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TFPA Submission: Tasmanian Positive (Our State's sustainability strategy) Discussion Paper

The Tasmanian Forest Products Association (TFPA) welcomes the opportunity to make comment on the Tasmanian Positive (Our State's Sustainability Strategy) Discussion Paper, noting that Tasmania's forestry industry is already recognised as a leader in sustainability – and regarded as the "Ultimate Renewable".

Tasmania's forest industry is unique in many ways. It is based on a renewable resource that sequesters carbon. The industry employs over 5,000 direct and indirect jobs in rural and regional areas and in major cities.

The TFPA is the peak body for forestry that undertakes policy development, lobbying and advocacy for members interests. TFPA represents all elements of the value chain from the sustainable harvesting of plantations and multiple use natural forest resource including forest establishment and management, harvesting and haulage, processing of timber resources and manufacture of pulp, paper and bioproducts.

Forestry is a well-established industry in Tasmania. Our forests act as a carbon sink and produce wood-based products that help achieve climate neutrality by storing carbon, which offsets most of the State's greenhouse gas emissions. We also play a significant role in mitigating climate change, growing regional communities and providing economic benefit to the state, but we can do a lot more with support from the community to continue to grow, diversify and deliver carbon storage solutions.

The IPCC Fourth Assessment Report has stated; "A sustainable forest management strategy aimed at maintaining or increasing forest carbon stocks, while producing an annual sustained yield of timber, fibre or energy from the forest, will generate the largest sustained mitigation benefit."

Furthermore, the IPCC said: "Sustainable forest management aimed at providing timber, fibre, biomass, non-timber resources and other ecosystem functions and services, can lower GHG emissions and can contribute to adaptation (high confidence).¹"

¹ IPCC, 2019: Summary for Policymakers. In: Climate Change and Land: an IPCC special report on climate change, desertification, land degradation, sustainable land management, food security, and greenhouse gas fluxes in terrestrial ecosystems.

The forest sector is central to the ongoing transition to a low-carbon and circular future embedded in renewable, natural resources, also known as the bioeconomy. With their ability to capture and store carbon, fibre-based materials feed into a broad array of renewable solutions that can substitute non-renewable and fossil-based materials in products we use every day.

To meet a global need, forest products must be sourced from healthy, working forests that can continuously supply wood and fibre while providing multiple benefits such as carbon storage, clean air and water, natural habitat and livelihoods.

Our forestry industry can assist the Government meets its sustainability targets and actions, including:

Sustainable Development Goals

Forestry has the capacity to help advance each of the 17 Goals in a variety of ways. However, for the purpose of this strategy and to achieve maximum impact, it was important to identify the SDGs where the sector can have the most influence or ability to drive innovation, transformation and impact through leveraging its role in the value chain.

SDGs 7, 8, 11, 12, 13 and 15 are identified as the core SDGs where the industry has the potential to make the most significant and direct contribution by creating long-term value and driving sector transformation.

While SDGs 4, 5, 6 and 9 are identified as supportive SDGs. This is where the industry can leverage its influence to advance inclusive and sustainable economic growth through innovation and transparency.

Increased tree canopy in urban areas

The industry fully supports the increase in tree canopy in urban areas, not only for the natural shade it provides - reducing the urban heat island effect, but also for the myriad of health benefits from a greener urban environment.

However, beyond the potential green canopy benefits, the commitment to the use of timber and wood products in our urban areas will have a significant impact on Tasmania's sustainability goals, using carbon-sequestering timber and wood in our state's home construction.

Tasmania's well balanced and diversified sustainable forest industry will be critical in building the thousands of new homes needed in Tasmania. It will also need to involve all sectors of forestry.

Plantation forest timber:

- The timber frames for our homes, engineered wood products used to build new multi-storey residential and commercial buildings, wood-based panels for our kitchens, and wood fibre used to manufacture newsprint, packaging and bioproducts, replacing single use plastics. In addition, residues go into making potting mix, mulches, composts and landscaped products for our gardens.

Native forest timber:

- Floorboards, staircases and furniture, while the residues and secondary timbers are used to make pallets, paper and packaging, replacing single use plastics. Also, local processing of timber products including ply, veneer and construction timber.

TFPA represents forest growers, harvesters, and manufacturers of timber, wood and fibre products.

The use of wood products that store carbon for long periods in building construction applications, can sequester carbon for longer. This has the additional benefit of replacing more emissions-intensive building products such as concrete and steel.

50 per cent women in senior leadership roles and on boards in all sectors

The Tasmanian forestry sector is a key employer in Tasmania, with over 5000 employed by the industry in rural and regional areas and in major cities. The majority of our members are actively involved in promoting opportunities for women in senior management.

Additionally, the industry is actively encouraging strong and diverse workplaces through programs such as its:

- Forest Industry Workforce Development and Implementation Plan; and
- Connecting and Belonging: Forest Industry Diversity Action Plan.

The results of the forestry industry's commitment to gender diversity is already showing results. The individual award winners in the recently held Tasmanian Timber Awards 2023 were predominately women. Our industry is proud of the opportunities it has created for women and is committed to offer further opportunities for gender diversity.

In conclusion, the future of Tasmanian forestry is key to the Tasmanian Governments desire for sustainability. Incorporating sustainable forest management and its products at the centre of this strategy will be critical to ensure that policies and plans are well designed and avoid any unintended consequences.

I look forward to further discussing the Government's sustainability action plan, as the process of design and implementation is undertaken.

Yours sincerely,



Nick Steel
Chief Executive Officer