21	17

The numbers in the table are the number of forestry operations issued with a particular type of compliance action. Compliance actions may have been issued to several parties associated with each operation. Each compliance action may also relate to several breaches. Compliance actions may include advisory letters, directions (voluntary), show cause letters, formal warnings, official cautions, clean-up notices, stop work orders, penalty notices, Private Native Forestry Plan terminations (for financial years 2016-17, 2017-18 and 2018-19 only) and prosecutions completed.

<sup>1</sup> Totals include 'Directions (voluntary)', a compliance action no longer used by the EPA under its updated Regulatory Policy.

Source: New South Wales Environment Protection Authority.

[Click here for a Microsoft Excel workbook of the data for Table 7.1b-3.](#)

### Forestry Corporation of New South Wales

Forestry Corporation of NSW also conducts compliance monitoring, with a primary focus on environmental compliance in native forests, with more staff carrying out pre-harvest planning and elevated compliance requirements since the extensive bushfires of 2019-20. Operations in native forests are governed by a rigorous set of regulations including many hundreds of individual measures, which provide a high standard of environmental protection when correctly implemented.

A Compliance Assurance Team elevates focus on environmental compliance at all levels of the business, to enhance processes, ensure adequate resources are in place, and improve compliance, with a focus on environmental outcomes.

### Tasmania

Tasmania’s forest practices system operates with the objective of achieving sustainable management of public and private forests, with due care for the environment. The forest practices system was set up through the *Forest Practices Act 1985*. Tasmania’s Forest Practices Authority, an independent statutory body established under this Act, has legislative authority to investigate and measure compliance against Tasmania’s legal forest management instruments, and to take appropriate enforcement action.

Tasmania’s Forest Practices Authority undertakes annual audits of forest practices plans, and investigates all potential breaches under the *Forest Practices Act 1985*. Under the Act the Forest Practices Authority must investigate all complaints relating to alleged breaches or poor practice.

Table 7.1b-4 shows the number of formal investigations undertaken by the Forest Practices Authority.

A risk-based approach adopted in 2020-21 resulted in the introduction of an ‘assessment’ category, which distinguished those investigations from formal investigations. Most minor breaches can generally be attributed to human error or lack of knowledge about the requirements of the forest practices system, and can be dealt with by corrective actions, in accordance with the philosophy of the *Forest Practices Act 1985* to ‘make good’ and to effect improvement. Such breaches are no longer reported as ‘investigations’: ‘investigations’ are those offences likely to result in sanctions under the Act.

**Table 7.1b-4: Number of formal investigations completed by the Forest Practices Authority**

Year	Total	Number investigated and no breaches identified	Number of minor breaches identified	Number of major breaches identified
2016-17	24	7	14	3
2017-18	10	2	4	4
2018-19	17	3	9	5
2019-20	37	1	17	19
2020-21	18	0	4	14

Minor breaches include notices to rectify; warnings, but no further action. Major breaches include penalties and legal action. Breaches where no action was pursued due to insufficient evidence and/or legislative time constraints are included in the numbers for major breaches.

Source: State of the forests Tasmania 2022.

[Click here for a Microsoft Excel workbook of the data for Table 7.1b-4.](#)

