

Our highlights 2022-2023



Our agency

Working in plantation and native forestry across the diverse environment of Western Australia, the Forest Products Commission (FPC) is a dedicated team committed to close engagement with communities, industry and government to support a vibrant and sustainable forestry industry.

Delivering timber products and services across three business segments – plantations, native forest and sandalwood – the FPC is shaping the industry's future with our key priorities of timber production, forest health, and adapting to the challenges of climate change.

Our objective is supplying essential timber products for the housing and construction industry in Western Australia, for furniture, artisans, firewood and other uses.



Plantations

The Softwood Plantation Investment Program is injecting \$350 million over ten years to secure our softwood estate, while carbon sequestration from new plantations plays an important role in the State's response to climate change.



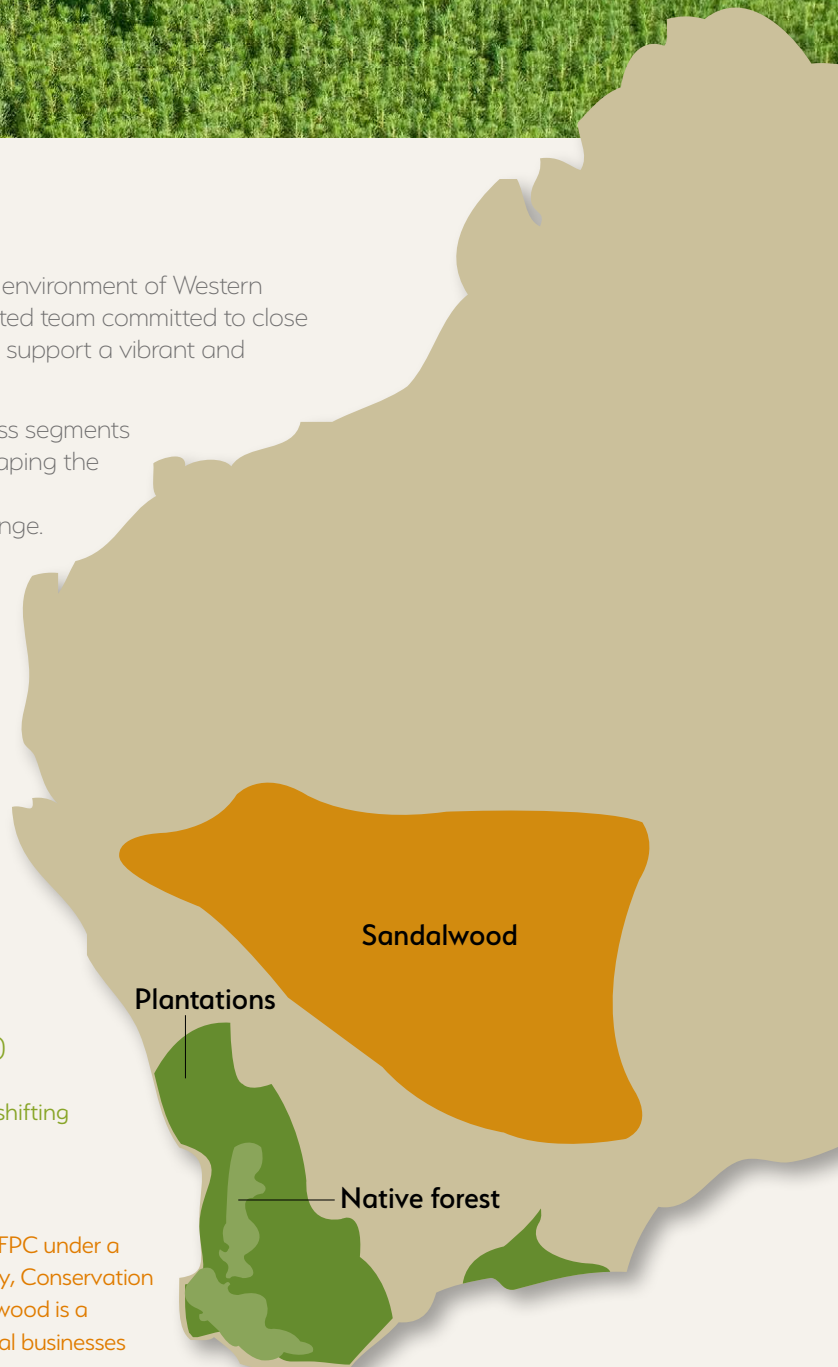
Native Forest

All FPC native forest operations are undertaken in accordance with the Forest Management Plan (FMP) 2014-2023. With the end of native forest commercial logging in Western Australia from 2024, our focus is shifting to supporting forest health outcomes.



