

Candidate Information Pack

Organisation: Australian Forest Products Association
(AFPA)

Position: Chief Executive Officer

Consultant: Emma Alberici, Partner

June 2026

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Advertisement

Chief Executive Officer

- Australian Forest Products Association (AFPA)
- Lead Australia's peak forest products industry body at a critical moment for the sector
- Canberra | Remuneration negotiable

Australia's forest products industry contributes more than \$24 billion annually to the national economy, directly employing around 80,000 people. The Australian Forest Products Association (AFPA) is the peak national industry body representing that value chain – from sustainable harvesting of plantations and multiple use natural forests through to processing, manufacturing, pulp, paper and bioproducts. At a time of significant policy headwinds, housing demand, and best practise scrutiny, AFPA requires a Chief Executive Officer who can lead with authority, advocate with credibility, and position the sector for long-term strength.

The role

Reporting to the Board of Directors, the Chief Executive Officer leads AFPA's national advocacy, policy, and stakeholder engagement. The CEO provides strategic and operational leadership to a small, high-performing team of 16 people. They drive AFPA's policy positions across government and industry, and serves as the public face and principal spokesperson for the forest products sector.

The CEO is responsible for setting and delivering the industry's strategic direction, working closely with the Board, members, state branches and affiliated organisations. The role requires deep engagement with federal and state governments, related industry bodies, environmental groups, and the media to advance the interests of the sector and protect members' ability to operate.

Australia's forest products industry is navigating a period of significant challenge and opportunity – from the national housing crisis and growing demand for sustainably produced timber, to ongoing policy reform, land use debates, and the sector's role as a key climate change mitigator. The incoming CEO must be capable of advocating with confidence across all of these fronts, reading the political and stakeholder environment with sophistication, and shaping the industry's agenda with clarity and conviction.

AFPA has four state branches in NSW, Victoria, South Australia, and Tasmania and works closely with affiliated representative groups in WA and QLD. The CEO must be skilled at building positive relationships with staff, members and key industry stakeholders to deliver a coherent and effective national advocacy position for the whole industry.

The person

The successful candidate will bring a track record of senior executive leadership within a peak body, government agency, or complex industry organisation. The ability to navigate government relations, lead high-stakes advocacy, and represent an industry publicly and credibly across media and government forums are core requirements.

Experience in or adjacent to the forestry, agriculture, natural resources, or land use sectors would be highly regarded, as would familiarity with the federal and state policy landscape relevant to Australian forest industries. Demonstrated successful experience managing a membership-based organisation is preferred.

AFPA's team is small, focused, and driven. The incoming CEO will set the tone for AFPA's workplace culture where psychological safety, strong leadership, transparency, and a focus on employee well-being will be performance measures. The CEO will bring both the strategic credentials to lead the sector's advocacy agenda and the leadership character to build a cohesive, high-performing organisation.

How to apply

Candidate information: Please **click on the "Additional Information" button** to download a copy of the **Candidate Information Pack**. For more information, please contact Emma Alberici on email publicsector@derwentsearch.com.au or call 0419 683 660.

To apply: Please provide a cover letter (no more than 750 words) highlighting your suitability for the role and a resume (no more than four pages) by the due date.

Applications close: Sunday, 19 July 2026.

The Organisation

The Australian Forest Products Association (AFPA) is the peak national industry body representing the resources, processing, and pulp, paper and bioproduct industries covering the full forest products value chain. AFPA represents every element – from the sustainable harvesting of plantations and multiple use natural forests, through forest establishment and management, harvesting and haulage, processing of timber resources, and manufacture of pulp, paper and bioproducts.

AFPA has branches in New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, and Tasmania and works with affiliated organisations in QLD and WA.

The forest products industry is one of Australia's largest, with an annual turnover in excess of \$24 billion. It contributes around 0.5% to Australia's gross domestic product and 6.6% of manufacturing output. Around 80,000 people are directly employed along the value chain, with a further 100,000 jobs supported through flow-on economic activity – making it a critical employer in regional and rural communities across the country.

The sector is a proven climate change mitigator – locally grown and processed timber stores carbon and provides a sustainable alternative to carbon-intensive building materials. As Australia grapples with a national housing shortfall and an accelerating decarbonisation agenda, the forest products industry is increasingly recognised as an essential part of the solution.

AFPA at a Glance

- Annual industry turnover in excess of \$24 billion.
- Contributes approximately 0.5% of Australia's gross domestic product and 6.6% of manufacturing output.
- Around 80,000 direct jobs along the value chain, with a further 100,000 jobs supported through flow-on economic activity.
- Exports valued at approximately \$2.74 billion in 2025–26, spanning timber, wood products, pulp, paper and bioproducts.
- The sixth largest manufacturing sector in Australia, including downstream processing of wood products.
- A proven climate change mitigator – sustainably grown timber stores carbon and provides a low-emissions alternative to steel and concrete construction.
- Critical employer in regional and rural communities across every state and territory.
- Positioned to play a central role in addressing Australia's national housing shortfall through the supply of locally grown, sustainably produced timber.

