

# Connecting & Belonging

TASMANIAN FOREST INDUSTRY DIVERSITY ACTION PLAN | 2022 - 2025

VERSION 1 | SEPTEMBER 2022



SUPPORTED BY



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The Tasmanian Forests and and Forest Products Network (TFFPN) is providing leadership in the development of a Diversity Action Plan for Tasmania's forest and forests products industry. This plan articulates and reflects the perceived and real constraints and barriers to supporting a diverse and inclusive workforce for our forest industry.

Key its success, is the engagement from stakeholders across the sector, government, training and the community. The people who have developed this plan have embodied it's title of Connecting & Belonging. They have connected with each other and built an inclusive project where everyone can feel they belong. These individuals have freely given their time and expertise to not only develop this plan but, more importantly, to lead and guide the implementation of key actions within this plan.

The GREAT theme of this plan requires strong leadership in managing change. This is a change management plan, and with a focus on providing tools to help the industry to become more inclusive and to attract and retain a diverse workforce. With this change, the forest and wood products industry can realise a vision of being an 'industry of choice' with a skilled workforce that supports industry development and is representative of the community in which it operates.

The Tasmanian Forests and Forest Products Network (TFFPN) acknowledges the Pakana and Palawa peoples' connection with Country, and their active land management of the forests of Iutrawita/Tasmania over thousands of generations.

We acknowledge the Palawa and Pakana, as the Traditional Owners and spiritual custodians of the land on which our sector operates, and we pay our respects to their leaders.

# KEY TERMINOLOGY

## Diversity + Inclusion

Diversity is the way in which people are unique, both visible and invisible, innate and external. It describes the differences and uniqueness of people, acknowledging the unique blend of knowledge, skills and perspectives people can bring to the workplace.\*

Inclusion is a workplace's culture and the way in which the workplace welcomes diversity and creates an environment where all different kinds of people can thrive and succeed. Inclusion is the empowerment of people to contribute their skills and perspectives and allows everyone to bring their authentic selves to work.\*

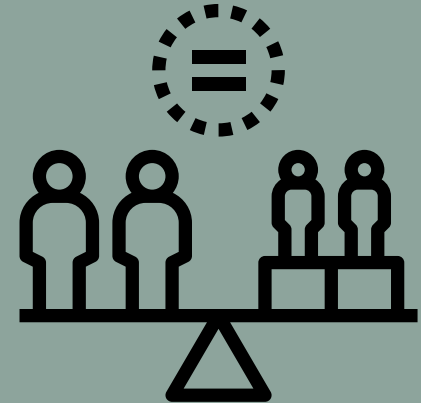
Inclusivity and diversity does not come at the detriment of others\*\*.



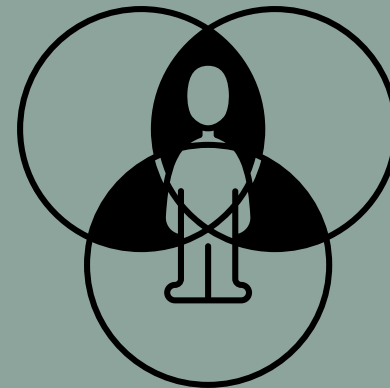
## Equity

Equity is acknowledging that each person has different circumstances and then allocating the appropriate resources for them to achieve an equal outcome.

Equity differs from equality in which everyone is allocated the same resources regardless of their circumstances.