Sandalwood

The harvest of native sandalwood is managed by the FPC under a supply licence issued by the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA). Regeneration of wild sandalwood is a priority, and we are committed to supporting Aboriginal businesses via our Sandalwood Dreaming contracts.



Our people



64%
staff in regional towns



10 work centres



143
full time staff



18
part time staff



23
casuals



Professional development, culture, health and wellbeing

The professionalism, resilience and dedication of our people has been a major contributing factor in our progress and positive outcomes in 2022-23.

As part of its commitment to the health and wellbeing of staff and setting them up for success, the FPC delivers a wide range of programs and initiatives to create a positive culture, health and wellbeing and a safe workplace.

We are investing in our people through good training and development to improve our workforce capability, performance and culture. We are also progressing other programs that support diversity and inclusion to strengthen our workforce and ensure we bring out the best in our people.



Embracing cultural diversity

The FPC is made up of people from diverse backgrounds, walks of life and cultures. We view our diversity as an asset that enriches our working life.

Harmony Week (20-26 March 2023) provided an opportunity to celebrate inclusivity, respect and belonging for our people. This was achieved by sharing foods from various cultures and telling the stories of staff about their cultural backgrounds and the ways multiculturalism enhances our workplace.

'Exposure to different cultures helps me to see vibrant diversity in my workplace and community, and appreciate the experience and learnings of others.'

Jessica
Financial Accountant (Operations)





Development and inclusion of women in our workforce

To demonstrate the FPC’s commitment to diversity and inclusion of women in our workforce, women from 8 of our 10 locations participated in the Women in Public Sector Leadership Conference in November 2022 (pictured above).

In addition, 28 women have embarked on a Women in Leadership Training and Development program to support them in their professional leadership journey. There are three separate programs, allowing women at different career stages to participate in appropriately pitched skills development and networking.

Training safer drivers

Over 100 FPC staff attended the 12 Defensive Driving training sessions held in 2022-23, representing 91% of staff who regularly drive vehicles as part of their role. Training includes a classroom session focussing on road and vehicle safety, followed by a practical afternoon session.



Mental Health First Aid Training

Two-day Standard Mental Health First Aid Training Courses in Perth and Bunbury enabled the participants to build their mental health knowledge, provide skills to recognise warning signals of distress, and to provide practical assistance to colleagues in need.

Employee health and wellbeing

The FPC recognises the importance of employee health and wellbeing and is committed to supporting staff with specific services such as the Employee Assistance Program as well as promoting other campaigns during the year including:

- R U OK? Day
- Men’s Mental Health Week webinar for staff on healthy habits
- 16 Days in WA campaign
- Optimising health through nutrition
- Positive thinking skills for work/life balance
- Essentials of financial health providing guidance and advice to support long-term financial wellbeing.



Follow us on social media



Keeping our people safe

We continued to engage with the Forest Industry Federation of Western Australia (FIFWA), the Australian Forest Products Association (AFPA), and the Community and Public Sector Union/Civil Service Association to improve Work Health and Safety (WHS) across the forest industry.

The FPC is a member of the AFPA WHS sub-committee. Its Safety, Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2022-2025 and Annual Works Plan includes the development of industry guidance documents and delivery of projects and research that focus on the use of technology to reduce risks and incidents.

The FPC is also collaborating with the WA forest industry to develop a new WA Forestry Code of Practice aligned with WA WHS legislation and modelled on Safe Work Australia Codes of Practice.

We undertook our annual OSHtober campaign for staff in October 2022. The theme was Work Health and Safety - think physical, think psychological, a reminder that under the WHS laws psychosocial health and safety is just as important as physical health and safety.

The FPC engaged a safety consultant to audit the FPC's Safety Management System to identify and progress best practice recommendations. Key priorities include the development of a Safety Management System framework aligned with ISO 45001.



The Graduates visited the Manjimup Nursery and Seed Centre as part of their regional induction tour.

'I have enjoyed learning and gaining many invaluable skills, which I look forward to further developing in the extensive, diverse range of functions within the FPC.'

