

GIPPSLAND FORESTRY HUB: CARBON FOOTPRINT SUMMARY



The Gippsland forestry, timber, and paper sector plays a critical role in Victoria's transition to net zero emissions. This study provides the first whole-of-sector assessment of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, carbon removals, and carbon storage associated with plantation forestry and timber production in Gippsland, using FY2023/24 data and best-practice greenhouse gas accounting methods.

Purpose

The assessment quantifies the sector's carbon footprint, identifies emissions reduction opportunities, and provides strategic and policy recommendations to support industry resilience, competitiveness, and alignment with Victoria's Net Zero by 2045 target.

Key Findings & Strategic Challenges

- **Net carbon negative sector:** Total emissions of approximately 1.08 million tonnes CO₂-e are outweighed by ~1.62 million tonnes CO₂-e of carbon removals and storage, resulting in a net balance of around -0.55 million tonnes CO₂-e.
- **Carbon storage is the dominant benefit:** Large-scale carbon removals from plantation growth and long-term storage in wood and paper products are the primary contributors to the net-negative outcome.
- **Emissions driven by fossil fuels:** Emissions are mainly associated with diesel and natural gas use in harvesting, haulage, and processing, as well as grid electricity use. Renewable energy uptake remains limited and fragmented.
- **First-of-its-kind baseline:** As the first whole-of-sector assessment, results provide a robust baseline. Improved data coverage in future assessments will further refine accuracy but is unlikely to change the overall conclusion that the sector is net carbon negative.

Priority Opportunities

Six strategic areas offer the greatest potential for emissions reduction and increased climate benefits:

1. Improved forest management and climate-resilient practices
2. Decarbonisation of timber and paper processing
3. Expansion of ecologically sustainable plantation areas
4. Enhanced circularity and resource recovery
5. Decarbonisation of harvesting and haulage
6. Industry and community capacity building

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Four priority policy directions are identified: enabling circular economy outcomes, incentivising plantation expansion, accelerating clean energy and transport, and driving industry transformation through standards, targets, and workforce development.

Conclusion

The Gippsland forestry sector is already a major contributor to climate change mitigation. With coordinated investment and policy support, it can further strengthen emissions reductions while delivering regional economic, employment, and resilience co-benefits.