## Intersectionality



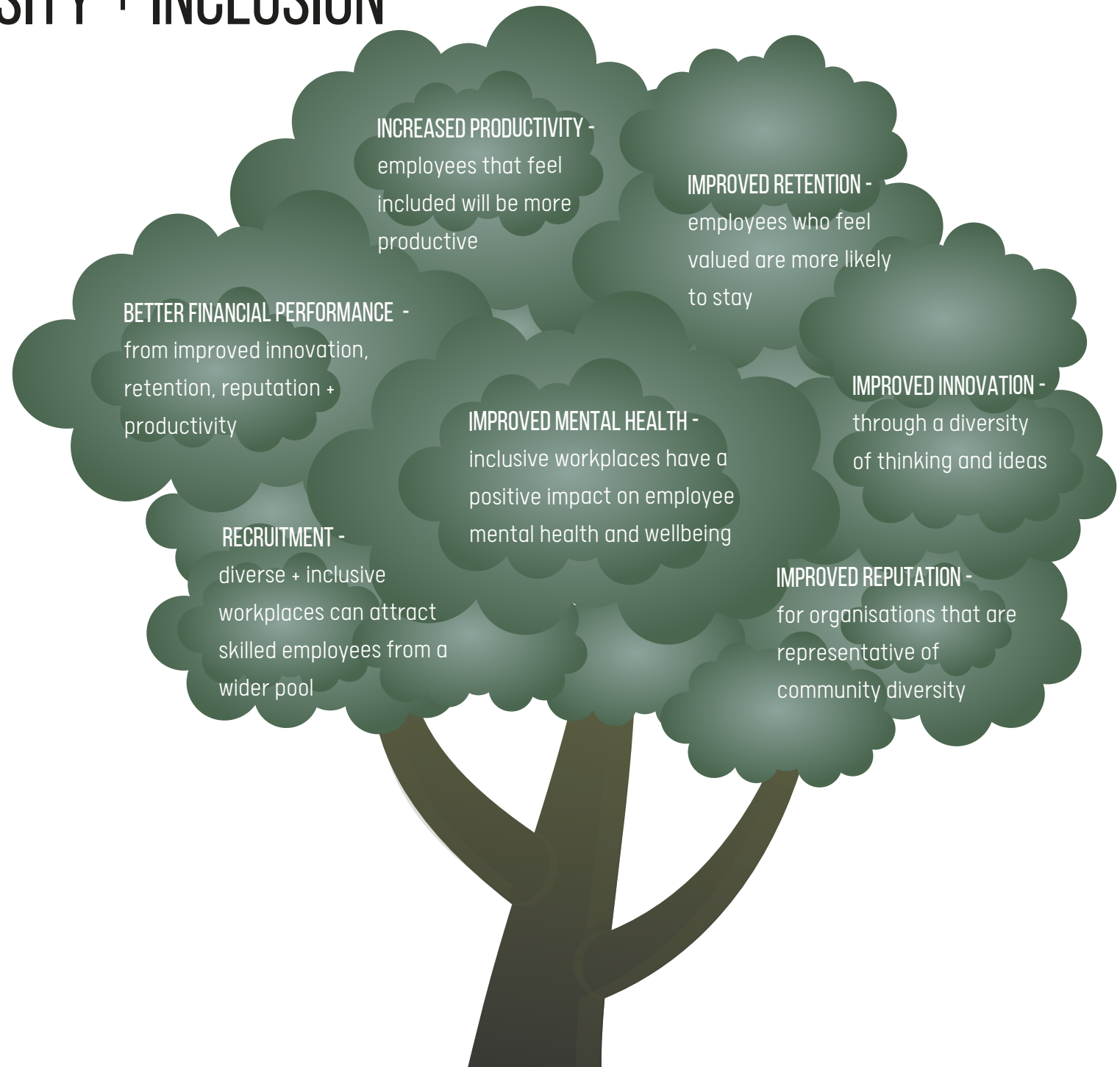
Intersectionality describes how many aspects of a person's identity overlap and acknowledges that each person has their own unique experience of disadvantage and privilege.

# BENEFITS OF DIVERSITY + INCLUSION

There are many benefits to businesses and industries that embrace diverse and inclusive workforces that include:

- an ability to attract and retain skilled workers,
- better innovation,
- improved worker mental health outcomes and
- increased organisational financial performance.

A company's reputation may also be boosted by them promoting a diverse workforce that is representative of the community.



# TASMANIA'S FORESTRY WORKFORCE SNAPSHOT

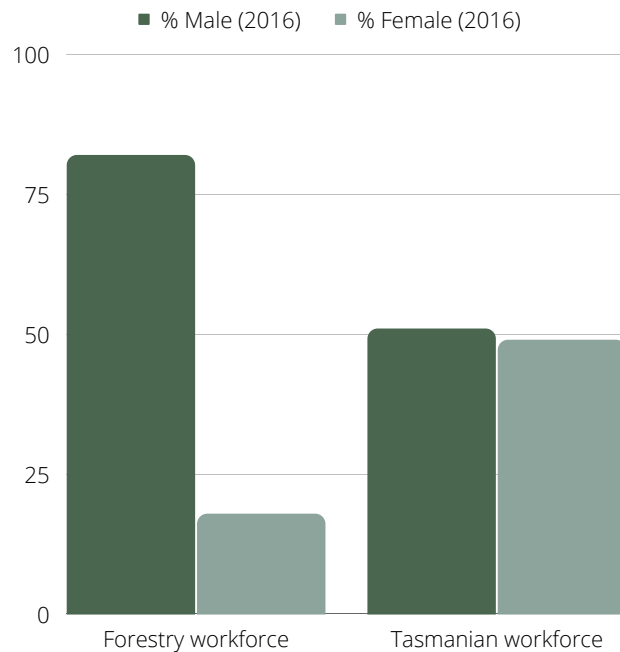
This is a snapshot of some key demographic data from 2016 that compares the Tasmanian Forest Industry workforce with the broader Tasmanian workforce. It is included to provide a context of why diversity and inclusion are important when considering the workforce of the future - whether attracting employees into new roles or even as a replacement workforce.

