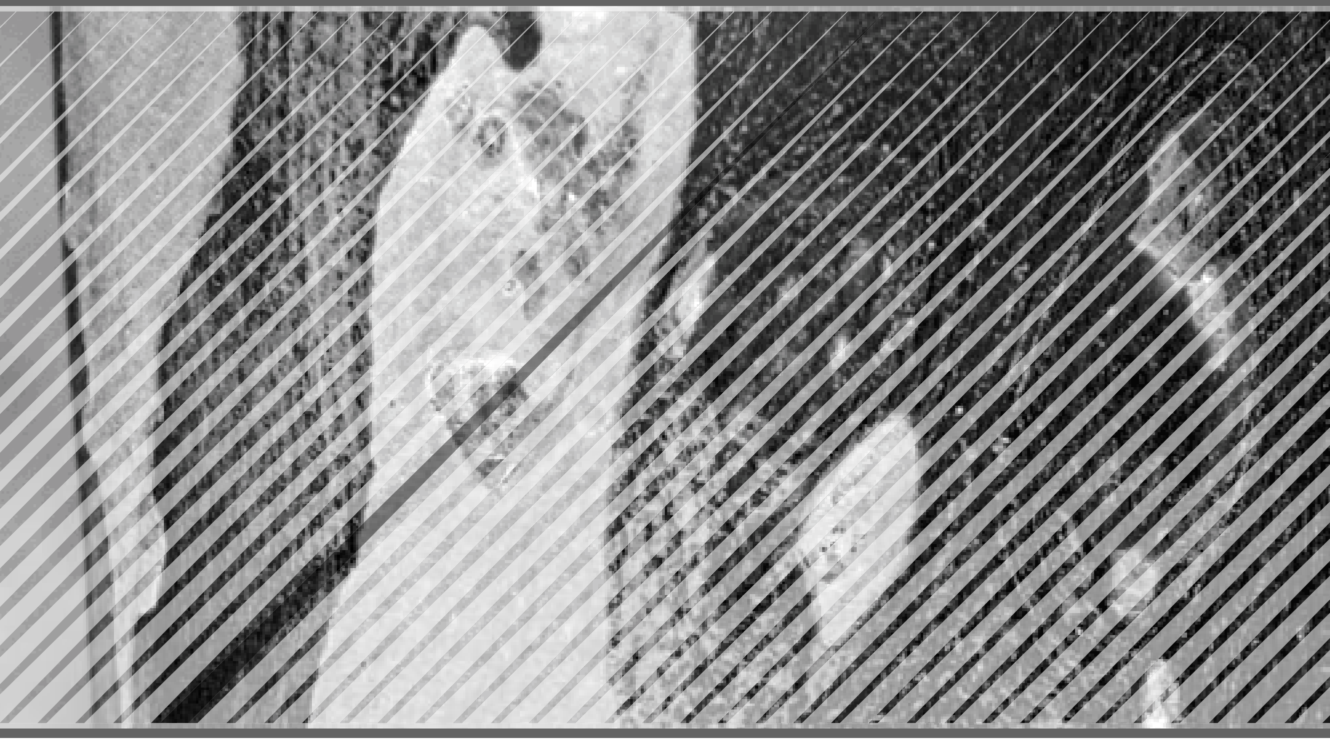
OPPORTUNITIES AND BARRIERS FOR GREATER INDIGENOUS INVOLVEMENT IN AUSTRALIA'S FORESTRY INDUSTRY

A scoping report addressing Indigenous involvement in the forestry and associated sectors for the National Indigenous Forestry Strategy Steering Committee



Australian Government
Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Services

BDO Consulting (SA) Pty Ltd

ATSIC

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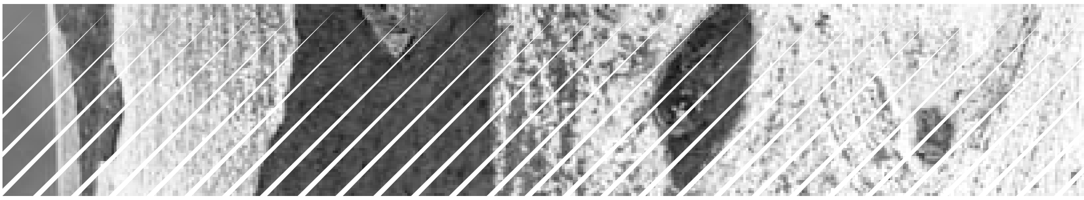

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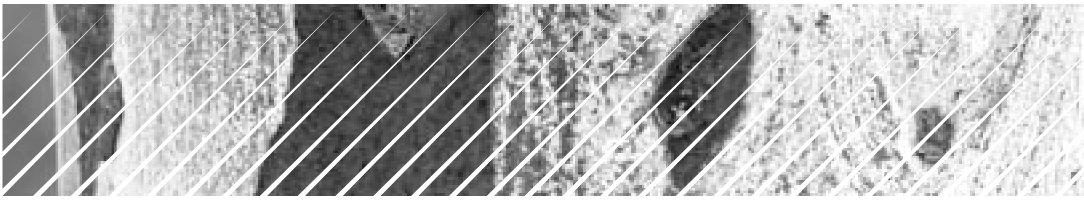


EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

It is important and sensible for Indigenous communities to be involved in the forest growing, timber processing and non-timber forest products sectors, referred to in this report as the ‘forestry industry’.

These industries make a major contribution to the economy and workforce and significant numbers of Indigenous Australians live in close proximity to forest growing and wood processing areas around Australia.

Few Indigenous people are involved in the forestry industry, but it offers a range of jobs and business opportunities to Indigenous people and their communities. The forestry industry is forecasting strong growth and some Indigenous communities wish to contribute to and benefit from this growth.

In 2003 the Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) commissioned this study to identify and report on opportunities for greater Indigenous involvement in the forestry industry.

The aim of the study was to describe the structure of the forestry industry and identify where Indigenous communities are involved in the industry, areas where they could be involved and impediments to future involvement.

The objectives of the study were to:

- provide a consistent national framework to encourage Indigenous participation in the forest growing, timber processing and non-timber forest products sectors
- identify opportunities for Indigenous people to participate in the growth of Australia’s forest and timber industries
- outline the way for Indigenous people to participate in these activities
- provide a structure for Indigenous people to assist with the development of Australia’s forest and timber forestry industry.

A number of outcomes were identified for the National Indigenous Forestry Strategy (NIFS). The NIFS is to:

- increase the economic independence of Indigenous communities through active participation in the forest and timber forestry industry
- assist/encourage Indigenous input into regional, state and national forest management, policy development and forestry industry activities

- improve the management of forests and plantations for all of their economic, social and environmental benefits.

Five stages were involved in development of the NIFS, including initial desktop research, selection of eight sites for Indigenous community consultations, a media launch and follow up releases, and compilation of an extensive database of interested parties. The consultation phase involved a public call for submissions, conducting consultations at the selected sites and meeting with forestry industry representatives throughout Australia. Analysis of the results from the consultations and further desktop research resulted in the NIFS outlined in this scoping report.

The majority of the on site consultations were successful in terms of the number and diversity of attendees and their level of input. It was clear from the consultations that the NIFS is timely—representatives of the forestry industry and Indigenous communities identified opportunities, recognised barriers and are seeking guidance on ways to move forward.

THE FORESTRY INDUSTRY

An overview of the forestry industry provides background to the NIFS on the scale, location and structure of the industry as well as opportunities to increase Indigenous community involvement. Research highlighted a low level of Indigenous community involvement generally.

Overview of the forestry industry in Australia

The forestry industry in Australia relates to that part of the national forest estate concerned with managing forests for wood production and the associated wood based manufacturing industries that depend on forests for their raw materials.

Natural forests provide approximately 39 per cent of Australia's wood processing requirements; planted forests provide 61 per cent. Planted forests will provide an increasing proportion of the total wood fibre required for processing in the future.

The volume of sawlogs and veneer logs has trended downwards since 1990, primarily due to reductions in the area of public native forests available for timber production and the transfer of significant areas of these forests to conservation reserves.

The volume of pulpwood has increased significantly in recent years as plantation estates have grown. The expanding plantation estate will continue to provide an increasing proportion of the total harvest in Australia. This expansion (in both softwood and hardwood) will provide significant opportunities for development.

The range of wood based manufacturing activities includes sawn hardwood, sawn softwood, medium density fibreboard, pulp and paper, cardboard, woodchips and furniture. These activities are usually located in or close to the major forests.

The forestry industry is entering a period of growth due to the increasing availability of wood fibre resources and significant new investment, coupled with strong demand for new housing and renovations. The forest products industry sector remains one of Australia's largest manufacturing groups and a major regional employer.

The forestry industry is financed, developed and managed by companies specialising in forest management, forest product supply and materials manufacture using forest products. Each of these specialist areas can be considered targets for strategies to increase Indigenous involvement in the forestry industry.

Throughout Australia there are a number of Private Forestry Development Committees promoting the development of commercial forests on farmland with the capacity to support existing manufacturing industries and new industry initiatives.

Overview of the non-wood products Forestry industry

Australia's non-wood products forestry industry includes all businesses, opportunities, products and activities not associated with the forestry industry that are sourced from, or experienced in, forests.

It is evident from the NIFS consultations that there are opportunities to develop existing non-wood products forest based industries and also to develop new ones in two areas, namely, alternate wood products and non-wood products—including eco-tourism, bush tucker and bush medicines.

A considerable amount of literature and anecdotal information exists about these activities. Many of the activities and businesses are small and isolated, lack product volume and continuity of supply to develop outside their own environs, lack business skills and capital to develop, and have difficulty accessing markets.

INDIGENOUS INVOLVEMENT IN FORESTRY

The consultations considered the relationship between Indigenous communities and the forestry industry from three perspectives:

- current Indigenous involvement in the forestry industry
- current Indigenous involvement in the non-wood products forestry industry
- potential for increased Indigenous involvement in forest based industries generally.

A significant finding from the consultations with Indigenous communities and meetings with forestry industry representatives was the current low level of involvement of Indigenous communities in the forestry industry. The consultations with Indigenous communities also confirmed the potential for involvement in the non-wood products forestry industry and the lack of development in this sector. These findings underpin the strategies for increasing Indigenous involvement in the forestry sector generally.

In broad terms there is a low base of both Indigenous employment (and experience) in the forestry industry and Indigenous ownership of forests or related businesses.

Some positive initiatives are being undertaken and have strong potential to be replicated because they are, by their nature, transferable across Australia. Of particular note are:

- major plantation management companies engaging with Indigenous communities in business arrangements
- development of local employment strategies, with the forestry industry, government agencies and Indigenous communities seeking a coordinated approach to funding and Indigenous employment

- employment opportunities in environmental projects
- development of a publication outlining agroforestry opportunities for Indigenous communities
- regional meetings involving local Indigenous communities, research groups, the state development agency and representatives of the forest industry to discuss the feasibility of forestry activities in
  the region, land availability, funding needs, expertise for implementation, linkages required, and cost sharing
- various government assisted demonstration projects.

INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES

Globally, indigenous participation in forestry is being recognised as an important factor in improving conservation management and the sustainable use of natural resources. International organisations are encouraging member countries to increase the participation of indigenous peoples in forestry and forest management.

Key international initiatives include the United Nations Forum on Forests (the principal international forum for progressing international forest issues), the Convention on Biological Diversity (the first global agreement on the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity) and the Montreal Process Working Group (dealing with criteria and indicators for the conservation and sustainable management of temperate and boreal forests).

There are two accreditation initiatives relevant to NIFS. They are the Forestry Stewardship Council (an international body that accredits certification organisations in order to guarantee the authenticity of claims by forest managers and retailers that their timber is sourced from well managed forests) and the Australian Forestry Standard (developed by Australia as the basis for forest certification).

This report looks at indigenous forestry issues in Canada, though its First Nation Forestry Program, and in New Zealand through its Maori forest experience as examples of international indigenous forestry, to identify key features from both countries that can be applied in Australia. Differences between the Australian, New Zealand and Canadian indigenous communities and the forest industries in each country need to be taken into account in adapting the Canadian and New Zealand experience to Australia's circumstances.

Key lessons learnt from Canada and New Zealand include:

- forestry can provide indigenous landowners with employment and income, opportunities to participate in business ventures, and community benefits
- forestry industry, government and indigenous businesses and communities need to work in partnership to develop forestry activities
- strategies need to adapt to local conditions and the level of development of remote communities.

CONSULTATION FINDINGS ON BENEFITS AND BARRIERS

Participants in the consultation process responded to questions about:

- the benefits to Indigenous Australian communities of an involvement in the forest, timber and associated industries
- benefits to the forestry industry of Indigenous involvement
- barriers to increasing Indigenous involvement in the forest, timber, and associated industries.

A general finding was that Indigenous communities show a high degree of interest in working with the forestry industry and, similarly, the forestry industry wants to work with Indigenous communities. Both see the potential to develop long term mutually beneficial relationships. The willingness of the parties is yet to translate into any significant change to the status quo, although there are a number of active examples of changes in attitudes and practices.

While the forestry industry's main emphasis is on economic outcomes it showed some recognition that social and cultural outcomes are important for long-term stable relationships. Indigenous communities also demonstrated a strong economic focus, with an interest in projects ranging from forest-based businesses to enterprises and activities in the non-wood products forestry industry.

CONSULTATION FINDINGS ON BENEFITS TO INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

Involvement in the forest, timber and associated industries has the potential to benefit Indigenous communities in the following main areas:

- employment outcomes
- economic outcomes
- social outcomes
- cultural outcomes
- broader community outcomes
- specific benefits from non-wood activities.

Overall the responses were very positive and participants identified economic independence as the major benefit from increased involvement in the forestry industry. The majority of the feedback strongly suggested that Indigenous involvement in the forestry industry would accord with the lifestyles and skills of Indigenous Australians across wide areas of regional Australia.

FINDINGS ON BENEFITS TO FORESTRY INDUSTRY

The major benefit to the forestry industry from increased Indigenous community involvement is the opportunity for business development with those communities—particularly 'new business' development. The main benefits envisaged for the forestry industry were:

- access to land
- local labour force
- improved forest management
- broader community benefits
- greater cultural awareness.

While there was some scepticism about the likelihood of benefits there was a broad view that the forestry industry and Indigenous communities could each accrue benefits. There were different views about the size of the potential benefits and when they would materialise.

Based on these findings, the NIFS needs to acknowledge the range of likely benefits for both groups and formulate strategies that can be delivered over a period of time, a set of priorities against which benefits can be delivered, and recognise that these may be different from location to location. The measurement and promotion of successful initiatives will be important.

BARRIERS TO INCREASING INDIGENOUS INVOLVEMENT IN THE FORESTRY INDUSTRY

Numerous barriers preventing Indigenous Australians gaining employment in the forestry industry were identified—a large number apply equally to Indigenous Australians gaining employment generally.

Some of the barriers relate to lack of self-esteem, attitudes to work, racism, employment processes, education, specific skills, cultural issues, demographics, business skills and exclusion from decision-making processes.

Ongoing communication and consultation will be important to overcome a number of these barriers and the NIFS needs to provide a framework for local and regional engagement.

The success of the NIFS will be determined by the extent to which it is able to engage people and businesses at local and regional levels because the forestry industry and Indigenous communities are made up of stakeholders and interest groups with differing agendas and views; they are often fragmented and lack a common voice to achieve their outcomes. In some cases interest groups are highly emotive, visible and active and can influence public opinion.

EXISTING POLICIES AND PROGRAMS

Existing policies and programs, government and private sector, may provide a significant springboard for Indigenous communities and the forestry industry to realise the NIFS objectives.

Numerous relevant programs are open to Indigenous groups or individuals. Some are specifically intended for Indigenous people, and several are aimed at increasing the involvement of Indigenous people in the forestry industry. Relevant programs and policies have been grouped in this report according to their main focus, namely employment and training programs or business initiatives and assistance programs.

EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING PROGRAMS

The three key areas of employment and training programs aimed specifically at Indigenous people are the Indigenous Employment Policy initiatives of the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR), the Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP) program managed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Services (ATSIS), and direct and indirect employment policies and programs of other support agencies.

DEWR and ATSIS are key players in this area of NIFS because they have geographical reach across Australia and programs, officers and funding in place.

Forestry industry training programs are available to the wider Australian community from numerous providers, and Indigenous people can access these programs. They are flexible as to content and delivery methods, meaning training can be developed for a number of different purposes and for remote delivery where numbers justify tailored programs.

BUSINESS INITIATIVES AND ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

Several programs are available to assist with business development and land acquisition as part of the NIFS: ATSIS's Business Development Program, the Indigenous Small Business Fund (ATSIS and DEWR), the Indigenous Business Australia program and the Indigenous Land Corporation program (which has already acquired land for commercial timber production).

A variety of programs are available to assist Indigenous people assess, acquire or start a business. These programs generally aim to assist Indigenous Australians develop business management and planning skills to start commercially viable businesses in order to access business capital and support services. Generally a business case must be presented to access funding for support services and a sound business plan is required to access project finance.

DAFF offers services and programs aimed at increasing the competitiveness and sustainability of agriculture, fisheries and forestry industries. In particular, DAFF provides programs that could assist individuals or organisations in the forestry and related sectors.

NATIONAL INDIGENOUS FORESTRY STRATEGY—KEY PLATFORMS

There are six key platforms for a successful NIFS.

PLATFORM 1—COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION FLOW

Communicating the objectives and outcomes of the NIFS to the forestry industry and Indigenous Australians, and to the wider community, is critical to encouraging groups to explore potential benefits for themselves and regional and rural Australia.

The most effective way of encouraging and energising parties to become involved is a single focus point and information source. A single focus point also facilitates communication and information flow. Extensive regional and local consultation should provide the means to identify potential opportunities within the industries and the Indigenous communities for business development. This must, in turn, be able to be channelled through a single focus point that provides:

- relevant information about the NIFS and its objectives
- direction and mentoring to help develop opportunities.

Platform 2—Regional communities involvement and ownership

Increasing involvement by Indigenous Australians in the forestry industry will require support and commitment from the wider community. Successful implementation of the NIFS will require informed, enthusiastic regional communities working to achieve its promised outcomes.

Numerous opportunities will arise and they are likely to be widespread and diverse. Regional communities must become involved in, and take ownership of, opportunities. Engagement of local communities is fundamental to the realisation of the potential benefits for Indigenous Australians and the forestry industry and the communities in which they live.

Consultations clearly identified that planning for regions is best done at the regional level. The NIFS needs to encourage closer links within regions, inform regional planning processes, provide a framework to assist implementation, and facilitate a forum for Indigenous communities and the forestry industry to talk.

Platform 3—Improving knowledge and skill base

Forestry industry businesses are expanding, and developing and implementing new technologies to maintain their competitive advantage and ensure they comply with corporate and environmental protocols and standards. They continually require a higher and more sophisticated skill level from staff.

One key to achieving increased involvement by Indigenous Australians in the forestry industry lies in appropriate knowledge and understanding of industry requirements, how these can be met by Indigenous Australians and how the industry can integrate Indigenous Australians into their supply chains.

Platform 4—Consistent federal, state/territory and local government and forestry industry direction

Implementation of the NIFS will be complex. It is likely to influence a diverse range of forestry industry businesses and associations, and a similarly diverse range of Indigenous and wider communities. In addition, potential NIFS business opportunities will be spread over much of Australia and over a diversity of climatic regions.

Consistent and appropriate government policy and support at the federal, state/territory and local government levels together with a coordinated approach by the forestry industry will be critical to developing an environment and framework that encourages partnership projects and employment opportunities.

PLATFORM 5—SUPPORT FOR PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

Implementation of the NIFS will require significant support for project development because projects are likely to be diverse, widespread, and come from a low base. Support for project development will need to be a mix of proactive and reactive approaches, depending upon resources available.

The proactive approach involves mapping potential ‘areas of interest’ and defining where opportunities exist for the industry and Indigenous Australians to develop business enterprise separately or together. Initially support should focus on the ‘areas of interest’ and target projects that are likely to have a high potential for success or where support and assistance is needed most.

Priorities for support should be based on potential for success initially and include willingness to participate, population demographics and existing industries. Of these the willingness to participate is the most important in terms of moving a project forward and an early indication of Indigenous community support must be sought.

PLATFORM 6—RECOGNITION OF SOCIAL AND CULTURAL ISSUES

In many instances forestry industry players will have had little interaction with or experience of Indigenous Australians. For the NIFS to achieve its potential the stakeholders will need to understand social and cultural differences and integrate this understanding into developing business opportunities. This provides a challenge for the NIFS.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations made as a result of this study are summarised below. A more detailed rationale for the recommendations and linkages to the strategy platforms is provided in Part VII of the report.

1. Establish a specialist Indigenous Forestry Unit (IFU) to act as a focal point for the NIFS. The likely location for the IFU would be within DAFF or possibly the National Association of Forest Industries (NAFI) and the position would be for an initial period of three years. The primary functions for the Unit during this period would be to:
   - develop a marketing plan to actively promote and communicate the NIFS and encourage stakeholders to become involved
   - establish a comprehensive database of stakeholders interested in increasing Indigenous involvement in the wood and non-wood products forestry industry
   - establish an information bank relevant to the NIFS that would include:
     - a toolkit for forest resource assessment appropriate to the NIFS objectives
     - a project checklist and ‘How to’ guides for project development
     - an inventory of Indigenous forest based activities and products including case studies of successful NIFS related initiatives

- models of successful partnerships, joint venture arrangements and other business arrangements between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people that define the key ingredients for their success, and can in turn be duplicated; case studies and models where there is a natural relationship to build on will be of particular importance

- develop an information plan to ensure a regular flow of relevant information to the database and the wider community
- instigate a national coordinated approach to training and project funding by funding providers—ATSIS, DEWR, DAFF, the Indigenous Land Corporation (ILC)—to achieve the NIFS outcomes
- develop a job placement and mentoring program to place trained Indigenous Australians in wood product and non-wood product forestry industry positions
- develop a scholarship and mentoring program to place trained school leavers in both wood product and non-wood product forestry industry positions
- develop and incorporate cross cultural training units into forestry industry training programs
- in consultation with the forestry industry, prepare an education package about the industry to be delivered in the areas of interest.

2. Establish a framework to encourage regional forums and networks to develop involving Indigenous communities, the forestry industry and governments interested in NIFS outcomes.
The aim of these forums is to provide a vehicle for Indigenous communities, the forestry industry and government to talk about key issues—including business development, training and resource access—which are important to increasing the involvement of Indigenous Australians in the forestry industry.

3. Develop a National Indigenous Employment Strategy for the forestry industry (ATSIC, DEWR, forestry industry training providers) that:

- confirms the industry's skill level needs and developing trends
- assesses existing training programs and how they can be delivered to assist Indigenous communities
- provides a gap analysis and where the gap is substantial, establishes specific nationally accredited Indigenous forestry courses
- delivers relevant training in a coordinated manner.

4. Define intellectual property issues associated with Indigenous Australian business and cultural heritage in the wood and non-wood forestry industry, and work with appropriate government, legal, Indigenous community, industry and business organisations to introduce steps to protect the intellectual property rights of Indigenous Australians.

5. Undertake a mapping exercise to define areas of interest where potential exists to increase Indigenous involvement in the forestry industry. The mapping would principally identify broad forest areas that could provide opportunities for Indigenous communities.

6. For each of the areas of interest, identify the range of forest based activities in wood and non-wood products that may provide opportunities for Indigenous communities. Subsequently, select target sites in the areas of interest and key individuals who can act as regional coordinators to interface with the regional forum network to:
   - develop and maintain links between Indigenous communities, the forestry industry and governments interested in NIFS outcomes
   - encourage regional community involvement, establish networks and identify projects
   - identify the key research issues for the target sites and the range of opportunities.

7. Bring together forestry industry, Indigenous community and government representatives to address the issue of access to Australia's forests for Indigenous communities.

8. Establish a NIFS Project Committee to:
   - oversee the work of the IFU and the regional forums
   - review and make recommendations on the NIFS process
   - work towards an alignment of federal and state/territory policies with respect to forest management issues as they impact on Indigenous people
   - act as an interface between policy makers and the NIFS stakeholders
   - monitor the NIFS outcomes by measuring key performance indicators relevant to Indigenous involvement in Australia's wood and non-wood products forestry industry.

9. Adequately resource the IFU and NIFS Project Committee for an initial period of three years.

10. Establish a high profile NIFS tree-planting program for Community Development Employment Projects (CDEPs) that establishes future plantation resources to meet wood and non-wood product forestry industry needs.

11. Develop a National Bush Tucker and Bush Medicines Strategy.

12. Identify key research issues for the range of forest based opportunities relevant to the NIFS, and target research and development organisations to include NIFS research priorities in their programs. Harness research and development funding and activities to help achieve NIFS outcomes, including:
    - advising key research and development organisations associated with the forestry industry of the NIFS and establishing links for information exchange and project support
    - establishing a means of applying research and development outcomes relevant to the NIFS in practices that can be transferred to and realistically used by Indigenous Australians on forestry projects
    - in collaboration with existing Commonwealth, state and regional research institutions, establishing a means of focusing research and development efforts on the special requirements of Indigenous communities and the interface with the forestry industry.

13. Recognise the role Indigenous communities can play in the conservation and management of forested lands and the range of wood and non-wood products they can provide, and incorporate this role in forestry industry, Indigenous community and government management plans.

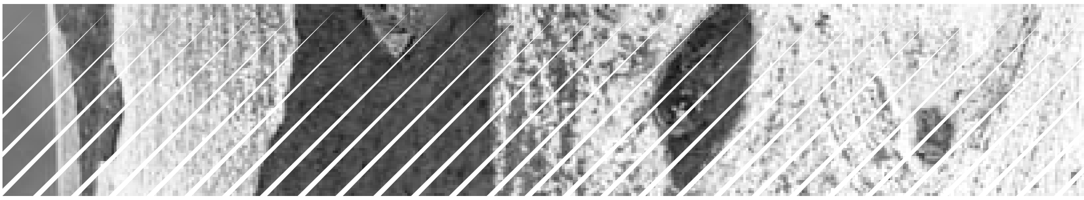
14. Promote the importance of integrating Indigenous forestry activities with planning for complementary activities.

15. Ensure that culturally sensitive areas are identified and protected within forested areas.

16. Revisit in 2006–07 the eight sites visited in the NIFS development stage to assess any changes in Indigenous involvement in the wood and non-wood product forestry industry as a result of the NIFS. Quantitative measures could include:

- number of forest based projects where Indigenous Australians are involved
- number of locations where Indigenous Australians are involved in forest based businesses
- number of Indigenous Australians involved in wood and non-wood products forest based activities
- number of Indigenous businesses in the forestry industry
- annual production and turnover statistics for these businesses.

17. In 2006–07, review the project database of Indigenous involvement in the wood and non-wood forestry industry to assess changes in Indigenous involvement as a result of the NIFS.



PART I: THE NIFS CONSULTANCY

1. COMMISSION AND STEERING COMMITTEE

1.1 COMMISSION

In 2003 the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission commissioned a study to look into the opportunities for greater Indigenous involvement in the forestry industries.

1.2 STEERING COMMITTEE

The NIFS project was overseen by a steering committee comprising representatives of the commissioning authorities, Indigenous community groups and the forest and wood products sector. Organisations represented on the Steering Committee included:

- Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Services
- Indigenous Land Corporation
- National Association of Forest Industries
- Timber Communities Australia Inc (TCA)
- State Forests of NSW (SFNSW)
- WA Native Title Working Group.

2. OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES OF THE NIFS

2.1 OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the NIFS project were to:

- provide a national strategy and framework for encouraging greater Indigenous participation in the forest growing, timber processing and non-timber forest products sectors (referred to in this report as the 'forestry industry')

- identify the opportunities for Indigenous people to participate in the growth of Australia's forest and timber industries
- outline the means and support for Indigenous people to participate in these activities, especially where they promote the economic independence of Indigenous communities, the sustainable management of forest resources and improve the outcomes for existing forestry industry participants
- provide a link to key government policy areas and forestry industry strategies, thereby providing a structure for Indigenous people to assist with the development of Australia's forest and timber forestry industry
- establish an effective management, monitoring and review plan for the NIFS.

2.2 OUTCOMES

A number of outcomes were identified for the NIFS. The NIFS is to:

- increase the economic independence of Indigenous communities through active participation in the forest and timber forestry industry
- assist/encourage Indigenous input into regional, state and national forest management, policy development and forestry industry activities
- improve the management of forests and plantations for all of their economic, social and environmental benefits.

3. THE CONSULTING TEAM

The consulting team comprised the principals and staff from BDO Consulting (SA) Pty Ltd (BDO Consulting) and Forest Professionals.

3.1 BDO CONSULTING

BDO Consulting is part of an international organisation that has access to a network of resources in over 600 offices in 90 countries across the globe. The South Australian office, that was responsible for this scoping report, has significant experience in regional development and planning strategies for Indigenous communities that make a difference to the individuals, communities and stakeholders involved.

David Muller is the consultant and can be contacted on (08) 8224 5279 or by email to *david.muller@bdosa.com.au*.

3.2 FOREST PROFESSIONALS

Forest Professionals is a leading consultant to the forestry industry in Australia and overseas. The company differentiates itself by linking forest growers and manufacturing industry, and provides effective solutions for the forest and wood products sector that meet commercial, sustainable and responsible objectives. Forest Professionals staff are skilled and experienced in forest development, wood supply, wood product industry analysis, valuations and project management.

Gerard Moore is the consultant and can be contacted on (02) 6056 2208 or by email to *gerard@forestprofessionals.com.au*.

4. METHODOLOGY ADOPTED BY THE CONSULTING TEAM

4.1 WORK PLAN FOR THE NIFS PROJECT

SUMMARY OF THE WORK PLAN

The work plan adopted for the NIFS project had five stages; the stages and principal tasks for each are listed in Table 1.

Table 1: *Summary work plan*

Stage	*Principal tasks*	*Timeline*
Stage One	Project commencement Consultation site selection (eight sites) Desktop research Media launch and follow up releases Compilation of database Call for submissions	Mar–Jul 2003
Stage Two	Conduct Indigenous community consultations Meet with forestry industry representatives Summarise outcomes	Jul–Sept 2003
Stage Three	Desktop research Analyse consultation outcomes	Sept–Dec 2003
Stage Four	Develop the NIFS	Oct–Dec 2003
Stage Five	Write the draft scoping report Obtain feedback from steering committee Finalise scoping report	Jan 2004 Feb–April 2004 May 2004

A detailed summary of the five stages, the key tasks within each stage and a description of each task, key outcomes and timeline for the NIFS study are listed at Appendix 3.

4.2 RESEARCH

Desktop and field research for the NIFS was conducted throughout 2003. Field research was based primarily on a major consultation stage during August and September 2003 with Indigenous communities, the forestry industry and the wider community.

A map of Australia showing locations of the site visits and other places referred to in this document is at Figure 1.

4.3 summary of stage 2 consultations

The consultation phase took place over four months and included the following main tasks:

1. establish and correspond with a contact database
2. call for public submissions
3. carry out Indigenous community site visits
4. convene forestry industry meetings.

An overview of each of these tasks is set out in the following sections.

