



Summary management plan for plantations and South West native forests

Introduction

The Forest Products Commission (FPC) is responsible for the sustainable management and development of Western Australia's native forest, plantation and sandalwood industries on land owned or leased by the State. Our vision is 'to build and maintain an environmentally sustainable and commercially viable forest products industry that provides economic and social benefits to the people of Western Australia.'

This summary plan provides an overview of forest management within our Defined Forest Area (DFA) as certified under the Australian Forestry Standard for Sustainable Forest Management (AS: 4708-2013) administered by Responsible Wood. AFS certification is endorsed by the Programme for Endorsement for Forestry Certification Schemes (PEFC). This certification covers our South West native forest operations and softwood plantations, including those on private property. It also includes mixed eucalyptus plantations on land owned by the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation. It excludes native sandalwood operations and areas covered by active mining tenements. Maps of our DFA are available on our website.



Photo: Rainbow Trail near Pemberton (karri regrowth forest)

Legal and other requirements

FPC is a Statutory Authority governed by the *Forest Products Act 2000* (the Act) and sections of the *Forest Management Regulations 1993*. We also operate in accordance with a wide range of legislative and other compliance requirements, including the Conservation and Parks Commission's *Forest Management Plan (FMP) 2014-2023*.

The FMP is developed in accordance with principles of ecologically sustainable forest management (ESFM) and the requirements of relevant State and Commonwealth legislation. The Conservation and Parks Commission develops the plan in consultation with stakeholders. Prior to the FMP's implementation it is reviewed by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and approved by the Minister for Environment. More information about the development of the FMP is available on the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) website. DBCA and the Conservation and Parks Commission oversee compliance with the FMP.

The FPC also manages plantations on private property, which are not subject to FMP requirements, although are subject to the relevant State and Commonwealth legislation as well as Local Government by-laws. Our private property plantations are referred to as sharefarms, and operate through profit-a-prendre arrangements.

Figure 1 provides an overview of the legislative framework governing both South West native forest and plantations (including private softwood plantations under sharefarm arrangements).