*Note: Updated data for all datasets is not yet available and will be included once it has been released by ABS. However, there is not expected to be any significant variation from 2016 data*

## GENDER

Less than 1/5 of the forest industry workforce identifies as female.

This has remained relatively stable from 2011 to 2016, but does not reflect the balanced nature of male and female workers within the Tasmanian workforce.



## AGE

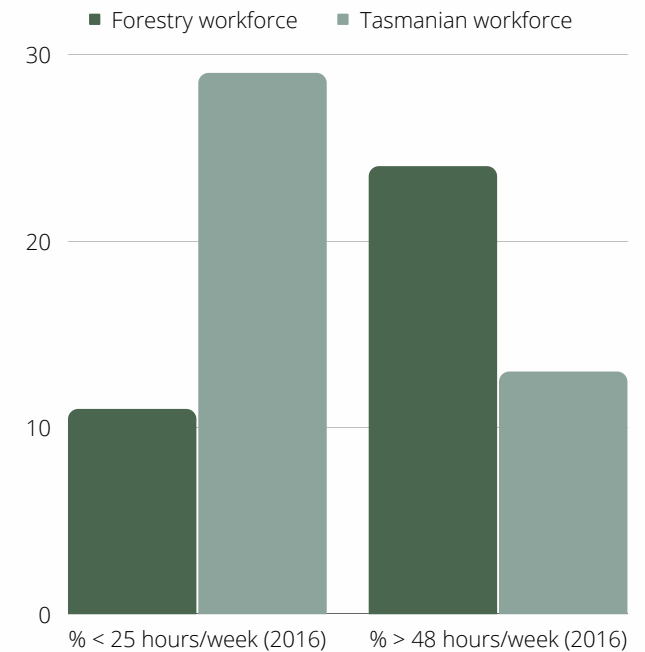
The Tasmanian forest industry workforce is aging - with an increase in workers 55+ and a decrease in workers under 35 from the 2011 to 2016 census. The aging workforce is in line with the Tasmanian workforce but the decrease in younger workers in forestry is greater than the wider workforce.

Year/Age	Forestry Workforce	Tasmanian Workforce
% aged < 35 years (2011)	31%	30%
% aged < 35 years (2016)	27%	32%
% aged 55 years + (2011)	16%	16%
% aged 55 years + (2016)	22%	22%

## WORKING HOURS

Long working hours of greater than 49 hours per week and underemployment can have negative impacts on worker health and well-being.

In 2016, forest industry workers worked longer hours on average per week than the general Tasmanian workforce.



# CURRENT INITIATIVES

Tasmania's dynamic and highly diversified forest and forest products industry is one of the central drivers of Tasmania's economy, and is constantly evolving to meet market, environmental and community expectations. Central to driving this evolution is the sector's workforce which can be supported to meet these expectations by forest industry leaders working together. This workforce of the future will need to be professional, sustainable, diverse and safe.

## WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The Tasmanian Forest Industry Workforce Development and Implementation Plan was developed in consultation with the industry and released in late 2021. This plan is a tactical framework and was developed utilising content in existing publications and with forest sector stakeholder input.

The Workforce Development Plan is underpinned by three important action areas to support effective workforce development into the future. These foundations are:

- **One Voice - Leadership, Collaboration and Coordination** will ensure integration of available and new resources and initiatives to avoid duplication or leaving gaps.
- **Effective Engagement and Communication** across all stakeholder groups is essential in implementing any initiatives.
- **Good data will support good decisions** to enable forecasting of workforce demand and the designing of workforce initiatives.

This plan also provides a summary of the workforce profile, where in 2017, an industry survey found that only 16 percent of the workforce was female and that the workforce was aging more rapidly than the broader labour force. This, combined with low literacy and numeracy skills both within the workforce and the broader Tasmanian population provides further evidence of the need for the sector to focus on diversity and inclusion practices.

## THE TASMANIAN FORESTRY HUB

The objective of the Hub is to support the capacity of the Tasmanian forest industry to meet the long term increases in demand for timber by working with stakeholders to identify and progress industry priorities.

Key activities that have been identified include:

- Assisting industry to identify and capture new opportunities created by advances in science and technology.
- Developing a fit-for-purpose workforce to meet the needs of the future.
- Demonstrating to landowners and the community the benefits of carbon reduction and farm enhancement through forestry.
- Encouraging infrastructure development to support industry investment.
- Informing the community of the progress of change and the resultant environmental, social and economic benefits to be enjoyed.

