

# Pro Forma Wood Encouragement Policy

## Background

A Wood Encouragement Policy generally requires responsibly sourced wood to be considered, where feasible, as the primary construction material in Council/Local Government building and fit out projects.

Tasmania has become the first state government in Australia to adopt a state-wide Wood Encouragement Policy. In addition, there are two local government authorities and fifteen local councils that have adopted a Wood Encouragement Policy, and Rotorua Lakes Council has done some ground-breaking work in New Zealand. The adoption of similar policies around the world is growing steadily, including Canada, Japan, France, Finland, Netherlands and the UK, who are all encouraging the use of natural, timber-based products in construction.

## Rationale

The [XXX] Council recognises the importance of the forest and wood products industry to regional employment and economic development and is committed to growing the forestry industry on a sustainable basis.

To achieve this objective, the Wood Encouragement Policy has been developed to maximise the use of forest and wood products (wood) within Council procurement activities, particularly in construction, fit out, and the heating and energy requirements of buildings and infrastructure.

## Purpose

The Policy will:

- Help **XXX Council** to demonstrate local and national leadership;
- Facilitate a culture of wood;
- Help stimulate sustainable economic development within the Australian forest and wood products industry and encourage value adding products within the timber industry;
- Encourage agencies to consider the use of wood, particularly in construction, fit out, and the heating and energy requirements of building and construction projects;
- Encourage agencies to recognise the benefits that make wood a smart choice;
- Encourage agencies to share information and encourage education regarding the benefits of using wood in construction and fit out of buildings and infrastructure;
- Encourage agencies to consider the use of wood in exemplar (demonstration) projects.

## Why Is Wood A Smart Choice

Wood is sustainable, low carbon, low energy, attractive, high performance and economical. In addition to its environmental benefits, the increased use of wood will make a significant social difference to the local community, supporting manufacturing and jobs and recognising the historical importance of the industry to regional areas.

Responsibly sourced wood is unique in that it stores carbon and has low embodied energy and low carbon emissions associated with its production when compared to carbon intensive materials like brick, concrete and steel.

As trees grow they remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. When the tree is responsibly harvested the carbon is locked in the wood and remains there for the life of any products made with that timber.

A recent study in New South Wales also found that by maximising the use of timber in two popular housing designs in Sydney, approximately 30 tonnes of carbon emissions could be avoided (or saved) per house design<sup>1</sup>. This represented a reduction in emissions of almost 50% compared to the use of traditional building materials.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC, 4<sup>th</sup> Assessment Report) stated that:

*'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'.*

Wood also brings many other benefits like reduced cost, increased speed of construction, improved health impacts and exceptional thermal insulation properties allowing buildings consume less energy.

## What Must Agencies Do?

Council/Local Government entities are required to ensure that the planning process, specification and assessment for procurement, particularly in the area of building and construction, provides the greatest possible use of wood, so long as it:

- Represents value for money;
- Provides appropriate quality and functionality, and
- There are no technical reasons for not doing so.

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<sup>1</sup> Ximenes, F.A. and Grant, T. 2013. Quantifying the greenhouse benefits of the use of wood products in two popular house designs in Sydney, Australia. *The International Journal of Life Cycle Assessment* 18: 891-908.

Maximising wood use solutions provides an opportunity to simultaneously contribute to multiple policy objectives such as buying locally, employment creation, industry development, climate change and environmental policies.

Although the Wood Encouragement Policy does not mandate local wood, local supply should be considered, wherever possible. In addition, it is important to consider, where practicable, other sustainability benefits such as carbon sequestration and low embodied energy and maintenance energy.

**Tier 1: General Procurement [\$ threshold to be specified here]**

Agencies must ensure that, where relevant, wood use is taken into account in the planning, design and specification of Council/Local Government building and fit out projects and roads and bridges projects. It is expected that known requirements for wood products will be incorporated into the weighted evaluation criteria if appropriate.

A Wood Use Declaration is not required for general procurement but may be requested from the supplier if considered appropriate.

**Tier 2: Building and Construction Projects Over [\$ threshold to be specified here]**

Where design consultants are engaged by agencies for building and construction projects, they must be made aware of the Council's commitment to maximising wood use. All design briefs and design contracts should incorporate project specific wood use requirements if known, along with the following standard clause:

"The **[XXX] Council** has a policy of maximising wood use in procurement solutions. You are required to work with Council entities to maximise the use of wood contained in building and construction procurement solutions. You should familiarise yourself with the Wood Encouragement Policy and ensure that the design submitted maximises the use of wood and takes advantage of the opportunity provided by the modern forest and wood products industry, including engineered wood products, building systems and biomass/energy solutions."

Examples of areas where wood use should be encouraged are:

- Structural elements;
- Wood fit out options; and
- Biomass heating and/or energy production (e.g. pellet heaters).

On receipt of the design, the procurement manager should also review the designer's Wood Use Declaration to ensure that the designer has considered the maximum use of wood and that impediments to wood use are captured in procurement reporting for future analysis.

## What Must Suppliers Do?

Suppliers must familiarise themselves and comply with the **XXX Council's** Wood Encouragement Policy.

Design consultants should ensure that all designs for building and construction projects maximise the use of wood and take advantage of the opportunities provided by the modern forest and wood products industry, including engineered wood products, building systems and biomass/energy solutions, so long as they:

- Represent value for money;
- Provides appropriate quality and functionality, and
- There are no technical reasons for not doing so.

For building and construction projects valued at over **[level to be specified here]**, designers must complete a Wood Use Declaration as part of their response to the procurement request. Submission of the Declaration is mandatory and will assist Council/Local Government entities in analysing and maximising wood use in procurement.

## Supporting and Promoting the Policy

Agencies should, wherever possible, undertake the following activities to actively support and promote the Policy:

- Seek those who can develop and produce practical, efficient, versatile and cost-effective building design solutions using wood when sourcing design and architectural expertise;
- Encourage sourcing locally produced wood products;
- Be a champion of the forest and wood products industry;
- Actively seek exemplar (demonstration) projects that showcase the use of wood within the XXX Council region;
- Actively work to attract new, innovative wood products manufacturers to the region.

## Reporting

Council/Local Government entities will be required to report on compliance with the Council's Wood Encouragement Policy.

Reporting data and the Wood Use Declaration will be monitored on an ongoing basis to ensure that any barriers to wood use are identified and addressed.