



Our Ref: D19/35480  
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Department of Water and Environmental Regulation  
Email: [climate@dwer.wa.gov.au](mailto:climate@dwer.wa.gov.au)

Dear Ms McEvoy

## CLIMATE CHANGE ISSUES PAPER

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on climate change matters to help inform the development of a new State Climate Policy for Western Australia (WA). The Forest Products Commission (FPC) has reviewed the climate change issues paper (September 2019) with great interest.

As highlighted in the issues paper, it is important that we work together to ensure WA is well positioned for the transition to a low carbon economy and is resilient to the unavoidable impacts of climate change.

The forest industry is strongly placed to contribute to a low-carbon future. As highlighted by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change in its 4th assessment report:

*'In the long term, 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'.*

In addition, as outlined in the Djarlma Plan, the Western Australian forest industry has:

*'...an opportunity to support transformative change towards a more sustainable future by maintaining healthy forests, supporting regional employment and growth, and helping to mitigate climate change'.*

The forest industry is an important contributor to regional jobs and prosperity. The FPC is supporting the long-term viability of the native forest sector through the creation of forestry hubs in the south-west of the State. A local forest products industry based on sustainably managed forests provides a substitute to carbon intensive materials and reduces the risk of importing forest products that may come from unsustainable sources. A local forest products industry provides a source of recyclable, renewable wood products for furniture and construction, and residues for bioenergy.

A State Climate Policy should encourage the consideration of energy use and greenhouse gas emissions produced over the lifetime of a product or structure, as highlighted in the Wood Encouragement Policy for Western Australia (WEP). The WEP, which was released by the Minister for Forestry in July 2019, aims to encourage the use of responsibly sourced wood within procurement activities, particularly in the construction and fit-out of buildings. By



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encouraging the use of responsibly sourced wood in procurement processes, the WEP supports a number of existing State policies and aims to achieve multiple employment, community and climate change mitigation objectives.

Timber building materials use less energy to produce than other materials such as concrete and steel, and buildings containing timber materials are more energy efficient with respect to heating and cooling. Although the WEP is aimed at State Government procurement, the policy encourages local governments and private organisations to adopt a similar approach. Copies of the Djarlma Plan and the WEP are available from the FPC website.

A State Climate Policy should also support the expansion of the softwood plantation estate. Expanding plantations in the south-west of the State creates jobs and supports regional communities. It also offers opportunities for Aboriginal participation in forest management in the context of the South West Native Title Settlement. In addition, the FPC is looking for opportunities to generate carbon credits from new plantations through the Commonwealth Carbon Farming Initiative.

Carbon farming also presents opportunities for farmers who wish to plant trees on their properties. In addition to carbon benefits, farm forestry can assist with water and salinity management, and trees provide shade for livestock. Farm forestry is supported through the FPC's Farm Forestry Assist program which provides eligible landowners with free seedlings.

As for enhancing resilience, the FPC, in collaboration with the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions and key stakeholders, is conducting ecological thinning and mechanical fuel reduction trials to improve forest resilience to the impacts of climate change and reduce fire risk to the forest and surrounding communities. I suggest that a State Climate Policy supports such practices.

The FPC strongly supports a State Climate Policy that would encourage further uptake of bioenergy markets. Sustainable forest management practices and ecological thinning result in the production of forest residues which can be used for bioenergy. Supporting bioenergy markets would increase the uptake of such residues as biomass for energy generation.

For a more detailed discussion on the issues outlined in this letter please contact Annelies de Ruiter, Manager Strategic Policy and Corporate Support on 9363 4614.

I look forward to the opportunity to comment on a draft State Climate Policy.

Yours sincerely,

Stuart West  
GENERAL MANAGER

27 November 2019