4.4 contact database

scope and purpose

A comprehensive, Australia wide contact database including people and groups likely to have an interest in the NIFS was developed. It was designed to provide:

- the primary method of communication about the NIFS between the database subjects and the project consultants
- the key to informing Indigenous communities, forestry industry and the wider community about the NIFS study, and to receive comment from these groups.

contact entries

The initial database included names and contact details of groups and individuals from within DAFF and ATSIC, the forestry industry and the wider community including environmental groups. It expanded by word of mouth during the course of the project.

The database contacts finally included:

- Indigenous based agencies and groups such as ATSIC, ATSIS, ILC and the Indigenous Land Management Facilitators (ILMF)
- Indigenous community groups such as Aboriginal Land Councils
- forestry industry companies and associations
- federal and state government forestry industry bodies
- professional associations within the forestry industry
- local government
- special interest groups
- concerned individuals.

DATABASE EFFECTIVENESS

The contact database has proven to be an effective way of communicating with interested parties. The database has more than 750 names, which can be sorted by a number of categories, zones and communication dates. A number of the database entries are secretariats or offices of associations that represent a significant number of people, for example:

- National Association of Forest Industries—the peak forestry industry body representing a wide cross-section of Australia's forestry industry
- Institute of Foresters of Australia (IFA)—the professional body representing foresters
- Association of Consulting Foresters of Australia (ACFA)—the peak organisation representing consulting foresters
- Australian Forest Growers (AFG)—representing the interests of private forest owners
- Timber Communities Australia (TCA)—the organisation representing regional grass roots forestry industry communities.

A number of groups and organisations contacted via the database forwarded NIFS information to their respective memberships. This resulted in the distribution of information to larger numbers of interested people and organisations.

4.5 PUBLIC CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

PURPOSE

In addition to the contact database, public submissions were invited to ensure as many people and groups as possible knew about the NIFS study and had an opportunity to contribute to its development.

PUBLICITY

The public call for submissions was announced via:

- the media by way of a media launch, media releases and with advertisements placed in The Australian, Koori Mail, National Indigenous Times and Yamaji News
- forestry industry journals and newsletters
- the DAFF and ATSIC websites
- the contact database.

Interested parties were allowed two months to provide initial input for the NIFS. People were encouraged to provide submissions either in writing or in other suitable formats, such as images and video.

SUBMISSIONS RECEIVED

Written submissions were received from 32 organisations and individuals. Summaries of the responses contained in submissions are aggregated with responses from the Indigenous community site visits and forestry industry meetings throughout this report.

4.6 INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY SITE VISITS

SITES AND HOW THEY WERE SELECTED

A series of workshops were held with Indigenous communities at eight sites across Australia.

The sites were chosen to provide a broad cross section of forest types and regional environments with potential for future forest based development, coupled with a significant population of Indigenous Australians.

The location of the sites by state and territory are listed in Table 2 and are described in Figure 1.

Table 2: Indigenous community consultation sites

State or Territory	*Location*
Western Australia	Manjimup and Moora
South Australia	Mount Gambier
Victoria	Barmah
Tasmania	Hobart
New South Wales	Grafton
Queensland	Cairns
Northern Territory	Tiwi Islands

Figure 1: Eight Community Consultation Sites

ACCESS AND ATTENDANCE

The workshops were open to anyone interested in the NIFS study, although they were primarily held to provide a forum for the local Indigenous community to learn more about the study and contribute to the strategy. Local forestry industry and wider community representatives also attended the workshops at most sites.

The format and agenda for each site visit was effectively the same. A typical outline of the proceedings at a site visit, the final itinerary for the site visits and meetings and the number of attendees at each site is shown at Appendix 4.

OBJECTIVES

The short-term objectives of the site visits were to:

- inform Indigenous communities at key sites about the NIFS project
- gather data about, and identify successes and failures of, current Indigenous involvement in forest based industries at each site
- engage Indigenous communities in the potential for further involvement in forest industries
- extend the coverage of the contact database
- consider the feedback from the site visits to indicate avenues for desktop research
- consider the forest types and industries at the sites to identify opportunities for increased Indigenous involvement in those forest industries.

QUESTIONS ASKED OF PARTICIPANTS

The questions asked of participants at each of the Indigenous community consultation sites were:

- What forest activities currently involve Indigenous Australians (in your region) or are planned for the future?
- What are the benefits to Indigenous communities (in your region and elsewhere) from being involved in the forest, timber and associated industries?
- What is stopping Indigenous involvement in the forest, timber, and associated industries?
- What are the benefits to the forestry industry if Indigenous people become involved?
- What is stopping forest and timber industry businesses increasing Indigenous participation in the forestry industry?
- What would you like to see in the National Indigenous Forestry Strategy?

4.7 OBSERVATIONS ON THE INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY SITE VISITS

SUCCESS CRITERIA

The majority of the workshops were successful in terms of:

- the number of attendees
- the diversity of attendees—as well as interested individuals, representatives of the forestry industry, Indigenous communities, all three tiers of government and educational institutions attended
- the level of input from attendees.

PARTICIPANTS' RESPONSES

Participants demonstrated a very positive response to the NIFS initiative and indicated they were genuinely looking to make meaningful contributions to it. In three locations, some participants displayed an initial negative attitude towards the NIFS and the consultancy process. Some participants queried the intent of the project. Questions also arose as to whether:

- all relevant parties had been invited
- there was enough advance notice
- those who wanted to get there attended
- they would be listened to
- the forestry industry would dominate discussions and decisions anyway.

Participants who were initially sceptical became more positive during the course of the consultations.

Queries were raised about the consultancy process and whether it was broad enough to provide a platform for a national strategy. A related issue was a concern about having an Indigenous community at one site speak for other Indigenous communities.

OTHER OBSERVATIONS

It was clear from the consultations that the development of a NIFS seems timely. Both the forestry industry and Indigenous communities identified opportunities, recognised the barriers, but are seeking guidance on how to move forward.

It is important to ensure that Elders and Traditional Owners groups are involved in the development of the NIFS, particularly at the regional level.

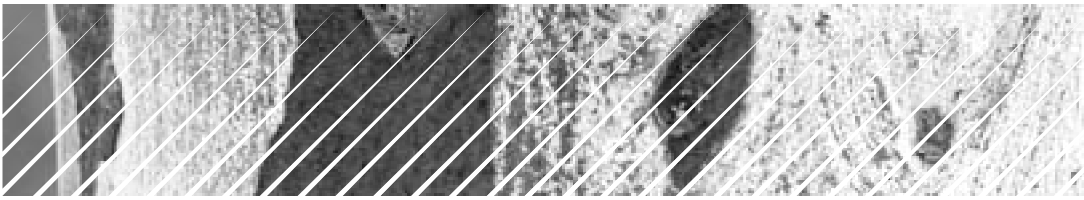
4.8 FORESTRY INDUSTRY MEETINGS

Forestry industry meetings were held in the capital cities and major regional centres where appropriate. They were generally attended by players from within the forestry industry and included state based forestry industry associations. Sites for the meetings held with industry are listed in Table 3.

Table 3: Forestry industry meeting locations

State or Territory	***Location***
Western Australia	Perth
South Australia	Mount Gambier
Victoria	Melbourne
Tasmania	Hobart
New South Wales	Sydney
Queensland	Brisbane
Northern Territory	Darwin

The final itinerary for the site visits and meetings and the number of attendees at each site is listed at Appendix 4.



PART II: THE AUSTRALIAN FORESTRY INDUSTRY

5. OVERVIEW

5.1 WHAT'S IN PART II?

This section examines:

- the Australian wood products forestry industry (the forestry industry)
- the Australian non-wood products forestry industry (the non-wood forestry industry).

5.2 WHAT IS THE RELEVANCE OF THE FORESTRY INDUSTRY TO THE NIFS?

An overview of the forestry industry (in wood products and non-wood products) in Australia provides background for the NIFS on:

- the scale of the industry
- the location of the industry
- the major and minor companies and organisations involved in the industry
- opportunities that exist to increase Indigenous community involvement
- current production and product value of this production
- employment in the forestry industry generally.

Research on the forestry industry highlighted the current low level of Indigenous community involvement generally; this, in turn, underpins strategies that meet the objectives of the NIFS project.

6. OVERVIEW OF THE FORESTRY INDUSTRY IN AUSTRALIA

6.1 AUSTRALIA'S FORESTS

WHAT IS A FOREST?

A definition of a forest suitable for the purposes of this study is:

"… an area incorporating all living and non-living components, that is dominated by trees having usually a single stem and a mature or potentially mature stand height exceeding two metres, and with existing or potential crown cover of overstorey strata about equal to or greater than 20%.[1]"

NATIVE AND PLANTED FORESTS

Australia has more than 164.25 million hectares of forest made up of about 162.68 million hectares of native forests and about 1.57 million hectares of planted forests.[2] Planted forests are also known generally as 'forest plantations' or 'plantations'.

Native forests provide about 39 per cent of Australia's wood processing requirements and planted forests about 61 per cent. Planted forests will provide an increasing proportion of the total wood fibre required for processing in the future.

Planted forests have been established in Australia since 1876 when the South Australian Government forest service (Woods and Forests Department) planted a number of Pinus species in the mid-north of South Australia near Bundaleer and Wirrabara.[3]

Other state and territory government forest services subsequently established large areas of planted forests that have provided an increasing proportion of the total wood fibre harvest from Australia's forest estate.

The total area of softwood plantation in Australia as at December 2002 is more than 987 000 hectares, and the area of hardwood plantation is more than 630 000 hectares. This includes 49 200 hectares of new hardwood and 5200 hectares of new softwood plantations[4]. The area of plantation by state and territory is listed in Table 11 in Appendix 6.

Australia's major planted softwood species include Pinus radiata, Pinus caribaea, Pinus elliottii and Araucaria species. The major planted hardwood species include Eucalyptus globulus, Eucalyptus nitens, Eucalyptus pilularis, and Eucalyptus grandis.

LOCATION OF AUSTRALIA'S FORESTS

Australia's native and planted forests are predominantly found in regions of higher rainfall, including the 'forest fringe' along the eastern seaboard in Tasmania, southern Victoria and southern South Australia, and in south west Western Australia. The location of Australia's forests can be seen in Figure 2 and the principal forest types are listed in Table 4.

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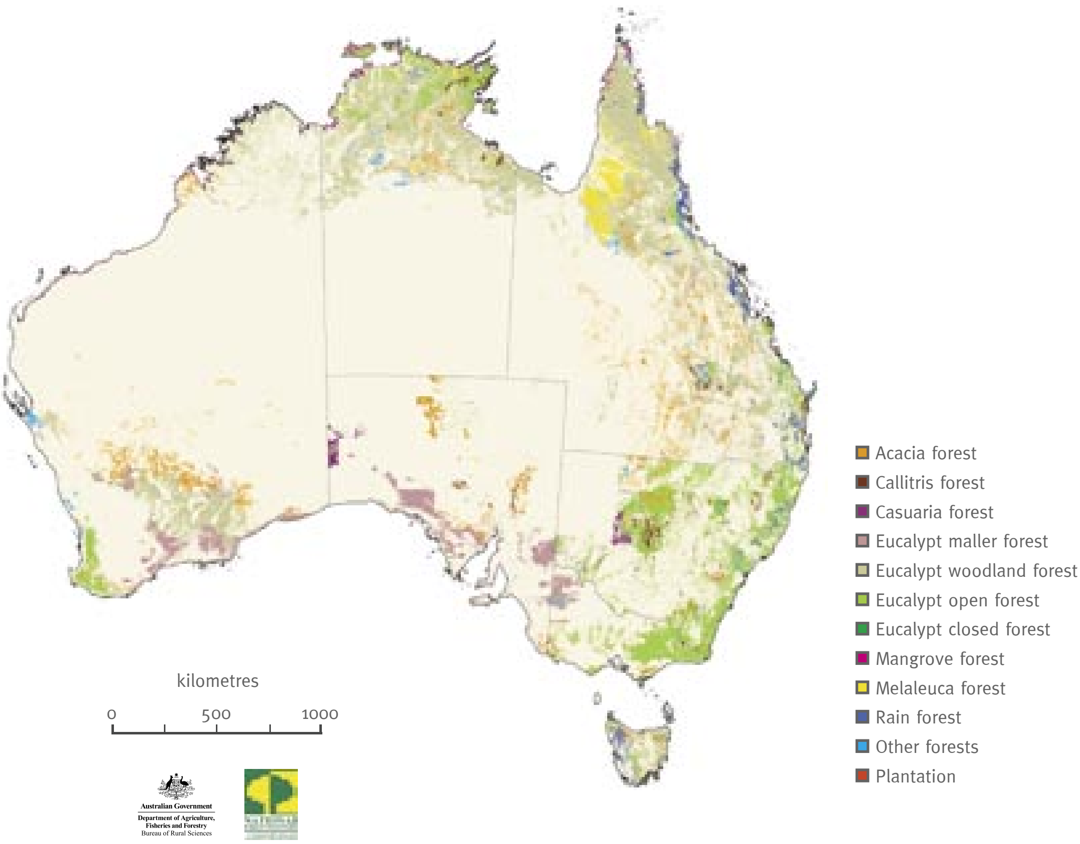
1 (National Forest Inventory, undated)
2 (National Forest Inventory, 2003)
3 (Lewis, 1975)
4 (National Forest Inventory, 2003)

Figure 2: Forests of Australia



Source: Forests of Australia, Native and Planted forests

Table 4: Forest types of Australia

Forest type	
Acacia	Callitris
Casuarina	Eucalypt mallee
Eucalypt woodland	Eucalypt open forest
Eucalypt closed forest	Mangroves
Melaleuca	Other
Rainforest	Plantation

Throughout Australia there are a number of Private Forestry Development Committees funded by the federal government under the National Heritage Trust Farm Forestry Program. These committees have been established to promote the development of commercial forests on farmland that can support existing manufacturing industries and new industry initiatives.

The committees distribute information to local government and the community and provide advice to landowners and investors who want to establish and manage planted forest projects on rural land.

6.2 forestry industry in australia—a typical definition

The forestry industry in Australia is usually thought of as that part of the national forest estate concerned primarily with managing forests for wood production, and the associated wood-based manufacturing industries that depend on forests for their raw materials.

The forestry industry includes a number of sectors:

- natural and planted forests
- fibre supply
- manufacturing of wood and wood-based products
- marketing in the domestic and international arenas.

These sectors constitute the 'wood products' forestry industry and are referred to as the 'forestry industry'. From the consultations and research it was identified that Indigenous Australians work in these sectors although they represent a small component of the total forestry industry workforce. There is potential for an increased number of Indigenous Australians to work in these sectors and an apparent willingness on the part of the forestry industry and Indigenous communities to achieve this.

6.3 forestry industry in australia—an expanded definition for the nifs

An expanded definition of the 'Forestry industry' in Australia—and a more appropriate one in the context of the NIFS—incorporates forest activities and enterprises that provide:

- 'alternate' wood-based products that are not generally thought of as being part of Australia's Forestry industry, including for example
  - bark paintings
  - Didgeridoo production.
- non-wood activities or products derived from and in forests, including
  - eco-tourism
  - cultural heritage and site management
  - bush tucker and bush medicines.

These types of activities and enterprises have not usually been considered part of the forestry industry in Australia; in this report we have referred to them, and others like them, as the 'non-wood products forestry industry'.

CONSEQUENCES FOR NIFS

Some of the products, activities and enterprises in the non-wood products forestry industry may be unique to Indigenous communities. These opportunities may also be located some distance from the general locations of the mainstream forestry industry. As a result, they are not usually treated as part of Australia's forestry industry.

The non-wood forestry industry has the potential to involve a wide cross section of Australia's Indigenous communities. The NIFS will need to address the cultural, occupational, commercial and geographical gaps between the non-wood forestry industry and the traditional forestry industry.

6.4 NATIVE AND PLANTED FOREST—TOTAL WOOD PRODUCTS

In 2001–02 the total volume of wood fibre harvested in Australia was 21.3 million cubic metres.[5]

HARDWOOD HARVESTED FROM NATIVE FORESTS

Australia has more than 162.68 million hectares of native forest and of this only a small part is set aside for commercial timber harvesting. The State of the Forests Report 2003 confirmed that in the four states covered by Regional Forest Agreements, harvesting of the native forest was within sustainable levels of production.

In 2001 about 43 per cent of the total volume of wood fibre harvested in Australia was sourced from native forests.

The volume of wood fibre harvested from native forests from 1991 to 2001 is detailed in Table 6 in Appendix 6; it was 9.1 million cubic metres in 2002–03.

The total volume of hardwood harvested from native forests has been around 10 million cubic metres for 10 years from 1990, and increased in 2000 and 2001 to more than 11.5 million cubic metres. The volume of sawlogs and veneer logs has trended downwards since 1990, and the volume of pulpwood declined slightly until the late 1990's when it increased significantly.

The decrease in the volume of sawlogs, veneer logs and sleeper logs harvested over the period relates to decisions by the federal and state governments to reduce the area of public native forests available for timber production and the transfer of a significant area (3.4 million ha) of public native forest to conservation reserves.

The downward trend in the volume of sawlogs, veneer logs and sleeper logs harvested from Australia's native forests, coupled with an increasing population, will ensure that an increasing volume of these products will be sourced from plantation forests or overseas (given the size of the on-going trade deficit in forest products).

PROJECTED HARVEST FROM PLANTED FORESTS

The expanding plantation estate will provide an increasing proportion of the total harvest in Australia. Forecast log supply from Australia's plantation estate is detailed in Table 12 in Appendix 6.

5 (Reference Australian Forest & wood Products Statistics 2003)

The forecast volume of sawlog harvested from softwood and hardwood plantations shows an increase from 9.2 to 11.8 thousand cubic metres during the period 2001–2044 and indicates that a greater proportion of Australia's future sawlog and veneer log harvest will come from planted forests.

DEVELOPMENT AND INVESTMENT IN PLANTED FORESTS

The increasing volume of wood fibre available from Australia's planted forests provides significant opportunities for development. Some are being realised now, for example the relatively recent commissioning of the Visy Pulp and Paper plant at Tumut, and the expansion of the Hyne & Son sawmill at Tumbarumba.

Investment opportunities exist throughout Australia. Most are positioned on the increasing availability of plantation softwood during the coming decade. Meanwhile, the processing of the burgeoning hardwood plantation has begun. Native forests will provide sustainable volumes although 'sawlog yields are currently committed for utilisation by existing forestry industry'.[6]

6.5 WOOD-BASED INDUSTRIES—NATIVE AND PLANTED FORESTS

WOOD-BASED MANUFACTURING INDUSTRIES IN AUSTRALIA

The range of Australia's wood-based manufacturing forestry industry types includes:

- sawn hardwood
- sawn softwood
- plywood
- laminated veneer lumber, often referred to as LVL
- particleboard
- medium density fibreboard, often referred to as MDF
- pulp and paper
- cardboard
- pallets
- veneer
- renewable energy (electricity, heat and steam)
- roundwood or chip export
- furniture manufacture.

6 (Jaakko Poyry, 2001), URS Australia, Investment in the Australian Forest Sector (2002), also provides a brief overview of Australian forest investment opportunities

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON WOOD-BASED INDUSTRIES

Names of leading manufacturers in Australia's forest and wood products sector are shown in Appendix 7.

Some relevant literature from key forestry industry organisations is listed at Appendix 8.

Federal, state and territory agencies and commercial and industrial organisations are listed at Appendix 8.

6.6 LOCATION OF THE WOOD AND NON-WOOD PRODUCTS FORESTRY INDUSTRY

Australia's forestry industry activities are usually located in or close to the following major forest types: Eucalypt open forest, Eucalypt closed forest and plantation forest (refer Figures 1 and 2 and Table 4 above). The wood-based manufacturing sector is generally located close to the forests on which it depends for its raw material supply.

In contrast, non-wood products forestry industry activities and the Indigenous communities involved in them are often located away from these forests.

IMPLICATIONS FOR INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

The NIFS will need to provide mechanisms for Indigenous Australians to become more involved in the forestry industry and non-wood products forestry industry. These mechanisms are likely to have common components but different delivery methods depending upon locations.

6.7 KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE FORESTRY INDUSTRY

RECENT GROWTH

The forestry industry is entering a period of growth due to the increasing availability of wood fibre resources and significant new investment, coupled with strong demand for housing and renovations. More than $6.5 billion has been invested in the forestry industry since the early 1990s including $1.6 billion in plantations.[7]

FORESTRY INDUSTRY VALUE

The forestry industry contributes $15.077 billion a year and about 2.1 per cent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to the national economy[8]. Annual turnover increased by 11.8 per cent or $2.5 billion between 1998–99 and 2001–02. Forest product imports totalled more than $3.9 billion in 2002–03. They included 810 000 cubic metres of sawn wood and more than 1.52 million tonnes of paper products. Exports were $2.1 billion[9]. In 20023–03 the volume of sawn wood was 854 000 cubic metres and the quantity of paper products was 1.93 million tonnes.[10]

7 (State of the Forest Report, 2003)
8 (Reserve Bank of Australia)
9 (Invest Australia 2003)
10 (Australian Forest and Wood Products Statistics 2003)

EMPLOYMENT INCREASING

Employment in the forestry industry rose 7.65 per cent from 200-01 to 2001–02 totalling 78 400, not including truck drivers, managers and conservation staff.[11]

In 2002 Australia's 1141 sawmills included 862 or approximately 75 per cent hardwood mills producing mainly high value, small volume products, and 279 or approximately 25 per cent softwood mills with many producing high volumes of mainly structural building products.[12]

Employment in the forestry industry by sector is detailed in Table 5.

Table 5: Employment in the forestry industry 2001–02 ('000s)

Sector	*Direct employment by sector (2001–02)*
Forestry and harvesting	13.4
Log sawmilling	5.3
Resawn and dressed timber	7.9
Veneers, plywood and fabricated wood manufacturing	5.5
Wooden structural fittings and other joinery	20.2
Hardwood woodchips	6
Other wood products	5.7
Pulp, paper and paperboard	5.1
Paper bags	1.2
Solid fibreboard containers	2.9
Corrugated fibreboard containers	5.9
Other paper products	4.6
Total	78 400

Source: National Forest Inventory 2003

RECENT OUTPUT

Australia's forests produced more than 24 million cubic metres of wood in 2001–02, of which more than 61 per cent came from plantations and more than 39 per cent from native forests. It was processed to produce:

- 4.6 million cubic metres of sawn wood
- 1.9 million cubic metres of panels
- 3.5 million tonnes of paper and paperboard products.[13]

COMPARISON WITH THE NON-WOOD PRODUCTS FORESTRY INDUSTRY

Comparable data for the non-wood products forestry industry is not readily available. In order to understand the non-wood products forestry industry and support its development, similar data will need to be obtained.

11 (State of the Forest Report, 2003)
12 (Australian Forest and Wood Products Statistics 2003)
13 (Australian Forest and Wood Products Statistics 2003)

7. KEY PARTICIPANTS IN THE FORESTRY INDUSTRY

7.1 OVERVIEW OF KEY PLAYERS IN THE FORESTRY INDUSTRY

The forestry industry is financed, developed, managed and exploited by companies specialising in a number of areas, including:

- forest managers
- forest product suppliers
- manufacturers of materials using forest products.

Each of these specialist roles can be considered as targets for strategies to increase Indigenous involvement in the forestry industry.

7.2 FOREST MANAGERS

Over the last 200 years, non-Indigenous communities have assumed responsibility for managing Australia's native forest estate. During this time large areas of native forest have been cleared for farming, roads and urban settlement, and the forest landscape has changed significantly. Forest managers today fall into two main categories:

- managers of native forests
- managers of planted forests.

7.3 NATIVE FOREST MANAGERS AND AGENCIES

HISTORICAL

Australia's native forest estate, including coastal forests, has been managed by:

- the federal government
- state and territory government forest services
- other state/territory agencies such as the National Parks and Wildlife Service
- the private sector.

DAFF, the federal government's forestry agency, in association with the states, territories and industry, has been responsible for setting policy guidelines that have been applied nationally. State and territory government forestry agencies manage the forest estates in their jurisdictions.

CURRENT

The major native forest managers in Australia are:

- Department of Primary Industries, Forestry, Queensland (DPI (Forestry))
- State Forests of New South Wales (SFNSW)
- Department of Sustainability and Environment, Victoria (DSE)
- Forestry Tasmania (FT)
- Forestry SA (FSA) and Department of Environment & Heritage, South Australia (DEH)
- Department of Conservation & Land Management, Western Australia (CALM)
- Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries, Northern Territory (DPIF)
- State and territory parks services.

RECENT CHANGE IN FOREST MANAGEMENT BY INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES IN AUSTRALIA

Over the past few years Indigenous communities have resumed ownership and management of some areas of land, including native forest areas, following the outcomes of the Regional Forest Agreements (RFA) process, through the ILC and by way of native title claims.

The significance of this change for the NIFS is that some Indigenous communities now have access to land for forestry activities and other purposes. Importantly these Indigenous communities can use this land as an asset on which to develop forestry based businesses.

7.4 PLANTED FOREST MANAGERS AND AGENCIES

Major planted forest managers include:

- Department of Primary Industries, Forestry, Queensland
- State Forests of New South Wales
- Hancock Victorian Plantations (HVP)
- Forestry Tasmania
- Forestry SA
- Forest Products Commission, Western Australia (FPC)
- Gunns Limited (Gunns)
- Timbercorp Limited (Timbercorp)
- Auspine Limited (Auspine)
- Great Southern Plantations Limited (Great Southern)
- Green Triangle Forest Products Pty Ltd (GTFP)

- Integrated Tree Cropping (ITC)
- Midway Limited (Midway)
- Norske Skog
- Willmott Forests Limited (Willmotts).

See Appendix 7 for further details on key players in the forestry industry.

8. OVERVIEW OF THE NON-WOOD PRODUCTS FORESTRY INDUSTRY

8.1 OVERVIEW

Australia's non-wood products forestry industry essentially includes all businesses, opportunities, products and activities not associated with the forestry industry (as defined previously) that are sourced from, or experienced in, forests.

This is referred to in this report as the 'non-wood products' forestry industry, and this industry could involve an increased number of Indigenous Australians.

8.2 PRESENT STATE OF NON-WOOD PRODUCTS FORESTRY INDUSTRY

OPPORTUNITIES

It was evident during the NIFS consultation process that there are opportunities to develop existing non-wood products forest based industries and new ones. There are two types of opportunities:

- 'alternate' wood products including
  - – bark collection for painting
  - – seed collection for tree planting and nursery supplies
  - – Didgeridoo manufacture
  - – bush flowers (wild flowers)
  - – bush furniture
- non-wood products including
  - – eco-tourism
  - – land management
  - – park management
  - – bush tucker and bush medicines[14]
  - – bee keeping
  - – cultural heritage and site management.

14 More information about sources for bush tucker and bush medicines can be found at Appendix 2

NATURE OF NON-WOOD PRODUCTS FOREST BASED INDUSTRIES

A considerable array of literature and anecdotal information exists about these activities, particularly bush tucker and bush medicines. However, many of the activities and businesses:

- are small and isolated
- lack product volume and continuity of product to develop outside their own environs
- lack business skills and capital to develop
- have difficulty accessing markets.

LACK OF INFORMATION ABOUT NON-WOOD PRODUCTS FOREST INDUSTRIES

Little definitive information exists about non-wood product enterprises that can be used to quantify these industries, especially:

- the total type, range and location of products and activities that can be sourced from, or experienced in, forests
- the volume of products obtained from native forests and from planted forests
- the proportion of these products used for personal consumption and for sale
- the number of people employed in this sector
- where businesses are located and how long they have been in business
- the value of the products.

ECONOMIC VALUE

Ryder (2000) estimates the value of the 'fledgling' native foods industry at $14 million annually, but points out that 'its export potential (and presumably its domestic market potential) is yet to be realised because it can't guarantee regular supplies of high quality produce'.[15]

This annual turnover is not insignificant. However, Ryder amplifies the shortcomings in these (and similar) industries by saying that the relative immaturity and disparate nature of this sector means there is little baseline information available for:

- employment
  - – total numbers employed in the sectors
  - – proportion of Indigenous people employed
  - – ABS statistics references

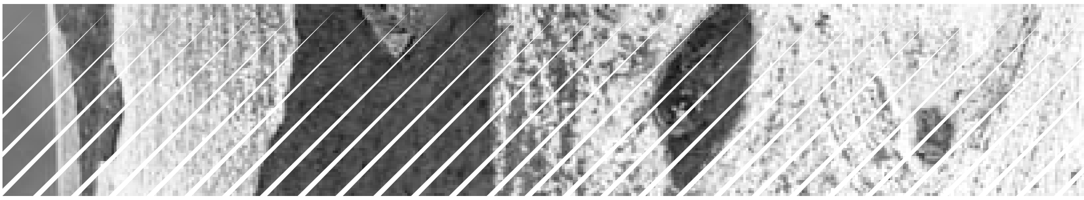
15 (Ryder, 2000)

- education and skill requirements
  - – university
  - – TAFE
  - – place based training
  - – entry level requirements for degree, diplomas and certificates
  - – training at the place of employment
  - – primary/secondary level requirements for the above
  - – availability of education options.

Much of the literature admits the great potential to develop non-wood products forest based industries for the short and long term benefit of Indigenous Australians: economically, socially and culturally. However, while many commentators acknowledge the potential for development, they agree that much remains to be done to realise that potential.

Considerable time and effort is required to develop businesses in and with Indigenous communities in Australia. There is still no critical framework for understanding existing collaborative initiatives (successes and failures). Publicising current activities and past mistakes will encourage new initiatives, but such publicity should not overstate the achievements to date or else it will create an overly optimistic picture. Private sector support for Indigenous Australians is commendable 'but it is relatively unknown both in the wider population and in the business sector. ... Some Australian commercial activities rank with or exceed international initiatives though they are neither numerous nor expeditious.'[16]

16 Sugget and O'Loughlin (2001)



PART III: INDIGENOUS INVOLVEMENT IN FORESTRY

9. OVERVIEW

9.1 WHAT'S IN PART III?

This part looks at the relationship between Indigenous communities and forestry from three main perspectives:

- current Indigenous involvement in the industry
- current Indigenous involvement in the non-wood products forestry industry
- the potential for increased Indigenous involvement in forest based industries generally.

The bulk of this part consists of summaries of current relevant initiatives at the eight community consultation sites visited and from meetings with representatives of the forestry industry, as well as activities noted from other regions by way of desktop research and submissions.

9.2 WHAT IS THE RELEVANCE OF THIS PART TO THE NIFS?

A significant finding from the consultations with Indigenous communities and the meetings with the forestry industry was the low level of involvement of Indigenous communities in the forestry industry. The consultations with Indigenous communities also confirmed the potential for the non-wood products forestry industry, but the lack of current development in this sector. These findings underpin the strategies for increasing Indigenous involvement in the forestry sector generally.

In broad terms there is a low base of both Indigenous employment (and experience) in the Forestry industry and Indigenous ownership of forests or related businesses. Some positive initiatives are being undertaken which have strong potential to be replicated. These include a number of the major plantation management companies engaging with Indigenous communities in a business arrangement that involves managing tree crops that are being grown to produce fibre for pulp and paper production.

