

## CHAPTER 2 DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL

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## **2. DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL**

### **2.1 Site Location**

The proposed site for the Wood Centre comprises about 90 ha located on the top of a ridge, approximately 75-100 metres in altitude. The ridge runs approximately north-south and is relatively flat on top where the proposed development is to be situated. The Huon River forms a significant bend around the ridge.

The Wood Centre is located on the Glen Huon 4823 map (Tasmania 1:25,000 Series) at grid reference 484750E 5233250N (Figure 1 and Figure 13 in Chapter 4) on the Weld Road. The Wood Centre is located approximately 25 km due west of Huonville and about 16 km north northwest of Geeveston.

### **2.2 General Site Description**

The selected site is on a ridge approximately half a kilometre north of the Huon River opposite the Arve River confluence. The majority of the site is undeveloped, remaining under low scrub, or wet sclerophyll forest. Past land use has involved quarry activities. These activities have resulted in the progressive extension of the road along the ridge top and numerous tracks across the site (Figure 2). The area impacted by these activities is generally linear but includes several areas opened up for extraction purposes.

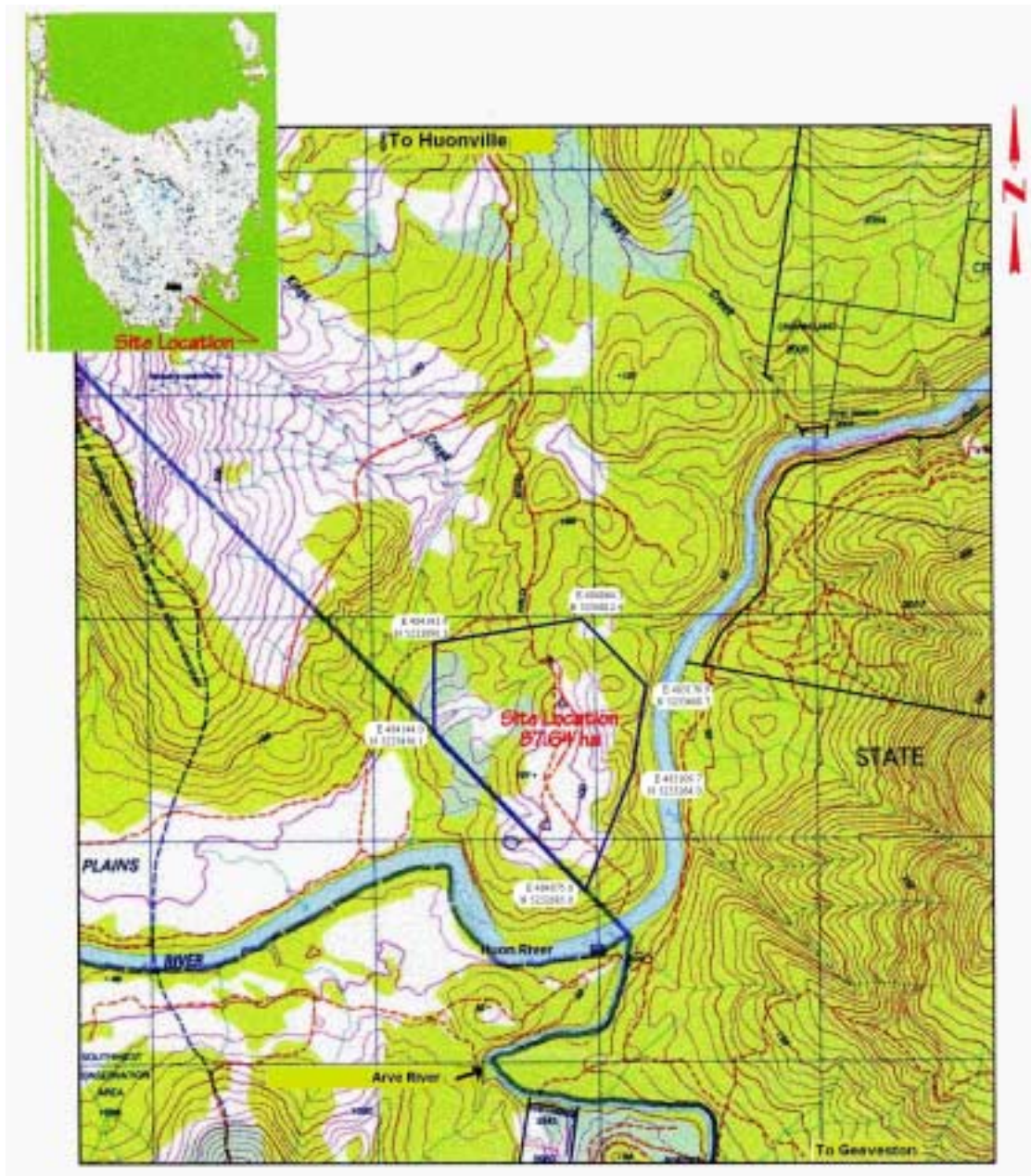
Access to the site is via the Weld Road, and is on the Southern Forest link road network. The existing track to the former quarries has been upgraded and extended to the river as part of the Weld Road upgrade and extension. A bridge has been built across the Huon River to allow access for log trucks from the south as part of the link road concept. The road is considered part of normal forestry road infrastructure upgrading and has not been built explicitly to service the requirements of the Wood Centre.

To the north and west, eucalypt plantations have been established. There are no publicly accessible lookout points in the vicinity. Refer to the Chapter 3 of the report for further discussion of the existing environment. An aerial photograph of the site taken in about 1998 is shown in Figure 2.

### **2.3 The Wood Centre Operation**

The site will act as a central processing location for hardwood currently harvested in the Southern Forest. Most of the logs will be hauled to the site using forestry roads. A major reduction in log truck traffic on the Huon Highway north of Geeveston will occur as a result. Where wood is hauled wholly on FT roads, 24 hour per day cartage may occur.

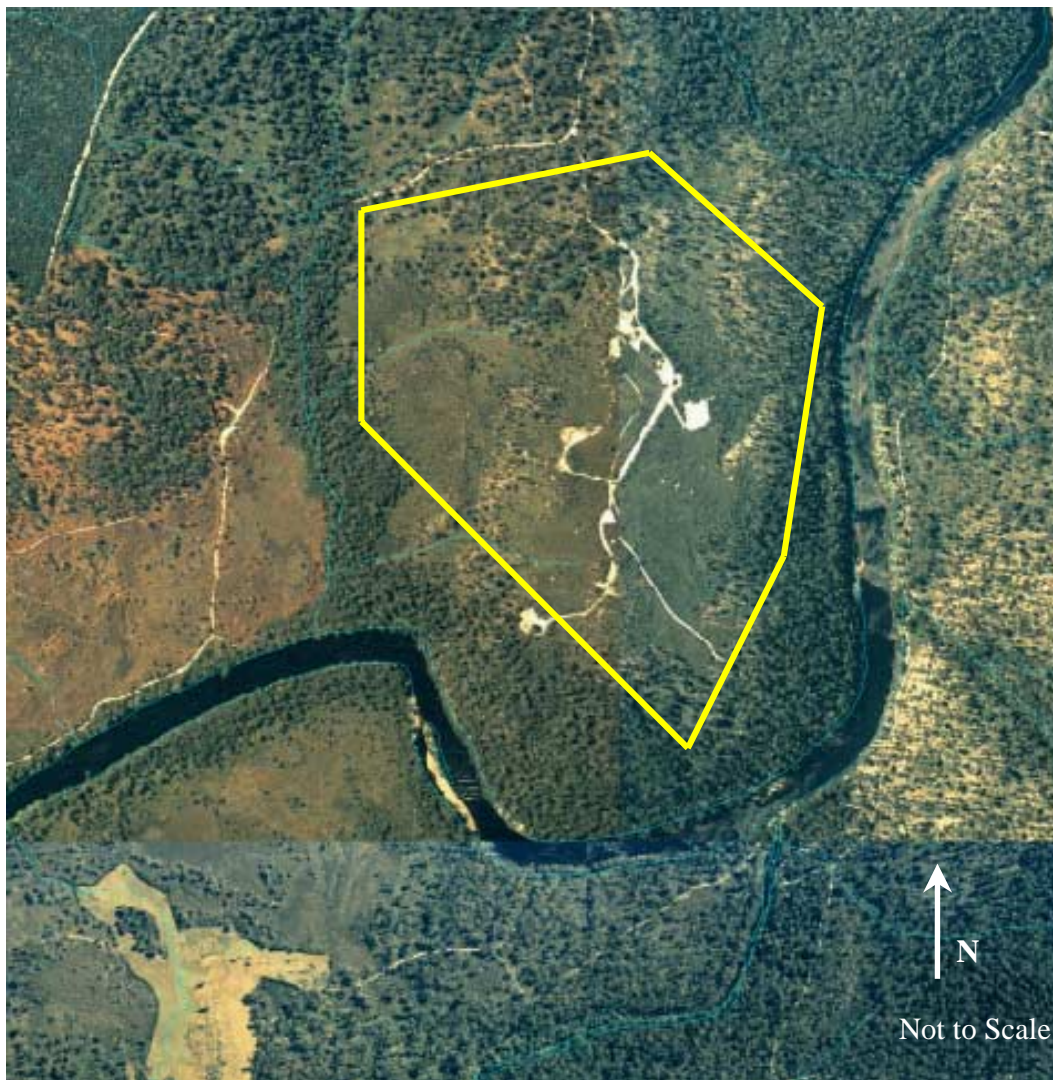
Figure 1 Site Location (Map 4823, Glen Huon)



Not to Scale

For a regional view see Figure 13 in Chapter 4.

**Figure 2 Aerial Photograph of Existing Site with Approximate Proposed Site Boundary**



*Circa 1998*

The facilities proposed for development on the site, and for which development approval is being sought, include:

- Merchandising yard (receiving, weighbridge for log segregation, cross cutting and sawlog sales and storage);
- Sawmill (for green timber recovery, kiln drying, air drying, planing and moulding);
- Rotary peeled veneer mill (for veneer production);
- Wood fibre mill (for wood fibre production);
- Forest residue and timber processing by-products fired power station;
- Associated site-wide wastewater management (for collection, treatment and reuse of wastewater from the above facilities); and
- Water supply and pumping.

A composting plant (making use of on-site wood by-products such as offcuts, shavings sawdust and ash generated from the log processing activities within the Wood Centre) will be the subject of a separate application on land adjacent to, but outside the site.

The following are brief descriptions of the general process of each facility. The details of the process descriptions are provided in the relevant environmental management plan sections of this DPEMP. Figure 3 illustrates the flow of wood through the Wood Centre.

