

Forest Industry Advisory Council (FIAC)

The Australian Government established the Forest Industry Advisory Council (FIAC) in October 2014 to provide advice from a cross-section of industry participants on issues affecting Australia's forestry sector.

Consistent with its terms of reference, FIAC provides advice to the Australian Government on:

- issues facing Australia's forestry sector
- initiatives to foster investment, growth and the sustainability of Australia's forestry sector
- infrastructure priorities for continued growth
- strategic priorities to support industry best practice
- long term planning for research and development investments, and
- other forestry issues as requested.

FIAC is co-chaired by Senator the Hon. Anne Ruston, Assistant Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources, and Mr Rob de Fégely, a forest industry member. The co-chairs are supported by ten members and four observers with expertise from across the forestry sector.

FIAC paper

In June 2016, FIAC released its paper, Transforming Australia's forest products industry – Recommendations from the Forest Industry Advisory Council. The paper, outlines a vision and strategies for addressing the opportunities and challenges for the forest industry to 2050 and beyond. It makes recommendations to industry and the Australian Government on how best to position Australia's forest products sector for the future.

Almost eighty submissions to the issues paper were received from a wide range of forest industry stakeholders.

All non-confidential submissions received are published at Issues paper submissions.

FIAC Members

The Australian Government established FIAC to provide advice on contemporary issues affecting Australia's forestry sector. The collective experience of FIAC members and observers covers: native forests and plantations; forestry on public and private land; farm forestry; community and Indigenous forestry; sawmilling; pulp and paper manufacturing; timber imports; research and development; and training and education.

Co-chairs

Senator the Hon. Anne Ruston, Assistant Minister to the Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources.

Mr Rob de Fégely is the President of the Institute of Foresters of Australia and Chairman of Forestry Tasmania. Mr de Fégely has over 28 years of experience in the Australian forest industry. He has worked in softwood plantations and natural forest management in New South Wales. Mr de Fégely commenced a consulting career in 1990 and has consulted to both corporate and government clients on issues such as forest resource assessment, wood processing and end product market reviews.

Members

Ms Karina Coombes is a cultural, employment and training advisor on the Tiwi Islands and has had exposure to forestry management and development issues in the wider community. Ms Coombes is currently participating in the 21st Australian Rural Leadership Program which is sponsored by the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources.

Ms Michelle Freeman is a PhD Candidate, School of Botany, University of Melbourne. Ms Freeman has held harvesting and planning forester roles in Victoria. In 2013, she won the Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation Victorian Rural Women's Award. She holds a Bachelor of Science (Forestry and Botany).

Ms Linda Sewell is the Chief Executive Officer of OneFortyOne Plantations, which is the consortium which purchased the harvesting rights to the South Australian Government's Green Triangle softwood estate. Ms Sewell's previous role was the Chief Executive Officer of Hancock Victorian Plantations. Ms Sewell was also the inaugural chair of the Australian Forest Products Association in 2011.

Mr Ron Adams is the Managing Director of WESPINE Industries Pty Ltd, a softwood sawmilling company producing products for construction, renovations and furniture manufacturing. Mr Adams's previous roles have included Chairman of Forest and Wood Products Australia and past President of Forest Industries Federation of WA. Mr Adams is currently a Trustee of J.W. Gottstein Memorial Trust.

Dr David Brand has over 30 years of experience in timberland investment, forest management, science, and public policy. In 2005, Dr Brand founded New Forests Pty Ltd, a plantation forest investment and management company. Previously, Dr Brand was responsible for investment programs that integrated timber management with emerging environmental market opportunities at Hancock Natural Resources Group. Dr Brand has also held senior roles at State Forests of NSW and the Canadian Forest Service.

Mr Ian Dickenson AO has been influential in farming and forestry in Tasmania. He is a member of the Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Association forestry reference group and recently stepped down as chairman of Private Forests Tasmania. He was awarded an Order of Australia in 1992 for services to agriculture and forestry. Mr Dickenson is the Director of Elverton Pastoral Pty Ltd.

Mr Andrew Hurford is the Managing Director of Hurford Hardwood Pty Ltd. The Hurford Group of companies is integrally involved in sawmilling and value added production of high quality hardwood products on the far north coast region of NSW. The Hurford Group is a major local employer, having some 100 staff, plus contractors, and is a significant contributor to the regional economy.