10. Opportunities for Indigenous people to become involved in forestry

10.1 Indigenous involvement in the forestry sectors—findings from the consultations

There are opportunities for Indigenous Australians to become involved in the forestry industry. This section looks at the eight consultation sites visited during the consultation phase and discusses:

- the forestry industry in each region
- current projects in each region
- projects being considered and projects at various stages of development
- future opportunities for wood product
- future opportunities for non-wood products.

The broad areas of immediate opportunity appear to be for wage-based employment or staged business development with respect to these areas of the forestry industry:

- wood products
  - seed collection and extraction for planted and native forest tree crops
  - nursery operations (plant development through to sales)
  - planted forest development and management
  - native forest development and management
  - transport
  - milling
  - value adding and manufacturing
  - speciality areas—bush furniture
- non-wood products
  - cultural heritage
  - environmental tourism (e.g. low impact eco-cabin/tent accommodation)
  - educational/scientific tours
  - special events
  - bush tucker
  - harvesting from forests (e.g. bee keeping, bark collection)
  - rehabilitation/environmental re-vegetation (e.g. mining sites, riparian zones, enrichment planting, bio-links)
  - retail opportunities (art, food/local produce, native plants).

10.2 DATABASE DESIRABLE

The nature of a number the projects makes them transferable from place to place and across states/ territories; observations were made that there is merit in establishing a database of opportunities in order to:

- share relevant project information, for example funding sources, training, employment material
- gain critical mass for markets, for example bush tucker network across states to supply national and international markets
- have a peer support group to discuss initiatives or problems.

11. INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY CONSULTATIONS

11.1 SITE VISITS

The consultation process included visiting selected locations that covered a wide range of forest and environmental types and climates, and some where Indigenous communities were already involved in forest industries to some degree. The site visits consisted of public meetings arranged by local Indigenous community representatives and other interested parties.

Participants at each site consultation were asked to respond to the following question regarding the level of Indigenous involvement in forest based industries in their region and in general:

'What forest activities happen now, or are planned for the future, that people are aware of?'

This question was intended to extract information on what is happening now, and also to identify successful projects to demonstrate activities that could be undertaken in other areas. Below is a summary of current relevant initiatives from the eight sites visited (Section 12) as well as activities noted from other regions (Section 13).

11.2 SITES VISITED

BRIEF FORESTRY INDUSTRY PROFILE OF EIGHT SITES VISITED

Manjimup, WA: Tall Eucalyptus forest with the main species being Eucalyptus diversicolor (Karri), Eucalyptus marginata (Jarrah) and Eucalyptus calophylla (Marri); significant but declining sawmilling industry based on this forest resource. A Pinus radiata and smaller Pinus pinaster plantation resource and associated manufacturing industry. Significant export woodchip operations in neighbouring ports historically based on native forest resource and changing to planted Eucalyptus forest resource mainly of the species Eucalyptus globulus (Blue Gum).

Mogumber Farm, Moora, WA: Historically largely covered in Eucalyptus forest that was largely cleared for farming; some farm forestry plantings, marginal rainfall for large scale plantation tree crops.

Mount Gambier, SA: Centre of one of the major Pinus radiata plantation resources in Australia, significant vertically integrated manufacturing industry based on this resource; more recently large areas of Blue Gum have been planted.

Hobart, TAS: Tasmania is characterised by tall Eucalyptus forests the main species being Eucalyptus regnans (Mountain Ash), Eucalyptus delegatensis (Alpine Ash) and Eucalyptus obliqua (Messmate Stringybark). A significant but declining sawmilling industry based on this forest resource. A Pinus radiata plantation resource and associated manufacturing industry. Significant export woodchip operations historically based on native forest resource and changing to planted Eucalyptus forest resource mainly of Blue Gum and Eucalyptus nitens (Shining Gum).

Barmah, VIC: Centre of the largest naturally occurring Eucalyptus camaldulensis (River Red Gum) forest in the world that historically has been managed and utilised to supply sawn timber for the sleeper, furniture and outdoor timber products markets. More recently the Barmah Forest region has been managed for a variety of outcomes including water, timber, and conservation of biodiversity, wildlife and cultural heritage.

Grafton, NSW: The Grafton region is characterised by tall Eucalyptus forests the main species being Eucalyptus pilularis (Blackbutt) and, Eucalyptus grandis (Flooded Gum), as well as small areas of rainforest. A significant but declining sawmilling industry based on this forest resource. A Eucalyptus plantation resource to produce sawlogs has recently been established.

Cairns, QLD: Centre of a significant rainforest that stretches along the Queensland coast; the associated sawmilling industry is in decline. Isolated areas of various species of planted forests. A significant tourist hub for Australian and international tourists. As returns for sugar and dairy products have fallen there is scope to grow plantations on former dairy and sugar cane farms.

Tiwi Islands, NT: Location for one of the significant business arrangements between Indigenous communities and non Indigenous people that involves harvesting existing planted forests and establishing new Acacia mangium plantations that will provide wood fibre for pulp and paper production.

Each site is analysed below by reference to the following criteria:

- description of forestry industry in region
- current projects
- future projects
- relevance for NIFS
- opportunities for wood products
- opportunities for non-wood products.

12. INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY SITE VISITS

Several common themes emerged from the site visits where native forest is a significant part of the landscape:

- the volume of hardwood timber available for harvesting and processing has reduced and is likely to reduce further
- the opportunities for Indigenous Australians in the forestry industry vary considerably
- Indigenous communities expressed concern that they will not be allowed access to the native forest to carry out their traditional activities or to be part of an industry that offers economic independence.

12.1 MANJIMUP, WESTERN AUSTRALIA

DESCRIPTION OF THE FORESTRY INDUSTRY IN MANJIMUP REGION

Historically, the forestry industry in Manjimup has been based on Eucalyptus hardwoods sourced from native forest that were processed into structural timber. Log allocations have fallen considerably over the past 10 years leading to a reduced forest resource available for harvesting and processing, and a significant increase in the number of displaced skilled timber workers. This situation will not improve appreciably as increasing areas of native forest are being taken out of production and dedicated as national parks.

Increasingly, log allocations harvested from native forest are being processed to achieve higher levels of value adding, for example manufacture into furniture products.

Offsetting the reduction in the native forest resource available for harvest, to some degree, is the maturing softwood plantation resource that has recently resulted in an expansion in softwood sawlog processing.

Over the past about 20 years there has been a substantial increase in the area of hardwood plantations established in the region; the main species planted is Blue Gum to provide wood fibre for pulp and paper production. Some of the older plantations have recently been harvested and the wood fibre exported from the ports of Bunbury and Albany.

The push for and presence of farm forestry on farmland has recently increased. Farm forestry is a system in which both agriculture and forest products are produced at the same time from the same area of land by cropping or grazing below an open canopy.

In summary this region's forestry industry potential lies in the areas of plantation timber, both softwood and hardwood, and to a lesser degree in the harvest from native forest that will increasingly be processed into higher value added timber products. However there are concerns that access to the native forest will become increasingly restricted in the future.

current projects

Department of Conservation and Land Management

CALM has employed a small number of Indigenous staff in various roles in accordance with their employment policy.

Timber 2020 Great Southern Regional Plantation Committee

The committee's primary goal is to develop a regional forestry industry development plan for farm forestry in the dryland zone of the Great Southern Region of Western Australia. The project aims to facilitate the development of a coherent and sustainable regional farm forestry industry. Workshops have been held with key interest groups from the farming community, non-government organisations, forestry industry, and local and state government. The committee is interested in engaging Indigenous communities in its initiatives. Further information on the project and on farm forestry can be found at *www.timber2020.com.au*

future Projects

A number of projects/issues were identified or discussed at the consultations, but no substantial progress has been made in these areas to date.

Utilising current sources of waste wood. Numerous opportunities were identified for wood that is currently not used but could form the basis of small businesses under the Community Development Employment Program (CDEP) (see Section 26 for CDEP details). These include timber 'thinned' around marked trees in native forest, and wood left behind after harvest, which could be used for firewood, bush furniture or craft uses. However basic rights of access do not exist to gather this wood, which is left to rot. Downstream opportunities for training and employment in furniture and craft manufacturing were discussed and the local TAFE has been identified as having the infrastructure to assist with this.

Eco-tourism related. Teaching about the region's biodiversity and linkages to tourism activities were identified as a non-wood product project (Gondwana Links Project). Courses are available in the broader region on biodiversity and on tourism development. These were identified as likely to lead to non-wood product projects along the lines being promoted by the Gondwana Links Project.

Intellectual property rights. Protecting the broader intellectual property rights associated with the region's biodiversity was considered an issue.

Hazard reduction burning program. Involvement in a seasonal burning program to reduce the level of ground fuel to protect the region's native forests.

Using ILC or Aboriginal Land Trust (ALT) properties for plantation development with training being linked specifically with the properties.

Developing an oil mallee project by establishing an oil mallee plantation and using residue timber as a sustainable energy source.

RELEVANCE FOR NIFS

Overall, Indigenous Australians in the Manjimup region have minimal representation in the forestry industry locally, however there is strong interest in the NIFS initiatives.

CALM has employed a small number of Indigenous staff in accordance with their employment policy. This has been passive rather than proactive in stimulating Indigenous employment levels. On the other hand, the Timber 2020 Committee has been working with the local Aboriginal Corporation to identify cooperative opportunities in areas such as seed collection, wood recovery using mobile mills and bush furniture(This initiative has more potential than actual benefits at present, as it will for some years to come). Even so, the Manjimup meeting and follow up research revealed a fair level of positive thinking on engaging Indigenous people and a variety of projects have been earmarked for inception. However, the region lacks focal points for relevant education and training and access to practical information and literature. The cumulative effect is to constrain the conception and start up stages of new projects.

MANJIMUP—OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOOD PRODUCTS

The following opportunities could be looked at in the Manjimup region:

- natural forest management and development in Jarrah and Karri
- planted forest management and development in Tasmanian Blue Gum and Radiata Pine
- low to medium rainfall agroforestry development in the low to medium rainfall parts of the region, with added potential benefits for salinity management and carbon banks
- forest operation planning, cultural heritage
- harvest operation planning, cultural heritage
- contract harvesting.

MANJIMUP—OPPORTUNITIES FOR NON-WOOD PRODUCTS

In the non-wood products sector the Manjimup region could look at:

- cultural heritage management including input to forest operations planning
- eco-tourism.

12.2 MOGUMBER FARM, MOORA, WESTERN AUSTRALIA

DESCRIPTION OF THE FORESTRY INDUSTRY IN THE MOORA REGION

The Moora region is characterised by broadacre cropping and includes pockets of farm forestry and environmental tree planting projects. There is no wood based manufacturing industry in the region. Although it supported a small hardwood timber industry many years ago when the land was being cleared for agriculture, trees were generally not replaced.

CURRENT PROJECTS

Generally, there is little Indigenous or non-Indigenous employment in forest based activities and industries in the Moora region. There have been instances of Indigenous employment in environmental tree planting projects, such as the Swan Catchment Council. This has assisted in encouraging community support and interest in projects.

Mogumber Farm, a property owned by an Indigenous corporation has some older Pinus farm forestry tree plantings and more recent plantings.

FUTURE PROJECTS

Participants at the Moora site visit identified the following possible opportunities:

- managing native bush in a productive way ('There is a lot of bush not working for us but the government wants us to look after it, not clear it.')
- employment opportunities in Landcare activities, for example dealing with salt affected land
- Sandalwood harvesting in the goldfields; this was presented as a current activity; however, recent changes to harvesting methods were considered to be reducing Indigenous involvement as harvesting requires financial backing.

RELEVANCE FOR NIFS

There was little employment in forest-based activities and industries in the Moora region at the time of the consultations, but there is strong interest in the NIFS initiatives.

There is potential to expand existing industries in wood and non-wood products and to develop new industries providing opportunities in the short and longer-term.

MOORA—FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOOD PRODUCTS

The following opportunities could be looked at in the Moora region:

- Sandalwood (Santalum spicatum) occurs naturally in the drier inland areas of Western and South Australia, and there are also small areas of planted Sandalwood forest—existing native Sandalwood forests in Western and South Australia could provide immediate forest management and harvesting opportunities in rural and remote parts of both States; planted Sandalwood forests could provide the longer-term opportunity to develop larger scale business units in remote areas
- expansion of Maritime Pine plantations and associated processing industry in the Shire of Moora
- managing and utilising Broombush as a crop—Broombush is grown on short rotations and is in current market demand

- nursery operations that can include sourcing seed, establishing and nurturing seedling plants, marketing the seedling products, and packaging seedlings for transport to markets
- planted forest management and development in Maritime Pine and Pinus halepensis (Aleppo Pine)
- low to medium rainfall agroforestry development, with added potential benefits for salinity management and carbon sinks/banks
- forest operation planning that includes cultural heritage issues
- increasing Landcare and farm forestry projects with trial and demonstration sites having been established.

MOORA—FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES FOR NON-WOOD PRODUCTS

In the non-wood products section Moora could look at the following activities:

- farming enterprises
- low to medium rainfall agroforestry development, including bush tucker and bush medicines plantings
- catchment management
- cultural heritage management (including input to forest operations planning).

12.3 MOUNT GAMBIER, SOUTH AUSTRALIA

DESCRIPTION OF THE FORESTRY INDUSTRY IN THE MT GAMBIER REGION

Historically the Mt Gambier region has obtained its timber from softwood plantations, mostly of Radiata Pine. The region, also known as the Green Triangle Region of southeast South Australia and western Victoria, is characterised by a mature softwood plantation estate and a diverse range of related downstream industries. These industries include an export facility at Portland in Victoria that handles roundwood sawlog and pulpwood, and woodchip.

More recently areas of hardwood plantations and to a lesser extent farm forestry plantings have been established. The main hardwood plantation species planted is Blue Gum to provide wood fibre for pulp and paper production.

In summary this region’s potential in the forestry industry lies in the areas of plantation timber, both softwood and hardwood.

CURRENT PROJECTS

There is a low level of Indigenous employment and business ownership in the forestry industry in Mt Gambier; the majority of jobs held by Indigenous people involve heavy labour and not supervisory or management roles. This low level of employment is despite an active labour market and low unemployment in the region.

There are isolated instances of non-wood activities, such as employment as parks assistants and in some environmental planting projects, and an Indigenous plants trial is being undertaken at a nursery at Ready Creek, north of Mount Gambier.

Nunga Links: A major initiative in the region is the Nunga Links-Forest Industry Indigenous Employment Strategy 2002–2007. Local timber industry companies have joined with the Australian Government (through DEWR), Indigenous leaders and other organisations in a commitment to improve the employment prospects of Indigenous people in the private sector of the forestry industry in the southeast of South Australia.

Consultation research for the Nunga Links project identified the following issues in relation to improving employment prospects for Indigenous Australians:

- lack of awareness of types of jobs that are available in the forestry industry—generally only labour type occupations were known to and considered available to Indigenous Australians
- lack of confidence and peer group pressure that can limit effective job seeking—peer group pressure focused on maintaining the status quo and discouraged those who sought to 'do better'
- lack of role models that have successful career jobs in the forestry industry—few Indigenous Australians are employed in the forestry industry, and most are in labour type roles
- lack of a driver's licence and transport to get to available jobs—Indigenous communities are often located some distance from job locations in the forestry industry and require transport to access employment; few Indigenous Australians have sufficient financial resources to travel independently to employment locations
- ability to pass forestry industry recruitment standards undermined by sporadic work history and lack of referees; this limits the likelihood of successful interviews with supervisors or other recruiting personnel—while Indigenous Australians have the ability required to obtain employment in the forestry industry, poor work records in their communities and the lack of adequate support works against them
- lack of understanding of cross-cultural issues in the forestry industry—there is a general lack of understanding of the significance of cross-cultural issues between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians; also, anecdotes about 'what happens between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians in the workplace' often discourages Indigenous people from applying for employment in the forestry industry
- lack of awareness of the profile of Indigenous workers already employed in the forestry industry—essentially, if there are Indigenous Australians working in the forestry industry they are not well known
- lack of record keeping in relation to identification of Indigenous job seekers to support appropriate recruitment practices—most employment screening processes do not ask applicants to nominate their cultural heritage.

As a result of this research, 17 parties including the Federal Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations, state government agencies and private sector companies have signed 'Timber Industry Leaders for Indigenous Employment', an agreement aimed at increasing Indigenous employment in the local forestry industry by:

- raising awareness of career opportunities in the forestry industry;
- raising awareness of the Indigenous Forestry Industry Employment Strategy in the forestry industry
- equipping Indigenous job seekers with knowledge, skills, motivation and experience to take up available employment in the forestry industry
- supporting Indigenous employees to sustain ongoing employment in the Forestry industry.

The Forest Industry Indigenous Employment Strategy was developed as part of the Nunga Links Projects from the South East Area Consultative Committee. The project is awaiting funding for its implementation. Further information can be found at http://www.jseacc.org.au/.

FUTURE PROJECTS

There is a high level of interest in the purchase of land for hardwood plantations in the Mount Gambier region because of available skills, appropriate soils and climate, and the relatively short distances to markets. A working commercial port services the region, giving it access to potentially wider markets. The Green Triangle Region has a strong base of support businesses and infrastructure for forest based activities in the form of sawmills, road and rail infrastructure and a skilled labour force.

The main employment opportunities for Indigenous Australians in the Green Triangle Region are expected to arise from the Nunga Links initiatives.

RELEVANCE FOR NIFS

The Nunga Links project is a good example of a public/private sector model that has the support of the local Indigenous and wider communities, the forestry industry and government. It requires additional support for implementation because Indigenous Australians have minimal representation in the Forestry industry in Mt Gambier. The Nunga Links project could be added to existing government schemes and programs that facilitate employment for Indigenous Australians.

Further analysis of the Nunga Links project is recommended to determine its potential as a model that could be duplicated elsewhere in Australia.

MT GAMBIER—OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOOD PRODUCTS

Principal forestry industry opportunities in the Mt Gambier region seem to be:

- planted forest development and management, mainly in Radiata Pine and Blue Gum
- nursery operation
- forest operation planning, cultural heritage

- harvest operation planning, cultural heritage
- contract harvesting.

MT GAMBIER—OPPORTUNITIES FOR NON-WOOD PRODUCTS

Eco-tourism could provide a non-wood products opportunity in Mt Gambier.

12.4 HOBART, TASMANIA

DESCRIPTION OF FORESTRY INDUSTRY IN THE HOBART REGION

Historically, the forestry industry in the Hobart region was based mainly on Eucalypt hardwood sourced from native forest. A number of other 'specialty' species were also harvested including Acacia, Myrtle, Sassafras, Huon and Celery Top Pine. However, allocations from this 'specialty' resource have declined or been reduced over recent years.

Although the mainstream forestry industry has limited access to these resources, smaller, specialist industries could be developed around these timbers for specialty products such as wood art. Increasingly, log allocations harvested from native forest are being processed to achieve higher levels of value adding, for example manufacture into furniture products.

Eucalypt hardwood plantations have increased substantially in recent years throughout Tasmania, especially of Blue Gum and Shining Gum. These species are being grown to provide wood fibre for pulp and paper production and possibly sawlogs.

A significant softwood plantation estate is located mainly in northern Tasmania and provides roundwood products for sawmill processing, pulp and paper and panel production.

Increasing areas of native forest previously managed for timber production are now dedicated as national parks and reserves, reducing the wood available for harvest. It is likely this process will continue with an increasing amount of wood fibre for timber and pulp and paper products being harvested from plantations, although a considerable amount of research is being undertaken to identify improved forest management options.

Relatively recent farm forestry plantings of a mix of species including those mentioned above and specialty timbers such as Acacia melanoxylon (Blackwood) have been established.

In summary, this region's forestry industry potential lies in the areas of native forest and plantation timber, both softwood and hardwood. However there are concerns that access to the native forest will become increasingly restricted in the future.

CURRENT PROJECTS

An Indigenous community has purchased a property called Murrayfield on Bruny Island in Bass Strait; the property is primarily an agricultural farm but has some forest activities.

Indigenous people are employed full time by Forestry Tasmania to 'walk over' land prior to forestry operations (generally harvesting and transport) to identify culturally significant sites and then assist with cultural heritage protection and management of buffer zones. The majority of these sites are not accessible to the Indigenous community. There is also Indigenous employment in sawmills and chip mills. Forestry Tasmania manages visits to forest sites.

Jahadi, an Indigenous community organisation in Deloraine, runs Indigenous bush tours as part of a major bus company itinerary.

There are also instances of environmental and site rehabilitation work being undertaken by Indigenous Australians. In particular Green Corps initiatives may have particular relevance in Tasmania (refer Section 27.7).

FUTURE PROJECTS

Participants in the consultation identified a number of ideas for non-wood activities warranting investigation, including:

- tourism (especially in reserve areas)
- supply of bark to interstate artists
- Landcare and environmental projects
- kangaroo, wallaby harvesting
- site rehabilitation
- seed collection.

RELEVANCE FOR NIFS

Indigenous Australians have minimal representation in the forestry industry in the Hobart region.

There is potential for increased Indigenous involvement in the Tasmanian forestry industry in the native and planted forest sectors in forest growing and management generally, in utilisation and in processing and manufacturing. There are emerging opportunities in cultural heritage management in all aspects of forest operations. There is a good level of interest in the NIFS initiatives.

HOBART—OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOOD PRODUCTS

Principal forestry industry opportunities for the Hobart region seem to be in:

- native forest management and development, various species and species associations
- nursery operation
- planted forest development and management, with Radiata Pine, Blue Gum and Shining Gum
- forest operation planning, cultural heritage
- harvest operation planning, cultural heritage
- contract harvesting.

HOBART—OPPORTUNITIES FOR NON-WOOD PRODUCTS

Opportunities for non-wood products in the Hobart region seem to be:

- cultural heritage management (including input to forest operations planning)
- environmental management
- eco-tourism.

12.5 BARMAH FOREST, VICTORIA

DESCRIPTION OF FORESTRY INDUSTRY IN THE BARMAH REGION

Barmah Forest is the largest naturally occurring River Red Gum forest in the world, and is regarded as a significant natural resource. Historically, Barmah Forest supplied large volumes of fuel wood for paddle steamers that transported farm produce from inland Australia to the major coastal markets prior to the advent of truck transport.

Timber extraction is now heavily regulated with only small volumes harvested each year. The harvest supports a number of small sawmills that produce sleeper grade timbers and high grade sawn timber used in fine furniture manufacture.

More recently, silvicultural thinnings from regrowth forests have been harvested and sold as firewood, fence posts and as fuel wood for the tourist based paddle steamer business.

Historically, there were a large number of Indigenous employees in the forestry industry but current employment levels are low and in labour type roles in silviculture and sawmilling.

In summary, this region's forestry industry potential lies in the areas of silvicultural management and utilisation, and in the processing and manufacture of higher value added timber products.

CURRENT PROJECTS

A new business has been established based on thinning selected stands of regrowth River Red Gum forests and selling the roundwood as firewood, fence posts and as billets to fuel paddle steamers. The Cummergunja CDEP and State Forests of NSW are helping a group of five Indigenous people to establish this new enterprise using residues from state forests around Deniliquin.

Parks Victoria is seeking to employ a number of Indigenous Australian rangers and have worked with DEWR to ensure suitable selection criteria are established.

FUTURE PROJECTS

A business plan has been prepared to establish a Yorta Yorta Nursery and provide it with preferred supplier status for a range of markets.

Preliminary investigations are underway into bush tucker, eco-tourism and environmental plantings.

RELEVANCE FOR NIFS

Indigenous Australians in the Barmah region have minimal representation in the local forestry industry. There were varying levels of interest in the NIFS initiatives ranging from strong support through to a high level of scepticism.

There is potential for increased Indigenous forestry industry involvement in the Barmah region in the native forest sector—in forest growing and management generally, in small-scale utilisation and marketing, and in processing and manufacturing.

BARMAH—OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOOD PRODUCTS

Principal opportunities for the Barmah region seem to be in:

- native forest management and development in River Red Gum and Callitris spp.
- forest operation planning, cultural heritage
- harvest operation planning, cultural heritage
- native forest harvesting/silviculture.

BARMAH—OPPORTUNITIES FOR NON-WOOD PRODUCTS

Opportunities for non-wood products in the Barmah region seem to be:

- cultural heritage management (including input to forest operations planning)
- water management
- rehabilitation.

12.6 GRAFTON, NEW SOUTH WALES

DESCRIPTION OF FORESTRY INDUSTRY IN THE GRAFTON REGION

Historically, the forestry industry in the Grafton region was based on Eucalypt hardwoods sourced from native forest. Increasing areas of native forest are being dedicated as national parks and reserves and timber allocations have fallen considerably over the past 10 years, leading to a reduced resource for harvesting and processing.

Significant areas of hardwood plantation were established in the region from the mid 1960s, including plantings of Blackbutt and Flooded Gum. These plantations are now providing sawlog, veneer log and poles for processing.

There has been a recent renewal in planting of the hardwood plantation estate, coupled with a push for farm forestry. The main hardwood plantation species are Blackbutt, Flooded Gum and Eucalyptus dunnii (Dunn's White Gum); the aim of these plantations is to provide sawlog, veneer log and poles for processing.

Recent expansion in plantation softwood processing based on a maturing Radiata Pine resource near Walcha provides sawlog for processing into timber and veneer log for further processing into plywood. North of Coffs Harbour a mixed species softwood plantation resource is harvested for sawlog and veneer log products and processed locally into sawn timber and plywood.

The plantation resource is widely scattered throughout the region.

In summary, the Grafton region's forestry industry potential lies in the areas of plantation timber, softwood and hardwood, and to a lesser degree in the harvest from the native forest estate that will increasingly be processed into higher value added timber products.

current projects

A local Aboriginal Land Council has commenced a horticultural program to develop a native tree and bush tucker nursery.

State Forests of NSW employ a number of Indigenous Australians in a variety of roles including cultural heritage management.

future Projects

No future projects were identified at the consultation.

relevance for nifs

Indigenous Australians have minimal representation in the forestry industry in the Grafton region. There was a varying level of interest in the NIFS initiatives ranging from strong support for the concept through to a high level of criticism of the NIFS process.

There is potential for increased Indigenous forestry industry involvement in the Grafton region in the native forest sector—in forest growing and management generally, in utilisation and marketing, and in processing and manufacturing.

The region lacks focal points for relevant education and training and access to practical information and literature. The cumulative effect is to stifle new projects at the conception and start-up stages.

grafton—opportunities for wood products

Principal forestry industry opportunities for the Grafton region seem to be in:

- tropical agroforestry
- nursery operation
- forest operation planning, cultural heritage.

grafton—opportunities for Non-wood products

Opportunities for non-wood products in the Grafton region seem to be in the area of cultural heritage management (including input to forest operations planning).

12.7 CAIRNS, FAR NORTH QUEENSLAND

DESCRIPTION OF FORESTRY INDUSTRY IN THE CAIRNS REGION

Historically the forestry industry in Far North Queensland was based on mainly rainforest species sourced from native forest. Significant areas of native forest have been converted to parks. Timber allocations have fallen considerably over the past 10 years, and all but eliminated the processing sector in the region.

A small hardwood processing industry operates in the region based on the species Corymbia citriodora (Lemon Scented Gum) that is generally found west of Cairns and Townsville.

The plantation resource totals about 24 000 hectares. Softwood species make-up about 90 per cent of the resource and include Pinus carribaea var hondurensis (Caribbean Pine) and Araucaria cunninghamii (Hoop Pine). Hardwood species make up about 2 per cent of the resource and mixed hardwood and softwood species plantations another 8 per cent. The plantation resource is widely scattered throughout the region.

These plantations were collectively established with the aim of providing a range of roundwood products for processing.

In summary, this region's forestry industry potential lies in the areas of plantation timber, both softwood and hardwood, and to a lesser degree in the harvest from the native forest estate that will increasingly be processed into higher value added timber products. The region has particular concerns that access to the native forest will become increasingly restricted in the future given the diversity and profile of the general region, and that this will limit the ability of all communities to use the native forest for wood and non-wood activities.

Importantly, new and emerging opportunities for Indigenous Australians lie in the non-wood products forestry industry, revolving around eco-tourism.

CURRENT PROJECTS

The attendees at the Cairns meeting showed a particularly strong interest in the NIFS project because they have been moving towards increasing Indigenous involvement in the region's forestry industry for a number of years. A number of organisations are taking a coordinated approach with a specific aim to deliver outcomes.

Tropical Agroforestry for Indigenous Communities

A group including representatives from James Cook University (Rainforest Cooperative Research Centre—CRC), Queensland's Department of State Development and the region's Indigenous communities has prepared a publication titled Introduction to Tropical Agroforestry for Indigenous Communities with support from the Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation.

The publication covers a range of topics, including:

- a description of agroforestry in a tropical region—the publication describes windbreaks, silvopastoral systems and inter cropping strategies in managing agriculture and forestry activities on the same land in a tropical environment
- bush tucker production from agroforestry
- enrichment planting and biodiversity
- native forest management
- portable sawmilling.

The group has met a number of times to identify a suite of agroforestry projects that may be successful in the region. Matters they considered include:

- feasibility of growing, land availability, etc.
- funding needs
- expertise for implementation
- linkages required
- cost sharing.

The benefit of this combined group (James Cook University Rainforest CRC, a recognised research group, Queensland's Department of State Development, a relevant government department, and the region's Indigenous communities, representing local community input) is that it is region based, practical and a coordinated approach aimed at bringing public and private funding sources together. The group is still at an early stage of development but it has already led to investigation of a number of projects.

Woorabinda

Woorabinda is an Aboriginal community with a population of about 1500 located in Central Queensland. The Dawson Agroforestry Group has been advocating a policy of education in forestry activities for young Indigenous people in years 11 and 12 at Moura High School. A number of Indigenous students have completed the program, assisted by a contract with Moura Mine, local forestry industry leaders and the Department of Employment and Training Community Job Plan program. There are now five young people employed under the Youth for the Environment Program, four of whom are at Woorabinda.

Dawson Hardwood Services is currently working on a feasibility study to plant 1500 hectares of hardwoods near Theodore. It is hoped some of the young Indigenous people who are leaving the Woorabinda and Moura High School programs will find employment with this new project. The young people at Woorabinda have already started erecting a small nursery for growing seedlings for planting out.

FUTURE PROJECTS

Cape York Forest Management Pty Ltd is a private sector company formed to provide an integrated approach to forestry in Cape York through a portfolio investment scheme. The company believes it is critical to have Indigenous involvement in its initiatives. They have identified a number of tree plantation projects and identified the key issues to be addressed to allow their development—training and employment, infrastructure development, sustainable management of harvesting from existing forests, development of plantations, introduction of environmental management systems, development of products and markets, resolution of ownership and land tenure issues, and identification of Indigenous custom forest management systems.

To progress their scheme Cape York Forest Management have said it will be necessary to:

- review available land and assess the potential for sustainable and commercial forestry activities
- identify previously cleared and degraded land, for example former mine sites
- estimate potential wood fibre production targets and the cost to achieve them
- identify markets and determine prices for potential wood fibre products
- quantify the employment from the projects and the potential costs and revenues that might be generated
- identify sources of funds and investors to enable the scheme to be developed.