#### Merchandising Yard

Trucks entering the site are weighed and in wet weather will be washed beforehand to remove mud. The logs are then unloaded, broadly sorted, washed and scanned for value recovery. The classifier examines each log and marks it out for the various product types. The log is then cross cut to extract the products identified.

Sawlogs will be moved in the Merchandising Yard using rubber-tyred loaders. Peeler logs and pulpwood will be transferred to the rotary peeled veneer mill and wood fibre mill respectively. Fuelwood will be hauled to the power station. Sawlogs will be stored in steel cradles when necessary under a water spray. Sawlogs sold to off-site sawmills will be moved by conventional log trucks.

### Sawmill

A green recovery mill will be constructed in the first stage, ultimately augmented with a dry mill and associated kilns and timber planing processes. Green wood waste from the sawmilling process will be fed by conveyor or loader to the wood fibre plant or to the facility heat plant, which may provide heat for reconditioning and drying.

Sawdust and dry waste will be fed into bins that will be moved to the fuelwood storage for the power station or facility heat plant. Sawn product will be moved from the site on conventionally sized trucks. Approximately 64,000 m<sup>3</sup> of sawn timber, depending on the degree of drying undertaken, will be transported each year, principally to Hobart.

### Rotary Peeled Veneer Mill

Logs entering the rotary peeled veneer mill will be initially conditioned by immersion in water. Different water bath temperatures are used depending on the conditioning needs. After conditioning, logs are placed on a lathe and are peeled into varying veneer thicknesses. The veneer is classified and guillotined to desired length before being dried. The drying process lasts about half an hour and reduces the moisture of the veneer from green wood (about 50% wet basis) to the target moisture (about 4% wet basis). The dryers are hot air (160°C), heated by steam coils in the facility heat plant.

Dry veneer is then trimmed to final size. Approximately 57,000 tonnes of dried veneer will be transported each year from the site to Hobart for subsequent shipping overseas.

### Wood Fibre Mill

Wood fibre is generated from wood that is not suitable for a higher value-adding process. Pulpwood logs from the merchandising yard and other solid wood wastes will pass through the wood fibre mill comprised of a chipper.

The chipper will be in a sound insulated structure, oriented to minimise noise impact on-site and the surrounding area. After screening, fines will be conveyed to the power station for incineration. Oversized chips will be re-chipped. Wood fibre will be collected in an overhead bin prior to export or local transport by semitrailer-mounted chip bins. Approximately 300 000 tonnes of wood fibre will be transported from the site each year for export, a further 40 000 tonnes a year will be moved to local users.

### Power Station

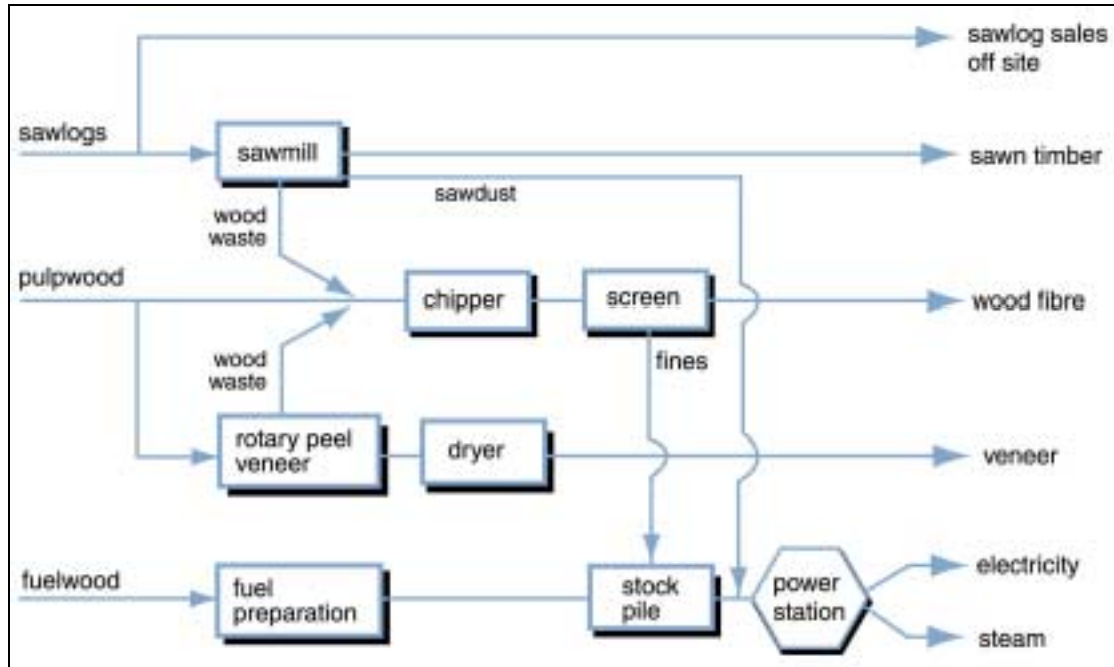
A wood-fired power station generating between 30 and 50 MW will use residues from forest operations and processing residues. About 300,000 tonnes per annum of forest residues will be gathered from existing integrated harvesting operations in the local area.

Forest residues left in the coupe are currently burnt to assist with regeneration and future site management. By harvesting a part of this residue for use as fuelwood in the power

station, the amount of residues burnt in the coupes will be substantially reduced and air quality may improve as a result of smoke reduction. Leaves and small branches will not be taken, providing nutrients, some large material will be left for biodiversity conservation. Using wood for power generation is sustainable and does not lead to increased carbon emissions. Indeed, due to the use of pollution control equipment, a number of environmental benefits will accrue including lowering particulate emissions, lowering of methane production from decaying wood and displacement of a modest level of coal from conventional coal-fired power stations in Australia (providing there is a market).

A stockpile of forest residue fuel will be created at the power station. The burning process and flue gas particulates will be strictly controlled to minimise impacts from the power station stack emissions. High-pressure steam from the boiler will be fed to a turbine to generate electricity. Low-pressure steam from the turbine exhaust may be piped to the kilns and the rotary peeled veneer mill at the Wood Centre for heating and drying processes. Excess steam will be cooled through a condenser connected to a cooling tower. During start-up, the boiler will be fired with a light diesel oil.

Figure 3 Wood Centre Wood Flow



## 2.4 Site Layout

A conceptual site layout has been developed to show the general areas for each facility (Figure 5). The location of each facility has been determined based primarily on flows of materials between the facilities, topography, and the requirement for close proximity to the communal power and steam resource.

Of the 90 ha site identified as the proposed development site, approximately 16 ha has been determined to be of unsuitable topography for development. The predicted area requirements for each facility are given in Table 6.

**Table 6 Predicted Area Requirements for Facilities**

| Facility                                  | Approximate Allowable Area (ha) |
|---|---------------------------------|
| Merchandising yard and log storage        | 15.0                            |
| Sawmill                                   | 14.0                            |
| Rotary peel veneer mill                   | 6.5                             |
| Wood fibre mill                           | 1.0                             |
| Wood-fired power station                  | 20.0                            |
| Communal wastewater management facilities | 5.5                             |
| <b>Total</b>                              | <b>62.0</b>                     |

## 2.5 Estimated Quantities of Production

The estimated quantities of production from the various facilities are summarised in Table 7 below and Figure 6 illustrates the raw material and product flow. The quantities of product and wood by-product are discussed in more detail in the relevant environmental management plan sections for facilities. The raw materials will enter the Wood Centre directly from the forest and the product is ready for transport off-site. The estimated product outflow is greater than the inflow for pulpwood because wood fibre from other Wood Centre facilities will contribute to the outflow. The production residue is utilised either as wood fibre or as fuelwood in the power plant and is not accounted for in the table. In addition, losses of water effect weight that contributes to imbalance in the values.

**Table 7 Estimated Annual Hardwood and Product Flows**

| Raw Materials      | Green wood inflow (pa) | Product                                   | Estimated product outflow (pa) |
|--------------------|------------------------|---|--------------------------------|
| Sawlogs            | 88,000 m <sup>3</sup>  | Sawn timber and sawlogs                   | 64,000 m <sup>3</sup>          |
| Pulpwood           | 300,000 T              | Wood fibre product                        | 340,000 T                      |
| Rotary Peeler Logs | 150,000 T              | Dried rotary peeled veneer with packaging | 57,000 T                       |
| Forest Residue     | 300,000 T              | Electricity (+steam)                      | 30-50 MW                       |
| <b>Total</b>       | <b>838,000 T</b>       | <b>Total</b>                              | <b>461,000 T</b>               |

The projected change in product mix over time as a result of introducing the Wood Centre is shown in Figure 4 below.

