

TIMBER PRODUCTS AND REQUIRED SOURCES

WHICH TIMBER IS FOR WHAT?

Different timber is used for different purposes. The timber and forestry industry in Victoria needs a mix of plantation and native forests to meet the demand for the different products.

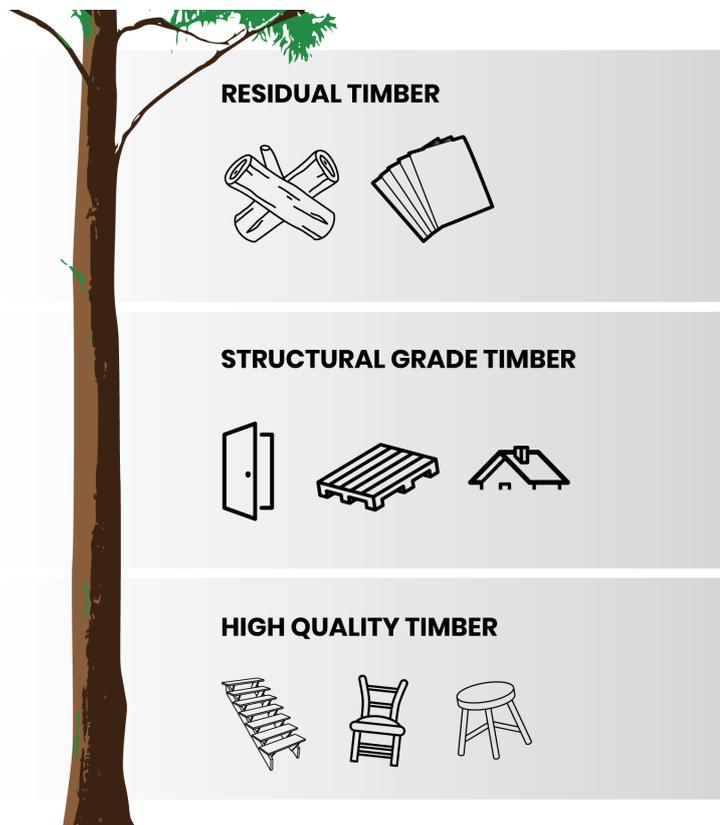
When extracting timber from our native forests (typically a variety of eucalypt), all parts of the tree are used for valuable end-use products. Different parts of the tree are used for different things:

- The lower part of the trunk closer to the base is where the timber is high quality. The grain is neatly straight and the wood can be used for things like kitchen finishes, high-grade furniture and musical instruments.
- The middle part of the trunk is where the timber is deemed 'structural grade' and is used widely in the construction sector – e.g. house framing, roofs and windows.
- The higher part of the trunk and the thick branches are bumpy with defects. This is called residual timber and cannot be used for visual or structural purposes but is excellent for things like paper and firewood.

CAN PLANTATION TIMBER REPLACE NATIVE FOREST?

Plantation timber is also important as a source but is different in purpose. There are both hardwood and softwood plantations. They can differ further in the manner which the trees are grown and the age at which they are harvested.

Softwood plantations provide a range of sawn timber, other solid wood and composite wood products, and pulp for paper-making. Hardwood (eucalypt) plantations mostly provide woodchips for export or domestic paper-making.



BOTH NATIVE FORESTS AND PLANTATIONS ARE CRUCIAL TO SUPPLY CERTAIN TYPES OF TIMBER WE NEED EVERY DAY.

We need native forests for some timber, and we have plenty of it.

- There are around 7.9 million hectares of native forest on public land in Victoria. More than 90% of these forests are unavailable or unsuitable for timber harvesting operations.
- Nearly 5 million hectares of native forest in Victoria is protected within national parks and conservation reserves. These are not touched.
- Each year, the industry (under VicForests) harvests approximately 3,000 hectares (or less than 0.04%) of Victoria's native forest – under strict environmental regulations.

No old growth Ash Eucalypt forest from the state's Central Highlands is harvested. These forests are protected.

NATIVE FOREST SOURCES FROM AUSTRALIA ARE FAR BETTER THAN GOING OVERSEAS

The Victorian economy's demand for hardwood timber products is greater than we can supply domestically. We are especially hungry for timber that can build homes.

An unfortunate consequence is that Australia currently imports \$4 billion of wood and paper products from overseas.

Some of these imported products are not subject to the same strict regulations relating to timber harvesting as we have in Australia. Imported timber also creates far higher greenhouse gas emissions than timber grown and processed locally.

By comparison, once the harvesting is done in our State forests, our industry regrows each area to ensure the forest regenerates and returns after harvesting operations.

This initial regeneration process of the forest after timber harvesting is a detailed process which can take more than three years to complete successfully. But vitally, it ensures the whole timber harvesting process in Victoria is sustainable and environmentally responsible.