

Media Release

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If pallets move the world, where are they?

The Victorian Forest Products Association (VFPA) says the current shortage of pallets highlights need to support sustainable native regrowth forests and native timber harvesting in the state.

“The national pallet shortage demonstrates how much we all rely on them to move our food and virtually every other good around the country,” said VFPA CEO Deb Kerr. “

It seems we have taken pallets for granted. Australia has some 140 million pallets in circulation. But if they are such a big part of national and local supply chains, where are they?

According to the Australian Pallet Survey (Deakin University, 2017), the “supply of hardwood timber is expected to be impacted by a general shortage of hardwood supply in Australia from 2025, as harvesting of native forests transitions to plantations”. It seems like this shortage has arrived four years early.

87.5% of all pallets in Australia are made from native hardwood, and Victoria produces some 1.1 million pallets each year, as well as supplying native hardwood timber to repair pallets every 20-30 trips. The Victorian Government’s decision to phase out native forestry, with a major step-down in 2024, will undoubtedly impact the movements of Australia’s major supermarket retailers.

“As more and more supply issues come to light, from house frames to pallets, we urge the Victorian Government to change their position on native forestry. Forestry is sustainable and, when managed well like it’s done here in Victoria, will continue to produce vital native timber furniture and other appearance grade products, along with wood fibre and paper and pulp products that we all depend on – and of course the pallets to move our food and other goods around the nation” continued Ms Kerr.

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About

The Victorian Forest Products Association (VFPA) represents all elements of the value chain from both sustainable harvesting of plantations and multiple-use natural forest resources. VFPA is a policy development and advocacy group which represents the interests of Victoria's sustainable forestry. We collaborate strongly with other industry bodies to ensure the best outcomes for forestry in general and our members more specifically. Our charter provides autonomy to manage state issues. We collaborate with the Australian Forest Products Association (AFPA) on any issues that transcend state borders and have national implications.