RELEVANCE FOR NIFS

Indigenous Australians in Far North Queensland have minimal representation in the local forestry industry. However there is strong interest in the NIFS initiatives and a concerted push by a local representative group for greater involvement.

A small number of Indigenous Australians are engaged in forestry industry activities in the greater Cairns region, and the focus of future employment in the industry is away from the native forest estate and towards plantation forest projects. It seems there are large numbers and a wide diversity of plantation tree crop projects being talked about. However, there are significant technical challenges in growing plantation tree crops that focus on producing sawlog products over short rotations in the sub-tropical and tropical environments of the region.

A high level of interest and discussion regarding the level of Indigenous involvement in the forestry industry has been instigated by this group of stakeholders taking a regional and practical approach.

Importantly, there is significant potential for eco-tourism based employment within the forest environment, including cultural heritage management.

Cairns/Far North QLD—Opportunities for Wood Products

The main forestry industry opportunities for the region seem to be in:

- tropical agroforestry
- forest operation planning, cultural heritage
- seed collection and extraction for planted and native forest tree crops
- nursery operations (plant development through to sales).

Cairns/Far North QLD - Opportunities for Non-Wood Products

Opportunities for non-wood products in the region seem to be in the area of cultural heritage management (including input to forest operations planning).

12.8 Darwin, Northern Territory

Description of Forestry Industry in Region

Forestry industry activities in the Northern Territory (NT) have been quite different to those in other parts of Australia, where either native or planted forests have provided large volumes of wood fibre for processing and downstream value adding. The NT landscape has not included tall Eucalypt forest or broadacre plantations that could provide timbers for building and furniture manufacture. Much of the Territory's wood fibre requirement has been sourced from other parts of Australia or overseas.

Local native timbers have been harvested on a small scale to provide for local markets.

In summary, the NT's forestry industry potential lies in the area of plantation timber, both softwood and hardwood, and to a lesser degree in the harvest from the native forest estate that will increasingly be processed into higher value added timber products.

Current Projects

The most significant forestry project in the region is the Tiwi Forestry Project, a joint initiative of the Tiwi Land Council and the Sylvatech Group, overseen by the Tiwi & Sylvatech Management Advisory Committee (TASMAC).

Key outcomes of the Tiwi Forestry Project include:

- developing a fully sustainable and vertically integrated plantation timber industry on the Tiwi Islands
- providing a sound basis for the economic and social development of the Tiwi communities, while also encouraging external equity participation on commercially advantageous terms for investors with economic, social and environmental (triple bottom line) objectives

- offering the Tiwi people sustainable direct employment prospects, contract opportunities and increased turnover for established Tiwi businesses
- annual land lease payments to clan groups and a share of the timber harvest proceeds to fund community facilities
- providing training for Tiwi Islanders—Sylvatech has operated a Tiwi apprentice and training program, training Tiwi Islanders to work in the forestry industry
- successful project management—TASMAC has successfully coordinated training and employment assistance packages from a variety of sources to aid the project
- harvesting existing mature softwood plantations established in the 1960s on Melville Island and other native forest areas for replanting with Acacia mangium that will be exported for subsequent manufacture into pulp and paper products
- growing wood fibre that is suitable for pulp and paper manufacture close to Indonesian, Japanese and other Asian markets—the Tiwi Islands are two steaming days closer to these markets than Australia's southern ports.

The first stage of harvesting the softwood plantations commenced in late 2003, with log products being exported to Asian markets; further background is available at *http://www.sylvatech.com.au*.

Harvesting of timber for specialty products such as didgeridoos is a widespread activity in the greater region. This is generally considered to be unsustainable, with no clear long-term strategy for the resource.

Greening Australia has undertaken a number of trial farm forestry plantings of teak and other high value timber species on the mainland with some Indigenous community involvement.

FUTURE PROJECTS

Opportunities in related industries will arise as the Tiwi Forestry Project matures.

There is interest in smaller scale projects (for example, Sandalwood and bush tucker) but they require further research and development and case studies in order to proceed to a commercial level.

RELEVANCE FOR NIFS

Despite the outcomes of the Tiwi Forestry Project so far, Indigenous Australians have minimal representation in the local forestry industry.

While it is still relatively new, the Tiwi Forestry Project is a significant success story and an example of the potential for Indigenous Australians and the forestry industry to work together with 'win-win' outcomes for both parties. There are some valuable lessons to be learnt from this project—in particular having the parties focus on the respective strengths that they bring to a project.

While the Tiwi Forestry Project is successful there is little other forestry activity in the NT that is based on sound long-term business and environmentally sustainable forest management principles, and many activities seem ad hoc. It is appropriate to review these other forest based activities and draw on the Tiwi Forestry Project experience to assess their potential.

TOP END OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOOD PRODUCTS

Principal opportunities for the Top End of the NT seem to be in:

- ongoing direct employment prospects, contract opportunities, diversification and increased turnover for established Tiwi businesses from the Tiwi Forestry Project
- tropical agroforestry
- Sandalwood plantation development and subsequent harvesting and processing
- nursery operation for tree crops, from planting to sales
- native forest development and management
- cultural heritage management in forest operations.

TOP END OPPORTUNITIES FOR NON-WOOD PRODUCTS

In the non-wood products sector the Top End of the NT could benefit from:

- cultural heritage management (including input to forest operations planning)
- bush tucker
- eco-tourism.

13. OTHER REGIONS AND PROJECTS

13.1 CURRENT OR PLANNED ACTIVITIES AND TRENDS

Projects and activities in the forestry industry outside the eight consultation sites that came to notice from public submissions and desktop research are discussed below. This section also looks at current trends for planning and action in forestry management and bush tucker.

13.2 SPECIFIC PROJECTS PLANNED AND UNDER WAY

Integrated Tree Cropping (ITC) and the Gidarjil Development Corporation, Queensland

ITC and the Gidarjil Development Corporation are working together on behalf of investor growers to grow a Eucalyptus plantation tree crop on Hillgrove Station to produce wood fibre for pulp and paper manufacture.

ITC's general approach is to purchase land that is suitable for growing tree species in plantation format and source investors who want to grow trees in this way. ITC then contracts to provide the plantation forest management skills and services to the investors to establish and grow the tree crop.

Important aspects of the ITC and Gidarjil Development Corporation project include:

- ITC had previously established Eucalyptus trees paid for by investors on ITC land leased by the same investors 'for the purpose of carrying out an afforestation project'
- in this case the ITC land is adjacent to land held by the ILC
- once the plantation was established, ITC developed a partnering arrangement with the local Indigenous community (Gidarjil Development Corporation), sold the land to the ILC and contracted the ongoing plantation management and maintenance works with the Gidarjil Development Corporation
- payment for the land and management and maintenance works is through lease and management fees paid by the investor growers to ITC who, in turn, pay part of these fees at commercial rates to the Gidarjil Development Corporation for work undertaken and completed; this provides the community with an income stream for the term of the project
- ITC has offered the forest management contract work to its own specifications to the Gidarjil Development Corporation, with the forest management tasks and timelines structured around due dates that 'fit' with some of the Indigenous community's requirements
- ITC has arranged for training of the local Indigenous people involved in the project
- ITC's tree crop project in this instance is separate from the land on which the trees are growing
- ITC holds the contract to harvest and market the wood fibre grown in the plantations when it becomes ready for harvest, and acts on behalf of the investor growers to do this
- ITC has first right to replant the ILC land using investor growers' funds and the local Indigenous community's skills, which by that time are likely to have increased significantly.

Further information on the project can be found on the ITC website *http://www.treecrop.com.au* (refer Spring 2003 newsletter).

This project demonstrates a partnership model whereby ITC has entered into a business arrangement with Indigenous Australians that provides benefits for all the parties involved—employment and investment opportunities for the Gidarjil Development Corporation and access to timber and investment returns for ITC. This project formula could be applied to other plantation forest regions and projects in Australia.

Victorian forest management and wood utilisation plans, Victoria

Victoria's Forest Management Plans provide for and include strategies to protect places of Indigenous heritage significance in state forests, to ensure regular consultation with Indigenous communities and to provide opportunities for increased participation of Indigenous people in the management of state forests.

Indigenous communities are also consulted in the development of Victoria's Wood Utilisation Plans. These are operational plans used primarily by Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) staff for wood production, road construction and improvement planning purposes, and to provide the public with information regarding the location and approximate timing of the planned harvesting of coupes. The department consults with Aboriginal Affairs Victoria to identify a plan for the protection of Indigenous heritage sites in proposed coupes.

In the north west of Victoria, DSE has utilised a number of key government initiatives that foster and support the involvement of Indigenous Australians in forest management activities, including:

- Community Jobs Program, a Victorian Government employment initiative helping community organisations and local government to employ local job seekers on community projects and assist these jobseekers move into ongoing employment or training
- Youth Employment Scheme, a Victorian Government initiative delivered through the Department of Innovation, Forestry Industry and Regional Development; it aims to improve the employment prospects of young people and provides apprenticeship and traineeship opportunities with the Victorian Government for people aged between 15 and 24
- Structured Training and Employment Project (STEP), a Commonwealth Government initiative (refer Section 26.2).

Through these initiatives DSE has employed a number of local Indigenous Australians to undertake site protection and forest regeneration work which enables the community to develop a range of skills that will increase future employment prospects.

The Forest Management and Wood Utilisation Plans are providing positive strategies for engaging Indigenous communities in planning commercial forest harvesting operations in Victoria's native forests. Indigenous Australians also have the opportunity to contribute their skills to this process, and at the same time to learn new skills in forest management.

Lake Condah, Victoria

The Lake Condah Sustainable Development Project in western Victoria near Heywood involves a number of elements, including rebuilding of the Lake Condah Mission church, re-flooding of Lake Condah to support aquaculture, eco-tourism and forestry.

Plans for the Lake Condah Sustainable Development Project were released in 2002 with its proponent, the Winda-Mara Aboriginal Corporation, having attracted 20 partners for the project. The partners include Timbercorp Limited, manager of one of Australia's largest hardwood plantation estates, Glenelg Shire Council and secondary colleges. More than 60 other parties have expressed interest in the project that is tipped to generate 150 jobs and add $130 million to the regional economy over the next decade.

Although in its early stages, the Lake Condah project demonstrates the ability and interest of Indigenous communities in participating in large scale commercial projects in water management and tree planting that, in turn, have the potential to provide long-term returns and flow on benefits to their communities.

DEWR Projects, Western Australia

DEWR has a number of projects underway involving Indigenous communities. Some relevant examples of Indigenous Employment Program projects in Western Australia are:

- the department's Structured Training and Employment Projects program (STEP) funded 25 places across the state allowing Indigenous Australians to be trained to Certificate IV level and be employed on an ongoing basis, primarily as park rangers in remote national parks and conservation areas
- in the Wheatbelt region east of Perth, a tree nursery project allowed eight participants to undertake Certificate II nursery traineeships in a CDEP based enterprise; the project supported by STEP aims to produce a variety of tree seedlings for sale initially to the public and in time to wholesalers; the long-term plan is to develop the nursery to have the capacity to produce and sell 500 000 seedlings per annum.
- in the Kimberley region an Indigenous business received support from the Indigenous Small Business Funding program to cultivate and develop markets for bush plums
- Wiluna is a remote site in the goldfields area of Western Australia; various attempts have been made to kick start bush foods or Sandalwood based projects in the region.

These projects in Western Australia show how funding can be provided for projects that meet funding and eligibility criteria and are based on sound business models.

Bowraville, New South Wales

The local Aboriginal Land Corporation in Bowraville has planted 6000 native trees and shrubs used for Indigenous bush foods and medicines along riverbanks with CDEP program funds. The aim of the initiative is riverbank restoration and bush medicine food rehabilitation, combining environmental and bush foods and medicines outcomes as part of a farm forestry push.

Importantly with this project, CDEP has been used for economic, environmental and culturally based planting programs.

Beagle Bay, Western Australia

The Beagle Bay Project aims to establish up to 5000 hectares of Teak, Sandalwood, Rosewood and Sheoak plantation on the Dampier Peninsular in northern Western Australia, on land leased to the Beagle Bay Community by the Indigenous Lands Trust.

A joint venture business arrangement between a private investor and the Beagle Bay Community has been established to bring financial and employment opportunities to both partners and help alleviate the poverty experienced by the Indigenous Australians of Beagle Bay.

A trial is currently under way involving 12 hectares of the above tree species planted in January 2001. Some $1m has been spent to date with government assistance provided for legal, financial and technical advice.

The significance of this project is the joint effort by government, private sector and the Indigenous community, and the risk reduction approach represented by starting with a trial plot.

Ourimbah Protocol, New South Wales

The Ourimbah Protocol is a partnership between State Forests of NSW and Central Coast community groups and businesses including Darkinjung Local Aboriginal Land Council, the Combined Community Organisation (Gosford), Central Coast Landcare Network and The Sydney Rainforest.

The partners have made a commitment to develop new opportunities for the wider community to become involved in forest management. Their aim is to improve the social, cultural, environmental and economic benefits arising from management of the 65 000 hectares of state forests along the Central Coast.

More information is at *http://www.forest.nsw.gov.au/bush/sep03/stories/2.asp*.

Ma:mu Indigenous Community, Queensland

The Ma:Mu Aboriginal Corporation in Innisfail has established a small bush tucker garden in the local botanical gardens to educate their young people and promote wider public awareness of traditional cultivation practices.

This is a good example of an Indigenous community working with local organisations to improve awareness of traditional bush foods and, in turn, providing social and cultural benefits to the community. More information on the Ma:Mu project can be found at: *http://www.smartstate.qld.gov.au/ssproject_e4d.shtm*.

Beeripmo Walking Track, Victoria

As part of the West Regional Forest Agreement a high profile overnight walking track was developed in the Mt Cole State Forest/Mt Buangor State Park, Victoria. The Ballarat Aboriginal Cooperative had some involvement in this and a local aboriginal artist designed the walking track markers used to guide walkers.

The track seeks to create a sustainable eco-tourism opportunity, with a small footprint protecting environmental and cultural features while constructing and promoting a highly appealing recreational asset to attract visitors and boost the local economy.

OTHER CURRENT AND PROPOSED ACTIVITIES

During the consultation process several additional activities were identified, including:

- seed collection and nursery programs at a number of sites
- Indigenous cultural heritage site protection and management including fencing
- environmental management of animals and noxious weeds
- small scale timber harvesting and saw milling

- harvesting of small hollow trees for didgeridoos (query regarding sustainability)
- seed collection for rehabilitation of mining sites
- firewood gathering and processing for sale
- craft wood collection.

A number of other initiatives are at various stages of development. For example there has been some discussion about:

- developing fuel reduction burning programs in native forest environments to link hazard management and ecology
- large commercial organisations with an interest in developing links with Indigenous communities for future forestry projects involving either new plantations, environmental revegetation projects or mining site rehabilitation
- more holistic projects ranging from seed collection, through to forest harvesting, and including other activities such as composting
- Sandalwood, which is seen as having a viable commercial market but for which there is no real solution on its development as a sustainable resource
- sourcing raw materials for making boomerangs, didgeridoos, bark paintings and other traditional Indigenous artefacts; in NSW this occurs on lands where the marketing of forest products is controlled by State Forestry NSW; in some cases there is already utilisation of these resources by both Indigenous and non-Indigenous participants and some have rights to extract timber in Far North Queensland rainforests.

13.3 CURRENT TRENDS FOR INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN FORESTRY

FOREST MANAGEMENT

There is a low level of involvement by Indigenous people in the management and/or ownership of forests in Australia, and in the wood products and non-wood products forestry industry. This is despite State of the Forest data that indicates 13 per cent of forested land is under Indigenous ownership, mostly in the NT, SA and WA.

Regional Forestry Agreements have recently been concluded in some states. The majority of these agreements address the issues of co-management of forests that engage Indigenous communities, actively pursuing Indigenous employment and training opportunities. This co-management approach is particularly directed towards the cultural, environmental, economic and to a lesser extent, the social context of managing forests. Recognition is given to Indigenous Australians as the rightful holders of Indigenous cultural heritage information including traditional knowledge, and social and spiritual values associated with items and places within forests. The agreements acknowledge that they should be involved in the management process, although the extent to which this is delivered in practical terms varies between states.

The forestry industry generally is moving towards including this thinking in its management planning for forests, and developing strategies that formally describe how they will achieve it. An example of this is the ITC approach that involves Indigenous Australians surveying and identifying proposed plantation lands to locate any unrecorded sites, and their subsequent involvement in site management.

State forestry departments have in recent years recognised the need to involve Indigenous Australians in the management of forestry resources. As a result, there are a number of initiatives around Australia looking at the education of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in cross-cultural issues, the cultural significance of sites within forest settings and ways they may be protected. The extent of these initiatives varies across Australia.

BUSH TUCKER AND BUSH MEDICINES

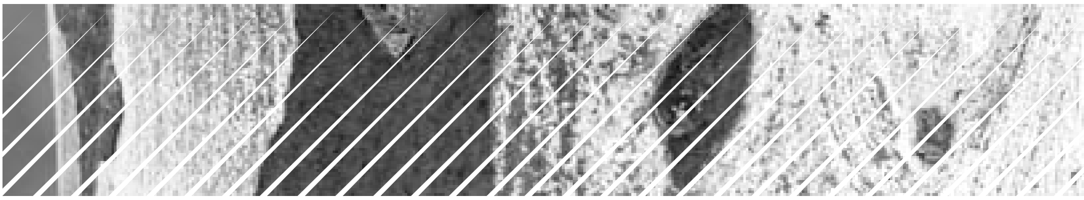
Interest in developing a bush tucker and bush medicines industry is gathering momentum, and research from the consultations and in the literature confirms this. There have been developments in different sectors including forestry, state government, Indigenous communities and the broader private sector. While business opportunities appear significant, the developments to date are largely uncoordinated.

Significant issues that relate to the current status of the bush tucker and bush medicines industries include:

- there is no formal strategy to foster and direct development—most projects have a local focus based on providing bush tucker and bush medicines from local forest resources for local communities; these activities are likely to continue but may not develop to a business level that could provide substantial benefits to Indigenous communities
- there are limited species trials and research—while the literature talks about a wide range of possible bush tucker and bush medicines activities there is little research into what works best and what species could be planted to develop bush tucker and bush medicines industries
- there is no coordinated approach to marketing—the local focus often relates to a finite resource, and the lack of a continuous supply of the raw materials necessary to develop commercial bush tucker and bush medicines enterprises is a constraint on developing and marketing businesses
- time consuming production methods—collection of bush tucker and bush medicines in the natural environment can often involve long walks and slow harvesting of raw materials
- no critical mass in operations—again, the local focus that often relates to a finite resource results in lack of a continuous supply of the raw materials necessary to develop bush tucker and bush medicines enterprises

- intellectual property issues—there is no organised approach to secure the intellectual property rights to bush tucker and bush medicines for Australia's Indigenous communities, and there is concern in the wider community that this issue needs to be resolved before any effective, commercial bush tucker and bush medicines industries can develop
- limited infrastructure or infrastructure that is not widely known and/or used by those involved in developing bush tucker and bush medicines enterprises.

Importantly, in some areas bush tucker and bush medicine enterprises may be an appropriate activity that could be developed into viable and profitable businesses to provide ongoing employment and income. However, significant resources will need to be allocated to address the above issues and matters critical to developing successful bush tucker and bush medicine enterprises.



PART IV: INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

14. OVERVIEW

14.1 WHAT'S IN PART IV?

This section examines:

- involvement of indigenous communities in New Zealand and Canada in forestry and forest based industries
- initiatives in these countries to increase indigenous involvement in forestry and forest based industries.

14.2 HOW IS THIS PART RELEVANT TO THE NIFS?

New Zealand and Canadian forests and forest industries have similarities and differences that the NIFS can learn from. The experience gained in the involvement of indigenous communities in New Zealand and Canada in forestry and forest industries, in particular, has application to the NIFS.

15. OVERVIEW OF OVERSEAS EXPERIENCE

15.1 INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND FORESTS

Indigenous peoples and native forests are inexorably linked worldwide. Indigenous communities used the native forests for shelter, building products, ceremonies and medicines, as well as for food and water. They were in effect the first forest managers in Australia using fire, in particular, as a forest management tool.

Indigenous peoples and the forestry industry are linked to varying degrees. Relationships between corporate forest based industries and indigenous peoples vary considerably throughout the world from active involvement to token involvement. The involvement of the world's indigenous peoples in native forest management and forest based industries generally also varies considerably.

Forestry and forest management worldwide is changing for many reasons. Factors causing or contributing to the change are:

- greater focus on sustainable management of forests through collaborative approaches
- increasing acknowledgement that indigenous peoples have relevant knowledge and should be involved in forest management
- awareness as to what indigenous forestry is (as it is understood and applied abroad).

Native forests worldwide provide an opportunity for indigenous peoples to maintain their traditions and at the same time develop an economic base. Planted forests worldwide provide an opportunity for indigenous peoples to develop new forest based industries that include some traditional values while broadening their economic base.

15.2 INDIGENOUS FORESTRY OVERSEAS

Parsons and Prest define indigenous forestry in Canada as 'sustainable forest land use practices that incorporate the cultural protocols of the past with interactions between the forest ecosystem and today's indigenous peoples for generations unborn'[17].

Indigenous forestry combines the considerable knowledge of today's forest management models with traditional cultural indigenous forest understanding to determine today's management practices.

Two countries with forestry policies of relevance for the NIFS are New Zealand and Canada. Their experience in the involvement of indigenous communities in forestry and forest industries, in particular, has application to the strategy Australia develops.

16. NEW ZEALAND

16.1 OVERVIEW

It is estimated that about 75 per cent of New Zealand's land area was originally covered with native forest. This figure has reduced to about 25 per cent today, with another 6 per cent of the land supporting planted forest [18].

Major changes have occurred in New Zealand's native forest forestry industry over the last 20 years. Wood production in crown forests ceased in 2002 and all timber harvested from native forests now comes from privately owned native forest.

The experience of indigenous people in New Zealand focuses on the sustainable management of indigenous forests with the main emphasis being for timber production[19].

New Zealand is a significant supplier of planted forest wood products to the Asia-Pacific region and by 2010 the plantation industry will develop further when the forecast wood supply from its forests will almost double its current harvest.

17 (Parsons & Prest undated) ***18*** (Hammond, 2001)
19 (Hammond, 2001; Griffith, 2002)

New Zealand's forest sector has identified a key issue in its development is the need for a partnership involving the forestry industry and government in:

- adding value to the country's wood supply by processing domestically
- promoting forestry to the general public
- Maori forest development in indigenous and planted forests
- sustainable management of the forest estate
- forest health and protection.

It was recognised that government and the forest industry would need to 'work in partnership to ensure the best possible contribution from forestry to New Zealand's sustainable development and economic growth'.

A key strategic objective of the New Zealand Government is to reduce the economic disparity between Maori and non-Maori. This can in part be achieved through greater involvement by Maori in the forestry industry. Significant Maori forestry issues in New Zealand include:

- potential contribution of forestry to Maori development
- treaty claims relating to forests
- crown forestry leases on Maori land
- government funding for forestry projects
- potential for further forests on Maori land
- potential for further development of indigenous forests on Maori land.

The experience gained from New Zealand's approach to these issues can be applied to the NIFS.

16.2 Potential contribution of forestry to Maori development

Forestry has the potential to make a large contribution to reducing the economic disparity between Maori and non-Maori, as illustrated by the following examples.

- in 1996 more than 22 per cent of all forest industry workers in New Zealand were Maori
- in 2000 there were 238 000 hectares of planted forest on Maori owned land, around 14 per cent of New Zealand's total planted forests
- Maori own and manage only 20 000 hectares or one percent of New Zealand's planted forests
- Maori own more than 440 000 hectares of indigenous forest[20].

Government policies actively support the development of Maori forestry by:

- funding treaty claims using funds from state forest assets—former state forest assets are being used to fund and settle treaty claims; continuing this process could result in Maori owning up to 41 percent of the land underlying New Zealand's planted forests

20 Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry New Zealand, *www.maf.gov.nz/forestry*, 2004

- transferring crown forestry leases on Maori land to Maori landowners—crown forestry leases on Maori land are a significant asset that were valued in 2000 at $NZ289 million; the government is progressively transferring its interests in the leases to Maori landowners, and this is likely to result in increased Maori involvement in commercial forestry
- funding forestry projects—the New Zealand Government has provided funding for Maori forestry projects including the
  - Taitokerau Forests Limited project, which was established to develop forests on Maori-owned land at Northland; the project has resulted in nearly 5000 hectares of plantation, but has not been able to achieve its long-term goals due to a lack of funding
  - East Coast Forestry Project, which was established to promote large scale commercial forestry on the East Coast and subsequently the sustainable use of highly erosion prone land in the Gisborne district; the project has resulted in positive outcomes for Maori that include increased Maori employment, active participation by an Tiwi-based company, productive use of under-utilised land and community benefits.

There is potential for Maori people to further develop plantation forests on Maori land to provide Maori landowners with an independent economic base. A New Zealand Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry study suggests there are about 200 000 hectares of Maori land suitable and potentially available for plantation forestry.

Maori own more than 440 000 hectares of indigenous forest and about 10 000 hectares is suitable for sustainable harvesting; however, in 2000 less than 1000 hectares were being managed under sustainable forestry management plans[21].

Significant lessons from the research of Maori forestry in New Zealand relevant to the NIFS include:

- forestry is a preferred land use for Maori because it is seen as an inter-generational use that provides a return to the owners through harvesting once per generation
- forestry can provide landowners with income and employment, opportunities to participate in business ventures, the potential to use Maori land productively, and community benefits
- greater involvement in the forest industry can assist Maori to create an economic base that will allow them to become more independent and achieve their social and economic goals
- there is significant potential for forestry development on Maori land that is not being productively used or is marginal for agriculture
- Maori have not participated to any significant extent in plantation forestry over the past decade due to
  - lack of access to finance (key barrier)
  - lack of information
  - land ownership, and control issues

21 (Hammond, 2001; Griffith, 2002)

- forestry protects hill country from erosion
- government and the forestry industry need to work in partnership
- a key issue in the development of forestry is the role of the forestry industry and government.

17. CANADA

17.1 OVERVIEW, FIRST NATION AND CANADIAN FORESTS

In Canada there are 657 000 First Nation people. Just over half live in First Nation communities. More than 2300 forest reserves cover an area of more than 3.1 million hectares and about 1 million hectares is planted forest, or about 0.3 per cent of Canada's total forested area.[22] Many of these communities are remote and are generally disadvantaged socially and economically compared with other Canadians[23].

While the remoteness of many of the First Nation communities may constrain economic opportunities in general terms, their location close to or in forest areas offers significant potential for their involvement in forest related economic development. Even so, many of the reserves are too small to provide for self-sufficiency through forest development.[24]

17.2 FIRST NATIONS FORESTRY PROGRAM

In 1996 the Canadian Government established the First Nations Forestry Program (FNFP) to address First Nation forestry development issues and help improve the economic conditions of First Nation communities within the context of sustainable forest management.[25] Further information is available at *www.fnfp.gc.ca*.

FNFP supports the relationship between forests and indigenous communities by providing a means to create sustainable communities and economic self-sufficiency.

The FNFP is a tri-partite partnership involving the two Federal Government Departments of Natural Resources and Indian and Northern Affairs and First Nation communities, and is seen as an innovative, proactive program that is different from similar programs in the following key respects:

- it adapts to the needs and priorities of First Nations people at the local level
- it covers a wide range of activities (from no experience to very experienced)
- a majority of First Nations people sit on the management committees.[26]

The FNFP operates under provincial and territorial management committees consisting of representatives of the parties and other groups as appropriate, including representatives from the provincial or territorial governments and the forestry industry.

Outcomes to date directly attributable to the FNFP include:

- improved social values and impacts through improving forests, doing business, enhancing the social lifestyle, moving from unemployment to full employment, seeing ideas turn into realities, decreasing some social problems and increasing personal self esteem

22 (Dubois et al, 2003; Parson) ***23*** (Dubois et al, 2003) ***24*** (Dubois et al, 2003)
25 (Dubois et al, 2003) ***26*** (Dubois et al, 2003)

- capacity building by creating business opportunities and improving professional and technical expertise, on the job training, workshops and conferences, leveraging funds from external sources, staff management and managing regional differences
- improving traditional ecological knowledge—Traditional Land Use & Occupancy Studies under the FNFP have accumulated the wisdom and lore of First Nations people and experts and harnessed them to help develop forest management policies and practices
- empowerment and innovative partnership—management and delivery of FNFP is the responsibility of Provincial-Territorial Management Committees and include Natural Resources Canada, Indian & Northern Affairs and a majority of First Nations representatives
- supporting new relationships—under the FNFP, 22 per cent of funded projects involved partnerships and joint ventures and went beyond program expectations.[27]

17.3 ISSUES AND CHALLENGES FACING THE FNFP

Canadian forestry commentators Alain Dubois, Nello Cataldo and Reginald Parsons have recognised that the FNFP faces a number of major issues and challenges, including:

- training and then retaining workers is important to First Nations forestry organisations—forest operations experience should be in a variety of tasks and efforts should be made to 'open the doors of the forestry industry' to First Nations employees
- First Nation people overall lack technical and practical experience—while more First Nations people are attending higher education institutions the natural resource area is not a preferred area of study and the number of qualified graduates is not expected to meet the number required to manage the First Nations land base
- lack of appropriate local training—work in on-reserve forests has historically been a training ground for silvicultural activities and models of Aboriginal forest development; this has reduced recently due to the absence of technical support programs and finance
- lack of access to long-term contracts—contracts with industry to perform a variety of silvicultural tasks would enable First Nations businesses to plan their development; local relationships need to be developed and industry awareness needs to increase to create opportunities and partnerships and to help build a climate of mutual trust and understanding
- off-reserve timberland licences to harvest timber are often allocated to non-First Nations parties and suitable areas of forest may not have available quotas to harvest—allocation of timberlands to non-First Nation parties hinders First Nation involvement in the forest industry and in developing forest based businesses
- not all First Nations communities have the skills and resources required to develop forest based projects—grouping of services and sharing experiences would benefit smaller communities, particularly by helping them avoid errors in business start-up and developing means to combine forestry practices with traditional knowledge
- limited access to capital—most First Nations communities do not have start up capital or borrowing capacity for forest based projects

27 (Dubois et al, 2003)

- the process for applying for government funding is cumbersome and often results in inadequate support—streamlining the application process to a single access point would allow access to various programs, reduce the time involved and promote effective collaboration.

Other significant issues facing the FNFP include:

- lack of access to forests where traditional territories/lands have been reduced over time, reducing the ability of indigenous people to practise their culture and lifestyle
- indigenous communities are also seeking equitable economic return for forests managed by the crown
- the process of resolving indigenous rights needs to be streamlined as it is a complex and lengthy process.

Importantly Dubois et al comment that the FNFP is innovative and successful because it involves First Nations people in the management of the program and adapts to local conditions and levels of development in remote communities.[28] Further, 'the FNFP's basic approach and experience could be applied to communities of many countries'.[29] This is significant for the NIFS project.

17.4 relationship between indigenous people and forestry industry

A 1998 Canadian forest industry study of the relationship between indigenous peoples and the forestry industry found that relationships between corporate Canada and indigenous peoples were becoming increasingly important.