# THE GREAT ENVIRONMENT WE WANT TO CREATE

This plan focuses on creating a GREAT environment for the Tasmanian forest industry to be an industry of choice with a diverse and skilled workforce that is inclusive of all employees. Within this GREAT environment, the sector needs to not only replace its aging workforce, but also build a workforce of new people and with new skills. The consumer demand for timber and timber products is unprecedented and the sector needs to maximise the value of both the forest and the people resources. This Diversity Action Plan details key initiatives focused on the **GREAT Outcomes** below.



## **G**rowing people

The Tasmanian forest industry has an improved understanding of the current and future workforce and a culture of education and training to support its workforce.

## **R**espected + respectful

The Tasmanian forest industry is understood and highly regarded as a socially, environmentally and economically respectful and sustainable industry.

## **E**quitable + inclusive

The Tasmanian forest industry works within a framework of policies and procedures to support diversity, inclusivity and equity for all employees.

## **A**uthentic leadership

Industry leaders understand and drive the organisational change that is critical for the successful implementation of workforce and diversity initiatives.

## **T**eamwork + partnerships

The Tasmanian forest industry works collaboratively with key and relevant stakeholders to develop and implement workforce and diversity initiatives.

# Growing people

## OUR STAKEHOLDERS HAVE TOLD US...

Forestry careers, career entry points and training pathways are complex and confusing. The pathway from school to industry is unclear and recruitment uses traditional methods, often relying on existing networks. Education within the sector encompasses formal tertiary and vocational pathways and non-accredited industry specific training.

Collecting and analysing industry and employment data is important for better understanding and promoting current and future career and training pathways.

## OUR KEY FOCUS IS...

The Tasmanian forest industry has an improved understanding of the current and future workforce and a culture of education and training to support its workforce.

## WHAT WE ARE GOING TO DO...

ACTIVITIES	WHEN
Define and map clear accredited and non-accredited education and training pathways for current and future forest industry employees using robust methodology and data sources. (Detailed actions are provided in Goals 1 + 2 in the Workforce Development Plan).	Short Term (1 year)
Investigate funding opportunities to support the development of a Career, Jobs and Training Portal for the forest industry that captures all of the pathways, education and training opportunities.	Medium Term (1-2 years)
Work with industry stakeholders to gain an improved understanding of the barriers that may limit the uptake of traineeships within the sector and investigate initiatives that may address these barriers.	Medium Term (1-2 years)
Work with stakeholders to explore a financially sustainable training and development model to meet the needs of the current and future workforce	Medium Term (1-2 years)

## THE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PLAN SAYS...

Goal 1: Career pathways are mapped and supported.

Career pathways with multiple entry and exit points are documented and promoted from school age to mature age; they are used by all relevant stakeholders.

Goal 2: Relevant training is available and used.

Engagement with formal and informal education and training providers to map out how to increase the knowledge, skills and qualifications of new and existing employees and employers via relevant education and training services.



# Respected + respectful

## OUR STAKEHOLDERS HAVE TOLD US...

There is a low level of understanding by many Tasmanians about the forest industry, the careers and the career pathways. Forest industry stakeholders have identified industry awareness and celebrating the sector as priorities in becoming a more diverse and inclusive sector and workforce.

An industry that is respected by the community and is seen as being respectful in looking after the environmental, social and economic well-being of Tasmania and Tasmanians.

## OUR KEY FOCUS IS...

The Tasmanian forest industry is understood and highly regarded as a socially, environmentally and economically respectful and sustainable industry.

## WHAT WE ARE GOING TO DO...

ACTIVITY	WHEN
Facilitate industry collaboration to develop key industry-wide messages regarding the sector, its workforce, diversity and inclusion that can be used by all stakeholders. This may include utilising existing networks or establishing new groups.	Short Term (1 year)
Develop, implement, and monitor a collaborative, industry-wide communications program to better inform all stakeholders of the sector and its careers (as detailed in Goal 4 of the Workforce Development Plan).	Medium Term (1-2 years)
Investigate opportunities to develop a website/portal/platform that collates the workforce, diversity and inclusion information, including training and templates and provides links to other industries and programs.	Short Term (investigate) Medium (if developed)

## THE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PLAN SAYS...

Goal 4: Effective promotion, attraction + retention  
Promoting a sustainable industry that looks after the social, environmental, and economic well-being of its people and communities.

Focus is on attracting people from diverse backgrounds (cultural background, gender, age, level of education) including from related sectors, and in particular younger people.

# EQUITABLE + INCLUSIVE

## OUR STAKEHOLDERS HAVE TOLD US...

There are many challenges for the sector to increase diversity and inclusion. Key challenges include a lack of understanding of best practice and limited capacity to implement this best practice. There is a strong will to improve both understanding and capacity to change amongst the sector. The industry wants to be inclusive of all diversity dimensions. The industry has elected to not set diversity goals, believing a more effective way to facilitate meaningful change is to focus on enabling opportunities and providing useful tools for implementation.

