

VAFI VISION 2025

Healthy Forests, Healthy Forest Industries

2007



A Sustainable Forest Industry

The Victorian Forest Industry has developed a draft strategy and policies as the basis for discussions and consultations with its members and stakeholders including suppliers, customers, environment groups, interested and affected community groups/organisations and experts in 2004. VAFI then developed a Policy Charter of its own as well as joint policies with others ie TCA, Plantations & Farm Forestry organisations.

The strategy outlines the potential of the forest industry to contribute to sustainability in its four dimensions – Economic, Environment, Social & Cultural and Governance (i.e. “Triple Bottom Line + One”) and consequently to assist the overall sustainable development of Victoria. It may also provide a model for the development of like industries elsewhere.

Around the world and in Australia, industries like mining, energy, water, chemicals and building & construction are exploring how they can be more sustainable and contribute to the sustainable development of economies and communities.

Most use the Brundtland definition of sustainable development

“...development (i.e. economic, environmental and social development) that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” “...Sustainable development is not a fixed state of harmony, but rather a process of change in which the exploitation of resources, the direction of investments, the orientation of technological development, and institutional change are made consistent with future as well and present needs.”

(World Commission on Environment and Development (1987) Our Common Future, Oxford University Press, Geneva, Switzerland)

Vision 2025

VAFI’s Goal is to have robust and sustainable forest industries in Victoria.

This goal is supported by VAFI’s desire for Victoria’s forest industries to be recognised as the World’s best managed and ecologically sustainable.

VAFI’s objectives

These are the essential elements for working towards our goal:

- To work with the State Government & Others to develop policies supportive of robust and sustainable forest industries in Victoria, economically and socially viable, long term, based on innovative, design, technologies and processes.
- For Victoria's forest industries to be world's best managed, ecologically sustainable and recognised as such.
- To work with the Federal Government and Others to introduce polices to restrict imports of illegally and unsustainably harvested timber and redressing Australia's trade deficit.
- To have recognised, native hardwood timber, sustainably harvested, used and regrown, as one of the most environmentally friendly materials we can use. Trees store carbon as they grow and wood based products continue to store that carbon.

In order to achieve our goal and objectives, VAFI is committed to establishing:

- Industry leadership with credibility & recognition around sustainable forest issues and change, especially economic and resource certainty for the industry
- A whole of supply chain presence with co-operation and innovation
- Community understanding & support by working with diverse organisations & voices
- Demonstrable credentials around the best forest management, including multiple values of production forests including ecosystems services, carbon, biodiversity, water, soil
- The case for sustainable native forest industries in Victoria

Native Forestry, Plantations, Farm Forestry should be viewed as part of sustainable land use policy, planning and management incorporating all the dimensions of sustainability, economic, environment, social and cultural, governance. As well, forest industries should be recognised for their contribution to local communities, and infrastructure, from road routes to fighting fires and being mayors and school councillors.

- 1 To continue to advance VAFI's Policy Charter and Engage with Government and other key stakeholders to improve the social licence to operate.**
- 2 Obtain credible independent third-party forestry certification to obtain both AFS and FSC in order to offer choice to both producers and customers around the world.**
- 3 Increase community understanding of and support for sustainable commercial forestry, locally nationally and internationally.**
- 4 Seek to increase all aspects of resource security and the value obtained from it through:**
 - Leadership at State and Federal Government levels.
 - Immediately optimising outcomes from Bushfire Recovery and Future Planning.
 - Ongoing input to all methods technologies, research and development and investment.
 - Plantations and Farm Forestry for Sawlog Production.

VAFI's 2007 Deliverables

1. VAFI Policy Charter

To keep VAFI's Policy Charter as a leading edge document in line with the best, progressive understandings of sustainable forestry around the planet. This should continue to be the basis of our representation to Governments and the public. Background and research papers need to be prepared as appropriate. This means engagement with key allies/institutions eg TCA, Creswick, Melbourne University, GSI @ RMIT, Plantation & Farm Forestry companies and organisations and others along the supply chain.