Mitchell Graduate Officer



2023 Graduate Program

The 2023 FPC Graduate Program commenced in February 2023 with five Graduate Officers based in Bunbury, Nannup and Manjimup. The program is designed to support succession and future skills requirements as the FPC repositions for the future.

Graduate officers are guided through structured training and development activities alongside coaching and mentoring from experienced forestry professionals.

Rotational opportunities include forest management activities, silviculture, bushfire protection and remediation.

Our business

Sustainable forest management performance

During 2022-23 the FPC was externally audited against the International Standard ISO 14001:2015 (for an Environmental Management System) and the Australian Standard for Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) AS 4708:2013. The FPC's entire business is covered by ISO 14001:2015.

 **20 tonnes**
of sandalwood
seed hand planted in


1,432 kilometres
of rip-lines seeded in the rangelands

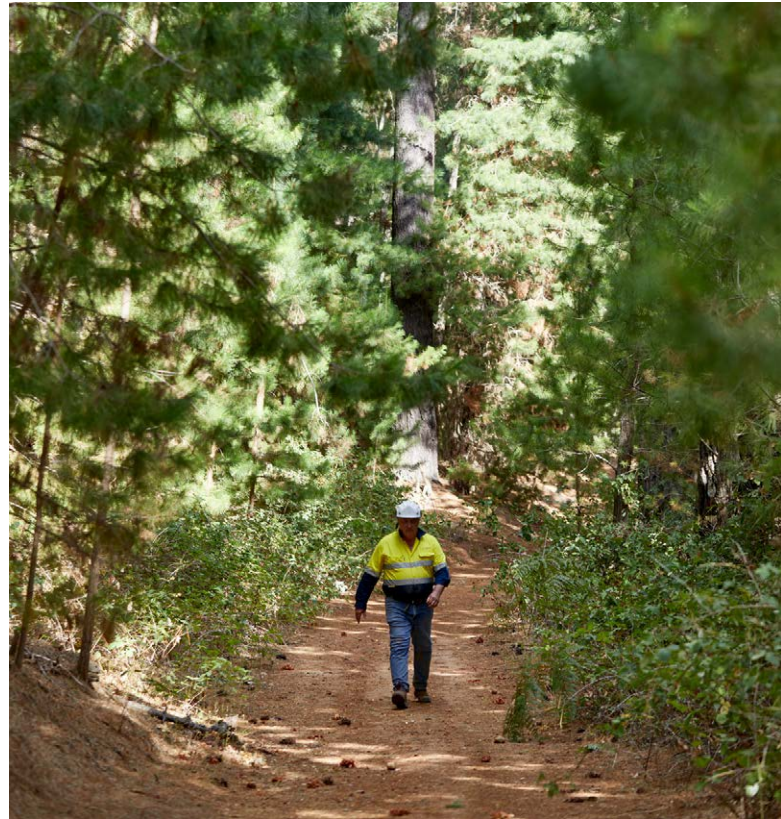
More than

180,000

sandalwood seeds
planted by Aboriginal
and/or Torres Strait
Islander people



 **33**
different fauna species
observed in monitored karri forests
over the last year



Plantations

The FPC's \$350 million Softwood Plantation Investment Program is gathering momentum with 2022-23 seeing the acquisition of new properties for plantation establishment.

Plantings on these properties, located in the South West, will help secure the future of the softwood processing sector and support the State's housing and construction industry.

Carbon sequestration

The FPC has registered several of its new plantations as carbon sequestration projects under the Emissions Reduction Fund. We will be reporting on the projects in the second half of 2023 and expect to be issued with our first Australian Carbon Credit Units (ACCU's) in 2023-24. The Softwood Plantation Investment Program is expected to lead to the sequestration of up to 7 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent making a significant contribution towards the State's target of becoming carbon neutral by 2050.

Partnerships

The FPC has also progressed plantation development projects on land owned by both public and private sector partners. In these projects the carbon credits generated will be retained by the owners while the timber products will contribute to the State's timber supply. Such partnership agreements effectively leverage the resources and forest management expertise of the FPC to increase the area of new plantation able to be established.

Farm Forestry Assist Grants Program

The FPC continues to support the integration of pine plantings on private land through the Farm Forestry Assist program. Under this program eligible landowners can receive pine seedlings from the FPC's nursery to establish a plantation on their land. As part of this program the FPC provides technical advice to the landowner as well as connection to plantation establishment contractors. The 2023 program awarded four grants totalling 136,000 seedlings.