Significant conclusions from this study relevant to the NIFS project include:

- a transformation has occurred over the past 10 years in the way the Canadian forestry industry and indigenous communities relate to each other; Parson and Prest describe this change as 'a shift in sustainable forest management in Canada from an industrial consultative process to a community driven development process built around a management plan'; however the outcomes of this change cannot be quantified because of a lack of data
- there will be counter currents to the overall direction of greater indigenous involvement in the forestry industry although there appear to be significant pressures to ensure that the general trend will continue
- forestry firms state that a strong 'business case' exists for developing closer ties with indigenous communities
- joint ventures are an important development in the relationship
- a large proportion of the forestry firms have ongoing relationships with indigenous communities, that are often expressed in letters of agreements or memoranda of understanding
- there is no single formula for success and relationship building is a long term venture
- a successful relationship can be richly satisfying to both sides and two way learning is an aspect of any effective relationship

28 (Dubois et al, 2003) **29** (Dubois et al, 2003)

- increasing indigenous employment levels in the forestry industry appears to be the most significant challenge facing the industry
- there are no special hiring programs directed at indigenous people—industry policy is to hire the best person for the job regardless of background, and indigenous employee numbers are not tracked
- a minority of firms have cultural awareness training for their non-indigenous staff
- industry associations have not played a significant role in developing the relationship between their members and indigenous communities
- forestry industry and indigenous businesses and communities can best develop solid business relationships without the direct involvement of governments.

The principles underlying the Canadian experience will need to be incorporated into Australia's approach for increasing the involvement of its Indigenous people in the forestry industry.

17.5 INDIGENOUS FORESTRY BENEFITS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

In Canada indigenous forestry is delivering socio-economic benefits to indigenous people and communities. One of the ways this is being achieved is through the FNFP. As reported above, communities have been able to create new partnerships, develop joint ventures, carry out relevant studies, develop and implement forest management plans, enhance capacity and skills development through forest management activities, learn leading edge technologies and obtain valuable relevant forestry training.

17.6 RELEVANCE TO THE NIFS

'The First Nations Forestry Program is an innovative and highly successful program that involves First Nations directly in the management of the program and adapts to various local conditions and levels of development of remote communities.[30]

Key lessons from Canada and New Zealand are:

- the forestry industry and governments need to work in partnership in the development of forestry activities
- forestry industry and indigenous businesses and communities can best develop business relationships without the direct involvement of governments
- access to forests has reduced over time, decreasing the ability of indigenous peoples to practise their culture and lifestyle
- forestry can provide indigenous landowners with employment and income, opportunities to participate in business ventures, and community benefits
- indigenous communities are seeking equitable economic returns from forest lands
- the process of resolving indigenous rights needs to be streamlined

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30 (Dubois et al, 2003)

- indigenous people need to be involved in the management of forestry projects
- there is a gap in technical and practical experience between what is required and what is available
- there is a need to adapt to local conditions and levels of development of remote communities
- lack of access to finance for indigenous communities is a key barrier to business development.

In developing the recommendations for the NIFS, the FNFP's and Maori basic approach has been considered or adapted for Australian circumstances.

DIFFERENCES

Differences between the Australian, New Zealand and Canadian indigenous communities and forestry industries need to be taken into account in adapting the overseas experience to Australian circumstances. For example, there are differences in population distribution. Most of Canada's indigenous population lives in forest areas whereas the vast majority of Indigenous Australians live in urban areas.[31] In Canada the forest industries focus on wood product activities and businesses, apparently overlooking the non-wood products opportunities that are an emerging focus for Indigenous communities in Australia.

In New Zealand a significant proportion, more than 22 per cent, of all forestry workers are Maori. There are more than 238 000 hectares of planted forest on Maori owned land, and there are few remote Maori communities because distances in New Zealand are relatively short.

SIMILARITIES

Strong parallels between Canada and Australia go to the heart of the relationship between Indigenous people and the forestry industry. In particular, a number of the comments arising from the 1998 Canadian research referred to above were echoed throughout the consultation process:

- a transformation has occurred over recent years in how the forestry industry and indigenous communities relate to each other
- there will be counter currents to the overall direction of greater indigenous involvement in the forestry industry
- forestry firms state that a strong business case exists for developing closer ties with indigenous communities
- joint ventures are an important development in the relationship
- a small proportion of forestry firms have ongoing relationships with indigenous communities, that are often expressed in letters of agreements or memoranda of understanding
- there is no single formula for success and relationship-building is a long term venture
- a successful relationship can be richly satisfying to both sides and two way learning is an aspect of any effective relationship

31 (Sugget and O'Loughlin, 2001)

- increasing indigenous employment levels in the forestry industry appears to be the most significant challenge facing the industry
- there are no special hiring programs directed at indigenous people—industry policy is to hire the best person for the job, regardless of background, and indigenous employee numbers are not tracked
- a minority of firms have cultural awareness training for non-indigenous staff
- industry associations have not played a significant role in developing the relationship between their members and indigenous communities
- forestry industry and indigenous businesses and communities can best develop solid business relationships without the direct involvement of governments.

While there are similarities it appears the business relationship between indigenous communities and the forestry industry in Canada is more advanced than in Australia.

18. OTHER INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES

Globally, indigenous participation in forestry is being recognised as an important element for enhancing the management of global conservation and sustainable use of natural resources. Many International fora and organisations are encouraging member countries to increase the participation of indigenous peoples in forestry and forest management.

18.1 UNITED NATIONS FORUM ON FORESTS

The United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) is the principal international intergovernmental forum for progressing international forest issues, in particular facilitating sustainable forest management globally.

In 2003, UNFF governments agreed to a resolution in relation to indigenous participation in, and sharing of benefits from, sustainable forest management:

- urging countries to foster greater involvement of local and indigenous communities in decision making and implementation of sustainable forest management
- encouraging countries to support broad based participation and clarification of ownership rights in conformity with national legislation.[32]

Australia is a member of the UNFF and fully supports the resolution.

18.2 INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' PROPERTY RIGHTS

Australia is working towards implementation of the UNFF resolution. The State of the Forests Report says in relation to property rights for Indigenous Australians:

'Australia's Commonwealth Government enacted the Native Title Act 1993 and established the Indigenous Land Corporation in 1996 to purchase land for Indigenous groups displaced from their lands. The Regional Forest Agreement Act 2002 specifies that agreements between the States and

32 United Nations Forum on Forests Report on the third session (25 March 2002 and 26 May to 6 June 2003) Economic and Social Council Official Records, 2003 Supplement No. 22

Commonwealth Government about the management of forests must include the protection of Indigenous heritage values ... The assessment of Indigenous heritage, economic values and social values, including community needs, are part of the Regional Forest Agreement process. Processes for formally securing Indigenous engagement in active forest management for timber production vary between jurisdictions.'

18.3 CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) is the first global agreement on the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity. The CBD addresses forests directly through its work program on forest biological diversity adopted by the Conference of the Parties (COP) at its fourth meeting in 1998.

The work program includes several elements: holistic and inter-sectoral ecosystem approaches that integrate conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity taking account of social, cultural and economic considerations; comprehensive analysis of the ways in which human activities, in particular forest management practices, influence biological diversity; and assessment of ways to minimize or mitigate negative influences (for further information see http://www.biodiv.org/programmes/areas/forest).

The expanded work program specifically highlights the importance of indigenous involvement in forest biological diversity and encourages acknowledgment of indigenous rights and interests.

In particular the report on the third session states:

'The need to facilitate adequate participation of indigenous and local communities and the need to respect their rights and interests. As a member of the COP, Australia is fully supportive of this decision.'[33]

18.4 MONTREAL PROCESS

The Montreal Process Working Group on Criteria and Indicators for the Conservation and Sustainable Management of Temperate and Boreal Forests (Montreal Process Working Group), was formed in Geneva, Switzerland, in 1994 to develop and implement internationally agreed criteria and indicators for the conservation and sustainable management of temperate and boreal forests.

Member countries are Argentina, Australia, Canada, Chile, China, Japan, South Korea, Mexico, New Zealand, Russian Federation, United States of America and Uruguay.

In 1995, the Montreal Process Working Group countries issued a declaration containing seven national criteria and 67 national indicators developed especially for the sustainable management of temperate and boreal forests. Australia adapted some of these and added others to reflect more accurately its own unique situation. After wide ranging consultation Australia adopted a comprehensive set of seven criteria and 74 regional (sub-national) indicators in 1998.

Australia's State of the Forest Report 2003 reported progress against six of the Montreal Process indicators directly relevant to Indigenous interests, and a significant number of indicators that may also be of interest.

33 Conference of Parties Decision V1/22

The Indigenous indicators are:

6.4a (i) Areas formally managed to protect indigenous values

6.5c (ii) Viability of forest-dependent Indigenous communities

6.6a Maintaining and enhancing Indigenous values

7.1a Indigenous peoples' property rights

7.1e Specific values and participation by Indigenous people.

Australia is committed to reporting against the Montreal Process indicators, as defined in periodic review of the indicators, and has an interest in increasing Indigenous participation in maintaining forestry information.

18.5 FORESTRY STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL

The Forestry Stewardship Council (FSC) is an international body that accredits certification organisations in order to guarantee the authenticity of claims by forest managers and retailers that their timber is sourced from well managed forests. The goal of the FSC is to promote environmentally responsible, socially beneficial and economically viable management of the world's forests by establishing a worldwide standard for 'Principles of Forest Stewardship'.

Principle 3 relates specifically to the inherent rights of indigenous peoples to own, use and manage their lands, territories and resources.

The FSC is a way of gaining market access to discerning consumers who care about the source of timber being purchased. FSC certification indicates to consumers that the inherent rights of indigenous peoples to own, use and manage their lands, territories and resources have been properly honoured in the growing and harvesting of forest resources where certified wood based products originate.

18.6 AUSTRALIAN FORESTRY STANDARD

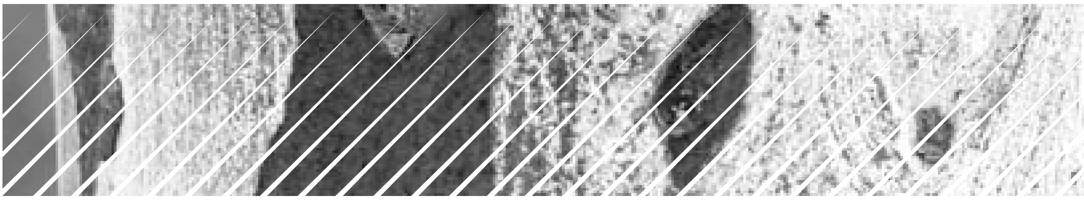
Australia has developed a forest management standard—the Australian Forestry Standard (AFS)—as the basis for forest certification and takes relevant conditions for Australia's forest types and ownership into account.

The objective of the AFS is to provide forest managers and owners with economic, social, environmental and cultural criteria and requirements that support the sustainable management of forests for wood production. The AFS seeks to distil from community values and the science of forest management those economic, social, environmental and Indigenous criteria that are considered to be most important for ensuring a forest is well managed.

There are nine AFS criteria, of which seven are based on the Montreal Process criteria—including one, Criterion 8, based on natural, cultural, social, religious and spiritual values. Criterion 8 provides that forest management shall protect and maintain, for Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, their natural, cultural, social, religious and spiritual heritage values.

In relation to Indigenous peoples, the AFS requires that forest management should ensure the protection of sites of cultural heritage, ceremonial and spiritual affiliation, aesthetic and religious values, and allow the exercise of their rights by legal or traditional forest users. The main intent of this requirement is to acknowledge mutual aspirations and establish a basis to further cooperative relationships between forest managers and Indigenous communities.

For further information see *www.forestrystandard.org.au/*.



PART V: BENEFITS & BARRIERS— CONSULTATION FINDINGS

19. OVERVIEW

19.1 WHAT'S IN PART V?

This section reports on:

- findings from responses to the enquiries of participants in the consultation process regarding
  - Indigenous community benefits from involvement in the forestry industry
  - forestry industry benefits from Indigenous involvement in the industry
  - barriers to increasing Indigenous involvement in the industry.
- outcomes from these findings important to the successful development of the NIFS.

A number of participants' responses were common across consultation sites and industry meetings, and also applied beyond the wood product and non-wood products forestry industry.

19.2 HOW IS THIS PART RELEVANT TO THE NIFS?

The general finding is that Indigenous communities show a high degree of interest in working with the forestry industry ('to walk side by side') and, similarly, the forestry industry wants to work with Indigenous communities. Both see the potential to develop long term mutually beneficial relationships. While the willingness of both parties is still to translate into significant change to the status quo, there are a number of active examples of change providing clear support for development of the NIFS.

The forestry industry's business focus is primarily on producing economic outcomes although there is strong recognition that social and cultural outcomes are important for long term stable relationships. The focus of Indigenous communities varies from opportunities for involvement in forest based businesses in the forestry industry to enterprises and activities in the non-wood products forestry industry.

20. SIGNIFICANT CONSULTATION FINDINGS

There are a number of significant findings from the consultation process that addressed and attempted to quantify to some degree the benefits and barriers associated with increased Indigenous presence in the wood and non-wood products forestry industry.

It is widely agreed there are benefits to Indigenous communities and the industry from increased Indigenous involvement and, importantly, that the benefits are a 'two-way street'. Forestry industry businesses and organisations can offer benefits to Indigenous communities by providing access to employment, business development, markets, expertise and funding. Indigenous communities can offer benefits to the forestry industry in some regions by providing access to land and a local labour pool with local knowledge.

While there are agreed mutual benefits, the level of Indigenous employment in the wood product forestry industry was unchanged during the five year period 1996–2001 according to the State of the Forests Report 2003. Anecdotal evidence from the consultations indicates that employment is lower now compared to the 1960s and 1970s.

There is little substantive information about the level of Indigenous employment in the non-wood products forestry industry.

Most Indigenous employment in the wood product forestry industry now is in labour based roles. Few Indigenous communities or individuals own or manage their own forestry business enterprises, primarily due to a lack of understanding of the types of employment available, lack of appropriate job skills and capital required.

The NIFS should attempt to increase the level of employment, reversing the trend from the 1960s onwards, and particularly in regional and more remote regions, to take advantage of the recognised benefits to all parties.

Australia's forestry industry business is increasing and moving towards a critical mass which should improve employment opportunities for Indigenous Australians. The continuing need to improve efficiency can, however, limit job opportunities and mean higher entry level skill requirements. Most Indigenous communities involved in wood product and non-wood product forestry are involved through smaller or niche operations with limited employment opportunities.

There are also a number of individual skill level barriers preventing Indigenous Australians from gaining employment in the industry. The overall low level of literacy, numeracy and job readiness of Indigenous Australians often surfaces when they are applying for jobs, and can prevent entry into the workforce. The NIFS needs to address the issue of the skill levels required for the range of employment opportunities in the forestry industry to improve employment levels and, in turn, provide ongoing benefits to all parties.

Research has indicated, and the consultation process confirmed, there is a relatively low level of communication between the forestry industry and Indigenous communities about industry opportunities. There is currently no forum that addresses this, and no regional Indigenous forestry strategy to date. On occasions it has proven difficult to identify appropriate forestry industry and Indigenous community contacts. The NIFS needs to address the issue of promoting effective communication between Indigenous communities and the forestry industry.

One inherent difference between some Indigenous community projects in the forestry industry and the industry generally is that they may have different objectives. There are often divergent expectations on the part of Indigenous communities and the forestry industry. For example, a desire by some Indigenous people for immediate cash for effort runs counter to the long term nature of the forestry investment cycle. Because goals may be different there is a need for mutual understanding. Situations in which industry players are seeking economic returns only while the community focus is on social benefits would benefit from more effective communication forums.

The forestry industry and Indigenous communities are made up of a large number of stakeholders and interest groups often with differing agendas and views; sometimes the stakeholders are fragmented and lack a common voice to achieve their outcomes. In some cases interest groups are highly emotive, visible and active and can influence public opinion. The NIFS should look at the nature of business and employment opportunities to address these issues.

21. FINDINGS ON BENEFITS TO INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

21.1 OVERVIEW

Participants in the consultation process were asked:

'What are the benefits to Indigenous communities from being involved in the forest, timber and associated industries?'

The conclusions from their responses and the relevance of these to the NIFS are discussed in the following sections.

21.2 EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES

The opportunity for long term employment was a major and consistent benefit identified by Indigenous communities during the consultations, and is a key objective for the NIFS.

Indigenous participants in the consultations reported that their communities are looking for long term employment outcomes and that they are able to provide a labour force in rural Australia that possesses local knowledge coupled with a strong interest in the land. They seek a wider range of employment and business opportunities—from those for less experienced workers through to more highly skilled and technical positions leading to the development of career paths and a role in decision making.

Generally Indigenous people who are interested in forestry are prepared to undertake training and study to achieve employment, and they accept that training and local employment will build up their community's work skill base for application to further business initiatives locally or elsewhere.

Indigenous communities expect substantial flow on benefits from strong local and permanent employment, including economic and social benefits; they believe it is significant that people will not have to leave their homes, which is important to family structure. Their focus goes beyond short term cash considerations.

21.3 ECONOMIC OUTCOMES

The opportunity for long term economic outcomes was a major and consistent benefit identified by Indigenous communities during the consultations, and is a key objective for the NIFS.

Indigenous communities are seeking economic independence that will in turn have a multiplier effect through their communities, increasing activity and incomes. This was particularly the case in the more remote areas where infrastructure improvements can be difficult to argue. The Tiwi Islands provide a good example, where forestry activity has led to increased trading in stores, improved roads and a likely upgrade of shipping services.

Participants acknowledged that community assets are created when the community can create economic wealth and then all can share in the social, environmental, economic and cultural benefits.

They believe involvement in the forestry industry can support their desire to create positive economic outcomes for their existing trading activities, and spread the economic wealth base in their communities. This can be achieved by building the business skills of the community and developing contacts and networks that in turn can be used to develop business ideas and projects—ideas and projects that are not being pursued at present.

Indigenous participants identified employment and economic outcomes as closely aligned.

21.4 SOCIAL OUTCOMES

The opportunity for long term improved social outcomes was a major and consistent benefit identified by Indigenous communities during the consultations, and is a key objective for the NIFS.

Indigenous communities want improved health facilities and benefits that will translate to better quality of life and longevity; they want their children to live healthier and longer lives. They want to enjoy more of life. Not only do they want to be healthier but they want to feel good about themselves; they seek increased levels of self esteem and purpose in their lives.

Indigenous Australians consider that self esteem and wealth can create visible assets in and for the community on which the community can build a profile in a cyclical and continuous process. Some participants identified an innate need for and preference to be involved in the land as it provides positive social outcomes for individuals and their communities.

Participants identified the positive social outcomes from 'family'. There is a strong ethic built around families and Indigenous communities staying together in preference to members leaving the district to seek employment, for example. They consider working together provides benefits from sharing and applying learning.

There is also a strong desire to support young Indigenous Australians:

- with visible role models as a practical way to learn other skills, e.g. reading, maths, technical skills, trades
- by placing them with mentors who will share their knowledge, pass on traditional knowledge, and provide a reason to utilise Indigenous knowledge.

Indigenous communities have a strong desire to achieve greater independence from government assistance—to move away from 'the welfare state'.

It was clear from the consultations that Indigenous involvement in the forestry industry can contribute to and provide some of these social benefits.

21.5 CULTURAL OUTCOMES

Indigenous communities identified opportunities to achieve cultural outcomes as a major and consistent benefit throughout the consultations, and this a key objective for the NIFS. Increasing involvement in the forestry industry provides opportunities for Indigenous communities to re-establish or strengthen links with the land.

Generally, Indigenous people see opportunities in forestry roles will give them access to important and often remote cultural sites that can be utilised for cultural and recreational pursuits. This is partly because they have a connection with the land but also because Indigenous people identify culturally with the native forest. Roles in forest based operations, activities and businesses give Indigenous communities opportunities to build on their traditional way of life.

Indigenous communities want opportunities to practice and document Indigenous Australian skills and this can be achieved through forestry industry activities in the wood and non-wood products sectors. Cultural heritage identification and protection is important to Indigenous Australians and they have a desire to develop strategies to protect cultural sites. In this way Indigenous communities can work together and learn from others who will provide benefits to their communities.

Importantly, Indigenous communities suggest that positive cultural outcomes can be used to revitalise, promote and share Indigenous culture with the wider community.

21.6 BROADER COMMUNITY OUTCOMES

The opportunity for broader community outcomes was a benefit consistently identified by Indigenous communities, recognising that Indigenous communities and the wider community are inextricably connected. Broader community outcomes resulting from an increased presence by Indigenous communities in the forestry industry is an objective of the NIFS.

Indigenous communities generally acknowledge the significant benefits that can be delivered to their communities and the wider community from working together. Working together in business and in other activities can provide each party with an appreciation of the others point of view, and can encourage wider community participation and interest in Indigenous communities. They consider that over time this can break down barriers and reduce social dysfunction in some communities, improving broader community perceptions and leading to greater social interaction—and contributing to reconciliation.

Economic independence is an important focus and there is potential to develop joint ventures in the forestry industry as one means of achieving this. Where a joint venture occurs this can deliver broader community benefits to the parties both economically and in cross-cultural awareness. The security of resources and markets can be enhanced through joint ventures.

Indigenous people consider their involvement in the forest environment adds another dimension to the management of forests and adds value. Local communities consider they have a big stake in the future of the native forest sector and appear to becoming more involved in determining the future of the forests. Improved environmental outcomes can result from some of their activities.

Indigenous Australians have potentially valuable knowledge of forests which can be used by forest managers to provide an on the ground resource, leading to increased social capital in the broader community, especially in smaller communities.

There is increasing international pressure for the forestry industry to improve opportunities for Indigenous Australians, which may assist in increasing both the profile and esteem of Indigenous communities.

21.7 SPECIFIC BENEFITS FROM NON-WOOD ACTIVITIES

Beyond the outcomes described above, a number of potential benefits to Indigenous communities relate specifically to non-wood activities, including:

- culling feral animals in native forest could provide food for communities
- tourists are seeking authenticity in Indigenous tourism products, which communities can provide for commercial and social benefit
- an integrated approach to natural resource management that includes wood production, bush tucker and bush medicines can have multiple benefits for communities
- commercial development of bush tucker and bush medicine projects could revitalise the use of traditional Indigenous medicines and food in communities.

21.8 RELEVANCE TO THE NIFS

Responses to the question on the benefits of Indigenous involvement in the forest, timber and associated industries had a very positive impact on development of the NIFS. The majority of the feedback strongly suggested that Indigenous involvement would accord with the lifestyles and skills of Indigenous Australians across broad areas of regional Australia.

Accordingly a high level of interest in the NIFS arose during the community consultations, particularly in relation to the pursuit of commercially and culturally based projects.

Overall the Indigenous participants identified economic independence as the major benefit from increased involvement in the forestry industry; all other benefits were regarded as secondary but important.

22. FINDINGS ON BENEFITS TO THE FORESTRY INDUSTRY

22.1 OVERVIEW

Participants in the consultation process were asked:

'What are the benefits to the forestry industry if Indigenous people become involved?'

Conclusions from the responses and the relevance of these to the NIFS are described in the following sections.

The major benefit identified was the opportunity for business development with Indigenous communities, particularly new business development. This benefit to the forestry industry also has potential benefits for Indigenous communities as described in the previous section.

22.2 BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

The forestry industry is seeking opportunities to develop new areas of business that are profitable. One of these areas is working with Indigenous communities to develop mutually beneficial businesses.

The industry acknowledges that developing a business idea or opportunity with Indigenous communities may not be the same as the way it generally carries out business, and it can often involve partnering arrangements of different types, for example joint ventures.

Partnering arrangements are based on the premise that Indigenous communities or organisations and the forestry industry can come together to make use of their respective competitive advantages, talents and skills, and that when combined they will deliver benefits for both parties and, in turn, for the wider community. Business that is based on partnering arrangements appears to be less confrontational if the parties share employment roles and wealth generated.

It is through these partnering arrangements that the forestry industry can derive benefits; at the same time the industry sees it can support Indigenous communities in enterprises that will provide benefits to them. Importantly, opportunities that could deliver benefits to the forestry industry should also deliver benefits to Indigenous communities.

Broadly speaking, the competitive advantages the forestry industry can bring to a partnership with Indigenous communities in a wood products based venture include:

- access to markets for products
- specific technical forestry and land management skills and expertise
- tree harvesting and roundwood transport
- wood product knowledge
- access to funding and project support.

And the competitive advantages offered by Indigenous communities in a partnership with industry can include:

- access to land for development
- supply of a local labour force with local knowledge
- a long term horizon in regional and rural areas for investment projects
- a willingness to be involved.

Anecdotal evidence indicates that local knowledge may in the future become more significant for forest based projects and businesses, suggesting the benefits to the forestry industry from local Indigenous community involvement may also be greater.

A significant business development benefit to the forestry industry can arise from consulting with and involving Indigenous communities, and in sharing the benefits of the association. By consulting with and involving Indigenous communities in forest based operations, and sharing the benefits, the industry is acting in accordance with the:

- United Nations Forum on Forests initiative to foster greater involvement of local and indigenous communities in decision making
- Montreal Process, which acknowledges indigenous issues as an important indicator and component in the conservation and sustainable management of temperate and boreal forests
- Forestry Stewardship Council, which speaks specifically of the inherent rights of indigenous peoples to own and manage their land, territories and resources
- Australian Forestry Standard, which also speaks about maintaining 'natural, cultural, social, religious and spiritual heritage values' for Indigenous and non-Indigenous people.

Complying with these standards may provide the forestry industry with an internationally and domestically recognised credential helping open up new business opportunities or markets that may not otherwise have been available.

22.3 ACCESS TO LAND

The forestry industry can benefit from increased Indigenous involvement in the forestry sectors by accessing land that can provide opportunities to expand business.

If the land is forested and trees can be harvested in a sustainable way the land and forest could provide industry with raw materials for its processing and manufacturing operations. It is possible this land and the raw material growing on it could replace the sawlog resource set aside in reserves as a result of the Regional Forest Agreements process.

If the land is predominantly cleared, and has suitable soils and adequate rainfall, and is located within economic transport distance to markets, the land could be used to establish and develop trees plantations to grow raw material roundwood for processing and subsequent manufacture. This land could contribute to achievement of the Plantations 2020 Vision to treble the area of planted forest in Australia by the year 2020.

22.4 local labour force

Indigenous communities can provide a local labour force with local knowledge of the land, their communities, and generally the 'local goings on'. They can also add to diversity in the work force and give employers a wider choice of employee. Local Indigenous people as employees can help reduce costs for employers.

A local labour force and one that has greater variety is a direct benefit to the forestry industry.

22.5 improved native forest management

The traditional knowledge and cultural heritage understanding of Indigenous Australians have only recently been widely included in forest management planning, and the degree of inclusion varies.

The forestry industry and Indigenous communities agree that Indigenous contributions to current day native forest management planning could result in better and more comprehensive outcomes for forests, leaving the forest estate in better shape. And this can provide benefits to the forestry industry through healthier forests, higher grades of raw materials, a wider diversity of forest products and forests affected by fewer and less intense wildfires.

The knowledge Indigenous Australians can provide gives another dimension to our understanding of the land and forest resource that is based on thousands of years of sustainable land and forest management, including traditional and cultural components. Indigenous Australians carry a wealth of knowledge of their land and its naturally occurring tree species, water, rock forms and soil types. And they can offer the forestry industry an understanding of flora, fauna and cultural issues in areas where they have to marry their operational, environmental and cultural obligations.

Importantly, traditional Indigenous knowledge can augment current forest planning and management techniques that have been determined after many years of ongoing scientific research and assessment.

The process for including Indigenous information in forestry industry management planning could be through:

- Indigenous communities sharing forest information with, for example, state government forest services to be included in forest management plans
- Indigenous communities owning land
- employment of Indigenous Australians in state government forest services and private sector organisations to perform functions and roles specifically related to Indigenous issues
- employment of Indigenous Australians in state forest services and private sector organisations to perform the broader range of forest based management activities and roles associated with managing native and planted forests
- cross-cultural awareness training for all levels of management and staff—the forestry industry has commenced developing initiatives and introducing strategies in the workplace aimed at integrating different cultures; there is significant potential for the industry to benefit from understanding and respecting the perspectives of Indigenous Australians in the workplace.

In a practical sense Indigenous knowledge about fire and fire behaviour could be applied to Australia's forests. Fire management strategies could be informed by Indigenous knowledge with the objective of enhancing the forest estate's ability to provide the range and diversity of products required by the greater community, and to maintain cultural, ecological and social outcomes on a sustainable basis.

This could be particularly important where the primary use of native forests changes from an active wood production regime to a non-wood production regime, such as in national parks and reserves.

Indigenous people can use their knowledge and understanding to produce a range of minor forest products, including some that utilise waste forest products that add value to the wider community appreciation of the forest estate. This is multiple-use forestry at its best, with products including Indigenous based tourism, bush furniture and firewood. It can also include products that Indigenous Australians can help develop due to their knowledge base, for example Sandalwood and bush tucker products.

22.6 broader community benefits

Opportunities for broader community benefits directly or indirectly related to forestry was a theme identified by the forestry industry, recognising that the industry and the wider community are inextricably connected, particularly in rural and regional locations.

The forestry industry generally acknowledges there are significant benefits to business and the wider community from working together. Working together in business can provide jobs for the community and labour for businesses, and income for families and the community—which in turn can have flow on benefits. Such an approach can provide each party with an appreciation of the other's point of view.

The potential to optimise benefits to the forestry industry and the wider community revolve around building goodwill between Indigenous communities and the forestry industry over the long term.

22.7 greater cultural awareness

Indigenous communities believe the forestry industry's participation in identifying and preserving cultural sites will lead to greater cultural awareness. This development would provide a strong link to the land and lead to a better understanding of the nature of biodiversity that they believe will benefit the management of forests in the long term. This would, in turn, benefit the forestry industry.

22.8 relevance to the nifs

Indigenous communities and the forestry industry generally identified a range of benefits from increasing Indigenous involvement in the forestry industry. There is a positive attitude towards development of the NIFS because stakeholders recognise the potential benefits.

While there was a consistent view concerning the probability of benefits , there were various views about the size of the potential benefits, and when the benefits would materialise. There was some scepticism in Indigenous communities that benefits would materialise at all. Accordingly, the NIFS will need to consider the range of likely benefits available to both parties and perhaps formulate a range of strategies to deliver benefits across the board. It is likely the NIFS will consider a range of benefits that can be delivered over a period of time, a set of priorities against which these benefits can be delivered, and recognise that these may be different from location to location. Measurement and promotion of successes will be important. In some areas strategies could give high priority to initiatives with a likelihood of early visible success.

Some examples include shortage of land for plantations in regions where Indigenous communities can access suitable properties, where suitable social outcomes can be achieved and where the traditional knowledge base may be diminishing due to Elders passing away.

On the other hand some strategies will need to be reactive and are likely to require a longer timeframe. In the case of forestry industry benefits this is more likely to be where the economic outcomes are less obvious.