**Figure 4 Change in Products Over Time**

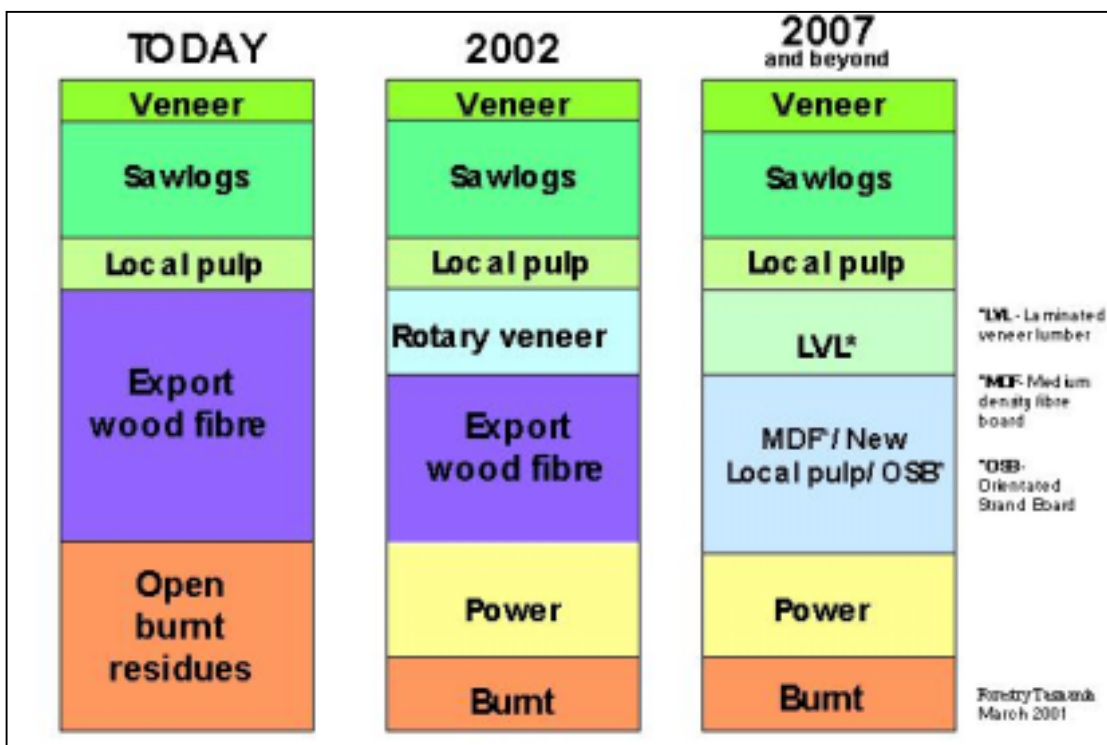


Figure 5 Conceptual Site Layout

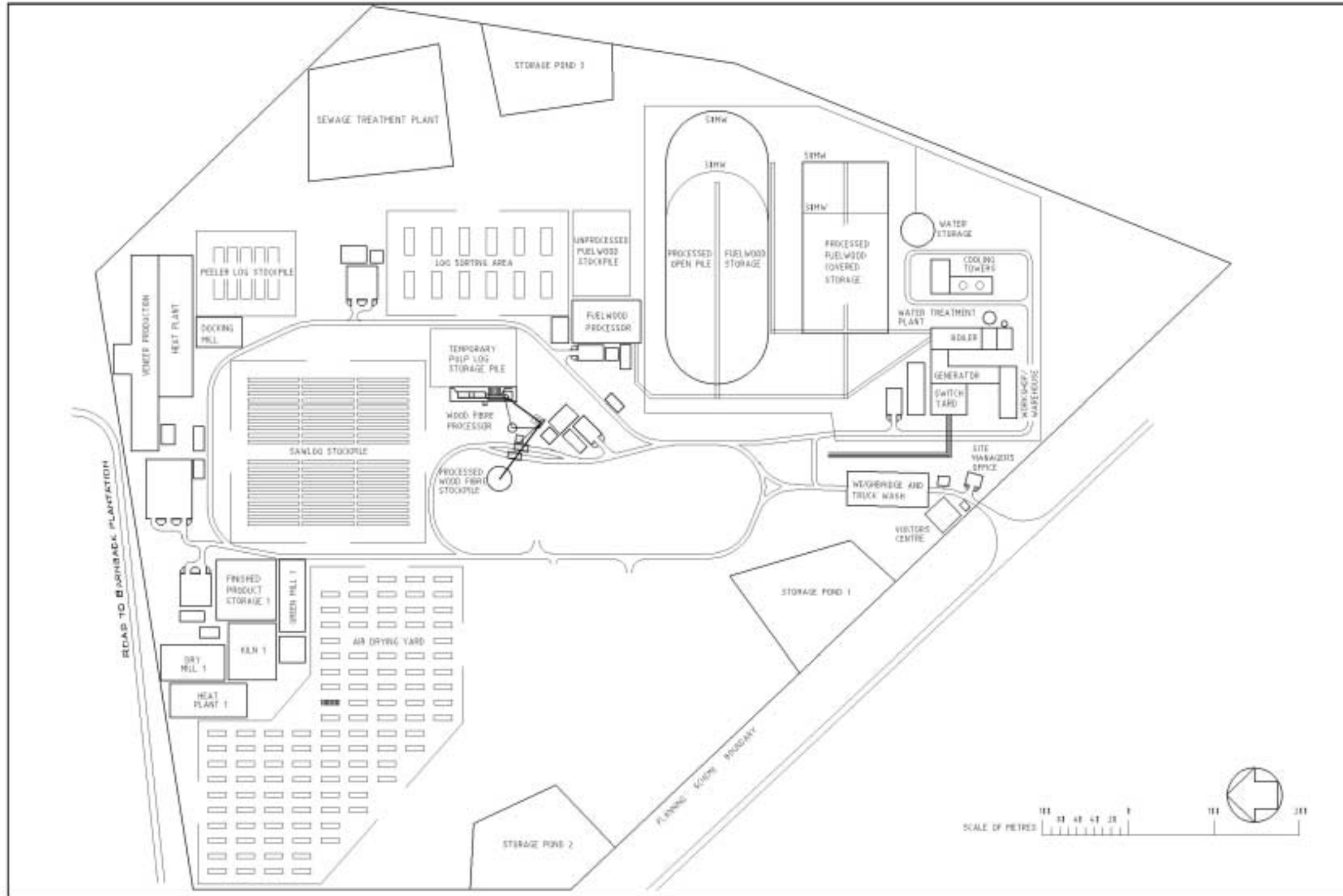
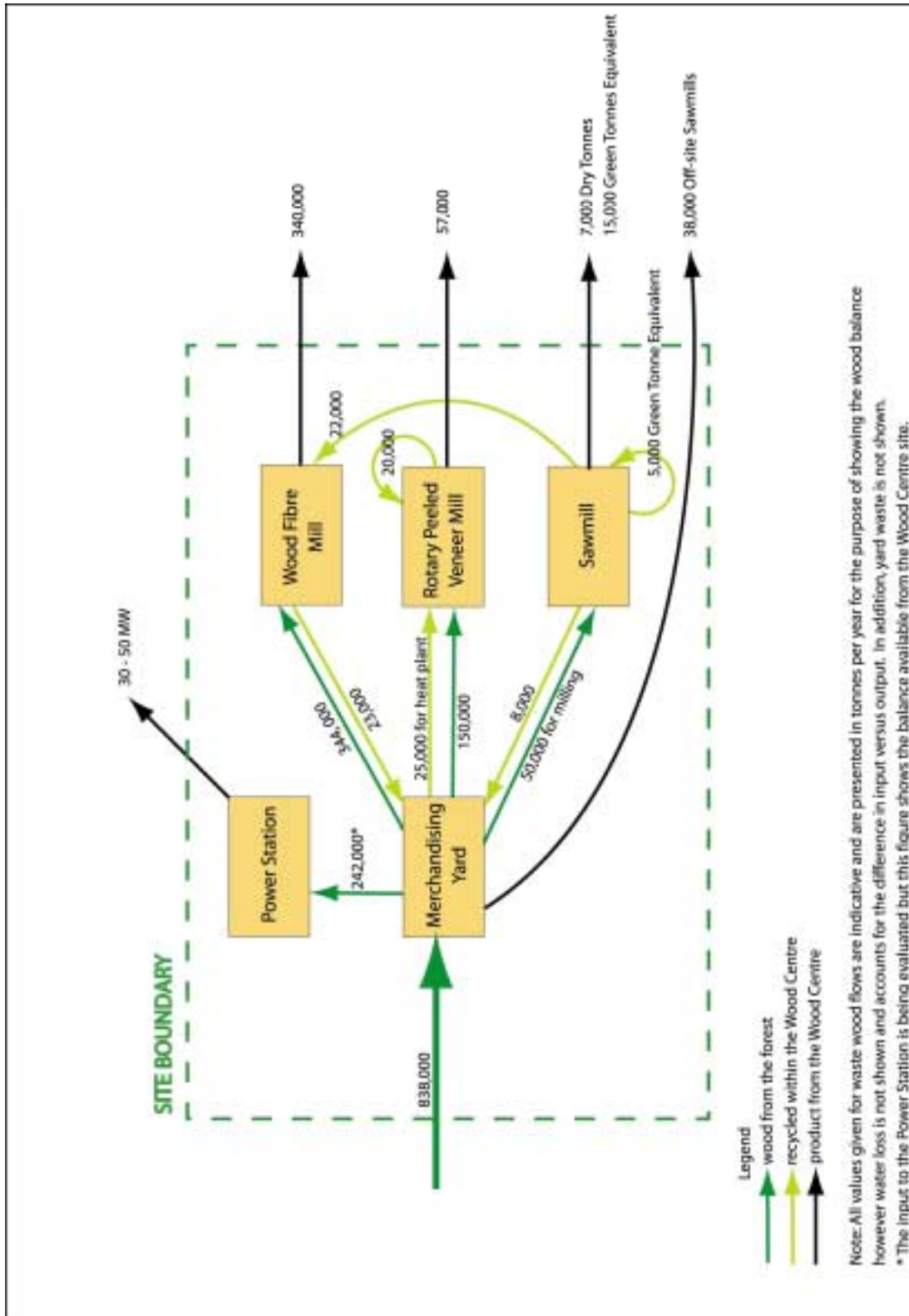


Figure 6 Raw Material and Product Flow



## 2.6 Wood for the Proposed Development

### 2.6.1 Tasmania's Forests

In total, Tasmania has over 3,350,000 ha under forest. About 30% (1,035,000 ha) of Tasmania's forests are privately owned.

The estimated volumes of merchantable wood in forest areas are shown below.

**Table 8 Merchantable Wood in Multiple Use and Private Forest Area**

|                                      |                     |                           |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|
| Total area                           | Multiple use forest | 1,770,000 ha              |
|                                      | Private forest      | 1,040,000 ha              |
| Forest area available for production | Multiple use forest | 780,000 ha                |
|                                      | Private forest      | 550,000 ha                |
| Standing volume sawlog               | Multiple use forest | 18,600,000 m <sup>3</sup> |
|                                      | Private forest      | 7,300,000 m <sup>3</sup>  |
| Standing volume pulpwood             | Multiple use forest | 142,000,000 tonnes        |
|                                      | Private forest      | 46,600,000 tonnes         |

(State of the Forest Report November 1998).

All native forest on public land that is harvested is regenerated, mostly back to native forest but some is converted to plantation.

### 2.6.2 The Regional Forest Agreement

In November 1997 the State and Commonwealth Governments signed the Tasmanian Regional Forest Agreement (RFA) following a comprehensive regional assessment of Tasmania's forest. The process involved major studies of the environmental, economic, heritage and social values of the forest. The RFA has increased reserve areas by 420,000 hectares to a total area of 2.7 million hectares, 40% of the total land area in the State. Under the RFA, a world-class "Comprehensive, Adequate and Representative" (CAR) forest reserve system based on nationally agreed reserve criteria (JANIS) was established.

The CAR reserve system is one that is:

**Comprehensive:** includes the full range of forest communities recognised by an agreed scientific classification at appropriate hierarchical levels.

**Adequate:** maintains the ecological viability and integrity of populations, species and communities.

**Representative:** those sample areas of the forest that are selected for inclusion in the reserves should reasonably reflect the biotic diversity of the communities.

Governments agreed to use the following criteria for the protection of biodiversity, old-growth and wilderness as a basis to establish the reserve system:

- 15% of the distribution of each forest ecosystem that existed prior to Europeans arriving in Australia;
- 60% or more of existing old growth forest;
- 90%, or more, of high quality wilderness.

The outcomes of the RFA process for Tasmania in terms of reserves and extent of conservation of forest types on public land are shown in the Table 9 below.