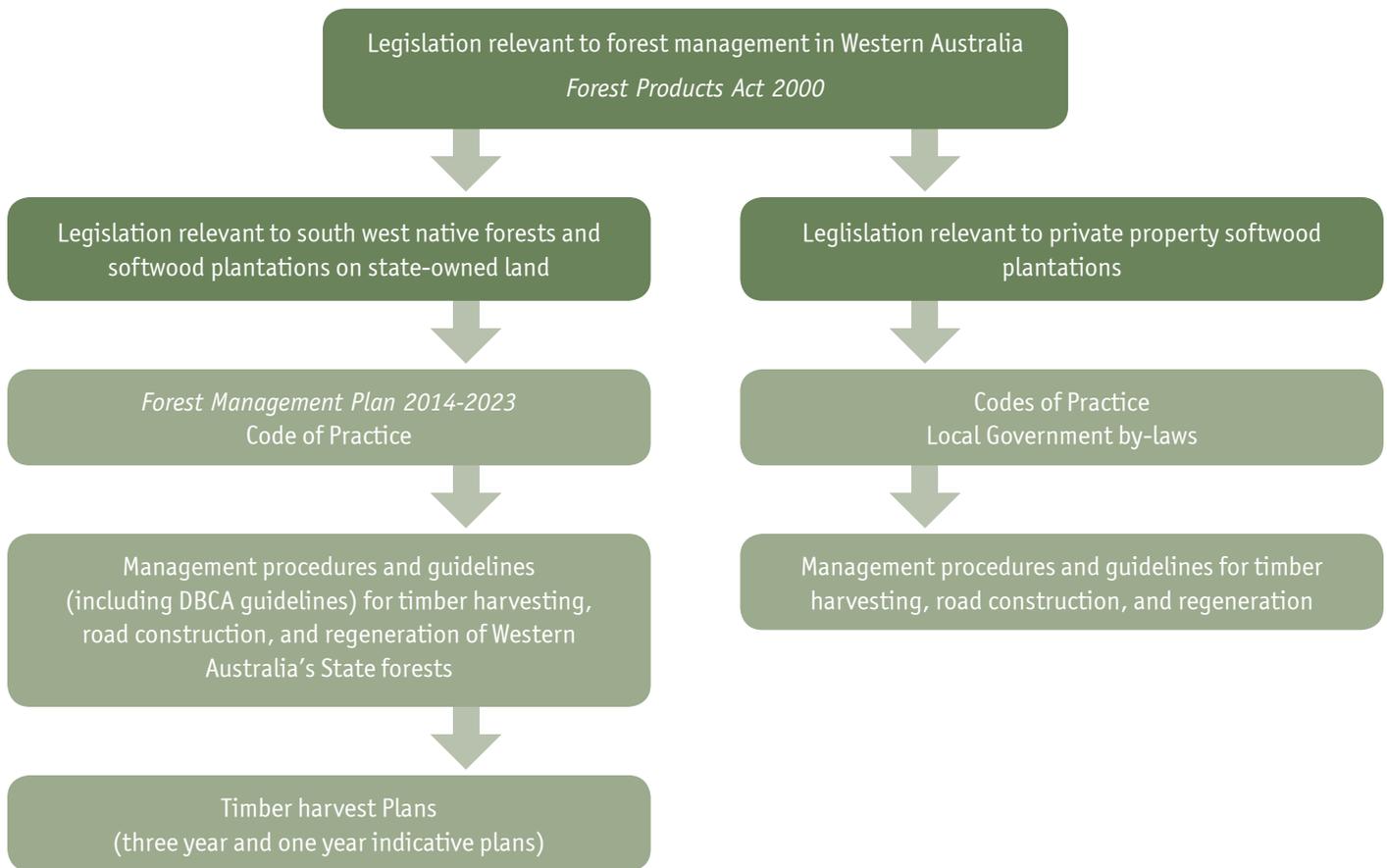


Figure 1: An overarching view of our legislative framework for forest management from legislative requirements down to site level operational requirements

In addition to legislative requirements, we incorporate voluntary requirements into our management. These include:

1. Environmental Management Systems ISO 14001 – for all our operations; and
2. Australian Forestry Standard (AS: 4708-2013) – for areas under our DFA (see introduction).

As part of our robust system for ensuring we meet legal and other requirements, we develop various policies, procedures and guidelines. ‘Policy 9 - Forest management’ is our overarching forestry and environmental policy.

Forest values

The basis of good forest management stems from the principles of ESFM. Management of the forests according to the principles of ESFM takes into account environmental, economic, social and heritage values. These forest values are not considered in isolation, as there is considerable overlap between them. For example, protecting soil and water resources is important for biodiversity, and productive capacity. Also, the conservation of soil and water is important for preserving the value of the land for the culture and heritage of Noongar persons. Water also provides an essential commodity for the community. Our South West native forests and plantations are managed to ensure the protection of a range of values including, biological diversity, ecosystem health and vitality, soil and water resources, productive capacity, natural and cultural heritage, and socio-economic benefits. Further detail about these values is included in the FMP and in the FPC’s management plan for the karri forest.





In addition, the FMP was developed considering a long history of research from a wide range of disciplines, including, but not limited to, forestry, botany, wildlife biology, catchment management, and cultural heritage. The FPC continues to work with a number of organisations to contribute to ongoing research.

Monitoring for ongoing improvement

The FPC monitors its operations and undertakes a risk assessment to understand what activities or operations are likely to have the highest potential negative impact/s. The outcome of this assessment is recorded on a register, where objectives are also listed. To help us meet our objectives, specific targets are set to mitigate or reduce the potential for negative impacts to occur. As an activity may have the potential to result in multiple impacts, multiple objectives and targets can be associated with one activity. Reviews of our management against the targets occur routinely to understand how we can continue to improve. In addition we also report all incidents and this information is also used to see how we can improve.



Photo: Pine plantation near Balingup

Forest operations and silviculture

Silviculture is the theory and practice of managing forests in terms of its regeneration, composition, health, and growth to achieve specific objectives. Our native forest and plantation operations are tailored to suit a number of silvicultural objectives that take into account one or more factors such as current forest health, stand productivity, biodiversity, and water resources. The type of forest also has an impact on how it is managed. Silvicultural guidelines are based on extensive research.

The FPC manages its native forest operations in accordance with DBCA's guidelines for silviculture. There are separate silvicultural guidelines for karri and jarrah forests that are suited to their different ecosystem processes. Both silvicultural prescriptions have been subject to review by a panel of independent experts. Silvicultural guidelines for plantations are developed by the FPC and take into account site productivity. Commercial and non-commercial thinning is undertaken to reduce competition as the plantation grows.