Education and engagement teach next generation about forestry

Opportunities such as the Bunbury Hidden Treasures of Mangrove Cove open learning day provide a fun and informative way for the FPC to connect with local communities.



The educational component teaches future generations about forestry and the lifecycle of pine from seedling to tree, then timber to products such as future homes. The activity aligns with the new Junior Forester children's activity book alongside the popular giveaway of pine 'Christmas tree' seedlings.



Engaging with stakeholders at community events



Sharing information about the Softwood Plantation Investment Program and existing plantation estate management is important to ensure community awareness and understanding about this vital industry.

Attending community events such as the Balingup Small Farm Field Day and Brunswick Show were a useful conduit to share information about the program with regional stakeholders.



Sandalwood

Our sandalwood operations include the management of plantations across the Wheatbelt and Mid West, along with managing the harvesting and regeneration of wild sandalwood (*Santalum spicatum*) on Crown Land across the arid rangelands. During 2022-23, the FPC was successful in developing new markets for wild sandalwood products. As part of our strategy to integrate wild and plantation sandalwood, a new powder blend has been developed and was well received by the market.

Sandalwood Dreaming

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are an important contributor to our sandalwood operations. We continue to work with local First Nations Peoples on our wild sandalwood supply chain. The FPC has eight 'Sandalwood Dreaming' contracts with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-owned businesses that harvest dead sandalwood and sow seed in remote areas.

The FPC is investigating opportunities to broaden these activities to include harvesting of green wood and further value adding of the resource.

Sandalwood Inventory Survey

This year we commenced a broadscale wood sampling survey within the FPC's 5,000 hectare plantation estate. The quantities and quality of sandalwood oil identified through this survey will be used to inform sales opportunities as the plantations mature and assist in steering silvicultural management to maximise commercial value.

Regeneration

Good rainfall fell across the rangelands over the 2022 winter, resulting in strong sandalwood establishment from the 2022 'Operation Woylie' mechanical seeding program with approximately 150,000 new sandalwood seedlings established. In the 2023 summer another 20 tonnes (6.5 million seeds) were sown.

Sandalwood in a nutshell at Forum



After a two-year hiatus due to COVID-19, the annual Sandalwood Contractors Forum was held in November 2022. Approximately 40 staff, stakeholders and contractors met in Kalgoorlie to learn and share knowledge and experiences about the sandalwood business.

Native forest

The native forest industry is currently adapting and responding to significant policy changes following the State Government's announcement in 2021 to end commercial native forestry from the end of 2023. The FPC is working with the State Government and industry to implement these changes as the industry transitions to the new Forest Management Plan (FMP) 2024-2033.

Draft Forest Management Plan 2024-2033

Released in draft form for consultation in October 2022, the FMP will provide the framework for ecological thinning for forest health activities in Western Australia. In the interim, while waiting for the new FMP to be finalised, the FPC has been working with the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA), and industry to scope options for delivery of forest health outcomes under the new FMP.

Regeneration of native forests

The FPC continued to regenerate native forest areas post-harvest under the provisions of the current FMP 2014-2023.

Ecological thinning trials

Working in collaboration with DBCA, the FPC continues to improve the operational knowledge of ecological thinning through a number of small scale trials. Trials in native forest areas also continue to assist the FPC and the DBCA to better understand how the objectives of the new FMP 2024-2033 can be delivered.

The FPC is also canvassing the local and interstate industry, along with leading forest machinery manufacturers, for machinery solutions that best deliver ecological thinning for forest health outcomes. The FPC expects learnings from the development and implementation of ecological thinning to continue into the period of the FMP 2024-2033.

Fire prevention and protection

Effective fire protection of the State's plantation estate is critical to the long-term security of WA's timber resource. As the investment in the softwood estate increases over coming years, it is important that fire mitigation measures and appropriate response structures are in place to protect regional communities and the plantation estate from the threat of bush fire.

The FPC continues to provide the State's Interagency Fire Services with experienced fire staff to support response capabilities within Department of Fire and Emergency Service (DFES), Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES) and Local Government. The FPC maintained its level of commitment to these structures in 2022-23 and is exploring ways to enhance the internal capabilities of the FPC to support the new plantation estate.