## OUR KEY FOCUS IS...

The Tasmanian forest industry works within a framework of policies and procedures to support diversity, inclusivity and equity for all employees.

## WHAT WE ARE GOING TO DO...

ACTIVITY	WHEN
<p><b>Facilitate the delivery of training opportunities to industry participants including:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diversity and inclusion awareness training including unconscious bias, cultural awareness and safety.</li> <li>• Leadership training for middle management and supervisors across the industry and linking in with existing programs.</li> <li>• Literacy, numeracy and technology support to support the workforce in keeping up with the increasing technology demands of the sector.</li> </ul>	<p>Short Term (1 year) Medium Term (1-2 years)</p>
<p><b>Diversity and inclusion best practice information and guides:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with key stakeholders to research and develop templates and best practice guides for recruitment, retention and promotion.</li> <li>• Templates and guides would include information on diversity and inclusion as well as flexibility, and remote working hours and conditions.</li> <li>• Make templates and guides available to all employers and organisations.</li> </ul>	<p>Short Term (1 year) Medium Term (1-2 years)</p>

## THE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PLAN SAYS...

Goal 3: Focus on employees and workplace diversity  
Employers have the skills to manage a diverse workforce.

Employers are looking after employees so that people from diverse backgrounds can flourish in the workplace and skilled employees are retained. Workplaces are safe and supportive.

# EQUITABLE + INCLUSIVE



TFFPN is committed to diversity and inclusion through membership of, and active participation in key organisations including:

- 26TEN ([26ten.tas.gov.au](http://26ten.tas.gov.au))
- A Fairer World ([afairerworld.org](http://afairerworld.org))
- Diversity Council of Australia ([www.dca.org.au](http://www.dca.org.au))
- Reconciliation Tasmania ([rectas.com.au](http://rectas.com.au))

ACTIVITY	WHEN
<p><b>Mentoring programs:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undertake an audit of existing mentoring programs with forest industry and other industries.</li> <li>• Promote and/or develop mentoring programs for all workers across the industry based upon the findings of the audit.</li> </ul>	Medium Term (1-2 years)
<p><b>Industry diversity and inclusion ambassadors:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with the Workforce Development and Diversity Project Reference Group members to develop and implement a Professional Development Program to provide them with tools to become Ambassadors of Diversity and Inclusion.</li> <li>• Initiatives may include connecting with other sectors and looking at best-practice programs.</li> <li>• Diversity and Inclusion Ambassadors will be asked to pledge their support to push diversity and inclusion information to their peers and their networks.</li> </ul>	Short Term (1 year) Medium Term (1-2 years)
<p><b>Inclusivity actions for all diversity cohorts</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with the Reference Group and stakeholders to ensure that all diversity cohorts within the sector are included as required.</li> <li>• Investigate opportunities for a Forest Industry Diversity and Inclusion Award as part of the Industry Awards Program. This could be open to individuals who demonstrate leadership in supporting diversity and inclusion in their workplace or the industry.</li> </ul>	Medium Term (1-2 years)

# Authentic Leadership

## OUR STAKEHOLDERS HAVE TOLD US...

Across the value chain, the sector is diverse in business size, type and capacity to implement workforce and diversity initiatives. For these initiatives to be successful, there needs to be leadership across the industry and within businesses. Smaller businesses within the sector face increased challenges in not having dedicated People and Culture staff and resources.

## OUR KEY FOCUS IS...

Industry leaders understand and drive the organisational change that is critical for the successful implementation of workforce development and diversity initiatives and there is recognition that there is varying capacity across the industry to invest in initiatives.

## WHAT WE ARE GOING TO DO...

## THE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PLAN SAYS...

Foundation 1: One Voice - Leadership, Collaboration and Coordination

One voice is a pre-requisite to successfully implementing the Plan and maintaining a workforce development initiative for the industry.

A Reference Group will be established to oversee the delivery of the Workforce Plan.

ACTIVITY	WHEN
Establish a Workforce Development and Diversity Project Reference Group comprising of representatives across forestry, government, education and training and other key individuals to provide leadership, guidance and expertise for the project at the industry level.	Short Term (1 year)
Develop an Active Pledge that employers can sign on to indicate they are aware and supportive of diversity and inclusion within the forest industry and can select to undertake some simple, agreed actions such as using promotional materials, sharing information with their staff. Review and report on the Active Pledge annually.	Short Term (1 year) Long Term (3+ years)
Work with industry stakeholders to develop a Hierarchy of Leadership that details how everyone could contribute to diversity and inclusion, from workers, to supervisors, managers and senior leaders.	Short Term (1 year)
Facilitate opportunities for Leadership and Diversity and Inclusion training for each level of leaders in the Hierarchy of Leadership.	Medium Term (1 -2 years)

# T Teamwork + partnerships

## OUR STAKEHOLDERS HAVE TOLD US...

Stakeholders outside of the forest industry have identified that lack of networks and support for new employees, particularly young people and those less represented in the sector, as having an impact on both obtaining employment and remaining in their jobs. Forest industry stakeholders have identified that they would like to have a greater understanding of the needs of a diverse workforce and support in meeting those needs.