Mr Vince Hurley is the Chief Executive Officer of Australian Sustainable Hardwoods, a company based in Heyfield, Victoria. The company has over 200 employees and has manufactured high quality hardwood products for over 30 years. Mr Hurley is also on the executive of the Victorian Association of Forest Industries.

Mr Nils Koren is the Managing Director of Gunnersen Pty Ltd, an Australian owned distributor of wood-based panel products, timber and decorative surface materials. Following a background in the softwood industry in Mt Gambier, Mr Koren was appointed to his current position in 2008. Mr Koren is also Chairman of the Australian Timber Importers Federation.

Mr Andrew Leighton is the Australasian Regional President for Norske Skog, which is one of the world's largest suppliers of newsprint and magazine paper. In his 18 year career with Norske Skog, Mr Leighton has held senior executive positions in marketing, sales, logistics, strategy and business development.

Observers

Mr Gavin Butcher is the Director of Policy and Strategy at the Forest Products Commission of Western Australia. Mr Butcher has a career in plantation and native forest management spanning more than 33 years. Mr Butcher was the past Chair of the Forestry and Forest Products Committee, which comprises of representatives from state and territory government agencies responsible for forestry.

Mr Ross Hampton is the Chief Executive Officer of the Australian Forest Products Association (AFPA). AFPA is the peak industry body for the pulp and paper, and wood processing and resources industries. Prior to commencing this

role in 2013, Mr Hampton led the development of the Australian public sector market for Cisco Systems. Mr Hampton has also worked as a reporter, adviser and policy advocate.

Mr Michael Hartman is the Chief Executive Officer of Skills Impact, a national Skills Service Organisation (SSO) which provides expert services such as skills standard and qualification development to the Forest, Wood, and Timber Products Industry Reference Committee. Mr Hartman previously held the position of Chief Executive Officer of ForestWorks Ltd, focusing on forestry skills development, employment and training. Mr Hartman had been in this role for almost 15 years and has worked with all sectors of the industry.

Mr Ric Sinclair is the Managing Director of Forest and Wood Products Australia Limited (FWPA), which is the industry owned services company for the forest and wood products sector. FWPA's activities include investing in research and development and promotional activities for the sector. Mr Sinclair holds a Bachelor of Science (Forestry) and a Master of Business Administration.

Terms of Reference

FIAC is being delivered through the Forest and Wood Products Council under subsection 11 of the Regional Forest Agreements Act 2002.

Purpose

The purpose of the Forest and Wood Products Council is to provide the Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources (or his/her delegate) with advice on a range of forestry issues and recommendations on proposed legislation or policies.

Aims

The council's aim is to provide timely information and advice from a cross-sector of industry participants on contemporary issues affecting Australia's forestry sector.

Expected deliverables

The council will provide advice, specific to the responsibility of the Australian Government, on:

issues facing Australia's forestry sector

initiatives to foster investment, growth and the sustainability of Australia's forestry sector

infrastructure priorities for continued growth

strategic priorities to support industry best practice

long term planning for research and development investments, and

other forestry issues as requested.

Scope

The council will limit the scope of its advice to those issues facing Australia's forestry sector.

Membership

The council will be chaired by the Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources (or his/her delegate).

In addition to the Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources (or his/her delegate), there will be up to 11 members of the council and four observers. One member will be appointed as a co-chair.

Members will be chosen by the minister (or his/her delegate) for their expertise, understanding of forestry issues and ability to consider the long-term interests of the industry.

Members will be appointed for a period of three years.

Expected lifespan

The council will be ongoing in accordance with subsection 11(1) of the Regional Forest Agreements Act 2002.

Meetings

The council will meet at least once every six months or as requested by the minister (or his/her delegate). The council can convene a meeting through written request to the Minister from a majority of members.

Supporting structures

Support and secretariat functions will be provided by the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources.

Contact

For any enquiries about FIAC or the FIAC discussion paper please contact the FIAC secretariat or by post at:

FIAC Secretariat, Forestry Branch
Department of Agriculture and Water Resources
GPO Box 858
Canberra ACT 2601