We manage our operations within prescribed harvest limits, so the renewable forest products that are sold today, will continue to be available for future generations to come. Annual harvest allowances in native forest operations are based on the sustained yield. More information about sustained yield, including a definition is contained in the FMP.

Management of wildfire

Our forests are managed to prevent the spread of wildfire. Uncontrolled spread of large wildfires can have a substantial impact on both the environment and our business. However, fire can also be a useful silvicultural tool. Appropriate fire regimes in native forest ecosystems help to promote natural regeneration, ecosystem health and vitality, and biodiversity. DBCA has primary responsibility for managing fire within areas covered by the FMP, and part of this involves prescribed burning to reduce fuel build up. Within private sharefarm areas, the Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES) has primary responsibility for emergency fire management. The FPC contributes to the State's hazard reduction and bushfire response capacity by making our trained staff available for fire prevention and suppression activities. More information about fire management is also included in the FMP.

Chemical use

The FPC minimises the use of chemicals where possible, but they are often necessary to control weeds and damaging insect pests and diseases within a plantation environment. The FPC only uses Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) approved chemicals and has a process for ensuring their safe and environmentally responsible handling and use, in accordance with relevant legislation.



Photo: Forest operations in the jarrah forest near Nannup

Forest resources and inventory

A brief description of each of the forest types and units we manage within our DFA is as follows:

1. Northern jarrah dominant forest – *Eucalyptus marginata* (jarrah) dominates this dry sclerophyll eucalyptus forest, which is uneven aged. *Corymbia calophylla* (marri) occurs throughout the jarrah forest. *Eucalyptus wandoo* (wandoo) and *Eucalyptus accedens* (powderbark wandoo) can be found on the drier eastern range and *Eucalyptus patens* (blackbutt) in moister sites.
2. Southern jarrah dominant forest – *Eucalyptus marginata* (jarrah) dominates this dry sclerophyll eucalyptus forest, which is uneven aged. *Corymbia calophylla* (marri) occurs throughout. The cooler southern forests can comprise a mix of *Eucalyptus diversicolor* (karri) and *Eucalyptus guilfoylei* (yellow tingle) and *Eucalyptus jacksonii* (red tingle).
3. Karri dominant forest – *Eucalyptus diversicolor* (karri) dominates this wet sclerophyll eucalyptus forest, which occurs in the lower South West of Western Australia. This forest regenerates after removal of the dense understorey (naturally through fire). Some areas of forest are described as 'pure karri', with other areas containing *Corymbia calophylla* (marri), and a smaller portion contains *Eucalyptus marginata* (jarrah).
4. Softwood plantations – Our softwood plantations mainly comprise of the pine species *Pinus radiata* (radiata pine) and *Pinus pinaster* (maritime pine), but also include small amounts of other pine species.
5. Mixed eucalyptus plantations – These plantations contains a range of exotic eucalyptus species. Once harvested, FPC plans to plant these areas as pine plantation.

Each of these forest types produce a variety of timber products. Log production data is collected to ensure we have an accurate record of what we have harvested. Each year we publish details of forest products, by species and product type in our Annual Report. We also provide an overview of the trends in the areas harvested, with historical records for both softwoods and South West native forest products dating back to the 1970s. We plan for future harvest by developing and pursuing marketing opportunities for the product that will be available.

Plan implementation

The FPC's forest management is monitored and continually improved to achieve best practice. This is achieved through an Integrated Forest Management System, which ensures that all legal and other compliance obligations are identified and managed under a corporate governance framework. The framework provides the basis for strategic planning, ongoing development of procedures and work instructions, measurement of performance, and review for ensuring improvement. As part of maintaining and improving our system, both internal and external reviews as well as internal and external auditing takes place.

External auditing includes auditing by DBCA to assess our performance against FMP compliance requirements, as well as auditing by independent environmental and forest management certification bodies.



Stakeholder commitment

The FPC is committed to engaging with stakeholders on an ongoing basis, as this forms an essential part of forest management (refer to Policy 9 - Forest management). There are a number of opportunities to engage with the FPC including, but not limited to:

- the release of indicative harvest plans;
- during the preparation of site level (coupe or plantation specific) plans;
- through operational specific notifications;
- through our feedback and complaints process; and
- via feedback on information materials, or plans such as the FPC's management plan for the karri forest.

These opportunities for engagement can help us to improve. If you would like further information and/or to have input into FPC's forest management, you can contact us at info@fpc.wa.gov.au or (+618) 9363 4600. For more information about our stakeholder engagement refer to our website.