**Table 9 Outcomes of RFA process**

**Forest Conservation Reserves**

| TYPE                           | 1993       | 1998<br>(post RFA) | Reserved on public<br>land |
|--------------------------------|------------|--------------------|----------------------------|
| wet eucalypt forest            | 15%        | 33%                | 39%                        |
| dry eucalypt forest            | 16%        | 32%                | 60%                        |
| rainforest                     | 34%        | 68%                | 71%                        |
| other native forest            | 22%        | 30%                | 44%                        |
| <b>All forests in Tasmania</b> | <b>19%</b> | <b>40%</b>         |                            |

**Forest community and Old-growth reservation in the CAR reserve system on Public Land**

| Community<br>Reservation   | Forest Communities: Biodiversity Criteria (JANIS<br>Report 6.1.2) | Old-Growth Communities: Old-Growth<br>Criteria (JANIS Report 6.2.2) |
|--|---|---|
| Communities that<br>have fully met the<br>criteria under the<br>JANIS Report | Coastal <i>E. amygdalina</i> forest                               | Coastal <i>E. amygdalina</i> forest                                 |
|  | <i>Allocasuarina verticillata</i> forest                          | <i>Banksia serrata</i> woodland                                     |
|  | <i>Acacia melanoxylon</i> forest on rises                         | <i>E. coccifera</i> dry forest                                      |
|  | <i>E. coccifera</i> dry forest                                    | Dry <i>E. delegatensis</i> forest                                   |
|  | Dry <i>E. delegatensis</i> forest                                 | King Billy Pine with deciduous beech<br>forest                      |
|  | Tall <i>E. delegatensis</i> forest                                | Grassy <i>E. globulus</i> forest                                    |
|  | King Billy Pine with deciduous beech forest                       | Huon Pine forest  |
|  | Huon Pine forest  | <i>Leptospermum</i> sp./ <i>Melaleuca squarrosa</i> swamp forest    |
|  | <i>Leptospermum</i> sp./ <i>Melaleuca squarrosa</i> swamp forest  | Callidendrous and thamnic rainforest on fertile sites               |
|  | Callidendrous and thamnic rainforest on fertile sites             | Thamnic rainforest on less fertile sites                            |
|  | Thamnic rainforest on less fertile sites                          | Dry <i>E. nitida</i> forest   |
|  | Dry <i>E. nitida</i> forest                                       | Furneaux <i>E. nitida</i> forest                                    |
|  | Furneaux <i>E. nitida</i> forest                                  | <i>Notelaea ligustrina</i> and/or <i>Pomaderris</i>                 |

| Community Reservation   | Forest Communities: Biodiversity Criteria (JANIS Report 6.1.2)  | Old-Growth Communities: Old-Growth Criteria (JANIS Report 6.2.2)  |
|---|---|---|
|   | Tall <i>E. nitida</i> forest<br>Dry <i>E. obliqua</i> forest<br>Tall <i>E. obliqua</i> forest<br><i>E. pulchella</i> - <i>E. globulus</i> - <i>E. viminalis</i> grassy shrubby dry sclerophyll forest<br>Pencil Pine with deciduous beech forest<br>Pencil Pine forest<br><i>E. regnans</i> forest<br><i>E. sieberi</i> forest on granite<br>Silver wattle ( <i>Acacia dealbata</i> ) forest<br><i>E. sieberi</i> forest on other substrates<br><i>E. subcrenulata</i> forest<br><i>E. tenuiramis</i> forest on granite<br><i>E. tenuiramis</i> forest on dolerite<br>King Billy Pine forest  | <i>apetala</i> forest<br>Tall <i>E. nitida</i> forest<br>Pencil Pine with deciduous beech forest<br>Pencil Pine forest<br><i>E. pauciflora</i> forest on sediments<br><i>E. subcrenulata</i> forest<br><i>E. tenuiramis</i> forest on granite<br><i>E. tenuiramis</i> forest on dolerite<br>King Billy Pine forest  |
| Communities that have met the practical limits of reservation on public land* (private land required) | Inland <i>E. amygdalina</i> forest<br><i>E. brookeriana</i> wet forest<br><i>Banksia serrata</i> woodland<br><i>Callitris rhomboidea</i> forest<br><i>E. viminalis</i> and/or <i>E. globulus</i> coastal shrubby forest<br>Grassy <i>E. globulus</i> forest<br>King Island <i>E. globulus</i> / <i>E. brookeriana</i> / <i>E. viminalis</i> forest<br><i>Melaleuca ericifolia</i> forest<br><i>Notelaea ligustrina</i> and/or <i>Pomaderris apetala</i> forest<br>Shrubby <i>E. ovata</i> forest<br><i>E. risdonii</i> forest<br><i>E. rodwayi</i> forest<br>Inland <i>E. tenuiramis</i> forest<br><i>E. viminalis</i> grassy forest<br>Furneaux <i>E. viminalis</i> forest<br>Wet <i>E. viminalis</i> forest on basalt | Inland <i>E. amygdalina</i> forest<br><i>Allocasuarina verticillata</i> forest<br><i>E. brookeriana</i> wet forest<br><i>Callitris rhomboidea</i> forest<br><i>E. viminalis</i> / <i>E. ovata</i> / <i>E. amygdalina</i> / <i>E. obliqua</i> damp sclerophyll forest<br><i>E. viminalis</i> and/or <i>E. globulus</i> coastal shrubby forest<br><i>Melaleuca ericifolia</i> forest<br>Shrubby <i>E. ovata</i> forest<br><i>E. pauciflora</i> forest on dolerite<br><i>E. rodwayi</i> forest<br><i>E. sieberi</i> forest on granite<br><i>E. sieberi</i> forest on other substrates<br>Inland <i>E. tenuiramis</i> forest<br><i>E. viminalis</i> grassy forest<br>Wet <i>E. viminalis</i> forest on basalt |
| Communities that have met the criteria under the flexibility provisions of the JANIS Report           | <i>E. amygdalina</i> forest on dolerite<br><i>E. amygdalina</i> forest on sandstone<br><i>Acacia melanoxylon</i> forest on flats<br><i>E. viminalis</i> / <i>E. ovata</i> / <i>E. amygdalina</i> / <i>E. obliqua</i> damp sclerophyll forest<br><i>E. pauciflora</i> forest on dolerite<br><i>E. pauciflora</i> forest on sediments   | <i>E. amygdalina</i> forest on dolerite<br><i>E. amygdalina</i> forest on sandstone<br>Tall <i>E. delegatensis</i> forest<br>Callidendrous and thamnnic rainforest on fertile sites<br>Dry <i>E. obliqua</i> forest<br>Tall <i>E. obliqua</i> forest<br><i>E. pulchella</i> - <i>E. globulus</i> - <i>E. viminalis</i> grassy shrubby dry sclerophyll forest<br><i>E. regnans</i> forest  |

\* Note that a number of forest and old-growth communities have been reserved to the maximum practical extent on public land. These communities have a limited extent on public land, are often fragmented and scattered, and will require protection on private land.

The RFA is a 20 year agreement with five yearly reviews. The key elements of the RFA

are legally binding. The whole thrust of the RFA is to ensure that systems of sustainable forest management are implemented in Tasmania.

In August 1996 the Commonwealth and States agreed to establish the Montreal Process Implementation Group for Australia (MIG) to develop the framework of regional criteria and indicators. The MIG completed its work with the adoption of the document entitled "A framework of regional (sub-national) level criteria and indicators of sustainable forest management in Australia" in August 1998. This provided for a set of core indicators (Category A) to be implemented immediately for most forests, plus Category B and Category C indicators, the implementation of which will be subject to feasibility of their inclusion in the core set.

A joint Tasmanian and Commonwealth review of performance implementation of the RFA is scheduled for 2002. A paper titled: *Tasmanian Regional Forest Agreement - Sustainability Indicators for the first review in 2002* June 2000, has been developed to support the review.

The following table provides a summary of sustainability indicators the review will cover for reporting in 2002:

**Table 10 Sustainability indicators for reporting in 2002**

---

**Criterion 1: Conservation of Biological Diversity**

- 1.1.a Extent of area by forest type and tenure.
- 1.1.b Area of forest type by growth stage distribution by tenure.
- 1.1.c Extent of area by forest type and reservation status (modified National Indicator 1.1.c).
- 1.1.d Area of old growth by forest type by reservation status (modified National Indicator 1.1.d).
- 1.2.a A list of forest dwelling species.
- 1.2.b The status (rare, vulnerable, endangered, or extinct) of forest dwelling species at risk of not maintaining viable breeding populations, as determined by legislation or scientific assessment.
- 1.2.c Population levels of representative species from diverse habitats monitored across their range.

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**Criterion 2: Maintenance of Productive Capacity of Forest Ecosystems**

- 2.1.a Area of forest land and net area of forest land available for timber production.
- 2.1.c The area, age class and future yield of plantations of native and exotic species.
- 2.1.d Annual removal of wood products compared to the sustainable volume.
- 2.1.e Annual removal of non-timber products (modified Regional Indicator).
- 2.1.f Area of plantation established meeting effective stocking one year after planting. (modified Regional Indicator).
- 2.1.g Area and per cent of harvested area of native forest effectively regenerated.

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**Criterion 3: Maintenance of Ecosystem Health and Vitality**

- 3.1.a Area and per cent of forest affected by processes or agents that may change ecosystem health and vitality.

---

**Criterion 4: Conservation and Maintenance of Soil and Water Resources**

4.1.a Interim indicator: Area and per cent of forest land systematically assessed for soil erosion hazard, and for which site-varying scientifically-based measures to protect soil and water values are implemented.

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**Criterion 5: Maintenance of Forest Contribution to Global Carbon Cycles**

5.1.a Total forest ecosystem biomass and carbon pool (modified Regional Indicator).

---

**Criterion 6: Maintenance and Enhancement of Long-Term Multiple Socio-Economic Benefits to meet the needs of Societies**

6.1.a Value and volume of wood and wood products production, including value added through downstream processing.

6.1.b Value and quantities of production of non-wood forest products.

6.1.d Value of wood and non-wood products production as percentage of regional value of production.

6.2.a Area and per cent of forest land available for general recreation and tourism

6.2.b Number, range and use of recreation/tourism activities available in a given region.

6.2.c Number of visits to recreational sites per annum (modified Regional Indicator).

6.4.a(i) Area and per cent of forest land in defined tenures, management regimes and zonings which are formally managed in a manner which protect Indigenous peoples' cultural, social, religious and spiritual values, including non-consumptive appreciation of country.

6.4.a(ii) Number of places of non-Indigenous cultural values in forests formally managed to protect these values (modified Regional Indicator).