2. Influence with Governments, Especially the Victorian Government and Local Governments in the State

To continue to build constructive relationships with the State Government, especially VicForests, DPI, DSE, Treasury, Premier's Office as well as other related agencies eg Parks Victoria, EPA, Worksafe, STIC, TIC. This means continual interaction at many levels. Departmental Secretaries, Key Policy Units, Ministerial Advisers, Chiefs of Staff, Ministers and the Premier. It includes submissions to Inquiries as appropriate.

3. Influence Across Political Parties

VAFI is to continue to build its influence with all political parties, especially at the State Level to ensure that they are informed of developments and policies. This means on-going interaction with the major political parties, the Greens and the Independents. This also includes supporting local relationships between VAFI members and politicians.

4. VAFI Members

As the industry continues to consolidate, VAFI should aim to focus on the issues that surround the industry's social licence to operate, influence the opinions and policies of Governments, community leaders and their organisations, including environment and community groups. At the same time, it is important for VAFI to ensure its members are well informed about the issues of the day affecting their businesses. This includes IR (VAFI is registered with the IRC) OH&S, environmental management, business and industry trends.

To do this, VAFI needs to engage with other organisations as appropriate ie Lawyers, IR, OH&S and EMS experts. VAFI must continue to enhance its website, email distribution system and ensure regular visits to all members, twice per year if possible. There is a member only section on the web and regular VAFI Bulletins. VAFI should pursue arrangements with other organizations as efficiently as possible, looking to minimise costs

5. Progressing Certification & Recognition of Wood Products

VAFI should continue to work closely with Wood Products Victoria (WPV), NAFI and others to ensure all adverse/perverse procurement policies around the use of timber and paper products are reversed and that AFS (PEFC) is recognised locally nationally and internationally. As well, VAFI needs to continue to pursue FSC so member companies and their customers have choice for branding in their various markets.

6. VAFI Materials & Communications Development for Public/Media/ Government

VAFI has developed core materials:

- ▶ Sustainability Reports, 2005, 2006 with 2007 in the pipeline.
- ▶ VAFI Policy Charter: Vision 2025 with separate Plantations Policy and Joint Forest Industries Policy with TCA and VFCCH
- ▶ A series of background papers on Water, Old Growth, Economics of the Industry, Bioenergy etc.
- ▶ VAFI's Forest Industries Explorer for students and the public for which VAFI is currently developing a marketing strategy.
- ▶ An up-to-date comprehensive website.
- ▶ A comprehensive database and IT capabilities
- ▶ VAFI Seminars that continue to address the issues.

7. Media

VAFI has developed an up-to-date media database, established on-going relationships with media and is encouraging other like organisations (especially scientific/academia), to make public statements and publish letters and opinion pieces especially around global warming and water. This is hard, consistent and persistent work. VAFI convened a meeting to discuss this last week.

This means that VAFI needs expertise in-house and should aim to make regular media releases and write regular opinion pieces, make new media contacts and encourage them to interact with the industry. We are also documenting bias on Editorial pages from the Age and Sunday Age.

8. VAFI's Community Council, Business & Investment Advisory Group

These are the result of amalgamating the four advisory groups established in 2004. VAFI has built strong relationships outside the industry through these two external advisory groups.

This year these groups will meet on the same day as the VAFI Executive and share lunch and discussions with an external speaker. They will also continue to be part of the dialogue with the Government, especially with Department Secretaries and Agencies.

9. VAFI Representations and Presentations

VAFI, mostly via the CEO, has a presence on a number of Government and related bodies. This needs to continue so industry issues can be raised directly.

VAFI presentations/speeches about forest industries issues continue at a lesser pace this year. These will be focussed as much as possible around global warming.

10. Beyond Compliance

VAFI will continue to guide members to operate way beyond compliance and make this known to Governments and the Public. The annual Sustainability Report and Awards frame this work across the four dimensions of sustainability.

This year it means continuing our partnership with GSI @ RMIT (Global Sustainability Institute), publishing a third Sustainability Report with an emphasis on Environmental Management Systems in all sawmills with the aid of an Environmental Management Systems Project Officer working for VAFI for the next nine months as part of the grant from Sustainability Victoria.