Sharing knowledge and growing partnerships

As part of preparation for the bushfire season, the Lower Southwest DFES region runs a preseason training exercise designed to develop and enhance support structures that underpin operational fire efforts in a bushfire event. The 2022-23 exercise took place in the Blackwood valley near Nannup, where the FPC has significant softwood plantations integrated with DBCA assets and local landowners. FPC staff were engaged to provide local knowledge and insight into the value of the plantations potentially impacted by fire threat and helped train local DFES and DBCA staff.

Another pre-season fire trip (pictured above) hosted by the FPC for DFES Emergency Fire Managers from the Southwest, Lower Southwest passed through the Boyup Brook, West Arthur and Collie shires, with the group travelling in convoy to various localities where a large part of our plantation investment is occurring. Field trips like these help with fire planning and mitigation and enable ongoing collaboration between local shires and emergency services, as well as broader industry partners.

The FPC provided more than 130 full-time equivalent (FTE) days to bushfire suppression this year and over 80 FTE days assisting DBCA with fuel reduction community protection burning programs.

The FPC continues to network with the broader timber industry through the Forest Industry Federation WA (FIFWA) to help develop the industry fire response skills and capabilities.

While some FPC plantations were unfortunately impacted by unplanned fire events in 2022-23, the associated loss against the broader plantation asset was relatively low with 451 hectares of the softwood estate impacted.

Community Fire Protection Grants boost fire safety

The FPC's Community Fire Protection grants were launched in 2023 and provide up to \$10,000 per grant to support volunteer fire brigades and other relevant organisations with their fire prevention, preparedness, and response activities.

The program prioritised applications that align with the FPC's strategic focus linked to its Softwood Plantation Investment Program; that increase understanding of plantation fire management; and deliver the greatest benefits to local communities.

Grants totalling \$66,630 were awarded to 11 recipients for telecommunications and firefighting equipment as well as water tanks and water pumping supplies. These grants provide resources over and above the existing funding arrangements available to volunteer fire brigades through the Emergency Services Levy.



Upper Capel Bush Fire Brigade's newly installed water tank.



Allanson Bush Fire Brigade with their new lighting towers for nighttime operations, thanks to their FPC grant.

Business improvements

The FPC is embracing digital innovation and technological advancement to improve forest management and business operations.

Remote sensing

Remote sensing technology continues to reduce the requirement for physical assessment and validation when mapping vast areas. Trials using remote sensing technology are also testing how we can advance our activity and performance by combining new approaches with existing needs and methods.

Over the past 12 months, the FPC has carried out hyperspectral imaging trials to assist with estimating wild sandalwood stocking rates in the semi-arid Goldfields. In WA, wild sandalwood occurs over millions of hectares, so if this technology is successful, it will significantly reduce the amount of time and resources needed to physically assess sandalwood populations in these vast and remote areas.

Thermal imaging



A remote sensing research trial using thermal imagery was initiated in 2023 to explore whether sub-surface or shallow rocks could be detected using remote sensing technologies. Mapping these sub-surface rocks has the potential to help reduce fire risk from machinery sparking fires during operations and to extend the length of the season when operations can be undertaken in areas with high fire risk.

The Remote Sensing team also conducted a successful drone-based trial aimed at identifying live *Pinus radiata* seedlings in newly established plantations. The capture of high-resolution imagery was then mapped against existing methods for seedling detection and estimation of survival rates, demonstrating comparable results. This type of drone capture is an important step on the journey towards digital forestry and the ability to produce a digital twin of the plantation resource.

Tree Breeding Program

The FPC continues to identify the best genetically selected seed stock via its successful *Pinus radiata* tree breeding program. This program builds on over 50 years of scientific research in WA, as well as collaboration with Tree Breeding Australia. To ensure that superior qualities of *Pinus radiata* are maintained, the FPC sources seeds from specially designed seed orchards from the FPC's Manjimup Nursery and Seed Centre that contain elite genetic material.

Silviculture practices

In some South West pine plantations, the FPC examined the benefits of mechanically mulching harvest debris back into the ground before establishment of the next tree crop, versus the traditional site preparation method of heaping and burning the debris. Potential benefits of employing this technique include faster seedling establishment time and a reduced reliance on burning plantation debris.

Digital operations planning system

The implementation of a cloud-based forest operations planning system, Remsoft Operations, represents a significant investment into digital transformation this year. Remsoft integrates data from FPC core operations systems into a centralised cloud-based platform. Since going live in April 2023, Remsoft has enabled streamlining of a range of processes from crew and harvest scheduling to allocation of products and tracking supply to customer targets.