## Statements by state governments on the future of wood harvesting in public native forests

### Queensland

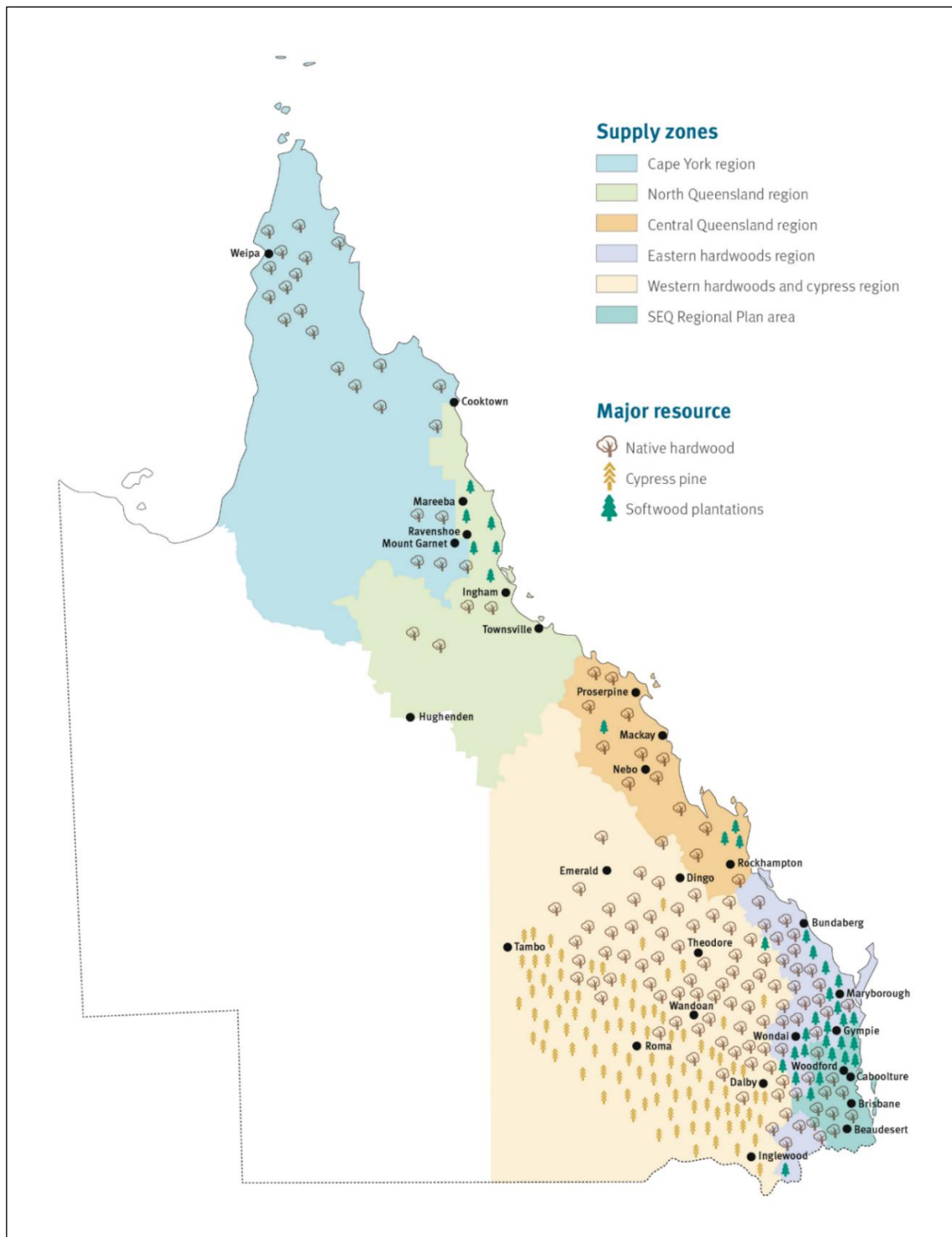
The Native Timber Action Plan was announced in 2019. A number of early decisions were made, and an approach presented for bringing stakeholders together to build a sustainable future for the industry that also ensures conservation outcomes.

For State-owned native hardwood supply, timber production on State forests in the South East Queensland Regional Plan area (SEQRPA) will end on 31 December 2024. The SEQRPA includes Brisbane, Moreton Bay, Lockyer Valley, Scenic Rim, Gold Coast, Logan, Redlands, Sunshine Coast and Noosa Local Government Areas.

Outside SEQRPA, State-owned native timber production is planned to continue in the Eastern hardwoods region until at least 31 December 2026, with supply after this time to be informed by assessments of sustainable timber yields. This region includes areas around Wide Bay such as Gympie, Fraser Coast, Bundaberg, Gladstone and the majority of South Burnett, as well as small areas to the east of Toowoomba and Southern Downs (Figure 7.1b-6).

‘Rolling-term’ sales permits in the Western hardwoods region (Figure 7.1b-6) will end in 2034. Supply after this time will also be informed by assessment of sustainable timber yields.

**Figure 7.1b-6: Map of native forestry supply regions, Queensland**



Source: Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries.

## Victoria

In 2019 the Government of Victoria added the protection of over 186,000 hectares of State forest as part of an announcement about transitioning out of native forest harvesting in Victoria's State forests. This included the immediate end to harvesting in 90,000 hectares of old growth forests, and the protection of 96,000 hectares of high conservation value habitat in new Immediate Protection Areas across the Strathbogie Ranges, Central Highlands, Mirboo North and East Gippsland.

On 23 May 2023, the Victorian Government announced that commercial native timber harvesting in Victoria's State forests would end by 1 January 2024.

Processes to determine the future use and management of these areas is underway.

## Western Australia

In September 2021 the Government of Western Australia announced the end of harvesting of some public native forests for wood production from January 2024. The Government of Western Australia also foreshadowed the addition of a further 400,000 hectares of karri, jarrah and wandoo forests to conservation reserves. From 2024, timber taken from Western Australia's south-west public native forests will be limited to forest management activities that improve forest health, and from approved clearing in advance of mining or infrastructure operations.

Western Australia's [Forest Management Plan 2024-2033](#) outlines the future of forest management for native forests on public lands in the south-west of Western Australia.

## References

ForestWorks (2016). [Industry skills scan 2015: Investing in skills and our industry, a research summary of the developments and directions impacting on skills, training and workforce demands in the forest, wood, paper and timber products industry](#), ForestWorks, North Melbourne.

## More information

Learn more about [Criterion 7 of Australia's State of the Forest Report](#).

Web [agriculture.gov.au/abares/forestsaustralia/sofr/](http://agriculture.gov.au/abares/forestsaustralia/sofr/)

[Download a Microsoft Excel workbook of the data presented in Indicator 7.1b.](#)

Email [Info.ABARES@aff.gov.au](mailto:Info.ABARES@aff.gov.au)

## Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of Australia and their continuing connection to land and sea, waters, environment and community. We pay our respects to the Traditional Custodians of the lands we live and work on, their culture, and their Elders past and present.

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