23. BARRIERS TO INCREASING INDIGENOUS INVOLVEMENT IN THE FORESTRY INDUSTRY

23.1 OVERVIEW

Participants in the consultation process were asked these two questions:

'What is stopping Indigenous involvement in the forest, timber, and associated industries?'

'What is stopping forest and timber businesses increasing Indigenous participation in the forestry industry?'

Conclusions from the responses and the relevance of these to the NIFS are discussed in the following sections.

The responses to these questions merged to illustrate the main challenges the NIFS will need to overcome. The majority of responses were consistent across regions, and although some language may seem confrontational it represents the responses as received during consultations. The questions relate to barriers and there are, naturally, negative sentiments in some responses.

23.2 BARRIERS TO INCREASING INDIGENOUS INVOLVEMENT IN THE FORESTRY INDUSTRY

BACKGROUND ON INDIGENOUS EMPLOYMENT IN AUSTRALIA

There are numerous barriers that prevent Indigenous Australians gaining employment in the forestry industry. A large number of these are barriers to employment for Indigenous Australians generally.

Statistically, Indigenous Australians have higher levels of unemployment than other Australians and lower levels of school attendance. Indigenous Australians are often less prepared for applying for and gaining employment. These reports are relevant:

'At the 2001 Census, 42% of Indigenous persons aged 15 years and over were in employment (employment to population ratio). About one in six Indigenous persons classified as employed were those who reported that they were participating in CDEP. Non-Indigenous persons were more likely

than Indigenous persons to be employed. At the 2001 Census, 59% of non-Indigenous persons aged 15 and over were in employment compared with 57% in 1996 .... The proportion of Indigenous persons in employment was higher in major cities (46%) than in other areas, ranging from 39% in inner regional areas to 42% in very remote areas."[34]

'Indigenous persons were only half as likely as non-Indigenous persons to have completed Year 12 (18% compared with 41%) ... Year 12 completion rates were affected by geographic remoteness, with the greatest disparity between Indigenous and non-Indigenous persons in very remote areas, where Indigenous persons were only one-quarter as likely as non-Indigenous persons to have completed Year 12."[35]

Family history of unemployment in Indigenous communities means there are few role models for young people aspiring to employment, and lack of family and peer encouragement can compound their problems. Negative peer group pressure is known to diminish the willingness to make an effort to be successful, and employed people can be subject to family pressure to share their incomes. Thus, for a variety of reasons numbers of Indigenous Australians choose not to work and this can have a cumulative negative impact on the entire population, either by maintaining a culture of unemployment within Indigenous communities, or leading to unhelpful perceptions in the wider community.

LACK OF SELF-ESTEEM BARRIER

A number of participants commented that many Indigenous Australians lack self-esteem and confidence when an employment opportunity arises and often present poorly for positions—a combination of problems relating to skills, dress and grooming making it difficult for them to succeed. Participants went on to suggest that these problems mean the applicant comes across as lacking self belief and self worth because they cannot see themselves in the role.

Participants at a number of sites also identified an element of rebellion against authority, including police and bosses, meaning some Indigenous Australians simply won't consider applying for positions.

The combination of these problems translates to a low employment rate and to a high education drop out rate for a variety of reasons, including shyness, that often further results in a lack of confidence, poor communication and alternate cultural choices above employment.

ATTITUDE TO WORK BARRIER

The wider community, including Indigenous Australians and the forestry industry, see the negative attitudes, views and situation of some Indigenous Australians as a barrier to employment and business development.

Participants provided examples of attitudes that form barriers, including some Indigenous Australians who do not want to work full time or in certain jobs, others who do not want to leave their homes to study or work, others who lack motivation, and the fact that some Indigenous communities do not get involved in employment processes. These problems also apply in the wider Australian community.

Indigenous Australians are often sceptical of and lack trust in employment in the forestry industry based on personal experience. Some participants suggested they are unable to adapt to the forestry industry

34 ABS statistics - 4713.0 Population Characteristics, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians

35 ABS statistics - 4713.0 Population Characteristics, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians manufacturing environment where there are a significant number of employment opportunities, and in some cases there seems to be a lack of awareness about the possibilities for involvement in the industry altogether.

RACISM BARRIER

While Australia continues to move towards reconciliation on the bigger picture level, bias, prejudice and racism affects Indigenous Australians at the local level.

Indigenous Australians experience this when applying for employment, often missing out on advertised jobs when they are well qualified. Jobs filled on the basis of personal relationships are unlikely to go to them because Indigenous Australians are not generally well connected in the forestry business sector.

EMPLOYMENT METHODOLOGY BARRIER

Indigenous Australians widely acknowledge that employment methodology is not ‘user friendly’ for them. Advertisements are often inappropriately written, they can be misleading and in difficult to understand language or equally difficult technical language, and are sometimes over specified for the tasks involved. Indigenous Australians are often not advanced to interview stage, but when they are the interview process itself can be daunting. Even when a position suits, the channels to securing employment are often unclear.

Importantly, a lack of literacy skills in the Indigenous community contributes to this barrier.

EDUCATION BARRIER

The relatively lower level of literacy, numeracy and technical skills of many Indigenous Australians coupled with increasing competition for employment opportunities, often meaning even higher education levels are required to secure positions, was seen identified as a barrier to employment for Indigenous Australians.

Many Indigenous Australians do not appear to have the necessary literacy, numeracy and technical skills for a wide range of employment opportunities, including in the forestry industry where increasing technology and in turn higher skill levels are required. Very few Indigenous Australians have higher level academic qualifications. The 2001 Census revealed that 7.5 per cent and 5.2 per cent of Indigenous people attended TAFE and University respectively, compared with 11.0 per cent and 23.5 per cent of other Australians.[36]

In addition, entry level requirements for a number of job types are increasing with a need for pre-vocational training to compete against other applicants. Workplace requirements, including Occupational Health and Safety legislation, mean that employees must be able to read and understand warnings.

While Indigenous Australian Elders and other community leaders may ‘understand the country’ they generally do not have the qualifications or experience to lead their communities in technical or commercial projects.

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36 ABS statistics - 4713.0 Population Characteristics, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians

SPECIFIC SKILLS BARRIER

The generally low level of skills and qualifications of Indigenous Australians relevant to the forestry industry, and the lack of appropriate training to correct this are barriers to increasing employment in the industry.

In general there has been a decline in the number of labour type jobs in the forestry industry, and at the same time the labour market has become increasingly competitive particularly for lower skill level positions. Government jobs often require advanced computing skills that a high number of Indigenous Australians do not have. There are also an increasing number of permits/licences required for basic forest operations for example chainsaw operation and four wheel drive vehicle licences.

Indigenous communities see a lack of appropriate and locally based vocational training as a barrier to employment in the forestry industry. They cite:

- training and skill development (to TAFE Level 2, 3 and 4) is difficult in remote areas
- no training programs specifically designed to assist Indigenous people to enter the forestry industry are available
- training in forestry industry specific competencies, for example in chainsaw operation and fine wood furniture design and manufacture, is not available
- apprenticeships and/or traineeships that require low entry level skills, and include on the job training that can lead to careers, are not widely available
- training when it is available does not always match the need.

During the consultations it was reported that in some cases Indigenous Australians have a low opinion of traineeships because they often do not lead to a job—the quote often heard was ‘If Indigenous Australians can get training they cannot always get a job’. A lack of mentors for young Indigenous Australians and hosting arrangements with employers adds to the difficulty they experience. For some, a lack of knowledge of the forestry industry and of resources available for training are barriers to employment.

At the same time they see that increasing technology in the forestry industry and the requirement for higher skill levels, including higher entry level qualifications, means training is becoming more important. This is particularly so as an increasing number of positions in the forestry industry now involve new skills that can only be developed through training.

It appears the gap is getting wider between the skill levels of Indigenous Australians and the skill levels required by the forestry industry.

The forestry industry acknowledges it has a role in smoothing the path to employment for Indigenous Australians and has recognised that training to address this issue could be improved:

- for management staff in how to engage and subsequently work with and manage Indigenous staff
- in cultural integration procedures in the workplace

- in culturally related disputes that occur in the workplace
- in understanding where to get the skills relating to employing and managing Indigenous Australian staff.

A similar picture exists for the non-wood forestry industry where opportunities are not promoted and courses are not available, and there are diminishing numbers of rural Indigenous people with the skills to teach and pass on non-wood forestry industry activities and business opportunities.

CULTURAL BARRIER

Some Indigenous Australians concede that their traditional cultural beliefs and values and the way they act on them can be a barrier to employment, as shown by the following examples.

- Indigenous Australians can only speak for themselves, they cannot speak for others or other regions—this can add complexity to a forest based project (or any other project) if there are a number of people or communities who need to be consulted; it can result a community losing a project to an area where lesser consultation is required
- Indigenous communities are often perceived as not speaking with one voice and are seen as fragmented—this fragmentation is manifest in cultural and tribal disputes and is an extension of the point above
- Indigenous Australians' motivation for employment is not always for financial gain, they may have other priorities—for example, they may only work for a time to meet their immediate needs—and this can restrict employment opportunities to those occupations that can accommodate these values
- in some instances Indigenous landowners are unsure what they want to do with their land or have a higher priority for it—for example, while an area of Indigenous land could be suitable for a forest based project, sometimes a cultural use is preferred to a commercial one
- from time to time there is disagreement between Indigenous Elders and younger Indigenous people, particularly when young people want to take up a project the Elders will not approve—this can result in projects not proceeding or being delayed.

There are also a number of long held views that contribute to Indigenous Australians not gaining employment in the forestry industry, including:

- cultural attitudes to and long term lack of role models in employment
- uncertainty whether employment in the Forestry industry is 'the right way to go', particularly in wood product manufacturing environments
- the potentially low numbers of Indigenous Australians who have a only passing interest in the forestry industry, because growing trees in plantations is foreign to Indigenous Australians
- a belief that employment in the forestry industry is an endorsement of industry policies and practices
- the notion that the opportunities available to and aspirations of Indigenous Australians do not always match.

A lack of Indigenous awareness of wider business culture, for example the importance of punctuality, the need for a more committed work ethic, and the importance of profit and wealth generation for a company, can impact on employment.

Reconciliation between Indigenous Australians and non-Indigenous Australians generally is incomplete, and as described previously this can act as a cultural barrier to employment of Indigenous Australians in the forestry industry.

Cultural barriers also apply to the forestry industry, which generally does not fully appreciate that the cultural and social backgrounds of Indigenous Australians are different to those of non-Indigenous Australians. Examples include high unemployment and incarceration rates, and low school attendance and high dropout rates, and the fact that there is often no fall back on parents for financial support. The lack of understanding and awareness of Indigenous culture can lead to tension. Examples provided by participants were the significance of attending funerals, which might involve an Indigenous Australian for an extended period and not just the short bereavement leave period accepted in the industry.

From the non-wood product perspective, the younger generation in many Indigenous communities has lost the traditional bush skills of their ancestors; in some areas traditional non-wood opportunities in bush tucker and medicines are not promoted and these skills may have to be re-learned.

HISTORICAL BARRIER

Many examples were given and negative comments made about historical experiences that undermine the potential for Indigenous Australians to attempt to gain employment in the forestry industry today.

Indigenous Australians acknowledge there is a general mistrust by their people of non-Indigenous Australians. There is a lack of confidence and trust, some are disillusioned by lots of talk and money spent with few results, there have been well meaning people with grants, but no proper accountability, no outcomes and no jobs.

This view in part extends to the forestry industry where in some locations mistrust based on past injustices and experiences has developed; people may be reticent about becoming involved with those they feel have let them down in the past. Some Indigenous Australians suggest they do not get advertised jobs when they may be qualified because jobs are filled on the basis of 'who you know' and Indigenous Australians are generally not well connected in the business sector. Often there is also stereotyping due to the (historical) actions of a few. Examples of unhelpful attitudes referred to by participants included reliance on government funding, lack of trust in the ability Indigenous employees to be 'good' (lacking punctuality and commitment, unreliable, have 'no stickability').

Historically the opinions and views of Indigenous Australians have not been valued or represented on management committees or in decision making processes. In relation to the forestry industry, Indigenous Australians have in the past been given little say in what was happening to their land or how forests were managed. They believe this has limited employment for their people in the industry.

Limited employment generally has contributed to problems developing businesses in communities because, for example, Indigenous Australians cannot confidently approach banks for start-up capital. This cycle continues to present problems.

DEMOGRAPHIC/GEOGRAPHIC BARRIERS

Australia's Indigenous population demographic has changed considerably since the 1960s and many are now located in urban centres, away from forest environments and potential jobs and careers.

The 2001 Census showed that 30 per cent of Indigenous peoples live in major cities, 20 per cent in areas classified as inner regional, 23 per cent in outer regional, and only 9 per cent in remote and 18 per cent in very remote areas.[37]

For urban Indigenous Australians, working in the forest industry may now mean having to leave home and family and travel considerable distances to work. This is seen as a barrier to employment in the forestry industry.

LAND BARRIER

Indigenous communities comment freely that if they had land they could develop a range of businesses, including forest based businesses. And they remark that a lack of access to land and low levels of land ownership are seen as barriers to business development and employment. These problems are exacerbated by the difficulty they experience in obtaining capital to secure land and work; for this reason capital partners are likely to be important to efforts to improve Indigenous involvement in the forestry industry.

They also believe the transfer of native forest areas to national parks and reserves will reduce further their opportunities to develop businesses and to practice cultural pursuits because they cannot access those resources for bush tucker and medicines.

Some participants commented that Indigenous Australians have no legal access to natural resources to practice their cultural traditions and they do not have intellectual property rights over their land and products. These matters are significant for the NIFS.

BUSINESS SKILLS BARRIER

A number of participants stated that few Indigenous Australians possess basic business and entrepreneurial skills, and they are therefore at a disadvantage in the commercial arena, including in the forestry industry. Indigenous business ventures often do not meet expectations and there is a high failure rate.

Specific skills identified by participants as lacking generally in Indigenous communities and other relevant issues include:

- business development and operation skills generally including planning, finance and budgeting, management and marketing, staff management and development, contractual matters, Occupational Health and Safety, and a lack of ownership in developing business management skills
- understanding how to raise capital to fund projects, managing finance and budgets that are integral to operating businesses, and networks to assist in these areas; lacking a sufficient economic base from which to launch prospective projects and opportunities

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37 ABS statistics - 4713.0 Population Characteristics, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians

- capital and the means to raise it, particularly at the beginning of a project; difficulties approaching traditional sources of finance for start up capital because they do not have assets to support proposals
- organisational infrastructure and resources to support Indigenous Australians to access and/or find the support to develop business skills
- mentoring and role models: few Indigenous Australians are in senior positions in business
- technological skills that are required generally by the business community; increasing technology in the Forestry industry in turn requires higher and more diverse skills.

There appears to be a gap between what Indigenous Australians and the wider community consider appropriate for roles in business. For example, Indigenous Elders and others often understand the land but may not have the qualifications required by the wider community to manage it. This may restrict their ability to gain employment in the forestry industry.

The small scale typical of Indigenous business enterprises limits opportunities for employing large numbers Indigenous Australians, and there is often no career path for labour based positions; this limits the potential to engage Indigenous Australians in these smaller enterprises.

LONG TERM NATURE OF FORESTRY PROJECTS, A BARRIER TO EMPLOYMENT

Forestry is by its nature a long term business; this is seen by some as a barrier to Indigenous Australians becoming involved in this part of the forestry industry.

The longer term return cycle, often 15–30 years for tree plantation projects, does not marry with the immediate and day-to-day needs of Indigenous Australians. However the recent initiatives involving ITC and the Gidarjil Development Corporation and the Tiwi Islands Project are examples of enterprises where Indigenous communities can assume responsibility for parts of long term tree plantation projects that provide periodic employment and income. This is a significant opportunity for the NIFS and for Indigenous communities in tree growing parts of Australia.

LEGAL ISSUES BARRIER

Many Indigenous Australians view the legal process for various forestry activities (such as clearing land and changing land use) as onerous and intimidating. Where this view impacts on business development generally and in the forestry industry it can be a barrier to development and to employment.

Another legal issue raised that could limit greater Indigenous participation in was the difficulty of defining and securing intellectual property rights for Indigenous community products from the native forest estate and Indigenous lands; the difficulty of this process can restrict development.

COMMUNICATION AND CONSULTATION BARRIER

Historically, Indigenous communities and the forestry industry have not communicated well and there has been a lack of dialogue between them generally. This poor communication by both parties, and a lack of consultation with Indigenous Australians by the forestry industry, are seen as barriers to greater participation in the industry.

Indigenous communities indicated they are uncertain about what the appropriate channels of communication are and that lines of communication are problematic and fraught with hazards. Also there is not enough information made available by the forestry industry and Indigenous Australians are not consulted on 'what's happening'. Importantly, differences in the way Indigenous people and the forestry industry communicate, 'there is not enough sitting around a table', were identified.

There is a lack of understanding by both sides, and Indigenous Australians would like the industry to meet them more on their ground.

Appropriate and timely communication between Indigenous communities and the forestry industry is important to the NIFS. This is likely to require a quantum change in approach by both parties.

EXCLUSION BARRIER

Indigenous Australians feel excluded from the forestry industry generally and believe this may prevent them gaining employment in the industry. Their exclusion is felt through a lack of access to markets, often because they are small players, through inappropriate wording in job advertisements and selection criteria and, because they are not part of the management structure of forests, they are not involved in discussion and decision making processes.

Importantly, Indigenous Australian Elders are not involved in management and the discussion and decision making processes in forests.

Non-wood opportunities that can be an intrinsic part of Indigenous life and important to them are not promoted in the wider community; this is seen as lessening the value of something important to them.

GOVERNMENT SUPPORT BARRIER

Indigenous Australians generally consider government policies do not support them to develop businesses and to gain employment in the forestry industry. These comments may also reflect unawareness of government policies and programs.

They consider a longer term commitment from government for short and long term projects is required and the government attitude that it wants a return today, not several years down the track, does not support business development, let alone Indigenous business development. Implied in the longer term horizon approach is sufficient funding to complete projects.

They are also critical of the process used to review Indigenous projects, saying it is too narrow and should be expanded and become more flexible. It appeared however that there was a lack of understanding of what is required in a business proposal and the process of evaluating it, including business planning issues described previously.

Indigenous communities also believe the interface between federal and state governments does not always support Indigenous Australians in gaining employment because of the difficulty in gaining approval for projects. An example given was the approval process for a business based in or dependent on heritage areas—the information required was enormous and the process used to evaluate the proposal very difficult. They say the number of layers involved in the process is a barrier to development, that is, it does not represent a whole of government approach. Another example was the method ILC uses to develop and evaluate business proposals; the view was the method must be changed to a more user-friendly process that will enable Indigenous Australians to make their proposals more attractive to the ILC.

Regionalisation and rationalisation of government forestry offices over the past decade (and in some cases removing offices and staff entirely) has also contributed to and impacted negatively on Indigenous employment in the forestry industry, and created a negative view of the industry by some Indigenous Australians.

The role of government in supporting and fostering an increase in Indigenous involvement in the forestry industry is an important issue for some, and a pivotal aspect of the NIFS will be to define the extent of the government roles compared to that of other parties.

LEGISLATION BARRIER

Legislation, and particularly legislation that restricts and affects the traditional land use of Indigenous Australians, is seen as a barrier to increased participation in the wood and non-wood products forestry industry.

Indigenous Australians believe they have a right to access land for their traditional pursuits, and that they are subject to the laws of the land for their survival and not to the laws of governments in relation to natural resource management. They say their right is based on the thousands of years they have occupied the land and on their living in harmony with the land in that time. They believe governments have successively shut their people out from increasingly greater areas of land, and that they continue to do so for example through the transfer of forested lands to parks.

Indigenous communities seek legislation that will enable their people to carry on their traditional culture and heritage without restrictions.

Some examples of legislation or other government action that Indigenous communities see as restricting their activities and therefore their ability to exist in the forest environment include:

- government policy restricts access in seemingly ever increasing areas of the native forest estate
- natural vegetation cannot be cleared in much of Australia
- native title has not moved far, there is a long way to go
- Indigenous communities have no legal access to natural resources to carry out their cultural practices
- the approvals process in heritage areas is very difficult to get through, there are many layers
- the often poor relationship between federal and state governments adds to problems in the legislation arena.

FORESTRY INDUSTRY ATTITUDES AND POLICY BARRIERS

Indigenous communities believe forestry industry attitudes have prevented and are preventing their people from gaining employment in the industry, and that these attitudes are a barrier to current and future employment. In addition they see the significant and technical development of the forestry industry and the resultant changes have had and will continue to have a negative impact on the ability of Indigenous Australians to gain employment in the industry.

Industry attitudes include:

- a poor attitude to Indigenous people generally including poor communication of opportunities
- employing Indigenous Australians in labour based roles based on historical experience of performance
- employment methods that disadvantage Indigenous Australians—for example they are often not encouraged to apply
- industry management and supervisory personnel having no cultural awareness and understanding of cultural issues associated with employing Indigenous Australians
- industry in some locations seeing engaging Indigenous Australians as a cost rather than asset development
- the industry preference to often employ displaced timber workers rather than Indigenous Australians.

A number of forestry industry companies do not have a policy in relation to engaging Indigenous Australians, and many do not include cultural awareness training and cross-cultural training programs in their workplaces.

One issue Indigenous communities and the forestry industry both agreed to some extent was that the industry does not always know what it wants to do in relation to Indigenous communities, and also that the industry does not always know what Indigenous communities want—and vice versa. This indicates a significant gap in the understanding of perspectives and objectives by both parties.

LACK OF INTEREST IN NON-WOOD OPPORTUNITY BARRIER

There was significant focus throughout the consultation process on wood-based opportunities in the forestry industry. The level of interest in and comment on non-wood based opportunities was secondary. Importantly, employment prospects in both sectors were seen by many to be low.

Some responses considered the lack of desire by Indigenous Australians to become involved in non-wood opportunities for a variety of reasons (that include difficulty in commercialising knowledge of Indigenous foods, plants and medicines) had the potential to reduce the employment opportunities available to them. It was felt that if interest could be developed in these areas the potential for employment of Indigenous Australians in activities more akin to their culture would increase.

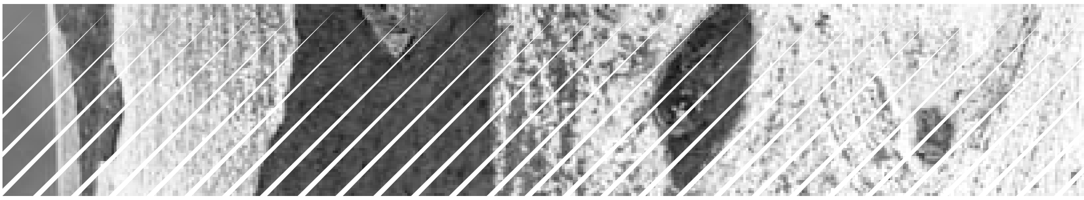
It will be important for the NIFS to identify reasons why Indigenous Australians are not taking up the opportunities many see in the non-wood products sector of the forestry industry.

23.3 National, regional, local strategy

This section has described in overview the barriers or limitations to increasing Indigenous community involvement in the wood and non-wood products forestry industry.

It is important to recognise, however, that while a national strategy could work at a national level, the focus of a national strategy (in this case the NIFS) must commence at the local level, and then progress to the regional, then state and national levels. The issue of region specific strategies was also highlighted during the consultations and any national strategy must focus on engaging the broader community at the local and regional levels.

The NIFS will need to acknowledge that a local and regional ideology, implementation framework and set of objectives must be the approach. Essentially the success of the NIFS will be determined by the extent of local and regional engagement.



PART VI: POLICY AND PROGRAMS

24. OVERVIEW

24.1 WHAT'S IN PART VI?

This section provides an overview of policies and programs that could assist in the implementation of the NIFS.

24.2 HOW IS THIS PART RELEVANT TO THE NIFS?

Policies and programs may provide a significant springboard for Indigenous communities and the forestry industry to realise the objectives for the NIFS. These policies and programs can be provided either by government or the private sector.

While government policies and programs can provide appropriate and targeted support and infrastructure for the NIFS, the task of realising an increased involvement by Indigenous Australians in the industry ultimately rests with Indigenous communities and the industry.

25. VARIETY OF AVAILABLE PROGRAMS

Numerous federal and state government programs are open to Indigenous groups or individuals. Some are specifically intended for Indigenous people, and several are aimed at increasing the involvement of Indigenous people in the forestry industry. Having reviewed the range of policies and available programs, those having particular reference to the NIFS have been selected for outline and analysis.

The selected programs and policies have been grouped according to their main focus:

- employment and training
- business initiatives and assistance programs.

26. EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING PROGRAMS

Programs are separated into employment and training aimed specifically at Indigenous people, and training initiatives related specifically to the forestry industry that Indigenous people could access.

Of particular interest in this area and relevant to the NIFS are employment and training initiatives in the Tiwi Islands and at Mount Gambier—sites of forest based projects that include Indigenous communities and the forestry industry. The projects were outlined in Part III above.

26.1 employment programs intended for indigenous people

Three key sets of employment and training programs aimed specifically at Indigenous people are:

- Indigenous Employment Policy initiatives (DEWR)
- Community Development Employment Projects (ATSIC)
- direct and indirect employment opportunities (various providers).

26.2 indigenous employment policy

primary goal

The over-arching goal of the Federal Government's Indigenous Employment Policy is to nurture and sustain the genuine economic and financial independence of Indigenous Australians. This goal is consistent with the outcomes sought by the NIFS.

key elements

The primary emphasis of the DEWR Indigenous Employment Policy is on creating employment and training opportunities for Indigenous Australians in the private sector, across businesses of all sizes. The three key elements to the policy are:

- the Indigenous Employment Program (IEP)
- the Indigenous Small Business Fund
- measures to improve Job Network outcomes.

The IEP initiatives that have particular relevance to the NIFS are the:

- Structured Training and Employment Program (STEP), which provides structured training and employment funding, usually involving new apprenticeships, for five or more people in one business
- Wage Assistance Program, which offers a $4000 incentive paid over 26 weeks to employers providing ongoing job opportunities; an incentive for part time jobs is also available
- CDEP Placement Incentive, which provides funds of $2000 for each participant placed in a full time job and off CDEP
- National Indigenous Cadetship Program, which provides Indigenous tertiary students with opportunities to gain professional qualifications and a commitment to a professional job in both the private and public sectors by way of business cadetships
- Voluntary Services to Indigenous Communities Foundation, utilises skilled volunteers to provide for the short term needs identified by Indigenous communities for business, financial and technical skills and mentoring

- DEWR's public awareness campaign, which aims to encourage the employment aspirations of Indigenous job seekers and to support a positive attitude by private sector businesses to the employment of Indigenous people.

AREA CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE NETWORK

A key delivery agent for the IEP is the Area Consultative Committee (ACC) network. ACC's are located throughout Australia and have as their primary objective increasing Indigenous employment.

One of these, the Central Murray ACC, has developed the following strategy objectives to increase Indigenous employment within its area:

- working together in partnership in the spirit of reconciliation to ensure long term sustainable employment and social outcomes
- reducing the disparity between Indigenous and overall unemployment in the region
- breaking the cycle of unemployment by specifically undertaking employment and social initiatives aimed at Indigenous youth.

Another, the South Eastern ACC has been proactive in the development of the Nunga Links project (refer Part III above).

IMPACT ON THE NIFS

A number of IEP initiatives can be used to support an increase in the level of Indigenous people employed in the forestry industry. DEWR is a key player in this area because it has the geographical reach across Australia (particularly with the ACCs) as well as the programs, officers and funding in place.

26.3 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT EMPLOYMENT PROJECTS

PRIMARY GOAL

The primary objective of ATSIC's CDEP scheme is to provide work for unemployed Indigenous Australians in community managed activities that assist them to acquire skills to benefit the community, develop business enterprises and/or lead to unsubsidised employment.

OPERATION

To partake in the scheme, unemployed members of a community or group choose to give up their current entitlements with Centrelink. ATSIC offers a grant to the CDEP community organisation to enable it to undertake community managed activities and pay wages to participants. Community organisations responsible for the management of projects also receive funding to cover the costs of administration and capital items required to conduct work projects.

CDEP DESIRED OUTCOMES

The stated outcomes for Indigenous Australians through the CDEP are:

- reduce dependence on social welfare benefits and raise the labour market participation rate to a level closer to that of the wider Australian community
- improve cultural or economic life to enhance self management within communities
- increase numbers involved in economic activities;
- collaborate with government agencies, departments and the private sector to meet the goals and vision of Indigenous peoples throughout Australia
- facilitate participation in community management, administration and decision making
- develop skills in management, supervision and specific job related areas, especially those that enhance opportunities to develop viable commercial enterprises (through training providers and facilitators) or to gain unsubsidised employment in the local labour market.[38]

IMPACT ON THE NIFS

CDEP is a long standing employment program that can be used to support an increase in the level of Indigenous people employed in the forestry industry. ATSIC is a key player because it has the geographical reach across Australia as well as programs, officers and funding in place.

26.4 DIRECT AND INDIRECT EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

An increasing number of private and public sector policies are aimed at creating a work environment that values and encourages diversity. This can result in direct and indirect employment outcomes.

For example, DEWR aims to increase by 33 per cent the number of Indigenous Australian staff directly employed by the department over the life of their strategy. An example of potential indirect employment outcomes is CALM in WA, which recently released a draft policy to involve Indigenous people in conservation and land management.

CALM's policy outline proposes an approach to achieve:

- recognition of the importance of land to Indigenous cultural heritage and the need to consider matters of cultural importance in relation to land and wildlife management
- joint management arrangements between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians to achieve sustainable conservation outcomes, both on and off the CALM managed estate throughout Western Australia
- promotion of economic, social and environmentally sustainable outcomes that achieve improved quality of life for Indigenous people[39].

38 ATSIC website *www.atsic.gov.au*
39 CALM website *www.calm.wa.gov.au*

IMPACT ON THE NIFS

Employment opportunities will arise as organisations seek to improve the representation of Indigenous Australians within their workforce. It is likely a number of these opportunities will arise in organisations dealing with wood and forestry activities. The NIFS needs to consider this and help facilitate the matching of employment opportunities with suitable job seekers.

26.5 TRAINING FOR WOODS AND FORESTRY OPEN TO INDIGENOUS PEOPLE

Many training opportunities specifically relevant to woods and forestry are available to the wider Australian community, and Indigenous people are able to access them.

THE FOREST AND FOREST PRODUCTS EMPLOYMENT SKILLS COMPANY (FAFPESC)

FAFPESC is a forestry industry owned and managed organisation whose primary role is to assist the industry to recognise and develop the skills of its employees.

FAFPESC is the National Forestry Industry Training Advisory Body. This means it is recognised by federal and state governments as the organisation providing industry and government with advice on vocational education and training, and leadership to assist the forestry industry to progress skills development in a nationally consistent way across the industry.

FAFPESC works across all forestry industry sectors—namely forest growing and management, harvesting and haulage, sawmilling and processing, timber product manufacturing, wood panel/board production and manufacturing, pulp and paper manufacturing and timber merchandising.

FOREST INDUSTRY TRAINING NETWORK (FITNET)

This FITNET training package provides enterprises the opportunity to implement skills development to support business growth and profitability; it provides opportunities for workers to have existing skills formally recognised through national qualifications and to obtain additional training to enhance current and future employment opportunities.