Aboriginal engagement

The FPC is committed to developing and strengthening relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, engaging staff and stakeholders in reconciliation through our Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) and business activities.

RAP working group members participated in cultural awareness training and met during the year to support other RAP initiatives.

The FPC is a signatory to the Noongar Standard Heritage Agreement and Aboriginal heritage and cultural assessments are embedded in FPC operations across the South West and Goldfields.

Improvements that help Aboriginal businesses to become commercially sustainable are a priority for the FPC, particularly in regional areas of Western Australia.

Initiatives include:

- Continued success in the implementation and management of the Sandalwood Dreaming program, which supports Aboriginal businesses to work on country harvesting sandalwood.
- Continued support for training and financial management, particularly as new contractors commence work.
- Continuing to award contracts to Aboriginal businesses, with 12.5% of new FPC contracts entered in this reporting period being for Aboriginal businesses, which exceeds the WA State Government target of 3%.



Flying high during Reconciliation Week

The FPC was proud to support the reconciliation movement by sponsoring the inaugural Reconciliation Week Street Banner program. FPC banners were flown in Perth CBD, Dunsborough, Capel, Harvey, Manjimup and Kalgoorlie. Team members from the Perth office snapped a shot with the banner on St George's Terrace.

Supporting Aboriginal businesses

The FPC provides practical training and guidance for new and existing Sandalwood Dreaming contractor crews to support their operational and business activities.



On country visits foster collaboration

FPC staff work closely with Aboriginal Sandalwood Dreaming contractors to support the development of commercial business opportunities. Visiting them on country is a positive way to foster collaboration and shared understanding to achieve best outcomes.



Art creates better cultural understanding

The 2022 FPC Aboriginal Art Competition invited aspiring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists to submit an art piece in response to the brief, "What does forestry mean to you?" The competition was launched during NAIDOC week to engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and celebrate and recognise their history, culture, and achievements. Seven entries were received from artists across WA. Leticia Shaw, from Kalgoorlie, is pictured with her artwork "Environment – Bushland – Country" when she visited the Perth office to see the exhibition.

Climate change

The Softwood Plantation Investment Program is a key action of the Western Australian Climate Policy 2021 and a major contribution by FPC to the State’s target of net zero emissions by 2050.

The FPC is further contributing to climate change action through assessing the risk of climate change to the agency’s business and establishing its first carbon account from which it will develop and implement an emissions reduction plan.

Cyber security

The FPC significantly enhanced its cyber security profile in line with the WA Government’s Cyber Security Policy, reporting that we now meet seven of the ‘Essential 8 Controls’ of the Office of Digital Government at the end of the 2022 calendar year.

As part of its cyber security program of works the FPC has undertaken penetration testing, enforced multi-factor authentication (MFA), implemented a new vulnerability management tool and updated its patching procedures.

The FPC has also signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Office of Digital Government and integrated its Security and Information Event Management solution with the State’s Security Operations Centre.

Supporting sustainability through innovation

Hard hats are standard items of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) which require replacement every two years. A lack of recycling options meant that expired hard hats were previously sent to landfill.

FPC staff spearheaded an innovative recycling initiative. Joining forces with the FPC’s Occupational Safety, Health and Environment branch, access to a new hard hat recycling service was organised, helping reduce both landfill and the FPC’s carbon footprint.

‘I look forward to seeing what other opportunities are available for us to pursue.’

Lindsay
GIS Officer



Financial performance



\$35.5 million

invested in building WA’s softwood estate

\$220 million 
Total value of our pine plantations

\$6.1 million 
Total operating profit (including other expenses)

\$125.9 million 
Total sales income from forest products



Getting in touch with the FPC

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Our Values

Each of us striving to be our best and treating each other well, this is what we stand for at the FPC.

Efficiency



Passion



Empowerment



Trust



Respect



Teamwork



What this means to us

We work together as one FPC.

We are passionate professionals, committed to best practice sustainable forestry in Western Australia.

Our work is underpinned by mutual respect, trust and teamwork.

We value diversity of people and ideas.

We strive to be our best; develop at work and embrace learning.

We take personal responsibility and empower each other, and our teams, to achieve results.

We are efficient in our decision making, processes and procedures.