6.5.a Direct employment in the forest sector and forest sector employment as a proportion of total employment (modified Regional Indicator).

6.5.b Average wage rates and injury rates in major employment categories within the forest sector.

6.6.a Extent to which the management framework maintains and enhances Indigenous values including customary, traditional and native title use by Indigenous peoples and for Indigenous participation in forest management.

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**Criterion 7: Legal, Institutional and Economic Framework for Forest Conservation and Sustainable Management**

7.1 (Narrative) Extent to which the legal framework (laws, regulations, guidelines) supports the conservation and sustainable management of forests. Includes 7.1.a, 7.1.b, 7.1.c, 7.1.d, 7.1.e.

7.2 (Narrative) Extent to which the institutional framework supports the conservation and sustainable management of forests. Includes 7.2.a, 7.2.b, 7.2.c, 7.2.e.

7.4 (Narrative) Capacity to measure and monitor changes in the conservation and sustainable management of forests. Includes 7.4.a, 7.4.b.

7.5 (Narrative) Capacity to conduct and apply research and development aimed at improving forest management and delivery of forest goods and services. Includes 7.5.a, 7.5.d, 7.5.f.

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**2.6.3 Threatened species and forest communities**

Tasmanian forests are home to some threatened species of flora and fauna and include some threatened forest communities. The RFA establishes and maintains effective strategies to protect these species and communities, taking priorities into account.

Research for the RFA identified 170 species of flora and 59 species of fauna as priority species for protection. Under the RFA, they are being protected through management of the CAR reserve system or by applying relevant management prescriptions in non-CAR areas. Priority species requiring consideration are listed in Attachment 2 of the RFA.

By focussing attention on species in the comprehensive regional assessment, the RFA has accelerated the recovery process for a number of species. Two examples are the recovery plans developed for the Swift parrot and the giant freshwater lobster.

Recovery action has been initiated for a number of threatened forest plants with the formation of a 'multi-species' recovery team. Work began as part of the RFA and a project was established to include both nationally listed and State listed species, which often occur in the same habitats.

#### ***2.6.4 World Heritage and Wilderness***

Native forests cover more than a third of the 1.38 million hectares of Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area.

The governments agreed that any additional nominations to World Heritage in Tasmania will come from the dedicated reserves of the CAR Reserve system. The Commonwealth agreed that any World Heritage nomination of places in Tasmania will give full consideration to potential social and economic consequences and will only occur after the fullest consultation and with the agreement of the Tasmanian State Government.

During the RFA process, wilderness values were identified using the National Wilderness Inventory procedures. Forests only have high quality wilderness value where the level of remoteness and primitiveness is commensurate with that required to classify the land on which they are growing as wilderness. A total of 1.944 million hectares of high wilderness quality in Tasmania was identified in the RFA. Much of this carries non-forest vegetation. The RFA increased the level of reservation of wilderness areas to 95% of all high quality wilderness areas identified.

#### ***2.6.5 Ramsar Wetlands***

There are no Ramsar wetlands in or in the vicinity of the timber catchment area. The closest wetlands on the register are Lake Sydney and South East Cape Lakes which are contained in a national park and Oyster Cove Wetland located on land managed by the Tasmanian Aboriginal Land Council.

#### ***2.6.6 Tasmanian Heritage Register***

Culturally significant sites located in the harvesting area have been placed in Cultural Heritage Special Management Zones or Protection Zones. Historic sites of State significance are protected by Forestry Tasmania and can receive additional legal

protection if listed under the *Historic Cultural Heritage Act 1995* whilst others are managed through the *Forest Practices Code*.

Forestry Tasmania is supportive of the development of cooperative management arrangements for areas of particular importance to traditional land user groups. Such arrangements could include for example, joint maintenance of tracks used for recreational purposes.

#### ***2.6.7 Areas of Aboriginal Heritage Significance***

The reporting of Aboriginal sites is mandatory under the *Aboriginal Relics Act 1975*. Sites are reported to the Department of Primary Industries, Water and Environment and must not be knowingly disturbed without an official permit. Sites located by Forestry Tasmania are reported initially to the Forest Practices Board (FPB) and then forwarded by FPB to DPWIE. Once known, management of Aboriginal sites often involves the establishment of a Special Management Zone.

Forestry Tasmania is supportive of the establishment of cooperative management arrangements with Aboriginal people in areas of particular significance to them in a manner consistent with other management objectives. This is explicitly recognised as an objective within the *Forestry Act 1920* with respect to Forest Reserves.

#### ***2.6.8 National Estate Values***

The *Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) places a duty on all Commonwealth ministers and Authorities to ensure their actions do not adversely affect national estate values. The Commonwealth government has certified in the RFA that its actions comply with the Act.

National Estate Values are fully considered in development of Forest Management Plans by Forestry Tasmania.

#### ***2.6.9 Private Land CAR Reserve Program***

Timber sourced from private land will only be derived from land that has approved Forest Practices Plans, consequently private land CAR Reserve program issues will have been dealt with as part of the planning approval process for these plans.

### 2.6.10 Greenhouse Gases

Some forestry operations, such as burning, lead in the short term to the accelerated release of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. However, by capturing carbon dioxide within trees and wood products, sustainable forestry also potentially results in a longer-term net reduction in greenhouse gases in the atmosphere.

### 2.6.11 Forestry legislation and management responsibilities

The principal Acts under which forests and the forest industry in Tasmania is managed and regulated is the *Forestry Act* 1920, which was substantially amended by the *Forestry Amendment (Forestry Corporation) Act* 1994, the *Forest Practices Act* 1985 (amended in 1994), the *Public Land (Administration and Forests) Act* 1991 and the *Private Forests Act* 1994.

The *Forestry Act* prescribes objectives and functions of Forestry Tasmania. These include objectives to:

- optimise the economic returns from its wood production activities;
- optimise the benefits to the public and the State of the non-wood values of forests;
- manage Multiple Use Forest Land (State forest entered in the Register of Multiple Use Forest Land) for wood production and, in a manner consistent with sustainable forest management and forest production policy, for other purposes including:
  - conservation of fauna and flora, landforms and cultural heritage;
  - care of the environment, including scenery; and
  - recreation.
- promote and encourage exploration and development of mineral resources in Multiple Use Forest Land;
- maintain Forest Reserves and Management Decision Classification areas in State forest; and
- provide information to and recreation facilities for the public, including the use of forestry roads.

Under the *Forestry Act*, Forestry Tasmania is vested with exclusive management and control of:

- all State forest, and, if the Director-General of Lands consents, forests and all forest products on other Crown land;
- forest operations; and
- development, control and delivery of the corporation's commercial policy.

The *Forest Practices Act* establishes a system of oversight and control of forest management on private and public land and prescribes the powers and functions of the Forest Practices Board.

The *Forest Practices Code* sets the standard by which forest practices on public and private land are conducted, and is enforced through the provisions of the *Forest Practices Act*. The *Forest Practices Code* sets out conservation and environmental protection provisions for soils, water quality and flow, site productivity, biodiversity, landscape, archaeology and landforms which may be affected by forest operations. The code was first published in 1987, and updated in 1993 and 2000.

The *Forests and Forest Industry Strategy* (FFIS) underpins forestry policy and management in Tasmania. The strategy was developed by a Ministerial Council, the Forests and Forest Industry Council (FFIC), in 1989-90.

The FFIS recommendations cover conservation management, public forest resource supply, management of public forests, special species timber supply and other forest products, and the timber industry.

#### ***2.6.12 Management and regulation of private forestry***

About one third of forests in Tasmania are on freehold land. Private forest owners are required to adhere to the provisions of the *Forest Practices Act* relating to the *Forest Practices Code*, Timber Harvesting Plans, three year plans, and Private Timber Reserves.

The management of forests on private land in Tasmania is facilitated by Private Forests Tasmania. Private Forests Tasmania is a state authority established under the *Private Forests Act*. Under this Act, Private Forests Tasmania is responsible for providing advice to private forest managers on sustainable management of forests, marketing and sale of forest products, advising and assisting the Forest Practices Board in the implementation of the *Forest Practices Act* on private land. It also processes applications for Private Timber Reserves under delegation from the Forest Practices Board.

### ***2.6.13 Three-year plans***

The *Forest Practices Act* provides that a person who has harvested more than 100 000 tonnes of timber in the preceding twelve months must prepare a three year plan which gives the location, volumes and transport routes planned for each of the three years. A three year plan may be varied if, after conferring with the person who prepared the plan, the Board considers that transport or harvesting is too concentrated in particular areas.

### ***2.6.14 Forest Practices Plans***

Prior to harvesting any coupe constructing a road or establishing a plantation a Forest Practices Plan must be developed in accordance with the Forest Practices Code 2000. The Plan addresses management requirements to ensure adequate protection of values such as soils, water, flora, fauna, apiary resources, geomorphology, cultural heritage and visual landscape. The Plan identifies harvesting methods and restoration methods following harvesting including how the area is to be re-forested. Within the Plan, provisions for fire management, pest, disease and weed control have to be detailed.

The Plans are certified by an authorised Forest Practices Officer prior to the commencement of operations and on completion of operations.

The majority of the areas harvested are regenerated as native forest. Wherever possible, seeds are collected from the coupe and/or equivalent seed zone before felling and re-broadcast in the coupe to re-establish the native forest. Coupes re-generated as hardwood plantations are usually planted with seedlings of *Eucalyptus globulus* at lower altitudes and *Eucalyptus nitens* in frost prone areas. Most plantations are pruned and thinned periodically to enable production of sawlog and veneer.

This forest management approach ensures that the supply of wood from State forest can be maintained at sustainable levels in compliance with the Regional Forest Agreement.

### ***2.6.15 The Intensive Forest Management Program***

An Intensive Forest Management (IFM) program has been adopted by FT to further improve wood quality from State forest. The program has the aim of achieving 16,850 ha of hardwood plantations and 2,900 ha of thinned native forest in the Huon District. Although nearly 17,000 ha of plantation area is significant, it represents less than 5% of the total Public Forest Estate in the Huon Forest District.

### *2.6.16 Forest Management Strategies*

FT uses a number of production strategies in its forest management approach:

- A very long rotation strategy that will deliver a mix of special species timber and older eucalypts;
- Extensive management aimed at the sustainable production of high quality eucalypt sawlog and veneer logs over a rotation of 80 –100 years (normal native forest strategy);
- A more intensive strategy aimed at producing high-value boards and structural timber over a rotation of 60 years (thinned native forest strategy); and
- Plantations on 20-25 year rotations pruned for high value products such as sawlogs and rotary peeled veneer.

