



## TIMBER TOWNS VICTORIA

A Local Government Association

6 August 2021

Mr Paul Smith  
Deputy Secretary - Forestry and Climate Change  
Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions  
1 Spring Street  
MELBOURNE VIC 3000

via: [Engage Vic website](#)

Dear Mr Smith,

**RE: SUBMISSION TO PRIMARY PRODUCTION CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION ACTION PLAN 2022-26**

Timber Towns Victoria welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission to the Primary Production Climate Change Adaptation Action Plan consultation process.

Timber Towns Victoria (TTV) is an incorporated Local Government Association representing the interests of municipal councils in relation to forestry on both public and private land.

In representing these local councils and the communities that work within the forestry and timber industries, we rely on maintaining sustainable practices to ensure the industry continues into the future.

Timber Towns Victoria is concerned that climate change has become a political tool by anti-forestry activist organisations to degrade the value of our native forests which provide multiple uses to our communities, including the use of less than ten percent of the public forest land for timber production.

Furthermore, Timber Towns Victoria is very concerned that timber production in public forests has not been included into the Primary Production Climate Change Adaptation Action Plan 2022-2026 meaning that the State Government does not understand the benefits to the environment of the native timber industry. This lack of foresight, by the government will lead to regional Victorians losing their jobs and communities suffering.

Timber Towns Victoria believes that the native timber industry provides a climate solution by taking and storing carbon from the forests and regrowing the harvested trees which absorb carbon at a great rate.

It is essential that people who may not understand the importance of native timber forestry are educated to its benefits and embrace the work done in the regions to mitigate climate change.

<p><b>Draft Primary Production AAP</b></p> <p><b>2022-2026</b></p>	<p><b>Timber Towns Victoria - response</b></p>
<p>Opportunities from climate change impacts and adaptation Section 2.2 of the AAP (page 16) identifies opportunities arising from climate change impacts and adaptation in the primary industries. Would you like to tell us about any other opportunities?</p>	<p>Native forestry's current practice promotes greater carbon absorption during the regrowth phase, stores carbon in the products created from the resource it creates and can improve forest health by regenerating forest areas badly damaged or killed by high intensity bushfires. Therefore, native forestry should be expanded to relieve pressure on the dwindling resource, improve our existing \$2billion trade deficit in wood and timber products and improve employment security for regional Victorians.</p>
<p>Are there any barriers to taking advantage of these opportunities? If yes, what barriers?</p>	<p>Unfortunately, due to corporate activism, the benefits of native forestry have been lost in political ideology. Millions of dollars have been poured into campaigns by activists to generate income by creating public outrage, and underhandedly portraying the native timber forestry industry in a poor light. It is well known that multiple use and active forest management can deliver positive environmental, social, and economic outcomes, however, the industry continues to be hit by negative activism.</p>
<p>AAP priorities and actions Section 6 of the AAP (page 24) includes the actions of the five-year plan. Do you have any feedback on the proposed actions?</p>	<p>Timber Towns Victoria additionally supports the adoption of 'active native forest management' as part of the priority areas and the 16 actions proposed in the five-year plan climate change solution. Having an active and adaptive management approach, rather than an ideological attitude towards native forestry could open opportunities to expand native forestry which would benefit the environment, support regional Victoria, and help to reduce reliance on more carbon-intensive industries.</p>
<p>How do these actions relate to you or the organisation you represent?</p>	<p>Timber Towns Victoria represents our members councils across Victoria, and the people who work directly in the forests and the timber industry within those councils, their families, and communities. By adopting native forestry as a climate change solution, we are demonstrating to the public, the industry, the workers, their families and their communities that native forestry is recognised for its sustainable management practices and there is a future for the industry. Thus, creating certainty and a positive community spirit by securing their future and reducing the negative stigma attached to forestry.</p>

<p>Do you have any feedback on the implementation of the actions?</p>	<p>Timber Towns Victoria strongly believes that Foresters should be respected as experts in carbon mitigation through their work in executing sustainable and world-certified forest practices. This includes the careful harvest and regeneration of a fraction of Victoria's forest estate. They should be considered at the forefront in reducing carbon emissions and given a sense of pride in the work they do in providing natural wood products which store carbon and renewing forests which absorb carbon at a greater rate during their early growth.</p>
<p>What role do you see you or your organisation playing in implementing these actions?</p>	<p>Timber Towns Victoria will continue to promote the benefits of native forest management as practiced by the forestry sector under strict, world-class guidelines in tackling climate change. We would champion the native timber industries careful management and care of our valuable native forests.</p>
<p><b>General feedback</b> The AAP includes some boxes highlighting practical examples of adaptation in primary industries. Do you have any examples that you would like to share?</p>	<p>YES - Changing regional climatic conditions require adoption of carbon-friendly primary industry as an alternative to more carbon-intensive industries. Native timber provides a climate solution by taking and storing carbon from the forests and regrowing the harvested trees which absorb carbon at a greater rate. It is essential that people who may not understand the importance of native timber forestry are educated to its benefits and embrace the work done in the regions to mitigate climate change.</p>

Would you like to make any other comments on the draft Primary Production AAP?

Timber Towns Victoria is gravely concerned that native forestry is not included in the Primary Production AAP when it should be recognised as a successful emission reduction tool.

Timber Towns Victoria believes plantation forestry should be encouraged, but it should be done in tandem with native forestry. Native forestry is the victim of ideology which has corrupted public opinion and driven policy for no better reason than to promote the interests of corporate activism and political groups. It is causing stress across the native forestry sector and to the workers who are made to feel guilty about supplying natural, renewable, carbon-storing wood products. It is causing the intolerable and totally unnecessary decay of forest communities.

Science which is not selective and agenda-driven has shown the environmental impacts are minimal thanks to world-leading timber production practice. The failure to actively mitigate bushfire risk is showing that the claims that stopping native forest harvesting and dedicating more and more national parks to "permanently protect" ecological assets is totally misleading the broader community.

The Primary Production AAP is an opportunity to change the narrative about native forestry and adopt it as our best chance to reach emissions reduction targets.

Timber Towns Victoria welcomes government action to support adaption to climate change across the primary production industry and hope to see these actions lead to clear pathways for our native timber sector to take advantage of and mitigate risks that arise from climate change through sustainable forestry.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission to the Primary Production Climate Change Adaptation Action Plan 2022-26. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you wish to discuss this submission.

Yours sincerely,



Cr Karen Stephens  
President

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