## OUR KEY FOCUS IS...

The Tasmanian forest industry works collaboratively with key and relevant stakeholders to develop and implement workforce and diversity initiatives.

## WHAT WE ARE GOING TO DO...

ACTIVITY	WHEN
Develop collaborative relationships with organisations supporting diverse groups into work and whilst they are in work. This could include organisations supporting young people, people with disability, migrants and gender diversity.	Medium Term (1 -2 years)
Develop a framework to support and encourage Aboriginal employees into the forest industry in partnership with Aboriginal stakeholders.	Medium Term (1 -2 years)
Develop a Framework to encourage and support increased gender diversity into the forest industry in partnership with stakeholders.	Medium Term (1 -2 years)
Investigate opportunities to access funding for projects that will support industry to work in partnership with external stakeholders to support recruitment of a diverse workforce.	Medium Term (1 -2 years)

## THE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PLAN SAYS...

Foundation 2: Effective engagement + communication  
Effective engagement and communication with all stakeholder groups, and the current and future workforce will be essential to implement the Workforce Plan and realise the industry's vision.



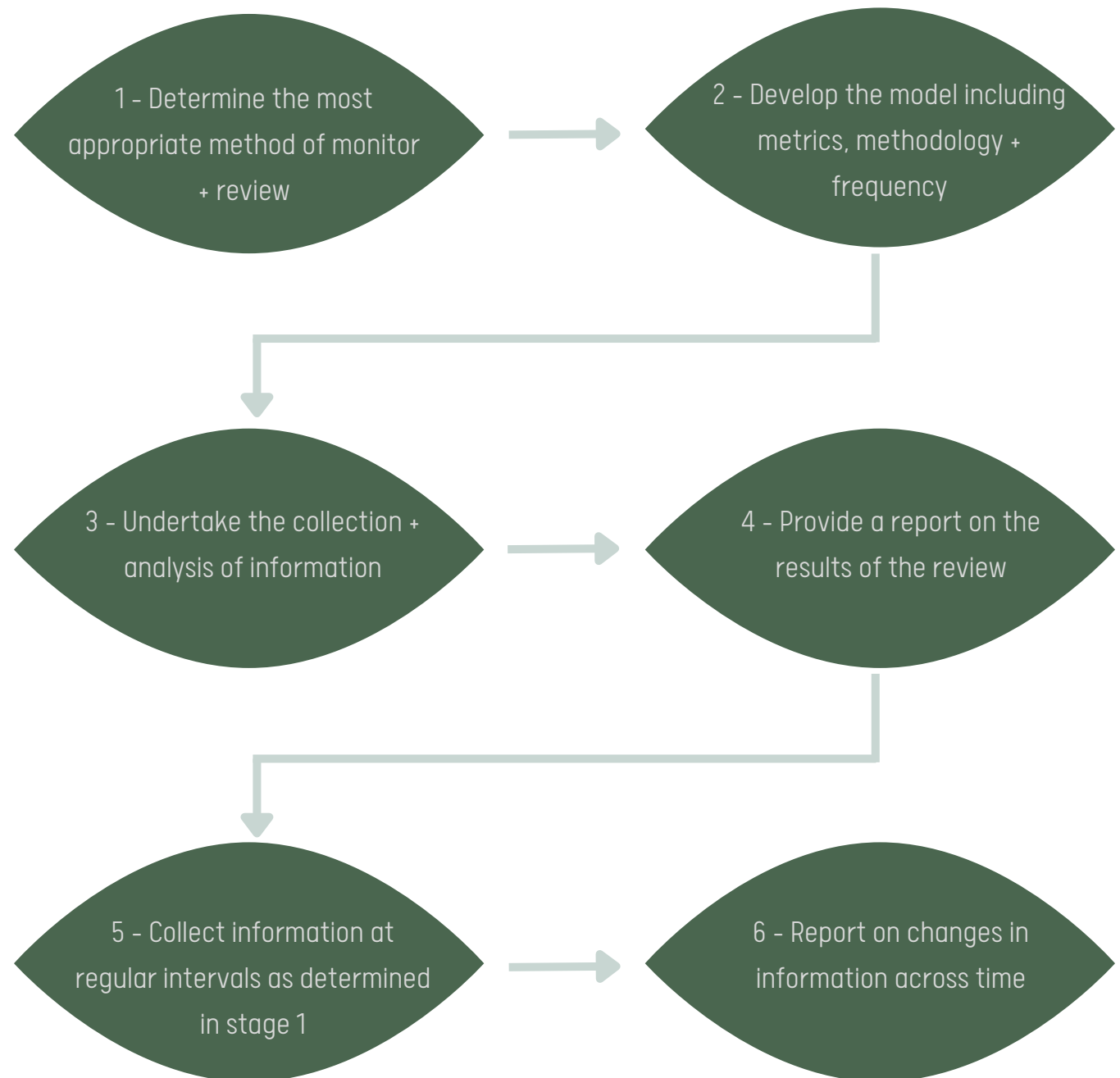
# MONITOR + REVIEW

It is essential that the activities identified in this plan are continually reviewed and monitored. This plan is a living document that reflects the forest industry and the community at any point in time.

A process will be developed to facilitate regular reviews of the plan to ensure that the actions are current and achievable. It is expected that this review will occur annually and involve reporting against activities and consulting with stakeholders to ensure they remain relevant.

This review process will be embedded into the project and led by an industry reference group to ensure it is not key person dependant.

Building a strong framework, with authentic leadership, and collaborative partnerships will provide the necessary environment for ongoing success.