THE NATIONAL TRAINING PACKAGE

The National Training Package for the forestry industry provides training support for most industry sectors—forest growing and management, wood panel products, sawmilling and processing, harvesting, timber manufactured products, and timber merchandising.

Master tree growers program

The Master Tree Growers Program is for committed landholders who want to make a genuine contribution the development of farm forestry in their region. The primary aims of the program are to:

- help landholders to recognise and critically evaluate commercial tree growing opportunities
- encourage landholders to play a more active role in farm forestry development by providing knowledge that instils confidence
- support regional farm forestry, agroforestry and landcare programs by providing a program that can be tailored to regional requirements
- encourage strong communication links between participants, extension officers, researchers and the forestry industry generally.

The program has developed an effective network of technical and on-farm participants and contributors across Australia, in the cities and in rural environments, and a regular newsletter provides updates to the wider community on the 'goings-on' of the program and its participants. This program and its newsletter could provide an effective medium for communicating the NIFS.

Logging investigation and training association

The Logging Investigation and Training Association (LITA) based in Mount Gambier and serving the wider logging sector is one of a number of industry organisations providing training services. LITA offers courses, including:

- Certificate 1 and 2 Forest Growing
- Forest Growing and Management Certificate
- plant operation
- traineeships in forest growing
- harvesting
- apprenticeships in sawmilling and processing timber
- electrical
- saw doctoring
- fitting and turning
- wood machining.

Impact on the NIFS

Training specific to a wide cross section of forestry industry activities is available, and flexibility within these programs is such that training can be developed for a number of different purposes and for remote delivery where numbers justify the tailoring of programs.

27. BUSINESS INITIATIVES AND ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

27.1 PROVIDERS OF BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

The main providers of programs that can assist business development and land acquisition as part of the NIFS are:

- ATSIC's Business Development Program
- Indigenous Small Business Fund
- Indigenous Business Australia
- Indigenous Land Corporation
- Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry.

27.2 ATSIC'S BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

The Business Development Program (BDP) aims to assist Indigenous Australians to acquire, establish and develop commercially viable enterprises. The BDP is a commercial program for economic development with funding criteria founded on the importance of commercial viability, although social and cultural benefits may also be considered.

Two types of services are offered to Indigenous individuals, partnerships, joint ventures, corporations and community groups—business support, providing access to professional business and marketing advice, training, mentoring and other public and private sector services; and business finance, providing loans, a loan/grant mix and/or guarantees to eligible Indigenous clients.

27.3 INDIGENOUS SMALL BUSINESS FUND

ATSIC and DEWR jointly fund the Indigenous Small Business Fund (ISBF). The ISBF complements existing Indigenous business programs available through ATSIC and DEWR by encouraging and supporting the development and expansion of Indigenous small businesses.

The fund aims to help Indigenous Australians to develop the business management and planning skills to start commercially viable businesses and to access business capital and support services. It also aims to enhance their business prospects by supporting skills development programs, mentoring, networking, advisory services and market development (including export opportunities). Funding is available to identify and facilitate business opportunities, help Indigenous people start businesses, develop business plans and provide advice or support services to small business owner/operators in developing their skills, markets and networks.

27.4 Indigenous Business Australia

Indigenous Business Australia (IBA) is a Commonwealth statutory authority established to assist and enhance Indigenous self management and economic self sufficiency. Generally, IBA invests directly in business opportunities, usually through joint venture arrangements with forestry industry partners. In addition it invests in a range of core assets to underpin its capital base.

IBA has advocated an approach involving partnerships with the private sector as an important means to achieving better economic outcomes for Indigenous Australians. To achieve its objectives, IBA has developed strategic alliances with experienced and reputable corporate operators who see the unique and commercial advantages in working with or involving Indigenous Australians in their operations.

The IBA's aim is to invest in a wide portfolio, including forestry industry businesses, and there is no typical investment—investments must be commercially sound and of benefit to Indigenous organisations. The IBA does not totally fund proposals. It enters into joint venture agreements with private sector interests and appropriate community organisations; it may take up agreed amounts of equity in its own right, provide loans to Indigenous bodies (at commercial interest rates), and/or assist them to identify alternative sources of finance. IBA is not permitted to provide grant funding.

The primary criterion for funding is clear evidence of long term commercial viability. However, in assessing a funding proposal, the IBA also considers the benefits to the local Indigenous community from employment, training and income. It endeavours to assist the client organisation to become an equity partner, with the eventual aim of buying out the IBA's shares so its own shareholders benefit from the profits generated by the business.[40]

27.5 Indigenous Land Corporation

The ILC is an independent Commonwealth Statutory Authority established to assist Indigenous Australians unable to exercise native title rights to acquire land and also to manage Indigenous owned land. Its purpose is to 'redress the dispossession of Indigenous peoples and Torres Strait Islanders by assisting them to acquire, own and manage their land in a way that enhances their social, cultural, economic and environmental well-being.'

In relation to land acquisition, the ILC's primary objective is to 'assist Indigenous peoples to acquire land in order to provide them with social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits'. To do this four strategies have been developed:

- develop, implement and periodically revise regional profiles that identify and prioritise Indigenous land needs through consultation with Indigenous peoples and other relevant parties
- through consultation and research, ensure the benefits of land ownership outlined in applications for support are clearly identified, achievable, sustainable and measurable

40 IBA website *www.iba.gov.au*
39 ILC Corporate Plan 2003 - 2006

- acquire and transfer land through a clearly defined and transparent process
- in each acquisition, identify and access, to the maximum extent possible, other mechanisms and sources that may assist in the acquisition of significant land for Indigenous peoples.[41]

The ILC has already successfully acquired land used for commercial timber production. This has enabled applicant groups to strengthen their economic future and also generated ongoing employment and training opportunities in the management of plantations.

To apply for ILC support to acquire land for timber/forestry production or to apply for support to develop timber/forestry opportunities on land already held in Indigenous hands requires completion and submission of either a land acquisition application form or a land management application form. A business plan or property management plan are also be required. All these forms and other useful information are available free on the ILC's web site *www.ilc.gov.au* or by phoning the ILC on Free call 1800 818 490.

27.6 DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FORESTRY PROGRAMS

DAFF offers services and programs aimed at increasing the competitiveness and sustainability of the agriculture, fisheries and forestry industries. Of particular interest, the Department provides programs that could assist individuals or organisations in the forestry and related sectors.

NEW INDUSTRIES DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

The New Industries Development Program provides assistance for pilot commercialisation of new products, technology and services. Grants are available for projects in the agricultural, processed food, fisheries and forestry industries. Funding supports projects that aim to produce new products, technologies or services, use currently ignored by-products, or change the form presentation and delivery of mainstream products.

The program also offers In-Market Experience Scholarships to help innovative Australians build on their strengths, explore new opportunities, commercialise market driven solutions based on innovation, and successfully compete with the best the world has to offer.

To date two scholarships have been awarded for forestry related projects. One has been awarded to an individual to develop new options for the forestry industry in the Northern Territory by developing high value plantations using elite genetic clonal material. The project aims to grow selected, high quality timber species, and process the timber and sell on to a range of markets. The project is based on establishing approximately 1000 ha of Teak plantation each year for the next 15 years.

In Victoria, a scholarship has been awarded to help develop supply and alliance agreements with local timber growers, and promote certified and sustainable timber products from the resultant cooperative to new, higher value markets such as furniture makers, architects, craftspeople and veneer manufacturers.

FARMBIS

The FarmBis program provides financial assistance to primary producers and land managers to undertake business and natural resource management training and education activities, including farm forestry training.

The Australian and state governments jointly fund the FarmBis program. Each state has a FarmBis coordinator to help interested people find the right training course and the people to undertake the training that best suits them. The program will help meet the eligible costs for participants undertaking training and education approved by the program.

FarmBis can help Indigenous land managers, farmers and fishers to take part in training that will help them run their businesses and look after their land better.

NATURAL HERITAGE TRUST

The Australian Government's Natural Heritage Trust (NHT) was set up in 1997 to help restore and conserve Australia's environment and natural resources. NHT provides funding to community groups for environmental and natural resource management projects through funding programs such as Landcare, Bushcare, Coastcare and Rivercare. An additional $1 billion for the Trust was announced in the 2001 Federal Budget, extending it's funding for five years and ensuring the future of many important ongoing activities.

The extension to the NHT has led to a more targeted and strategic approach to environmental and natural resource management. The bulk of the funding is to be invested in the context of a comprehensive and integrated regional natural resource management plan to deliver important resource condition outcomes—including improved water quality, less erosion, improved estuarine health, improved vegetation management and improved soil condition.

ENVIROFUND

The Australian Government's Envirofund program is the local level component of the NHT. Envirofund provides the opportunity and means for community groups and individuals to undertake small projects aimed at conserving biodiversity and sustainable resource use. Envirofund provides grants of up to $30 000 to fund environment based projects such, including:

- native vegetation planting for biodiversity conservation, habitat purposes, or restoration of Indigenous cultural landscapes, community health, bush food or medicine
- demonstrations or trials for new techniques for Indigenous hunting, gathering or fishing to promote sustainability, or other sustainable farming, forestry or fishing practices
- awareness raising activities that directly lead to local benefits for biodiversity conservation or sustainable natural resource use

- relevant skill and knowledge development for resource mangers and users through education and training, including Indigenous caring for country techniques and application or transfer of traditional Indigenous knowledge
- identifying, protecting and managing Indigenous cultural heritage resources where there is a significant biodiversity conservation benefit
- holding workshops, or producing videos, publications or similar resources that build the capacity of local Indigenous and other groups to engage Indigenous communities in natural resource management.

Since the inception of Envirofund in October 2002 a number of Indigenous groups have received funding to undertake bush tucker projects, fire management programs, seed propagation, weed management, erosion control and land management training.

INDIGENOUS LAND MANAGEMENT FACILITATOR PROGRAM

The goal of the Indigenous Land Management Facilitators (ILMF) Program is to encourage Indigenous communities to participate in NHT projects.

The ILMF's around Australia provide a practical two way link between Indigenous land managers and other individuals and agencies involved in sustainable land management and nature conservation activities.

The ILMF's provide information to Indigenous communities about the support and technical advice available to assist them with land management issues on their lands. They also provide feedback to Australian Government policy makers on land management issues of concern to Indigenous communities, and help raise awareness in government agencies and non-Indigenous communities of Indigenous values, aspirations and capacity in land management (for more information see http://www.deh.gov.au/indigenous/ilmf/).

PRIVATE FORESTRY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEES (PFDCS)

The Australian Government and responsible agency in each state/territory government jointly fund Private Forestry Development Committees (PFDCs) through the farm forestry segment of the NHT.

PFDCs work closely with local and regional stakeholders, industry and government to assist forest industry development at a regional level. Their roles vary from region to region—while all PFDCs play a role in communication and addressing issues that hinder forest development, some focus on coordination of farm forestry activities, providing opportunities to farmers, industry development or assisting industry and government to communicate with each other in addressing mutual concerns.

PFDCs provide assistance in:

- planning, infrastructure and industry coordination
- the development of regional feasibility studies
- the development of regional plantation and farm forestry strategies to encourage commercial forest based industries

- formulating related marketing, investment and wood flow plans
- facilitating communication between stakeholders
- improving information flows on marketing and management of plantations and private native forests
- incorporating farm forestry into the regional natural resource management planning process.

For further information see www.daff.gov.au/forestry.

PFDCs could assist in the development of Indigenous forestry projects.

27.7 other relevant programs

indigenous tourism business ready program

In December 2003 the new Indigenous Tourism Business Ready Program (ITBRP) was announced in the Tourism White Paper—the Australian Government's medium to long term strategy for tourism. The new program being developed by the Department of Industry, Tourism and Resources, will provide $4 million to assist Indigenous and tourism start up businesses. The ITBRP will be run in conjunction with ATSIS and the Indigenous Tourism Leadership Group and will assist individuals or early stage growth firms to increase their potential for commercialising Indigenous product or services.

ITBRP funding will be mainly used to employ mentors or business advisors to assist Indigenous tourism start ups. The ITBRP is not a grants program. Emphasis will be placed on development of management skills, business and strategic planning, market research, and understanding tourism distribution networks and commercial practices in the tourism industry.

Although in its early stages, this program may be relevant for Indigenous people interested in eco-tourism opportunities associated with their forestry ventures.

Indigenous Community Volunteers Foundation

Indigenous Community Volunteers (ICV) is an independent, not for profit organisation that assists Indigenous communities by supporting skills transfer projects. Communities identify what skills they need, design their projects, discuss their ideas with ICV and submit an application. ICV then allocates a skilled volunteer to the project. There is no fee involved and ICV works closely with the community to support the project. Further information is available at *www.volindigenous.org.au*.

green corps

Green Corps is a Commonwealth Government initiative administered by the Department of Family and Community Services. The program offers young people an opportunity to receive quality training by participating in projects that contribute to significant environmental and cultural heritage outcomes. During each Green Corps placement of 26 weeks participants receive accredited training in a range of skills.

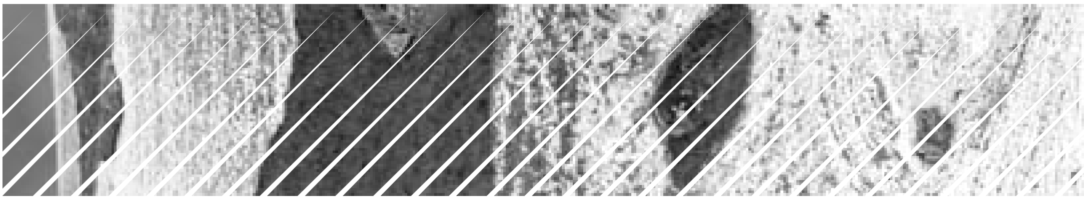
Community groups, local government and natural resource management agencies are consulted to assist in selecting suitable locations for projects in all states and territories. About 85 per cent of the project placements are located in rural and regional areas.

27.8 IMPACT ON THE NIFS

A variety of programs are available to assist Indigenous people to assess, acquire or start a business. They can support increased Indigenous involvement in the forestry industry provided the over riding focus of proposals is on positive economic outcomes—a reasonable business case must be presented to access funding for support services and a sound business plan must be presented to access project finance.

Indigenous Land Corporation programs are an exception because projects with overriding social, cultural, or environmental benefits will be considered in addition to those with solely economic benefits.

A combination of funding from the various sources is also a possibility. For example, land acquisition could be funded by the ILC and business projects could be funded by Indigenous Business Australia.



PART VII: NATIONAL INDIGENOUS FORESTRY STRATEGY

28. OVERVIEW

28.1 WHAT'S IN PART VII?

This section discusses:

- findings derived from responses to the specific questions asked of participants in the consultation process
- ideas and strategies that make up the NIFS and recommendations to effect its implementation.

28.2 WHAT IS THE NIFS?

The NIFS is a strategy and framework for encouraging greater Indigenous participation in the forest growing, timber processing and non-timber forest products sectors, to deliver economic independence for Indigenous communities through active participation in the forestry industry.

NIFS aims to facilitate partnerships between Indigenous communities and businesses in the forestry sector and increase the level of Indigenous involvement in forest management. It aims to substantially increase Indigenous participation in forest activities from current low levels.

This section describes the things that need to be done to achieve greater Indigenous involvement in the forestry industry.

29. NIFS DEVELOPMENT

29.1 INTRODUCTION

This section is a final reduction of the preceding discussion into proposals leading to a formal strategy for the NIFS, informed by:

- key influencing factors
- participant requests.

29.2 KEY INFLUENCING FACTORS

Consultations with Indigenous communities, forestry industry representatives, broader community groups, individuals and desktop research reveal a range of factors will influence the growth, direction and future prospects for Indigenous involvement in the forestry industry and forestry development.

EXTERNAL FACTORS TO INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES AND FORESTRY INDUSTRY

'We live in a global economy' is repeated every day when talking about business, the economy and environment. And the environment and business seem to be becoming more closely linked, particularly in marketing forest based products, activities and services in the international marketplace. A number of influences external to the domestic forestry industry, and to Indigenous community activities relating to or carried out in forests, can affect forest based activities and operations, including:

- international—international protocols are supporting an increase in Indigenous involvement in the forestry industry
- wider Australian community—expectations have been rising for an increase in Indigenous community employment in the workforce
- eco-tourism—opportunities exist where tourists seek authentic guidance for their touring experiences; eco-tourism is developing into a high profile travel industry sector and some Indigenous communities are well placed to take advantage of this, especially where high numbers of tourists already arrive in regions with substantial stands of native forests.

THE CHANGING FACE OF FORESTS IN AUSTRALIA

Environmental concerns in recent decades have led to an overall reduction in native forest used for wood production in Australia and in some other parts of the world. Some of these forests are now only available for recreation pursuits. Concurrently, increased plantation based development offers the greatest potential for substantial positive growth in wood fibre production, and in wood based employment. A proactive approach in the NIFS could influence the rate of this development in Australia.

For example, a mapping exercise showing areas of high level plantation development coupled with engagement of local communities, funding bodies and businesses with access to markets could lead to the development of appropriate projects. Agroforestry systems pose similar benefits. Joint venture forestry projects with managed investment schemes or public companies offer the greatest returns. Regions with high potential include:

- south western Victoria and south east South Australia, collectively known as the Green Triangle Region
- northern Tasmania
- Gippsland, Victoria
- north eastern Victoria and southern New South Wales between Benalla and Tumut
- the Central and North Coast regions of New South Wales

- the Central Coast of Queensland and inland
- the Tiwi Islands and south of Darwin
- south west Western Australia.

A more recent development in the planted forest sector is planting trees to obtain future carbon credits. For example, a joint venture planted forest management project could be arranged with State Forests of NSW that would include establishing and growing a sawlog plantation tree crop to provide sawlog for manufacturing in the future and, along the way, carbon credits for the carbon stored in trees.

The face of Australia's forests and how they are managed is changing at a relatively fast rate.

MUTUAL BENEFITS TO INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES AND FORESTRY INDUSTRY

There are clear benefits and incentives for Indigenous communities and the forestry industry to become more involved. Cultural differences between and within Indigenous communities and the forestry industry highlight the need for flexibility in policy and planning as well as in the workplace. Areas where the location of Indigenous Australians and forestry industry interests overlap are likely to have the best chance of success in the shorter term.

FORESTRY INDUSTRY

There appears to be an increased awareness of a need and willingness by the forestry industry to increase Indigenous involvement in the industry in recent times. The challenge here is to convert sound opportunities into viable projects. High level change in the forestry industry has led to both challenges and opportunities. Commentators have forecast a shortfall in meeting strong demand for timber resources in the foreseeable future.

INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

There is a high level of interest in forest related activities in some sectors of the Indigenous community, but limited knowledge as to how to proceed. Barriers to employment in some of the more traditional areas of the forestry industry have, if anything increased in the last decade. Numerous training and employment programs exist, but they are not being used to their full potential in forest based activities. New business development and employment starting points are at low levels and either deter entry altogether or deny the full potential of those activities in which Indigenous Australians are engaged. Land ownership by Indigenous communities, for example through the Indigenous Land Corporation, is at a relatively low level. Access to funding can be difficult.

Yet a large number of small scale, niche opportunities exist in the forestry industry where Indigenous communities can become involved, where progress is not time sensitive, and where there is flexibility in work hours.

29.3 PARTICIPANT REQUESTS

In arriving at the NIFS and the specific actions, processes and potential outputs to encourage and assist Indigenous people to become involved in the industry, participants in the consultation process were asked to respond to the following question:

'What would you like to see in the NIFS?'

Aggregated conclusions and key themes arising from the responses and the relevance of these to the NIFS are described below.

COORDINATED AND ACCESSIBLE TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS

Numerous existing training and employment programs can be packaged to meet the needs of both Indigenous communities and the forestry industry. In practice few of these programs are being accessed for a variety of reasons. Participants are seeking a coordinated approach (at federal and state levels) to the delivery of training and employment programs in the forestry industry. Awareness of the existence and terms of such funding needs to be improved. Funding to facilitate Indigenous involvement in productive forestry activities should be readily accessed if criteria are met.

INCLUSIVENESS

The focus of the NIFS should be inclusive, that is, recognise and respect the positions of both Indigenous communities and the forestry industry. The NIFS should also aim for multiple benefits for best results.

RECOGNITION OF CULTURAL HERITAGE

The importance of the identification, protection and management of cultural sites in forest areas should be recognised by the NIFS.

Regional and local Planning

The NIFS should provide a framework that facilitates people exchanging ideas and interacting at regional and local levels for mutual benefit rather than having the ideas of one group imposed on the other.

This could involve a regional facilitator in developing and implementing plans, and local ideas and strategies could contribute.

PROMOTE THE NIFS THROUGH EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

Communicating the benefits and the potential for Indigenous communities and the forestry industry is a key to success of the NIFS, including:

- a clear picture of what the NIFS is and what it sets out to achieve
- a common understanding of the initiatives the NIFS proposes

- promoting the benefits of the NIFS
- building cross-cultural awareness, particularly at the work site supervisor level
- showcasing projects that can be duplicated in other areas.

PROJECT ASSISTANCE

The NIFS delivery mechanism could provide project assistance throughout the various project stages. At the early stage, the NIFS could introduce information to Indigenous community members on concepts to market, and seek participants who are able to assist coordinate its inception. Subsequently, it could introduce joint venture partners to develop the project. During the project's life, it could provide the information needed to move it forward.

Critically, strategies will need to encourage and assist Indigenous Australians to identify and pursue project opportunities within the industry.

BE SIMPLE AND EASY TO UNDERSTAND

NIFS and the way it is communicated needs to be simple and easy to understand. It needs to clearly convey initiatives to its target audience and use photos and diagrams where possible.

CLEAR AGENDAS

Some cynicism about the NIFS was encountered and mistrust of the process was expressed—demonstrating the need for clear agendas.

NEEDS FLEXIBILITY

The NIFS needs to be flexible due to the different size and nature of projects across Australia. Clearly, one size doesn't fit all. That is, the same strategy can have a different outcome in different regions depending on social, environmental, cultural and economic views. Communities will be at different stages of development and will differ in their preparedness to accept the NIFS. To overcome this, the NIFS will need to pick early winners. Case studies will need to be disseminated widely. Sites should be selected where it is easier to engage the entire community and suitable potential projects are on offer.

TIMING

Timing is important and the feedback, in general terms, was that the timing is right for the development of the NIFS.

30. NATIONAL INDIGENOUS FORESTRY STRATEGY

30.1 OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES RESTATED

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the NIFS are to:

- provide a consistent national framework to encourage Indigenous participation in the forest growing, timber processing and non-timber forest products sectors
- identify opportunities for Indigenous people to participate in the growth of Australia's forest and timber industries
- outline the way for Indigenous people to participate in these activities
- provide a structure for Indigenous people to assist with the development of Australia's forest and timber forestry industry.

OUTCOMES

The outcomes sought from implementation of the NIFS are:

- increase the economic independence for Indigenous communities through active participation in the forest and timber forestry industry
- assist/encourage Indigenous input into regional, state and national forest management, policy development and forestry industry activities
- improve the management of forests and plantations for all of their economic, social and environmental benefits.

MEASURE OF SUCCESS

The success of the NIFS will be judged by the quantity and quality of increased Indigenous involvement, especially employment, in forestry industries. It is envisaged that this will mainly involve 'getting trees in the ground', new downstream businesses, increased levels of employment generally in the forestry industry or in non-wood activities. Accordingly the NIFS needs to focus on achieving results in these and other areas and provide a mechanism to measure this success.

30.2 NIFS PLATFORMS

There are six key platforms required for a successful NIFS:

1. Communication and information flow.
2. Regional communities involvement and ownership.
3. Improving knowledge and skill base.

4. Consistent federal, state and local government and forestry industry approach.
5. Support for project development.
6. Recognition of social and cultural issues.

The rationale for each of these platforms follows, and recommendations relating to them are detailed in Section 31.

30.3 COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION FLOW

WHY IS COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION FLOW IMPORTANT?

Communicating the objectives and outcomes of the NIFS to its potential target audience—the forestry industry, Indigenous Australians and the wider community—is critical to engaging groups to explore potential benefits for themselves and to regional and rural Australia.

Once engaged, the stakeholders should be able to readily access information to progress opportunities.

SINGLE FOCUS APPROACH TO COMMUNICATION

The most effective way of encouraging and energising parties to become involved is a single focus point and information source. A single focus point also facilitates communication and information flow. Extensive regional and local consultation should provide the means to identify potential opportunities for business development within the industry and Indigenous communities. This must, in turn, be able to be channelled through a single focus point that provides:

- relevant information about the NIFS and its objectives
- direction and mentoring on developing opportunities.

INDIGENOUS FORESTRY UNIT

It is recommended that an Indigenous Forestry Unit be established to focus on implementing the NIFS. The primary role of the Indigenous Forestry Unit will be to provide a conduit between the forestry industry, Indigenous communities and individuals, government and the wider community. The role of the Indigenous Forestry Unit will promote and market the NIFS to interested parties drawn from the forestry industry, Indigenous communities, the broader community and state governments.

The NIFS database created as part of this project will be a sound starting point for interested stakeholders. Promotion of the NIFS will involve a range of approaches, including:

- regular newsletters with motivational editorials and articles on case studies and success stories
- website re-presenting newsletter items—with links to the ATSIS/DAFF websites
- brochures addressing a range of issues and needs.

By these means, the Indigenous Forestry Unit will provide a conduit for regular information exchange between government departments and agencies, forestry industry associations, regional forums, Indigenous communities and other forestry industry participants. It will also link the NIFS with other agroforestry initiatives and programs.

The NIFS will have to maintain a database of relevant information including:

- interested parties
- sources of information
- project reports
- enquiries
- information that measures the success of NIFS.

Consideration needs to be given to structural issues for managing and maintaining the Indigenous Forestry Unit, the communication lines and the ongoing role of the NIFS Steering Committee and any successor. The NIFS will need to be driven by a working group with a similar make up to the NIFS Steering Committee, that is, high level representation from key stakeholder groups.

Refer to recommendations 1, 2 and 7 below.

30.4 REGIONAL COMMUNITIES INVOLVEMENT AND OWNERSHIP

WHY IS REGIONAL COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AND OWNERSHIP IMPORTANT?

'Think internationally, operate nationally, develop regionally and begin locally' can describe the process of, and recipe for, business development between the industry and Indigenous Australians.

Increasing involvement by Indigenous Australians in the forestry industry will require support and commitment from the wider community. The successful implementation of the NIFS will require regional communities that are informed about the NIFS and are willing and enthusiastic about participating in it.

Numerous opportunities will arise and they are likely to be widespread and diverse. Regional communities must become involved in, and take ownership of, opportunities. The engagement of local communities is fundamental to the realisation of the potential that exists to increase involvement in the forestry industry.

APPROACH TO REGIONAL COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AND OWNERSHIP

Consultations clearly identified that planning for regions is best done at the regional level. Therefore the NIFS needs to:

- encourage closer links within regions
- inform regional planning processes
- provide a framework to assist implementation
- provide a forum for Indigenous communities and forestry industry to talk.

The eight site consultations were good examples of how these groups could come together and exchange ideas. For maximum benefit these forums should have representation from:

- the forestry industry (e.g. Timber Communities of Australia Inc., individual businesses)
- Indigenous communities/businesses/individuals (e.g. ATSIC Regional Councils, Indigenous Land Trust, Community Groups)
- government (eg local councils and shires, ILC, ACC's, ATSIS, state and federal governments, research institutions).

AGENDA FOR REGIONAL FORUMS

Regional forums should address matters such as:

- information received from the Indigenous Forestry Unit
- identifying activities that could take place
- status of specific projects and ways forward.

Other matters to consider include defining what a region is and providing travel assistance where large distances are involved. Indigenous communities could also consider becoming members of forestry industry associations.

Refer to recommendations 1, 2, 5, 6 and 8 below.

30.5 IMPROVING KNOWLEDGE AND SKILL BASE

WHY IS IMPROVING KNOWLEDGE AND THE SKILL BASE IMPORTANT?

The forestry industry is expanding, and developing and implementing new technologies in businesses to maintain competitive advantage and ensure they comply with corporate and environmental protocols and standards. They continually require higher and more sophisticated skills levels from staff. Developing green field (areas that have not been previously developed) and brown field (previously developed areas) business ideas also require new business skills and understanding on the part of the industry and Indigenous Australians.

The key to achieving increased involvement by Indigenous Australians in the forestry industry lies in appropriate knowledge and understanding of industry requirements, how these can be met by Indigenous Australians and how the forestry industry can integrate Indigenous Australians into supply chains.

Appropriate research and clear identification of the skills required, targeted training and skill development packages to be delivered regionally, at school through to post secondary level, will improve the basic knowledge and skill base. The integration of Indigenous Australians into the industry will need to be facilitated by mentoring and vocational training programs. The aim is to provide 'job ready' staff and managers, with skill levels that meet the expectations of the industry and provide career paths for Indigenous Australians.

APPROACH TO IMPROVING KNOWLEDGE AND SKILL BASE

The approach to improving knowledge and skill base has four key aspects:

- education and awareness
- skills assessment and development
- job readiness
- ongoing support.

EDUCATION AND AWARENESS

The first step is to raise the awareness of possibilities for likely participants, to inform them what is potentially involved and spark interest in moving opportunities forward. This will be a role channelled through the Indigenous Forestry Unit. Awareness programs will need to consider:

- project or regional specific—for example a plantation development fact sheet
- tours and demonstration sites
- educate forestry industry on Indigenous communities
- educate Indigenous communities on forestry industry—what is it and how it links to their way of life
- general awareness and the encouragement of collaboration
- focus on benefits and how to get involved
- impact of emerging international protocols or forestry industry initiatives—for example, 'win/win' approach to accreditation
- extension of education back in the schools.

Assistance for educational and promotional tools may be available from places such as Australian National Training Authority, an Australian Government statutory authority providing a national focus for vocational education and training.

SKILLS ASSESSMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

Once awareness is raised the next step is to assess:

- the level of skills required to realise opportunities
- the current level of skills within the Indigenous community or region
- the gap between the two
- how the gap will be closed, including available training and funding.

It is important that a national approach be devised to use the combined resources of ATSIS, DEWR and forestry industry training bodies to develop specific training for the industry. This will have the advantage of learning from and using existing initiatives and providing a consistent approach across Australia to maximise the effectiveness of funding. Initiatives that could result include:

- establishment of forest training centres near Indigenous communities
- the use of various government programs to develop training courses
- specific management and business skills courses, for example, preparing tenders or assistance to take a business idea to market.

JOB READINESS

It is important that meaningful employment outcomes can be identified in conjunction with the training. This requires job readiness, including aspects such as:

- work ethic
- workplace literacy
- management of daily routines
- striking a balance between the needs of Indigenous communities, employers, employees and funding body requirements
- school to work programs where Indigenous Australians from secondary school level can have place based opportunities in the industry
- vocational training— competency based national training package
- mentoring.

It is important that a national approach be devised to use the combined resources of ATSIS, DEWR and forestry industry training bodies to develop a specific employment strategy for the forestry industry.