The management of State forest is based on long-term plans that schedule the harvesting and replanting of multiple use forest areas. The principal management zones are forest blocks whose boundaries are normally defined by major topographic features. Within the forest blocks the forest is divided into coupes, areas of about 70 ha, that are then managed on a particular production strategy. Wherever possible, a dispersed harvesting approach is adopted so that adjacent coupes are not harvested concurrently.

### *2.6.17 The Source of Wood*

The Wood Centre will be provided with timber harvested from the existing forest estate and additional from plantation areas in the future. The Wood Centre site is developed around the concept of young wood processing, with the primary feedstock coming from regrowth and plantation timbers.

All of the wood supply for the site is harvested in accordance with the Regional Forest Agreement and Forest Practices Code to ensure a long-term sustainable output is maintained.

The majority of wood will be harvested in State forest in the Huon District. Some additional regrowth pulpwood from the southern part of the Derwent District may also be conveyed to the site to augment the supply of rotary peelable material. Respective processors on-site may also purchase timber from private land.

The Huon Forest District comprises about 762,900 ha of land, the land tenure of which is shown in Table 11.

**Table 11 Land Tenure in the Huon District**

| Tenure  | Area<br>(Hectares) | % Total<br>Area | Total Afforested<br>Area<br>(Hectares) | Old Growth<br>Area<br>(Hectares) |
|---|--------------------|-----------------|--|----------------------------------|
| Reserved under the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1970   | 503,600            | 66              | 172,200                                | 139,100                          |
| Private Land  | 125,500            | 17              | 59,500                                 | 2,600                            |
| Multiple-use State forest, includes 5,000 ha of old growth forest protected by Management Decision Classification (MDC) | 115,800            | 15              | 101,700                                | 20,600                           |
| State forest Reserves and other areas   | 7,300              | 1               | 6,000                                  | 1,300                            |
| Other Crown Land  | 10,700             | 1               | 5,100                                  | 400                              |
| <b>Totals</b>   | <b>762,900</b>     |                 | <b>344,500</b>                         | <b>164,000</b>                   |

(Forestry Tasmania June 2001)

The area available for wood production from Multiple-use State forest totals 95,100 ha (77% of the total FT managed area) including areas that require special management because of identified values. Within the wood production area, 7,900 ha are managed for special species timber production in accordance with the Forests and Forest Industry Strategy for continuing supplies of these species. The timber harvesting plans for the next 10 years will result in about 2,000 ha of State forest being harvested and regenerated each year.

The native eucalypt forests of the Huon District are of relatively even ages due to past fire events or silvicultural activities. Large fires have impacted the District in 1892, 1934, and 1967. Intense fire removes the shade and exposes mineral soils, the necessary conditions for successful regeneration of eucalypts. The clearfelling and slash burning regimes used to re-establish forests in the Huon District are based on the natural regeneration process which occurs through wildfire events.

Following clearfelling a large amount of timber that cannot be sold due to failure to meet market product specifications is left in the coupe. This includes old logs on the forest floor, logs with charcoal or logs with excessive rot. Where plantations are to be established, the residue wood is usually windrowed and burnt. Where native forest is to be regenerated a broadcast burning technique is used.

Apart from the benefits in allowing eucalypt trees to re-establish, burning the residue is important to provide protection of the new growth from wild fire. The residue would otherwise dry out and provide a high fuel load that can promote intense bushfires. Management of fuel build up in forests has contributed to a major reduction in bushfire impacts.

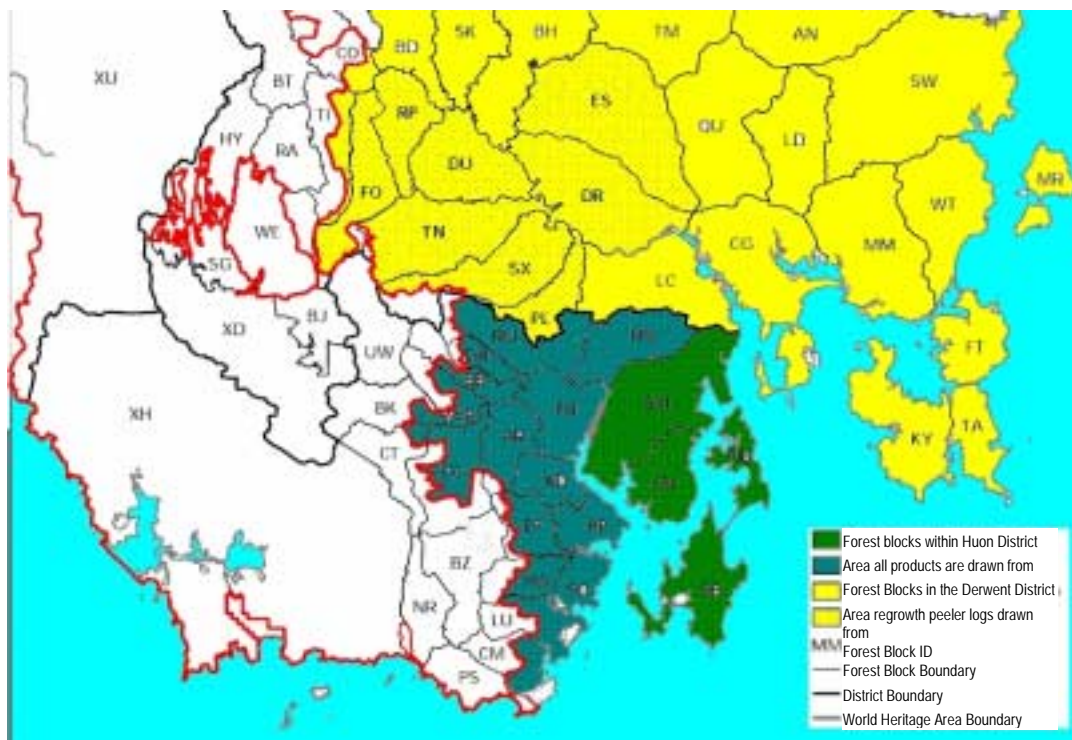
Recovery of this forest residue for power station fuelwood means that less material will need to be open air burnt. It will lead to an increase in utilisation of wood and produce a high value resource - electrical energy - from what is now a waste product. Approximately 300,000 tonnes per annum of fuelwood will be recovered from coupes prior to regeneration or plantation establishment burns. Despite this recovery of residue, it is envisaged that not all residue material will be utilised as fuelwood and as a result some forest residue will continue to be burnt in post harvest burns. Mostly, the largest pieces of wood such as downers and large branches will be utilised as fuelwood. It is not intended to remove root systems and stumps as part of the fuelwood harvesting process, nor will significant quantities of small branches and leaves be taken as these are important for nutrient recycling.

A process is underway with the Forest Practices Board to define the practices to be used in harvesting residue in order to minimise impacts on biodiversity in general and to ensure that sustainable management objectives are maintained.

Underpinning this process will be the various silvicultural research projects currently being undertaken at the Warra Long Term Ecological Research Site. These projects include several different silvicultural regimes and their effects on various aspects of biodiversity (including invertebrates, log decay, bryophytes, lichens etc). Results of these research projects will be used to further refine forest practices.

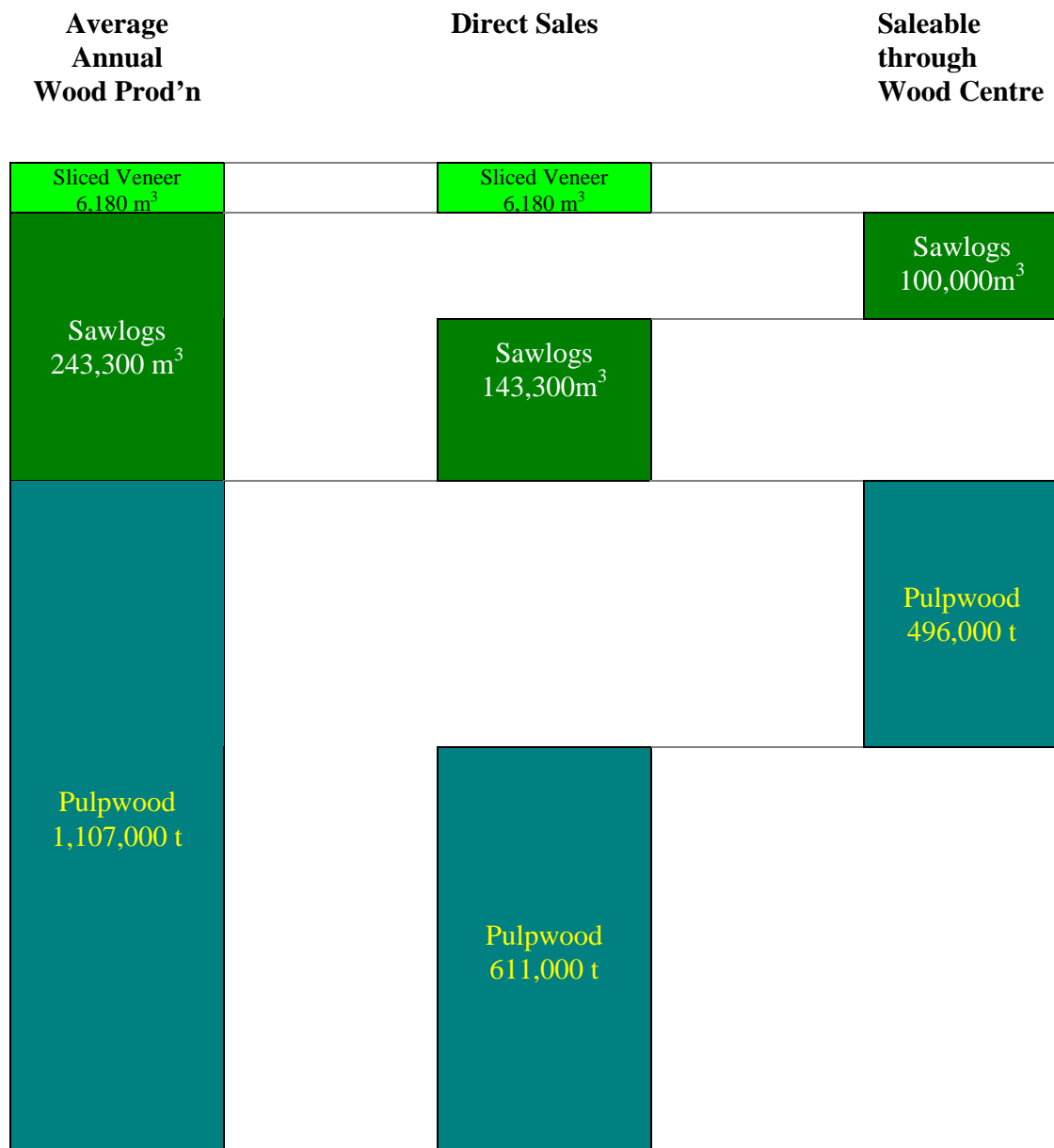
The notional supply area for the Wood Centre is shown in Figure 7 below:

**Figure 7 Notional Wood Supply Zone**



The extent of hardwood resource available for sustainable harvest from the Derwent and Huon Districts including committed resource is shown in the Figure 8 below. The committed resource is shown in the second column as direct sales. The third column illustrates the amount of wood available to be sold through the proposed Wood Centre.