# CONSULTATION ACTIVITIES

This Diversity Action Plan is a culmination of the input of many stakeholders and partners from across the forest industry and from across the Tasmanian community. The actions detailed in here have been identified by these stakeholders as being priorities, as addressing challenges and maximising identified opportunities.

The ongoing collaboration and input from these individuals and businesses will be critical in the implementation of the actions identified in this Diversity Action Plan. The consultation and communication throughout the implementation of the Diversity Action Plan will be inclusive and ongoing and include a number of channels to ensure maximum reach.

## ONGOING STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION + COMMUNICATION



FACE-TO -FACE DISCUSSIONS



SMALL GROUP MEETINGS



SMALL REGIONAL WORKSHOPS



NEWSLETTERS



ONLINE SURVEYS



WEBINARS

## FOREST INDUSTRY CONSULTATION

### Workforce of the Future Workshop

TFFPN facilitated an industry workshop attended by forestry, government and education and training participants. This workshop set the context for diversity in the future and explored the vision for the sector. The stakeholder survey results were presented along with a vision for the sector. Participants workshopped challenges for implementing workforce and diversity initiatives. They then highlighted the key actions needed to support the workforce of the future.

### Forest Industry Employers Qualitative Survey

An online survey that asked industry leaders their perception on diversity both within the sector as a whole and within their individual organisations. The results were not deemed statistically significant but were informative.

### Forest Industry Employees Quantitative Survey

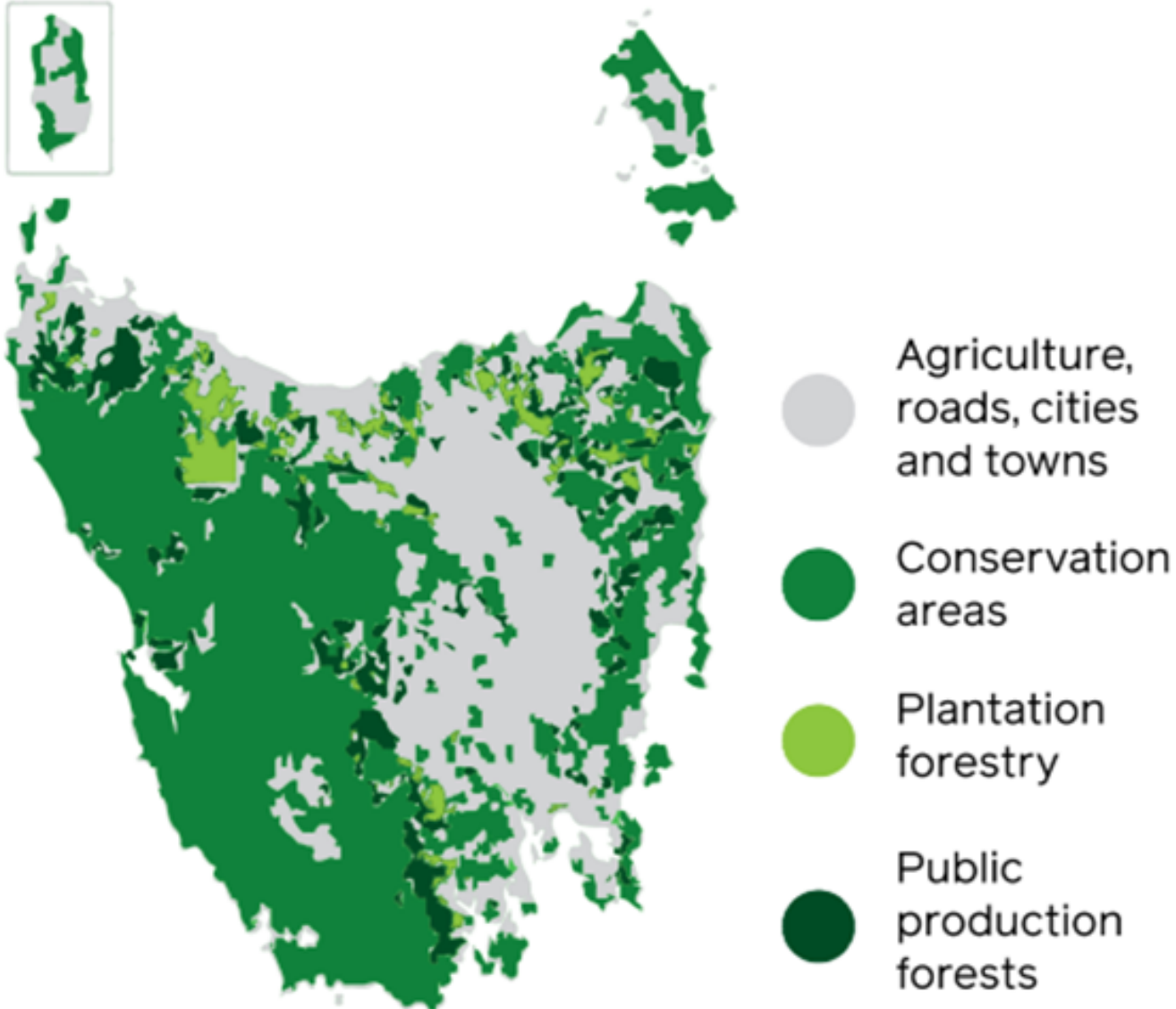
A sub-section of the employer survey was sent to forest sector employees that asked similar questions. The results were once again, not significant, however provided an indication on employee perception of diversity.

## EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION

Stakeholders representing migrants, women, young people and Aboriginal people were consulted in one-to-one interviews to discuss challenges and opportunities in attraction, retention and recruitment.

This qualitative survey provided valuable insights and informed the development of activities within the Diversity Action Plan.

# TASMANIA'S FORESTS



Tasmania has a total landmass of approximately 6.81 million hectares, of which nearly half (3.35 million hectares or 49 per cent) is forested. Native forest makes up 91 per cent of this and plantations 9 per cent.

Tasmania leads the world in sustainable forest practices with 59% of the state's forests protected, and around 85% of the state's old-growth forests protected and, an expanding plantation sector.

Tasmania's forestry industry has invested in more than 302,000 hectares of softwood and hardwood plantation forests. This equates to approximately 250 million hardwood and 75 million softwood trees growing in these sustainable and renewable plantation forests, and that number is growing all the time.

Tasmania is leading the way in developing new and innovative products from these plantation timbers.

*This information was sourced from [www.tasmanianforestry.com.au](http://www.tasmanianforestry.com.au) in September 2022.*



# FURTHER INFORMATION

The Workforce Development and Diversity Project Reference Group have been instrumental in the development and implementation of this Diversity Action Plan. These individuals from across the forestry, government, community services and training sectors have committed their time and provided invaluable information and support. This group is committed to being industry leaders in diversity and inclusion. This group's membership is ever evolving and at the time of the release of this document, the Reference Group members include:

Chair: Brodie Frost, Sustainable Timber Tasmania

Manager, Workforce + Diversity: Tracey Taylor, Tasmanian Forests and Forest Products Network

Amanda Slater, Forico

Anthony Bate, C3 Forestry

Andrew Wye, Wood Based Products

Chantelle Ridley, Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania

Christine Grove, Forest Practices Authority

Clinton Dean, RDO Equipment

Darcy Vickers, Forest Education Foundation

David Milne, Rural Alive and Well

Denise DeBattista, Arbre Forest Industries Training and Career Hub

Ella Dixon, Migrant Resource Centre Northern Tas

Eva James, Reliance Forest Fibre

James McCormack, Employment Facilitator, DESE

Jillian Aylett Brown, MechLog

Jessica Jones, Jobs Tasmania

Laurel Treblico, Forest Practices Authority

Lauren Carter, JCH Harvesting

Linda Crawford, Sustainable Timber Tasmania

Molly Marshall, Private Forests Tasmania

Nick Martyn, Technical Forest Services

Nicola Minns, Sustainable Timbers Tasmania

Simon Talbot, Tasmania Forestry Hub

Stephen Clarke, Private Forests Tasmania

Stuart Harris, Tasmanian Forest Products Association

Tanya Paterson, TradesWomen Australia

Therese Taylor, Tasmanian Forests and Forest Products Network

Troy Robbins, TasTAFE

## MORE INFORMATION:



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