

SWS FORESTRY HUB STRATEGIC PLAN



STRATEGIC PLAN FOR SW SLOPES – ‘Damaged but not destroyed – Recovery towards 2050’

Goal – By 2050, the SW Slopes Forestry Hub softwood plantation estates have been restored to pre-fire levels, and a further 45,000 ha has been added to expand the estate to 215,000 ha. The industry now supports the employment of 8,400 people, supports \$3.2 billion in gross output, and contributes \$1.5 billion to regional value-added (at 2020 prices). This growth has been achieved by delivering action under the following four themes, involving collaboration between the industry and the surrounding regional communities, local Government, NSW & Vic State Governments, and the Australian Government:

Community Engagement	People/Skills	Adequate Infrastructure	Resource Security
<p>Goal : The local community is engaged with the forest-based industry and recognises the industry as an important source of jobs and wealth with excellent management practices. The softwood plantations sector is appreciated for its’ carbon sequestration capacity.</p>	<p>Goal: The industry is supported with an appropriately trained and skilled workforce, in accordance with national training standards and accreditations. The forest industry is a preferred work place and occupation</p>	<p>Goal: The industry is supported with infrastructure of adequate capability and standard, to enable processors to maintain global competitiveness.</p>	<p>Goal: Regional plantation estate has been restored to 2019 levels by 2028, and subsequently expanded. The industry has been restructured to balance supply and demand over the next 30 years, and higher fibre yields (tonne/ha) are achieved by close attention to plantation design and silvicultural management. The industry is recognised for its positive contribution towards ameliorating climate change impacts as well as its socio-economic benefits.</p>
<p>Actions :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop fact sheets • Hold public workshops • Develop communications strategy, including development of Newsletter and social media platform/s. • Plan for Spring “Festival of the Forest” event (with sponsors) • Organise forest tours for decision makers, community groups and thought leaders 	<p>Actions :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey industry to identify current and future skill demands – now and over next 30 years • Update information from NE Vic • Work with training providers to ensure appropriate training available • Encourage workforce entrants to view industry as offering career pathways • Effectively engage with other organisations providing skills and training services 	<p>Actions :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roads – continue to identify “weak links” in logistic system • Identify supply chain productivity improvement potential • Energy – maximise efficiency (e.g. use of waste products as biofuel) 	<p>Actions :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete recovery from 2020 fires, with salvage of at least 4.5 million tonnes. • Commence replanting of areas lost to fire – public and private • Develop comprehensive set of socio-economic metrics for entire Hub region • Prepare comprehensive supply/demand forecasting scenarios • Identify options for plantation expansion (area and tenure). • Provide input into future protection strategies for the plantation estate. • Promote carbon sequestration capacity.

Pillar 1: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

Goal –The local community is engaged with forest-based industry, and supports the industry as an important source of jobs and wealth for the region. The industry is recognised for using excellent management practices across all sectors.

Element	Action	Who	When	Outcome
Fact Sheets on all relevant issues, including carbon and water implications, silvicultural practices, socio-economic role of industry, etc.	Identify fact sheets required. Review FIC sheets & update as required. Prepare series for publication.	Executive	Dec 2021	Information available to address issues regarding plantations. Community-based support for the industry is enhanced and based on readily available facts and data. Material for use in forest tours. Role of plantations in carbon sequestration is recognised and appreciated
Public Workshops	Identify and brief facilitator. Design structure. Host open workshops.	Executive	June 2021 (or when COVID-19 under control)	Community more engaged with industry. Identification of any issues and concerns that need to be addressed.
Develop communication strategy (including Newsletter and social media). Develop resource for skilled public speakers to promote industry in wider community. Deliver 'good news stories' to local media.	Identify resources required to develop relevant strategy, including channels, format, delivery, etc. Prepare photographic & video resources. Update website and prepare a social media platform. Ensure alignment with wider industry (national) goals	Executive External resources	Dec 2020	Community engaged with industry. Information on hub activities available. Local media engaged. Social media available & well utilised. Up to date and useful Website relied on by local industry and the community. Industry promoted in local education agencies, and awareness of industry included in curricula to encourage future career paths.
Spring Festival of the Forest	Plan event Gain sponsorships Co-ordinate with Riverina Arts Council (planning similar event)	Executive	October 2021	Positive feedback from local community. Arts/Tourism funding gained.
Forest Tours - Educate politicians and other thought leaders on industry	Conduct forest tours Develop list of individuals & groups to be taken on tour Update fact sheets	Executive	Continual	Greater understanding of industry amongst all sectors of the community
Promote industry in region generally	Provide interpretive signage for tourist routes (e.g. Rail Trail) on role of industry in region.	Executive	Dec 2020	Tourists can gain information on presence, history and role of industry to appreciate contribution made to region.