**Figure 8 Indication of Sales of Wood From State Forest in the Huon and Derwent Districts**



“Direct sales” will be delivered from the forest landings directly to customers, volumes “saleable through Wood Centre” comprises wood that either needs processing to extract

additional value material or wood that does not have a current contract for sale.

Of the 538,000 tonnes of wood per annum presently available from State forest in the Huon Valley, none of the pulpwood and no more than 20% of the sawlogs is processed in the region. The new development will result in the same 538,000 tonnes of timber largely being processed in the Huon Valley. A further 300,000 tonnes of forest residue, previously burnt to waste in post harvest regeneration burns will be utilised as fuelwood in the Wood Centre power station.

## **2.7 Infrastructure Overview**

### **2.7.1 Water Supply**

The Wood Centre will be designed to operate with mechanisms to minimise water use, and maximise water reuse where possible. The final requirements will depend on the nature and size of operations chosen, but it is predicted to require less than 5 Megalitres of water a day. Water will be pumped from the Huon River as described in Chapters 3 and 5. An application for approval of a water right licence for the Wood Centre has been lodged with DPIWE.

### **2.7.2 Stormwater and Wastewater Infrastructure**

The site will have the capacity to capture any contaminated stormwater and treat to an acceptable level in order to reuse it on the site. Three storage ponds will be located at lower elevations relative to the rest of the facilities for this purpose.

The site will treat most process wastewater prior to directing it to the storage ponds for reuse on site. A small proportion of process wastewater will be treated and used for irrigation of *Eucalyptus globulus* plantations.

The treatment and storage of stormwater and process wastewater is described in detail in the relevant Chapters (6, 7, 8, 9 and 10).

### **2.7.3 Power**

Generally, the site will have the capacity to export power once the power station is built. However, there will be periods when power will be imported, for example, during the construction phase and during scheduled maintenance operations for the on-site power station, from the State Grid and/or in the case where demand by processing activities commences prior to completion of the power station.

It is estimated that there will be between 10 and 30 MW of power available for export from the site. The final installed capacity of the power station will be selected on the amount of fuelwood that can economically be supplied. The installed capacity is

likely to be between 20 and 40 MW. The production facilities on the site will consume about 10 MW, the balance of the power generated will be supplied to the State power grid.

Excess electricity generated on-site will be transmitted by a high tension, pole-mounted line following Lidgerwood Road and Arve Road to Kermandie Substation.

#### ***2.7.4 Communications***

FT will provide (or arrange for provision by others, eg. Telstra) appropriate connections to a telephone landline at the site boundary as well as a mobile phone base station that covers the entire Wood Centre and surrounding area.

#### ***2.7.5 Road and Transport Infrastructure***

The transportation infrastructure involves transport to and from the Wood Centre. Much consideration has been given to the alternative modes of transportation and alternative routes. A preferred route has been chosen and is described in detail in Chapter 4.

### **2.8 Planning Issues**

#### ***2.8.1 Land Tenure and Use***

The site and surrounding area is State forest, owned by the Crown. Areas surrounding the site are predominantly regrowth forests, while some areas near the site have been recently harvested and replaced with eucalypt or blackwood plantations.

There are no residences within 6 kilometres of the site. The closest residences in the region are as follows:

- One residence situated near the Little Denison Bridge (about 6 km away);
- Residences to the north east on She-Oak Road (>6 km away); and
- No residences to the south or west within 15 km.

There is some undeveloped private land on the southern bank of the Huon that extends to within 1 km of the site. This land is zoned Rural and is generally steep. It is unlikely to be developed for intensive residential use, but has the potential for one or two residences in the future. Topography provides natural barriers in the direction of this land.

In general, other than timber harvesting, State forests are utilised for activities such as bushwalking, fishing, horse riding, private and some commercial recreational boating/rafting and four-wheel driving. While the proposed site is not well known for any of these in particular, the upgraded access roads may provide more opportunity for these activities in the future.

Rafting and canoeing on the Huon River is popular. The new road network has made access to launch sites at the Arve River more accessible. The proposed development will not directly impact on natural features of the river.

A recreational/tourism development (Airwalk) is located in the Tahune Forest Reserve with the vision of showcasing environmental best practice in a multiple use forest. The facility aims to provide educational experiences in a natural setting. The reserve is located approximately nine kilometres upstream adjacent to the Huon River. The sealed Arve Road from Geeveston is used to access the development. The road does not pass the Wood Centre and does not provide views towards the Wood Centre proposed site therefore people accessing the Tahune Airwalk will not be affected by the Wood Centre.

### 2.8.2 *Planning Scheme Controls*

The Huon Planning Scheme 1979 covers the site. The Esperance Planning Scheme 1989 boundary adjoins the south eastern boundary of the project site.

Schedule 1 of the Huon Planning Scheme 1979 sets out some broad aims including:

*"The main aim of the Planning Scheme is to establish policies for the guidance and control of development within the Municipality as well as preserving the economic viability and rural character of the Municipality."*

*"The Planning Scheme aims at preserving the Municipality's landscape and scenic character with particular emphasis on the skyline reserves in and around the built up areas and the river and stream embankments."*

*"The Planning Scheme aims at protecting the existing environmental quality of the Municipality by:*

- *Preserving the areas of natural scenic beauty and rural character;*
- *Preserving all historic buildings and places;*
- *Discouraging the clearing of land in environmentally important areas;*
- *Discouraging the inappropriate development in environmentally sensitive and historic areas; and*

- *Controlling the location of rural holdings."*

*"The aims of the subdivision policy are:*

- *To preserve the economic viability and rural character of the Municipality;*
- *To accommodate development demands within the Municipality, based on sound planning principles;*
- *To restrict ribbon and scattered development by consolidating future development within the existing built up urban areas and villages; and*
- *Protection of prime agricultural land.*

Other aims deal with consolidation of residential development around existing settlements.

The land is zoned Rural and clause 3.5.12 of the planning scheme implies the intent of the zone is to retain land for rural purposes. In the Rural Zone a Timber Mill is discretionary. Timber Mill is defined in the planning scheme as:

*'Land or premises used where logs or timber are sawn or chipped or pulped but does not include a joinery works unless logs or large pieces of timber are sawn therein.'*

Light and General Industry are not permitted in the zone. The subdivision minimum area in the Rural Zone is 20 ha. In many cases developments proposed for the site will require less than 20 hectares.

It is noted that the use *"land clearing"* is a permitted use in the Rural Zone. Land clearing is defined as:

*"use for the purpose of clearing or preparing land for the other purposes or for the exploitation of natural resources other than minerals, including the felling of indigenous trees or shelter belt plantations, the burning of scrub (otherwise than in accordance with recognised fire prevention practices) and the cutting of live timber for firewood or other purposes where not carried on as part of a regular program of forest management."*

The site is currently bushland with poor soils and is not suitable for agricultural use. The intent of the Rural Zone does not match the existing or potential use of the site. For the Wood Centre Development to occur on the subject land an amendment will be required.

It is considered that the tenor of the Huon Planning Scheme 1979 supports the development of an integrated timber-processing site. For example, the development

of an integrated timber-processing site will assist in preserving the economic viability of the local economy without destroying the rural and scenic character of the Municipality, which the planning scheme iterates as its main aim. Good agricultural land will not be destroyed nor will any environmentally sensitive area. There is nothing in the tenor of the planning scheme that suggests the proposed amendment should not be approved.

### 2.8.3 *Planning Issues*

The planning issues are summarised as:

- The proposed development of the site does not concur with the intent of the Rural Zone;
- The merchandising yard and wood fibre mill are discretionary uses;
- The wood fired power station and rotary peeled veneer plant are prohibited necessitating an amendment to the Huon Planning Scheme 1979;
- A single planning permit will be required for the site;
- To enable a permit application for the proposed uses to be considered, the Huon Planning Scheme 1979 must be amended;
- Except for the merchandising yard and the woodwaste composting operations, all other proposed timber operations are Level 2 activities under the *Environmental Management and Pollution Control Act 1994*;
- The Level 2 activities will require the assessment by the Board of Environmental Management and Pollution Control;
- The Board requires the preparation of a Development Proposal and Environmental Management Plan (DPEMP) to support the Development Application (DA) process;
- The Board has publicly scoped the guidelines for the preparation of the DPEMP;
- Because the development is an integrated timber processing operation all of the elements need to be compatible with the planning scheme; and
- The subdivision provisions need to be cognisant that most uses on the site will be developed by the private sector.

#### 2.8.4 Planning Policy Framework

##### *Resource Management and Planning Scheme*

The Resource Management and Planning System of Tasmania (RMPS) provides the planning and environmental policy framework within which the planning merit of the draft amendment can be assessed. The key tenet of the RMPS is the concept of 'sustainable development', which is defined in the *Land Use Planning and Approvals Act 1993 (LUPPA)* as:

*managing the use, development and protection of natural resources in a way, or at a rate, which enables people and communities to provide for their social, economic and cultural well being and for their health and safety while:*

- (a) sustaining the potential of natural and physical resources to meet the reasonably foreseeable needs of future generations;*
- (b) safeguarding the life supporting capacity of air, water, soil and ecosystems; and*
- (c) avoiding, remedying or mitigating any adverse impacts of activities on the environment.*

The definition of sustainable development is cognisant that development will have an impact, however the impacts should be 'avoided, remedied or mitigated'. It is submitted that the proposed Wood Centre development has been planned for the subject site to avoid or mitigate impacts as described in this project DPEMP.

The principal objectives of the RMPS are as follows:

- (a) to promote the sustainable development of natural and physical resources and the maintenance of ecological processes and genetic diversity;*
- (b) to provide for the fair, orderly and sustainable use and development of air, land and water;*
- (c) to encourage public involvement in resource management and planning;*
- (d) to facilitate economic development in accordance with the objectives set out in paragraphs (a), (b) and (c); and*
- (e) to promote sharing of responsibility for resource management and planning between the different spheres of Government, the community and industry in the State.*

Change and development is part of modern society. However sustainable development means that any use and/or development that brings change should aim to protect natural and physical resources in a manner which enables the community to provide for their social, economic and cultural well being and for their health and safety.