ONGOING SUPPORT

The changing environment and the nature of impediments noted during the consultations means that an ongoing commitment is required to improving the knowledge and skill base. In addition this commitment needs to be coordinated across departments, industry and communities to broker solutions that optimise the use of state and federal resources.

Refer to recommendations 3, 4, 8 and 12 below.

30.6 CONSISTENT FEDERAL, STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND FORESTRY INDUSTRY DIRECTION

WHY IS A CONSISTENT FEDERAL, STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND FORESTRY INDUSTRY APPROACH IMPORTANT?

Implementation of the NIFS will be complex. The NIFS areas of interest include a diverse range of forestry industry businesses and associations, a similarly diverse range of Indigenous Australian communities and the wider community. In addition, potential NIFS business opportunities will be spread over much of Australia and over a diversity of climatic regions.

Consistent and appropriate bipartisan government policy and support at the federal, state and local government levels, together with a coordinated approach by the forestry industry, will be critical to developing an environment and framework that encourages the forest industry and Indigenous Australians to develop partnerships/projects and employment opportunities.

Consultations showed a reasonable number of Indigenous Australians are wary of government programs and promises of a better future, and of similar claims by industry. There was also some cynicism noted about the potential for Indigenous Australians to become involved in the forestry industry. As the nature of forestry activity is long term it is critical that government policy reflects this. A common purpose and strong support from key stakeholders is required to advocate such long term bipartisan support for the NIFS. A long term commitment by the parties, adequately resourced, will provide the means to achieve the objectives of the strategy and help overcome the wariness of some stakeholders.

POLICY INPUT

NIFS should assist to develop an environment that encourages investment, advises on market trends and facilitates pursuit of opportunities. The NIFS should provide a channel for stakeholders to inform policy makers with respect to relevant issues and to provide feedback on policy development. Relevant matters raised during the course of the consultation included:

- conversion of forest resource being actively managed for forest activities into national parks
- legislation impacting on land tenure, forest and access to resources
- investment environment
- environmental compliance, governance and maintenance
- carbon credits
- the Australian equivalent of Canada’s ‘traditional land use and occupancy studies’ or plans, and their development where they could be used to significantly improve participation by Indigenous Australians in forestry
- modify forestry practices and planning to allow for the coexistence of multiple values that respect Indigenous forest values and land uses, and that are economically, ecologically and culturally sustainable

- consider developing an Australian equivalent of the First Nations Forestry Program currently operating in Canada—Canadian communities can create new partnerships, develop joint ventures, carry out relevant studies, develop and implement forest management plans, enhance capacity and skills development through forest management activities, learn leading edge technologies and obtain valuable relevant forestry training.

NIFS should also encourage a whole of government approach to matters such as:

- links with other agroforestry initiatives
- funding
- policy.

LONG TERM CONSISTENT COMMITMENT TO THE NIFS

The longevity and consistency of the NIFS will rely on the following key factors:

- a strong message of common purpose from key stakeholders to advocate long term bipartisan support for the NIFS project
- visible actions and success—ideally, initiatives and use of scarce resources should focus initially on potential winners
- a commitment to follow through with a high level of integrity from stakeholders at all levels
- recognition by all parties of the positions of others and concentration on common objectives rather than differences
- ongoing commitment of sufficient resources to implement the NIFS
- measuring and promoting success will be important in terms of future support.

Refer to recommendations 7, 8 and 9 below.

30.7 SUPPORT FOR PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

WHY IS SUPPORT FOR PROJECT DEVELOPMENT IMPORTANT?

Implementation of the NIFS will require significant support for project development because projects are likely to be diverse, widespread, and come from a low base. Support for project development will need to be a mix of proactive and reactive approaches, depending upon resources available.

The proactive approach is to map potential areas of interest and define where opportunities exist for the industry and Indigenous Australians to develop business enterprise separately and together. Initially support should focus on the areas of interest and target projects that are likely to have a high potential for success or where support and assistance is needed most. Priorities for support should be based on their potential for success initially and include willingness to participate, population demographics and existing industries. Of these the willingness to participate is the most important in terms of moving a project forward and an early indication of Indigenous community support must be sought.

Approach To Support For Project Development

The NIFS is aiming to substantially increase Indigenous participation in forest activities from current low levels. To achieve this the NIFS could take either a proactive stance—for example, developing specific projects following step one through to step eight below—or a reactive approach, beginning at step four.

Pro-active Approach (Steps One to Eight)

Re-active Approach (Steps Four to Eight)

Step One: Mapping High Potential Regions
Map out specific areas, chosen by their relevant legislation, resources and Indigenous communities.

Step Two: Identify Appropriate Activities
Regional planning to indetify suitable activities in the wood and non-wood sector.

Step Three: Education and promotion
Educate relevant parties as to benefits, strategies etc.

Step Four: Discuss at Regional Level and recruit potential participants

Step Five: Engage Industry and Indegenous Communities in the concepts.

Step Six: Assess the Technical and Financial Feasibility with reference to specie selection, funding etc.

Step Seven: Implement

Step Eight: Monitor and Manage

NIFS activities within each of these steps could involve:

- ***Step 1:*** mapping potential regions
- ***Step 2:*** identifying appropriate activities
- ***Step 3:*** education and promotion
- ***Step 4:*** regional discussion
- ***Step 5:*** engagement of parties
- ***Step 6:*** determine project feasibility

STEP 1: MAPPING POTENTIAL REGIONS

A mapping exercise could be initiated to identify areas of interest for increasing Indigenous involvement in the forestry industry. Further target areas of either high potential or high need could be identified within each area of interest. This will be a complex and challenging exercise and will need to consider factors such as:

- physical resources—land, water, soil types, climate
- forest resources
- infrastructure—roads, rail, ports
- management resources
- workforce and Indigenous communities
- courses, graduates
- market access to wood and non-wood industries e.g. tourism
- environmental
- cultural
- social
- legislation
- willingness to be involved
- demographics.

STEP 2: IDENTIFY APPROPRIATE ACTIVITIES

An initial resource assessment to identify appropriate activities could be undertaken at a high level based on the Step 1 mapping exercise. Key matters to be considered include:

- identify need for research and development for new varieties; the ability to use R & D from research organisations should be assessed
- species selection for specific regions
- demonstration plots
- specific markets
- identify specific Indigenous issues
- intellectual property issues.

An assessment 'tool kit' would be valuable. It would assist communities to assess their resources and help decide what could be done, develop a road map to outline the way forward and act as a screening tool prior to committing resources.

STEP 3: EDUCATE AND PROMOTE

This step links into the proposed role of the Indigenous Forestry Unit (Specific items to promote project development). Examples of activities include:

- move forward outcomes of mapping exercise
- success stories promoted to the wider community
- learn and promote by examples using case studies and 'how to' guides, for example for

  – plantation development

  – bush tucker projects

  – farm forestry

  – Agroforestry.
- need to get trees in the ground now for social economic and environmental benefit—the use of a high profile tree planting program to raise awareness and link in with CDEPs (e.g. Trees for Life, a non-profit community group dedicated to revegetation and the protection of threatened and valuable bushland in South Australia)
- research outcomes relevant to the NIFS projects need to be accessed and disseminated within the database with respect to, for example

  – tree growing

  – timber processing

  – non-timber forest sector.

STEPS 4: DISCUSS REGIONALLY

Discuss at regional level and recruit potential participants using the techniques referred to above but focused on particular projects. In particular ATSIS resources could be used to find out aspirations of communities.

STEP 5: ENGAGE PARTIES

Engage forestry industry and Indigenous communities in the concepts using the techniques referred to above but focused more on particular projects. In particular, ATSIS resources/networks can be used to find out aspirations of communities.

step 6: determine project feasibility

The Indigenous Forestry Unit could act as a one stop shop for advice. Importantly, its role is that of encouraging project development by providing information and linkages rather than acting as a project manager. Development of a project checklist dealing with critical elements that can be used to screen opportunities and move forward would be particularly useful. The checklist could include information on:

- the right to develop
- species selection/resource assessment
- link to research and development
- horticultural groups
- maintenance
- development of saleable products
- certification to access markets or command premium pricing
- the right to harvest, and
- access to markets (NIFS should address accessing markets as an issue, however it is not the role of the NIFS to provide extensive advice)
- links to forestry industry
- links to state development agencies
- access to funds
- links to funding bodies
- links to private sector (match projects to a register of potential investors)
- how to access project or investment funds—partnering or joint ventures for economic benefits
- professional advisers
- linkages to funding programs (NHT/Landcare, etc. social/cultural/environment)—one stop shop for information, and
- database for matching opportunities and funding sources
- critical mass for large scale projects
- production
- networking between communities
- niche operations
- joint production, e.g. bush tucker—national label and national approach, and
- joint marketing
- carbon trading
- become a ‘solutions broker’ and streamline funding sources.

A comprehensive checklist like this will provide guidance and expertise for the parties involved, facilitate and nurture the development of ideas, ensure effective and efficient information flow, and provide the mechanisms to realise the potential in an opportunity for the benefit of all. In addition, the Indigenous Forestry Unit can act as a contact point or 'help desk' for ongoing support.

Refer to recommendations 5, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14 below.

30.8 RECOGNITION OF SOCIAL AND CULTURAL ISSUES

In many instances forestry industry players have had little interaction or experience with Indigenous Australians. For the NIFS to achieve its potential the stakeholders will need to understand social and cultural differences and integrate this understanding into developing business opportunities. This provides a challenge for the NIFS that will be best overcome by a number of the initiatives referred to above, for example, regional forums, case studies and the development of projects. Cross-cultural training will be an important component of the education package.

Refer to recommendations 14 and 15 below.

30.9 MEASURING THE NIFS OUTCOMES

An effective management, implementation, monitoring and review plan for the NIFS, including measures for ongoing support of Indigenous people and communities, is complex as the outcomes of the NIFS are generally subjective and long term in nature.

The management and implementation of the NIFS is best handled through a single desk approach. This will also centralise the monitoring of the NIFS and the collection of relevant data. The monitoring of the NIFS will rely on qualitative and quantitative data to support initiatives related to each strategy platform.

Relevant data to be collected includes:

- information supporting a more effective focus and alignment of state and Commonwealth funding and programs to achieve the NIFS objectives
- ongoing financial commitment from the forestry industry, and federal and state governments to the NIFS, direct and indirect
- feedback from revisiting sites in three years time
- employment outcomes—apprenticeships and FTEs
- start ups/joint ventures instigated
- cultural/environmental/social/economic outcomes
- forest ownership by Indigenous landowners or communities.

The success or otherwise of the NIFS will also be difficult to assess due to the lack of current data on the above measures, as the majority of information gathered in the NIFS project is anecdotal. There may be merit in establishing a database of Indigenous community involvement in the forestry industry sorted by location, business type, number of employees and monetary values or other criteria as required.

Refer to recommendations 16 and 17 below.

31. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Establish a specialist Indigenous Forestry Unit (IFU) to act as a focal point for the NIFS. The likely location for the IFU would be within DAFF or possibly the National Association of Forest Industries (NAFI) and the position would be for an initial period of three years. The primary functions for the Unit during this period would be to:

   - develop a marketing plan to actively promote and communicate the NIFS and encourage stakeholders to become involved;
   - establish a comprehensive database of stakeholders interested in increasing Indigenous involvement in the wood and non-wood products forestry industry;
   - establish an information bank relevant to the NIFS that would include:
     - a toolkit for forest resource assessment appropriate to the NIFS objectives;
     - a project checklist and 'How to' guides for project development;
     - an inventory of Indigenous forest based activities and products including case studies of successful NIFS related initiatives;
     - models of successful partnerships, joint venture arrangements and other business arrangements between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people that define the key ingredients for their success, and can in turn be duplicated; case studies and models where there is a natural relationship to build on will be of particular importance;
   - develop an information plan to ensure a regular flow of relevant information to the database and the wider community;
   - instigate a national coordinated approach to training and project funding by funding providers—ATSIS, DEWR, DAFF, the Indigenous Land Corporation (ILC)—to achieve the NIFS outcomes;
   - develop a job placement and mentoring program to place trained Indigenous Australians in wood product and non-wood product forestry industry positions;
   - develop a scholarship and mentoring program to place trained school leavers in both wood product and non-wood product forestry industry positions;
   - develop and incorporate cross cultural training units into forestry industry training programs; and
   - in consultation with the forestry industry, prepare an education package about the industry to be delivered in the areas of interest.

2. Establish a framework to encourage regional forums and networks to develop involving Indigenous communities, the forestry industry and governments interested in NIFS outcomes.

   The aim of these forums is to provide a vehicle for Indigenous communities, the forestry industry and government to talk about key issues—including business development, training and resource access—which are important to increasing the involvement of Indigenous Australians in the forestry industry.

3. Develop a National Indigenous Employment Strategy for the forestry industry (ATSIC, DEWR, forestry industry training providers) that:
   - confirms the industry's skill level needs and developing trends
   - assesses existing training programs and how they can be delivered to assist Indigenous communities
   - provides a gap analysis and where the gap is substantial, establishes specific nationally accredited Indigenous forestry courses
   - delivers relevant training in a coordinated manner.
4. Define intellectual property issues associated with Indigenous Australian business and cultural heritage in the wood and non-wood forestry industry, and work with appropriate government, legal, Indigenous community, industry and business organisations to introduce steps to protect the intellectual property rights of Indigenous Australians.
5. Undertake a mapping exercise to define areas of interest where potential exists to increase Indigenous involvement in the forestry industry. The mapping would principally identify broad forest areas that could provide opportunities for Indigenous communities.
6. For each of the areas of interest, identify the range of forest based activities in wood and non-wood products that may provide opportunities for Indigenous communities. Subsequently, select target sites in the areas of interest and key individuals who can act as regional coordinators to interface with the regional forum network to:
   - develop and maintain links between Indigenous communities, the forestry industry and governments interested in NIFS outcomes;
   - encourage regional community involvement, establish networks and identify projects; and
   - identify the key research issues for the target sites and the range of opportunities.
7. Bring together forestry industry, Indigenous community and government representatives to address the issue of access to Australia's forests for Indigenous communities.
8. Establish a NIFS Project Committee to:
   - oversee the work of the IFU and the regional forums;
   - review and make recommendations on the NIFS process;
   - work towards an alignment of federal and state/territory policies with respect to forest management issues as they impact on Indigenous people;
   - act as an interface between policy makers and the NIFS stakeholders; and
   - monitor the NIFS outcomes by measuring key performance indicators relevant to Indigenous involvement in Australia's wood and non-wood products forestry industry.
9. Adequately resource the IFU and NIFS Project Committee for an initial period of three years.

10. Establish a high profile NIFS tree-planting program for Community Development Employment Projects (CDEPs) that establishes future plantation resources to meet wood and non-wood product forestry industry needs.

11. Develop a National Bush Tucker and Bush Medicines Strategy.

12. Identify key research issues for the range of forest based opportunities relevant to the NIFS, and target research and development organisations to include NIFS research priorities in their programs. Harness research and development funding and activities to help achieve NIFS outcomes, including:

- advising key research and development organisations associated with the forestry industry of the NIFS and establishing links for information exchange and project support;
- establishing a means of applying research and development outcomes relevant to the NIFS in practices that can be transferred to and realistically used by Indigenous Australians on forestry projects; and
- in collaboration with existing Commonwealth, state and regional research institutions, establishing a means of focusing research and development efforts on the special requirements of Indigenous communities and the interface with the forestry industry.

13. Recognise the role Indigenous communities can play in the conservation and management of forested lands and the range of wood and non-wood products they can provide, and incorporate this role in forestry industry, Indigenous community and government management plans.

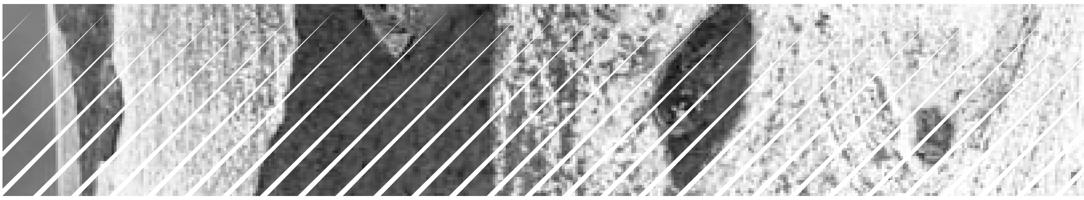
14. Promote the importance of integrating Indigenous forestry activities with planning for complementary activities.

15. Ensure that culturally sensitive areas are identified and protected within forested areas.

16. Revisit in 2006–07 the eight sites visited in the NIFS development stage to assess any changes in Indigenous involvement in the wood and non-wood product forestry industry as a result of the NIFS. Quantitative measures could include:

- number of forest based projects where Indigenous Australians are involved;
- number of locations where Indigenous Australians are involved in forest based businesses;
- number of Indigenous Australians involved in wood and non-wood products forest based activities;
- number of Indigenous businesses in the forestry industry; and
- annual production and turnover statistics for these businesses.

17. In 2006–07, review the project database of Indigenous involvement in the wood and non-wood forestry industry to assess changes in Indigenous involvement as a result of the NIFS.



PART VIII: APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

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Appendix 2

Abbreviations and acronyms used

ACC	Area Consultative Committee
ACFA	Association of Consulting Foresters of Australia
AFG	Australian Forest Growers
AFS	Australian Forestry Standard
ALT	Aboriginal Land Trust
ATSIC	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission
ATSIS	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Services
BDP	Business Development Program
CALM	Department of Conservation and Land Management
CDEP	Community Development Employment Program
CJP	Community Jobs Program
CMACC	Central Murray Area Consultative Committee
DAFF	Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
DEH	Department of Environment and Heritage, South Australia
DEWR	Department of Employment and Workplace Relations
DPIF	Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries
DSE	Department of Sustainability and Environment
FAFPESC	Forest and Forest Products Employment Skills Company
FITNET	Forest Industry Training Network
FMP	Forest Management Plans
FNFP	First Nations Forestry Program, Canada
FSC	Forestry Stewardship Council
FTE	Full time equivalent
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GTFP	Green Triangle Forest Products
HVP	Hancock Victorian Plantations
IBA	Indigenous Business Australia
ICV	Indigenous Community Volunteers

IEP	Indigenous Employment Program
IFA	Institute of Foresters of Australia
IFU	Indigenous Forestry Unit
ILC	Indigenous Land Corporation
ILMF	Indigenous Land Management Facilitators
ISBF	Indigenous Small Business Fund
ITAB	Industry Training Advisory Body
ITBRP	Indigenous Tourism Business Ready Program
ITLG	Indigenous Tourism Leadership Group
LITA	Logging Investigation and Training Association
MTGP	Master TreeGrowers Program
NAFI	National Association of Forest Industries
NHT	Natural Heritage Trust
NIFS	National Indigenous Forestry Strategy
NPI	National Plantation Inventory
PFDCS	Private Forestry Development Committees
PTMC	Provincial-Territorial Management Committees
RFA	Regional Forest Agreements
SEACC	South Eastern Area Consultative Committee
SFNSW	State Forests of NSW
STEP	Structured Training and Employment Program
TASMAC	Tiwi and Sylvatech Management Advisory Committee
TCA	Timber Communities Australia Inc
TLUOS	Traditional Land Use and Occupancy Studies
UNFF	United Nations Forum on Forests

Further information about bush tucker and bush medicines

www.bushtucker.com.au

www.globalgourmet.com

www.teachers.ash.org.au/bushtucker

www.theepicentre.com/australia/aufood

www.messagestick.com.au

www.abc.net.au

APPENDIX 3

WORK SUMMARY FOR THE NIFS PROJECT

Table 6: Scope of work summary for the NIFS project

Stage	*Description*	*Key outputs and status*	*Timing*
Stage One	Preparation	Completed	
Task 1	Met with Steering Committee in Canberra	Agree on sites and schedule Seed initial database	March/April 2003
Task 2	Gather & review information	Desktop research	Ongoing
Task 3	Publicly notify stakeholders and call for submissions	Media launch and follow up media releases Advertisements in National publications Posting on DAFF website Communication with database	May, June and July 2003
Stage Two	Consultation	Completed	
Task 1	Indigenous community workshops at eight selected sites around Australia	Identify consultation site coordinators and invitation lists Establish links and suitable venues with local groups	July, August and September 2003
Task 2	Forestry industry meetings	Establish database Preparation for site visits—coordinate sites, venues, travel arrangements etc Undertake consultations Summarise consultation responses—including RSVPs and submissions (formal and informal) Respond to queries throughout	
Stage Three	Desktop research & analysis	Ongoing	Ongoing
Stage Four	Strategy development	Completed	October 2003
Stage Five	Scoping report		
Task 1	Write draft report	Draft report and circulate to Steering Committee for feedback.	December 2003 January 2004
Task 2	Obtain feedback from Steering Committee	Incorporate feedback from Stage Five.	February and April 2004
Task 3	Finalise scoping report		May 2004

APPENDIX 4

SCHEDULE OF SITE VISITS

Table 7: Indigenous community workshops

Date	*Location*		*Number of attendees*
Tues 5 August	Western Australia	Manjimup Community Centre, Manjimup	30
Thurs 7 August	Western Australia	Mogumber Farm, Moora	28
Thurs 14 August	South Australia	Burrandies and SE Nungas, Mt Gambier	31
Mon 18 August	Tasmania	Risdon Cove Aboriginal Heritage Site, Hobart	11
Thurs 21 August	Victoria	Dharnya Centre, Barmah Forest	42
Thurs 28 August	New South Wales	South Grafton Ex-Servicemen's Club, Grafton	34
Mon 1 September	Queensland	Warrama Cultural Centre, Cairns	20
Wed 3 September	Northern Territory	Pirlangimpi, Tiwi Islands	11
	TOTAL ATTENDEES AT ALL LOCATIONS		**207**

Table 8: Forestry industry meetings

Date	*Location*		*Number of attendees*
Mon 4 August & Wed 6 August	Western Australia	Forest Industries Federation of Western Australia 5 separate consultations with 9 people (Perth)	9
Fri 15 August	South Australia	Forestry SA, Mount Gambier 4 separate consultations with 6 people	6
Tues 19 August	Tasmania	Forest Industries Association of Tasmania 5 separate consultations with 9 people (Hobart)	9
Wed 20 August	Victoria	Victorian Association of Forest Industries, 2 separate consultations with 2people (Melbourne)	2
Wed 27 August	New South Wales	Timber & Building Materials Association and Timber Development Association 5 separate consultations with 9 people (Sydney)	9
Fri 29 August	Queensland	Timber Queensland 1 Forestry industry consultations with 8 people (Brisbane)	8
Thurs 4 September	Northern Territory	TASMAC, Darwin 1 consultation with 11 people	11
	TOTAL ATTENDEES AT ALL LOCATIONS		**54**

Table 9: Total people in attendance during consultations

Consultation Group	*Number of attendees*
Community consultations	207
Forestry industry consultations	54
TOTAL	**261**

Appendix 5

TYPICAL PROCEEDINGS AT INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY SITE VISITS

WELCOME

INTRODUCE THE NIFS - WHAT IS IT?

Introduction to the NIFS by Consulting Team including:

- Video entitled Have Your Say, prepared by ATSIS.
- The NIFS is a joint initiative between ATSIC and DAFF.
- Objectives of the NIFS.
- Summarise the process being used to develop the NIFS.
- State the outcomes anticipated for the NIFS, namely
  - economic independence
  - provide input into Regional, State and National forest management and policy development, and
  - improved management of forests and plantations for all of their benefits (economic, cultural, social and environmental).

INTRODUCTIONS

Introduce the NIFS team, namely BDO Consulting, Site Co-ordinators and Steering Committee members.

WHAT IS A FOREST?

- broad definition of both native forest and planted forest was used for the purposes of the NIFS
- consideration of both wood and non-wood products with a similarly broad definition of each; the following examples were provided:
  - Wood—management, nursery operations, ground preparation, planting, harvesting, transport, milling, value adding, speciality areas (bush furniture), cultural practices
  - Non-wood—cultural heritage, environmental tourism, educational/scientific tours, special events (e.g. functions, cultural events), bush tucker, beekeeping, bark collection, retail opportunities (art, food/local produce, native plants), rehabilitation/environmental revegetation (mining sites, riparian zones, enrichment planting, bio-links), low impact eco cabin/tent accommodation.

FEEDBACK

The meeting was opened up for discussion on the major areas for input into the NIFS. This revolved around the following main questions:

- What forest activities that involve Indigenous Australians happen now (in your region) or are planned for the future?
- What are the benefits to Indigenous communities (in your region and elsewhere) from being involved in the forest, timber and associated industries?
- What is stopping Indigenous involvement in the forest, timber, and associated industries?
- What are the benefits to the forestry industry if Indigenous people become involved?
- What is stopping forest and timber forestry industry businesses increasing Indigenous participation in the forestry industry?
- What would you like to see in the National Indigenous Forestry Strategy?

THANKS AND CLOSURE

APPENDIX 6

FOREST PRODUCTS—TOTAL WOOD

Table 10: Hardwood harvested from native forests, 1991–2001 (Million cubic metres)

Product	*1991*	*1992*	*1993*	*1994*	*1995*	*1996*	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*Var*
Saw & veneer logs	3.9	3.7	4.0	4.3	4.3	3.9	3.9	3.4	3.5	3.6	3.7	-1.8
Sleeper logs	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	-9.5
Pulpwood for:												
wood based panels	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1				0
paper & paperboard	5.3	5.1	5.2	5.0	6.1	5.6	5.2	6.6	5.7	7.6	7.7	+3.6
other logs	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	-6.1
TOTAL	**10.0**	**9.5**	**9.8**	**9.8**	**10.9**	**9.9**	**9.5**	**10.3**	**9.5**	**11.5**	**11.7**	**+1.0**

Source: URS Australia (2002)

Table 11: Total area of plantation by state/territory, December 2002

State/territory	*Area of plantation (hectares)*			
	Hardwood	*Softwood*	*Other*	*Total*
Australian Capital Territory	194	15 713	0	15 907
New South Wales	51 289	270 467	923	322 679
Northern Territory	3198	3817	0	7015
Queensland	25 969	181 598	407	207 974
South Australia	32 351	116 768	261	149 380
Tasmania	135 284	78 162	0	213 446
Victoria	142 553	217 285	35	359 873
Western Australia	247 500	104 054	0	351 554
TOTAL	**638 337**	**987 864**	**1626**	**1 627 827**

Source: National Forest Inventory, 2003

Table 12: Forecast Australian plantation log supply, 2001–2044 (Million cubic metres)

Product	*2001–04*	*2005–09*	*2010–14*	*2015–19*	*2020–24*	*2025–29*	*2030–34*	*2035–39*	*2040–44*
Softwood sawlogs	9.0	9.2	9.4	9.6	9.7	9.8	10.0	10.1	10.3
Softwood pulplogs	6.1	5.8	5.5	5.4	5.3	5.2	5.3	5.3	5.3
Total softwood	15.1	15.0	15.0	15.0	15.0	15.1	15.2	15.4	15.7
Hardwood sawlogs	0.2	0.3	0.4	1.4	1.4	1.3	1.3	1.4	1.5
Hardwood pulplogs	2.4	8.3	10.8	10.7	10.6	10.6	10.3	10.2	10.1
Total hardwood	*2.6*	*8.6*	*11.2*	*12.1*	*12.0*	*11.9*	*11.6*	*11.6*	*11.6*
TOTAL LOG SUPPLY	**17.7**	**23.6**	**26.2**	**27.1**	**27.0**	**27.0**	**26.8**	**27.0**	**27.3**

Source: URS Australia (2002)

APPENDIX 7

WOOD BASED INDUSTRIES—NATIVE AND PLANTED FORESTS

Sawn Hardwood

Gunns Limited, Tasmania

Boral Limited, New South Wales

SOTICO (Bunnings), Western Australia

Neville Smith Timbers Pty Ltd, Victoria

SAWN SOFTWOOD

Carter Holt Harvey, South Australia, Victoria and New South Wales

Carter Holt Harvey—Boral JV

Weyerhaeuser, South Australia and New South Wales

Hyne & Son, Queensland and New South Wales

Auspine, South Australia

Wespine—Fletcher Building Products, Western Australia

PLYWOOD

Boral Hancock, Queensland

Carter Holt Harvey, South Australia and Victoria

North Coast Plywood (NORCO), New South Wales

Big River Timbers, New South Wales

Ausply, New South Wales

LAMINATED VENEER LUMBER

Carter Holt Harvey, South Australia

PARTICLEBOARD

Carter Holt Harvey, South Australia and New South Wales

Fletcher Building Products

Monsbent, Victoria

MEDIUM DENSITY FIBREBOARD

Fletcher Building Products, Queensland

Carter Holt Harvey, New South Wales

Sumitomo Alpine MDF, Victoria

PULP AND PAPER

Australian Paper (PaperlinX), Victoria

Norske Skog, New South Wales

Carter Holt Harvey, Victoria

Kimberley-Clark Australia, South Australia

Visy Pulp & Paper, New South Wales and Victoria

VENEER

Gunns, Tasmania

Boral-Hancock, Queensland

Brims, Queensland

Big River Timbers, New South Wales

Pro-Veneers

ROUNDWOOD OR CHIP EXPORT

Gunns, Tasmania

Pentarch Holdings, New South Wales, Victoria

Auspine, Victoria

Carter Holt Harvey, Victoria

Harris-Daishowa, New South Wales

WAPRES, Western Australia

Southern Plantation Exporters, Victoria

Midway, Victoria

FURNITURE MANUFACTURE

Glen Holst Furniture, Western Australia

APPENDIX 8

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON WOOD BASED INDUSTRIES

LITERATURE

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ORGANISATIONS

- Department of Agriculture Fisheries and Forestry, Canberra, www.affa.gov.au
- National Association of Forest Industries, Canberra, www.nafi.com.au
- Australian Forest Growers, Canberra, www.afg.asn.au
- Plantations 2020, Canberra, www.plantations2020.com.au
- Plantations Timber Association of Australia, Melbourne, www.ptaa.com.au
- Timber Promotion Council, Melbourne, www.tpc.org.au
- Australian Paper Forestry industry Council, www.ppmfa.com.au
- Timber Communities Australia, Canberra, www.tca.org.au
- CSIRO Forestry & Forest Products, www.csiro.gov.au
- Forest and Wood Products Research & Development Corporation, Melbourne, *www.fwprdc.org.au*

STATE FOREST SERVICES

- New South Wales: State Forests of New South Wales, www.forest.nsw.gov.au
- Victoria: Department of Sustainability & Environment, www.nre.vic.gov.au
- South Australia: Forestry SA, www.forestry.sa.gov.au
- Western Australia: Forest Products Commission, www.fpc.wa.gov.au
- Queensland: Department of Primary Industries, Forestry, www.forests.qld.gov.au

- Tasmania: Forestry Tasmania, www.forestrytas.com.au
- Northern Territory: Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries

STATE FOREST FORESTRY INDUSTRY BODIES

- Victorian Association of Forest Industries, www.vafi.org.au
- New South Wales Forest Products Association, www.nswfpa.asn.au
- Timber Queensland, www.qldtimber.com.au
- Forest Industries Federation of Western Australia, www.fifwa.asn.au
- Forest Industries Association of Tasmania, www.fiatas.com.au