Pillar 2: PEOPLE/SKILLS STRATEGY

Goal –The industry is supported with an appropriately trained and skilled workforce, in accordance with national training standards and accreditations, that match the needs of new technology adopted over the period to 2050. The forest industry is a preferred work place and occupation, and career paths for young entrants are developed.

Elements required/Action Plans

Element	Action	Who	When	Outcome
Industry Skills Survey (whole of Hub region).	Conduct survey of current needs in contracting sector. Conduct survey of current needs in growing and processing sectors.	UC. Executive Executive	June 2021	Data compiled on demographics of current workforce, over entire Hub region. Current skills gaps identified
Identify future skills needs.	Work with contractors (FIC) and with growers and processors to identify future skills required. Develop accurate recording/monitoring systems for skills accreditation and currency.	Executive	By June 2021	Forecasts of likely skills requirements into future.
Prepare industry summary of gaps (numbers and type) over time.	Use demographics to estimate retirements and required new entrants to industry.	Executive. ForestWorks?	By Dec 2021	Information for training providers indicating the types of skills (and numbers) that will be required by the industry over the next 30 years
Work with training providers	Discuss future skills requirements with training providers, to identify what training required and when. Effectively engage with other organisations providing skills and training services.	Executive, ForestWorks	Ongoing	Appropriate course available to meet ongoing skills needs in SW Slopes Hub region.
Encourage workforce entrants to view industry as offering career pathways	Change image of industry to encourage long term career involvement. Ongoing work (with communication and engagement strategy) to promote careers available in industry (all sectors)	Executive. FIC. ForestWorks. Training Services NSW. Careers Advisors Assoc of NSW & ACT	Ongoing	Metrics developed on changing skills levels (e.g. Numbers of Cert III in recognised and relevant fields of expertise). Local youth attracted to careers in the industry, which is seen as conducive to long term career development. New arrivals to region as a result of perception of good career opportunities in exciting, modern, highly professional industry.

Pillar 3: ADEQUATE INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGY

Goal – the industry is supported with infrastructure of adequate capability and quality, to enable processors to maintain global competitiveness by logistical and energy usage efficiencies, and to ensure quality co-ordinated communications systems.

Elements required/Action Plans

Element	Action	Who	When	Outcome
Roads – continue to identify “weak links” in logistic systems. Source funding for upgrade work. Prepare economic analyses to support funding applications.	Committee to identify major road upgrades required – focus on Hub regional needs, not on LGA requirements. Include cross-border issues.	Executive. LG engineers to provide costings as required.	Ongoing, but start before Dec 2020	Continual program of road upgrades developed, with required funding, to ensure efficient logistics network for industry.
Identify supply chain productivity improvement potential.	Provide map of value chain – identify resource required. Investigate smart technologies (ML, AI, robotics, etc.)	Committee. Specialist consultant? FWPA	For 2021/22 work program	Action Plan identified to improve productivity for total industry supply chain (new practices, new products, new inputs) and thus enhance global competitiveness.
Energy – maximise processing efficiency (e.g. use of waste products as biofuel, and renewables) and encourage renewable energy projects	Work with CSIRO on relevant project. Investigate options to improve energy efficiency for industry. Acquire & utilise data from processing industry.	Committee Consultant? Industry sources. CSIRO FWPA	For 2021/22 work program	Minimise unused resource. Cost savings for energy inputs. Enhance global competitiveness.
Improve communication (towers, networks, systems) across NSW/Vic border	Include in submission to Royal Commission on bushfire.	Executive	Dec 2020	Effective co-ordination of communications on a cross-border basis to assist in fire control.

Pillar 4: RESOURCE SECURITY STRATEGY

Goal – The regional plantation estate has been fully replanted by 2028. Progress will be made on acquiring an additional 45,000 ha to expand the existing plantation base. Industry will be re-structured to balance supply and demand over next 30 years, by adopting innovative technology and operational processes.