It is submitted that the proposed amendment will facilitate development that involves localised but manageable impacts and it is consistent with both the principles of sustainable development and objectives of the RMPS. In particular the following reasons are given to support this and the objectives of the RMPS:

- The proposed development has been identified, as being important to ensure maximum utilisation of the State's timber resource;
- The proposed development will be important for the local economy;
- The proposed DPEMP contains specific measures to ensure that the impacts of developing the subject site on air, land and water are avoided or mitigated;
- The proponents have sought public comment from Government agencies and the local community on the proposal. Furthermore, the DPEMP process will seek public comment on the drafting of the guidelines and during the public exhibition period. The process for the proposed planning scheme amendment includes seeking further comment from the public and Government agencies;
- The effects on the cultural heritage socioeconomic, infrastructure and environmental factors have been carefully examined;
- The framework for the planning and environmental approvals for the project will be developed in consultation with the Huon Valley Council and various Government agencies; and
- Because of the size and nature of the proposed development the development will be classified, as a Level 2 activity under the Environmental Management and Pollution Control Act (EMPCA). This means that the Board will assess the development application in accordance with the Environmental Impact Assessment principles outlined in the EMPCA.

#### *State Policies*

In accordance with the State Policies and Projects Act, which is part of the RMPS, the following State Policies have to be complied with.

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### Protection of Agricultural Land

The purpose of this policy is to foster sustainable agriculture in Tasmania by ensuring the continued productive capacity of the State's agricultural land resource. Although the general area around the Wood Centre has been classified as Rural, the Wood Centre site is on Crown Land and has not been classified. The site is considered to have very limited agricultural potential considering the topography, poor erodible soils (stone and quartz soils) and climate.

### Water Quality Management Policy

The purpose of the Water Quality Management policy is to protect surface and ground water resources from pollution. The policy states:

*“that planning schemes must require that land use and development is consistent with the physical capability of the land so that the potential for erosion and subsequent water quality degradation is minimised (clause 31.5).”*

The policy is relevant to the planning, design and management of stormwater, sewage and greywater disposal systems as well as overall site operations. It is the intent to ensure that any point source of diffuse emissions into surface waters or groundwater with a potential to adversely affect environmental values are avoided or minimised. Accordingly, appropriate provisions for siltation and erosion control and stormwater run-off will need to be required by the Council as part of any development permit.

The policy requires that a regulatory authority must not allow a point source discharge of a pollutant to surface waters or groundwater unless it is satisfied that:

- (a) it is not practical to avoid the need for the discharge of wastes by recycling or re-use in accordance with clause 16.2 (which places limits on the discharge of pollutants in accordance with a series of principles);*
- (b) land application of the wastewater in an environmentally acceptable and sustainable manner is not practicable or would result in a higher net environmental risk than disposal of surface waters or groundwaters;*
- (c) any avoidable discharge will not prejudice the achievement of the water quality objectives for the receiving waters; and*
- (d) discharge would not give rise to pollution within terms of the Groundwater Act 1985, beyond the boundary of any attenuation zone in accordance with clause 25 of this policy.*

The policy also requires that regulatory authorities should not approve the application of wastes to land unless they are satisfied that it:

- a) *Can be carried out in an environmentally sustainable manner;*
- b) *Incorporates the use of best practice environmental management;*
- c) *Will not compromise the water quality objectives for surface and groundwaters;*
- d) *Will not give rise to an unacceptable risk to human or animal health; and*
- e) *Involves less net environmental risk than other strategies for dealing with the wastes.*

Various measures will be put into place to ensure that during both the construction and production phases of the site, the quality of the water will be protected and to ensure the flow rates for the Huon River are sustainable. Specific measures will also be implemented to ensure protection of groundwater at both the processing site and the irrigation area. Detailed measures for the management of siltation, erosion and stormwater runoff are provided in this DPEMP.

### Coastal Policy

One of the principles of the Coastal Policy is that:

*"The Coast shall be used and developed in a sustainable manner."*

Although the site is not located on the coast it is important to recognise that the water that flows from the Huon River to the coast is not impacted by activities conducted on the site.

Chapter 5 of this report outlines the measures to be put in place to ensure the water quality in the Huon River is protected.

#### **2.8.5 Proposed Amendment**

The Huon Planning Scheme 1979 gives little guidance on how a large project such as this one should be developed or where it should be located. The areas zoned for industrial purposes are not suitable, being too small or, more importantly, being in the wrong location. The proposed site was selected on the basis it is the most central to the forest resource.

The objectives of the amendment are to:

- establish certainty to allow the development of wood based industries on the site; and
- provide a mechanism whereby Council can assess proposed development or use of the site and impose standards.

In accordance with Section 43A of the *Land Use Planning and Approvals Act 1993* the request is to amend the Huon Planning Scheme 1979, to introduce a specified departure for the subject site and to enable the issue of planning permits for the following uses:

- (a) log segregation, cross cutting of logs and sawlog sales;
- (b) sawmilling and timber drying;
- (c) rotary peeling and production of veneers and plywood plants;
- (d) composting plant;
- (e) wood fibre production plant;
- (f) wood fired power generation plant;
- (g) timber sales yard;
- (h) joinery;
- (i) all other uses which are related to the downstream processing of the timber resource;
- (j) infrastructure that is integral to the development of the above uses;
- (k) visitor information centre;
- (l) engineering and maintenance workshops;
- (m) signs;
- (n) weighbridge;and
- (o) subdivision.

The manner in which the proposed amendment has been constructed is explained below.

A new zone was not considered suitable because the amendment sought is for a limited specified area of approximately 90 hectares with the uses being known and limited to timber processing. A zone is usually considered when there are a number of suitable locations throughout the municipal area. Also, with a zone, the specific uses for specific sites are largely unknown and a zone is thus usually more flexible in the range of developments and uses allowed.

The Huon Planning Scheme has undergone numerous amendments and it is somewhat unclear in its construction. It also has few development control measures or criteria. As a result, a separate schedule is considered the best and most transparent method of amending the scheme. The Light Industrial Zone is not suitable as general industry is not permitted and to amend the scheme to do so may create conflict between uses in other parts of the municipal area. It is noted the specified departure mechanism has been used a number of times to amend the Planning Scheme for a variety of developments and uses.

The amendment sets out the intent and objectives of the special area that is identified on a separate plan. A plan also identifies the proposed layout for developments and uses on the site.

The uses or development are identified in the schedule and the request is for a single permit to cover all of the listed uses. This is important as the staging of development of various components of the site are not known yet and may take longer than the statutory 2 year period.

Even though most of the developments will be classed as Level 2 activities under EMPCA and therefore become discretionary, it is proposed to make it clear what information is required by the Council and how a development application will be assessed when it is submitted for approval.

Because a site layout plan will be approved with the uses and areas defined it is unnecessary to require an application for subdivision and to have minimum areas set. Proposed amendment clause 11.9.2 establishes that no minimum areas are required and subdivision is to be treated as permitted.

Finally, the proposed amendment sets some minimum setbacks and car parking standards.

## **2.9 Social and Economic Impacts**

A detailed socio-economic report on the Huon Valley has been prepared and the potential impact of the Wood Centre development on the region considered as part of the preparation of this DPEMP. The report is provided in Appendix D and is summarised below.

The proposed project will deliver significant economic and social benefits to Tasmania and the Huon Valley in particular.

The Huon Valley has a long history as a resource based economy from its early beginnings with fruit and vegetables and an ever-expanding logging industry (refer to Appendix D). Although the Huon Valley, the birthplace in Tasmania of hardwood pulp processing still has some small sawmills, it has no forest product manufacturing base, yet it produces some 16% of the State forest wood volume (not including fire wood).

The Wood Centre proposed by Forestry Tasmania has the potential to expand on the historical base and will impact on the socio-economic foundation of the valley. Positive impacts will be felt in the manufacturing sector, regional employment, traffic and electricity supply without changes to planned current or future harvesting rates.

The proposed development will have a long-term beneficial impact on the size of the manufacturing base in the region. Employment resulting from the proposed development will include stability for the existing 15 to 20 contract-harvesting businesses that employ some 100 to 150 operational staff operating in the area. A further 200 to 250 new jobs will be directly created at the Wood Centre. The occupational range is likely to be a mix of 20% basic vocational, 65% skilled vocational and 15% diploma or degree. The likely catchment for the source of employees will include Dover and Cygnet. No negative impacts on employment levels in existing businesses have been identified.

This employment will contribute about \$8.1 million a year in wages and salaries to the economy. The construction period will also create around 200 direct jobs over a period of 12 months. The flow on effects will mean that at least the same number of jobs again will be created indirectly.

It is not expected that the Wood Centre will have a negative social or economic impact on operations at Triabunna or on Sawmills in southern Tasmania. Existing sawlog contracts will be fulfilled with the site offering additional benefits to sawmillers constituting the current FT customer base. These include:

- Improved inventory control with reduced log holding capacity required by the sawmiller;
- Improved log specification and quality control as a result of improved log segregation within the Merchandising Yard.
- Improved delivery lead times as a result of improved transport efficiencies.

Modifications in traffic flows should have positive social benefits by reducing log traffic through several major population centres. Further, by moving processing

facilities closer to the forest, most of the wood that is moved away from the site will be in enclosed vehicles. Redirection of the traffic flow will impact on some smaller centres.

Electricity generation on site will assist in increasing the reliability of power supply south of Huonville. Currently the Huon Valley is served by a single circuit transmission line from Chapel Street to substations at Huonville, Electrona and Kermandie. Transend has a consultancy underway that is looking at the management of loads and methods for improving reliability. Additional generating capacity at the end of the transmission network provides an attractive method of improving reliability of the network as a whole. Any fault along the transmission line currently results in the whole of the area south of the fault being blacked out. A new generating source at the end of the line will result in near continuous availability of power.

The Wood Centre will become a major ratepayer within the Huon Valley Municipality. It will make a significant contribution to the Huon Valley Municipality rate base. One of the few tangible services that the Wood Centre will receive from the Council is maintenance of roads owned by Council used to transport products from the Wood Centre to the Huon Highway.

The Huon Valley has a growing tourism industry that in part depends on the forests. FT is seeking to enhance this tourism appeal through provision of interpretation in the forest and establishment of tourist-centred facilities such as the Tahune Forest AirWalk. Forestry and tourism have developed side-by-side over the past 100 years. Various tourist operators benefit from using infrastructure developed by FT to provide access to forest pursuits in State forest.

The proposed development features processes that will use a wide range of wood assets thereby increasing productive use and reducing residues. No changes to sustainable forest practices will occur as a result of the development. Where wood is sourced from private forests, the requirements for the forest to be managed sustainably and in compliance with the Forest Practices Code will be observed.