

Public submission

NAME REDACTED

Submission ID: 203985

Organisation: *Hyne Timber*

Location: *New South Wales*

Supporting materials uploaded: *Attached overleaf*

Submission date: 10/11/2024 10:05:32 AM



11 October 2024

**NSW Forest Industry Action Plan
Independent Forestry Panel**

Dear Panel members,

RE: Submission to the Independent Forestry Panel for the development of the NSW Forest Industry Action Plan

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in the Independent Forest Industry Panel's review of the sustainable future of the forest industry.

The NSW Government is seeking feedback from industry stakeholders on 'the best options to achieve the balance between sustainable supplies of timber and NSW's environmental commitments, ahead of the NSW Government developing its Forestry Industry Action Plan.'

We acknowledge and support submissions made on our behalf, such as the submission by the Softwood Working Group and this submission is purely to build on that from a Hyne Timber specific perspective.

Background.

Hyne Timber (Tumbarumba) is the largest softwood manufacturing plant in NSW producing anywhere around 500,000m³ softwood per year. By comparison, if this timber production on a day-to-day production bases was laid out in a straight line, it would stretch from Tumbarumba to Sydney.

The Mill employs approximately 200 people directly and according to economic modelling, this equates up to an additional three people indirectly to every person employed. Hyne Timber is the largest, private employer in the Tumbarumba region and therefore, a significant part of the local economy.

Sustainability and Environmental Credentials

Our softwood (pine radiata) feedstock is all locally grown, plantation pine, harvested and replanted on approximately, a 30-year rotation. Put simply, our feedstock is a farmed product on sustainable, certified (Responsible Wood) estates predominantly owned by the NSW Government (Forest Corporation NSW), Hancock Victoria Plantations (HVP), New Forest and Hume Forest.

Every log processed is made up of approximately 50% carbon from the carbon dioxide intake during the tree's growth photosynthesis process. The carbon remains locked up in the timber for the life of the timber.

Demand for Timber Products

Based on our sales volumes and average housing starts across NSW in recent years, we estimate approximately one in every four homes across NSW is built using Hyne Timber softwood framing.

Hyne Timber also owns XLam, the southern hemispheres' first Cross Laminated Timber manufacturing plant located over the Victorian border in Wodonga and employing most of its 65 team members from Albury NSW. XLam sources 100% of its feedstock from the Tumbarumba sawmill.

XLam predominantly supplies to commercial scale construction as a sustainable, light weight alternative to steel beams and concrete panels (excluding slabs). Having delivered over 1000 projects across Australia and New Zealand since 2012, XLam is currently supplying the Housing NSW Cowper Street (Glebe) development of 75 social housing apartments with the cross laminated timber structure a specification of the Kings Trust Australia. This is entirely in recognition of the sustainability credentials. Indeed, His Majesty, King Charles III is expected to visit the development during visit to Australia.

This project includes 2590m³ of our softwood which equates to 1860 tonnes of carbon sequestered from the atmosphere / 934 fewer cars on the road in a year. In accordance with the Australian pine plantation estate and a 30-year rotation, this volume of softwood will have regrown ready for the next project, in approximately 7 hours! There is no more sustainable construction material than that.

It must always be acknowledged that softwood sawmills, while they predominantly exist to manufacture pine framing, this only equates to 50% of the mill's outputs. The other 50% are also critical products throughout other supply chains. For example, low grade fibre for pallet manufacturing to freight our goods across the country and globe, wood chips for companies such as Visy for paper and packaging, and Laminex for medical grade benches for our hospitals. Even the bark is stripped and processed back into high grade, commercial scale potting mix to grow the next round of plantation seedlings, and for farmers to grow the nations fresh food. Without the sawmill processing its framing, these all important 'by-products' would see catastrophic disruption to our sovereign food production and freight capabilities including negative impacts for both mining and retail.

The Future of Softwood Plantations

As per the submission by the Softwood Working Group, the South-West Slopes region is home to 125,000 ha of sustainably managed and internationally certified Pinus Radiata plantations which support the largest concentration of softwood plantations and timber processing capacity in Australia.

Locally grown and manufactured softwood should be celebrated, protected and enhanced as the most sustainable, renewable solution to the NSW housing and construction needs. Sustainable, plantation forestry should never be confused with deforestation. As an industry, we continue to work hard to educate the broader population against mistruths.

The industry needs to increase the region's production of sustainable wood products to support increased housing construction. While Hyne Timber invests heavily in R&D and technology to extract maximum value from every log and introducing smarter construction solutions such as engineered timber, Government support and policies to expand the plantation estate are needed.

An increase in the local estate of 78,000ha over 10-15 years will see a step change in investment and output. This step alone would provide sufficient timber to support a long-term increase in timber availability for construction of an additional 10,000-15,000 houses each year.

Plantation expansion can further contribute to the NSW Government's legislated emissions reduction commitments (50% on 2005 levels by 2030¹), as well as future documented commitments. A growth of the estate will sequester an estimated 18.7m tonnes of CO₂e from the atmosphere, making 18.7m Australian Carbon Credit Units (ACCUs) available in the market. Additional lower emissions opportunities exist by increasing the use of wood in the built environment and through paper and cardboard packaging that replace plastic alternatives.

Risk Mitigation and Bushfire Recovery

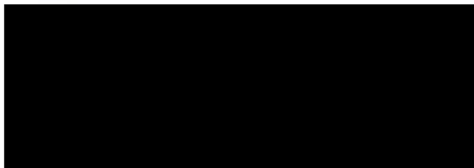
In 2019/20, the bushfires decimated 40% of our feedstock resulting in some logs now travelling up to 850km to the Tumbarumba Mill at unviable freight costs.

Hyne Timber is appreciative of some Government grant support to optimise the Tumbarumba sawmill and more recently, the \$13M Forestry Funding Package aimed at protecting essential timber supplies ahead of the 24/25 bushfire season.

However, the unviable freight costs (over 150km from the Mill) impacting Hyne Timber continue to mean Hyne Timber has a non-competitive position as a result of the natural disaster. In May 2024, both Hyne Timber and AKD wrote a joint letter to the NSW Premier, the Hon. Chris Minns MP along with a letter of support from Visy. The letter called for a meeting to discuss freight equalisation of Government owned logs from Walcha to Tumbarumba/Tumut. To date, this letter remains unanswered.

Hyne Timber looks forward to working with the Independent Forestry Panel to develop and implement sustainable policy solutions that highlight the positive contribution of the forest and wood products sector to a growing and vibrant New South Wales community and economy.

Yours sincerely



Katie Fowden
General Manager, Stakeholder Engagement