Elements required/Action Plans

Element	Action	Who	When	Outcome
Complete the salvage program from the 2020 fires and maximise the volume of fibre recovered.	Provide information to politicians and bureaucrats of importance of salvage work, and additional costs involved	Executive, with support from committee as required.	Underway/Ongoing	At least 4.5 million tonnes of fibre recovered. Funding provided to assist industry with salvage (and other) recovery activities
Replanting of burnt plantations – public and private.	Provide information to politicians and bureaucrats of importance of rapid re-establishment of burnt areas. Provide cost estimates for public plantation planting, and subsidies required to encourage private activity.	Executive, with support from committee as required.	Underway/Ongoing	Maximum area replanted in shortest possible time. Funding provided to cover costs for public growers, and via incentives to private growers. Alignment with ‘1Billion Trees’ program
Develop comprehensive set of socio-economic metrics for Hub region	Work with Uni of Canberra (UC) to expand existing data base to include NE Vic.	UC Executive	Dec 2020	Hub has access to comprehensive and consistent baseline data for considering socio-economic growth options
Prepare comprehensive supply/demand scenario modelling that covers the medium (10-15 yrs) and long term 30+ yrs)	Work with industry to model scenarios for future resource supply, and future demand.	Executive	June 2021	Industry recovery planned can proceed, based on identified scale and timing of resource gaps. Need for restructuring can be assessed, based on understanding of future fibre supply and demand.
Explore options to encourage development of investment in additional resource.	Work on modelling of lease options, to acquire land for plantation expansion.	Executive Industry sources	June 2022	Increased area of plantations established, with leasing as another means of acquiring additional plantation land.
Outline land area available for plantation expansion	Fact sheet developed, based on existing information prepared.	Executive	Jan 2022	Agriculture and plantations are recognised as being complementary and compatible land uses.

MANAGEMENT OF THE PLAN

Successful strategies have the following characteristics:

- A Shared Vision of the Future
- Ownership of the Plan by the Community
- Realistic Objectives for Each Sector
- Agreed Action Plans and Responsibilities
- A Structure for Effective Management
- A Sound Factual Base and Monitoring System

By working collaboratively (based on the existing relationships built by the Softwoods Working Group), it is expected that all of these characteristics will be incorporated into the Strategic Plan developed for the SW Slopes Forest Industry Hub.

This Plan documents the **actions** required, under four ‘pillars’, to remove constraints and achieve growth for the plantation-based industry of the SW Slopes Hub region. It is recognised that a sufficient volume of fibre resource must be available, and secure, in order to enable an integrated industry to operate – but for long term sustainability and growth for the industry, other programs involving community attitudes, infrastructure, and a skilled labour force must also be put in place. The overall goal of the Plan represents the **vision** that the Hub has developed for the industry based in the overall SW Slopes (including parts of NSW and Victoria) region:

Vision:
By 2050, the SW Slopes Forestry Hub softwood plantation estates have been restored to pre-fire levels, and a further 45,000 ha has been added to expand the estate to a total area of 215,000 ha. The industry now supports the employment of 8,400 people, supports \$3.2 billion in gross output, and contributes \$1.5 billion to regional value-added (at 2020 prices). This growth has been achieved by delivering action under the following four themes, involving collaboration between the industry and the surrounding regional communities, local Government, NSW & Vic State Governments, and the Australian Government.

In order to effectively manage the **implementation** of the Plan, based on all four pillars, it will be necessary to:

- Develop a work plan for the next two years, to set out timing (scheduling), duration, and all resources required (including the use of consultants where required), including a budget for the entire program.
- Appoint Committees of Hub members to provide management for each of the four pillars. These **Pillar Committees** will be charged with:
 - Providing management for each project proposed within the pillar area, to ensure timely completion and the delivery of the desired outcomes, within agreed budgets

- Identifying the resources required to deliver the actions
 - Liaising with the Executive team as required
 - Co-opting other skills, as required, to join the Pillar Committee
- Agree an overall target for the size and shape of the industry which can be achieved over the next 30 years – i.e., define a vision. This cannot be done until work has commenced on the Plan, and some conclusions developed as to what goals can realistically be achieved. All sectors of the industry must participate in this analysis, and agree overall industry targets.
- Agree on milestones for each “pillar”, to gauge progress and thus ensure that the work program can proceed.
- Work together to gain collective ‘ownership’ of the Plan, and to ensure that the needs of all Hub members are accommodated as far as possible.
- Continue to draw on data and analyses already available to the Hub, to ensure that all future plans are based on a sound understanding of the size and shape of the industry