

BETH ENGWIRDA

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Organisation: *First Floors Australia Pty Ltd*

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Topic 3. Demand for timber products, particularly as relates to NSW housing, construction, mining, transport and retail

First Floor's engineered timber flooring products are made with an attractive top lamella layer of NSW forest-grown hardwood timber that is bonded to a hevea core.

Engineered Flooring uses solid hardwood within its construction which sets engineered flooring apart from the synthetic alternatives that do not use timber. Engineered flooring offers the durability and the natural beauty of traditional timber floors, with added benefits including reducing the expansion and contraction experienced with traditional solid timber floors. Our engineered timber floors look and feel like a traditional solid timber floor.

First Floor's is a premium boutique product. It is very popular with home and apartment owners, architects and builders. It is commonly used in new apartment construction as the boxes the product is delivered in fit easily into a lift. Our engineered flooring is pre-finished, which means that the floor is ready to lay as soon as you take it out of the box. This logistical convenience during apartment construction is one of its key selling points.

Our customers like natural timber flooring. They seek the look and feel of natural timber floor and they like to know that the timber is Australian species.

The hardwood timber that we use for our lamellas comes from NSW state forests. The engineered flooring is manufactured in Malaysia and then shipped back to Australia where we wholesale it. Our product is sold in flooring shops in Sydney, Brisbane, Melbourne, and throughout Australia and in New Zealand.

The quality of the timber we are working with is very important for our business.

The timber for the lamella (top layer of flooring) needs to be strong, they need be aesthetically pleasing and they need to have a long working life. That's why we specify NSW hardwoods when we are purchasing timber. We use Blackbutt and Spotted Gum species because they are quality timber that are very suitable for the process of manufacturing. They look good and are very durable.

First Floor has been in business for 10 years. Demand for our products is good and growing every year because the Australian market for new apartments and homes is expanding every year. Our customers love Australian timber and they like dealing with a small business like us.

The NSW hardwoods we are buying are very high quality, of a clean grade, and they do not have a lot of knots. This is essential for our product and it would be extremely detrimental to our business if we could no longer access it.