More information about AFPA can be found at:

<https://ausfpa.com.au>

AFPA Strategic Focus

Mission

To champion Australia's forest products industry – advocating for a strong, sustainable, and innovative sector that supports jobs, regional communities, and Australia's climate and housing goals.

Advocacy Priorities

Securing long-term, sustainable access to Australia's forest resource for industry members across all parts of the supply chain.

Key Policy Areas

- Housing and construction – positioning sustainably grown Australian timber as a core solution to the national housing shortfall.
- Climate and sustainability – advocating for recognition of forests and forest products as genuine climate change solutions.
- Land use and resource access – engaging government on forest policy, native timber regulation, and plantation expansion.
- Trade and market access – supporting members to grow export markets and diversify revenue streams.
- Workforce and safety – building a skilled, diverse, and safe workforce for a growing industry.

Australia's forest products sector is at a defining moment. The ABARES March 2026 Agriculture Commodities Report confirmed the overall value of forestry production is expected to remain stable with limited growth over the next five years – while also identifying serious challenges and headwinds for the sector, including a projected five per cent decline in export values in 2025–26 to \$2.74 billion. Against this backdrop, AFPA is intensifying its advocacy across federal and state governments to ensure the industry receives the policy settings and resource access it needs to grow.

The national housing crisis has placed the forest products industry in the spotlight. Australia fell nearly 70,000 homes short of its 2024 target of 240,000 new dwellings. AFPA is actively working with federal and state governments to ensure that locally grown, sustainably produced timber is embedded in Australia's housing response – reducing reliance on imports, supporting regional economies, and contributing to Australia's decarbonisation agenda.

The incoming CEO will inherit a strong advocacy platform and a committed team. They will be expected to build on AFPA's existing government relationships while expanding the association's influence across new policy forums. Strengthening AFPA's voice on sustainability, innovation, and workforce development will be central to the next phase of the association's strategic agenda.

More information about AFPA's work and priorities is available at ausfpa.com.au

Role Description

Job Title:	Chief Executive Officer
Location:	Canberra, ACT
Reports to:	Board of Directors
Direct reports:	6-8

Position Overview

The Chief Executive Officer provides strategic and operational leadership to the Australian Forest Products Association (AFPA), Australia's peak national industry body for the forest products sector. The CEO is the principal spokesperson for the industry, leads AFPA's national advocacy program, and is responsible for the association's financial performance, governance, and member engagement.

Reporting to the Board of Directors, the CEO works closely with members, state branches and affiliated associations, and a broad network of government, industry, and community stakeholders to advance the interests of the sector across federal and state policy environments.

The CEO leads a small, professional team of 16 and is accountable for delivering AFPA's strategic objectives, building the association's public profile, and ensuring members receive effective representation and value from their AFPA membership.

Key responsibilities:

Strategic Leadership and Advocacy

- Develop and implement AFPA's strategic plan in close collaboration with the Board and members ensuring the association's advocacy agenda reflects member priorities and industry needs.
- Build and sustain strategic relationships with other relevant industry bodies, environmental and community groups to build a coalition and vision for a whole of industry strategy.
- Lead AFPA's national advocacy program across federal and state governments, including direct engagement with ministers, ministerial advisors, senior bureaucrats, and parliamentary committees.
- Serve as AFPA's principal public spokesperson – representing the sector credibly and confidently across media, government forums, industry events, and public inquiries.
- Oversee the development of AFPA's policy positions, submissions, and public commentary, ensuring these are evidence-based, timely, and aligned with the collective interests of members.
- Monitor the domestic and international policy environment and provide proactive, timely intelligence to the Board and members on emerging risks and opportunities affecting the sector.
- Promote the forest products sector's contribution to Australia's housing, sustainability, and regional economic agendas through targeted communications and thought leadership.
- Build consensus across AFPA's diverse membership on key policy positions, ensuring the association speaks with a unified and credible voice.

Member Engagement and Governance

- Foster strong, collaborative relationships with AFPA's members and ensure their priorities are effectively represented in AFPA's advocacy and policy work.
- Engage regularly with state associations, members, and industry stakeholders to understand emerging needs, gather intelligence, and ensure AFPA's advocacy remains current and effective.
- Ensure AFPA's governance processes, member communications, and Board reporting are timely, accurate, and fit for purpose, supporting the Board in their oversight and strategic responsibilities.
- Represent AFPA at industry events, parliamentary forums, and international conferences, building the association's profile and maintaining alignment with global forestry sector developments.

Leadership and Governance

- Lead and manage AFPA's staff team, fostering a culture of high performance, collaboration, and member service, and ensuring AFPA operates efficiently within its financial parameters.
- Oversee AFPA's financial management, budgeting, and forecasting, working with the Board to ensure the association's financial sustainability and long-term operational capacity.
- Uphold and model AFPA's values of integrity, transparency, and member-centricity in all internal and external dealings, and hold the team to the same standard.
- Oversee workforce planning, recruitment, performance development, and operational management, ensuring AFPA has the capability and capacity to deliver on its strategic objectives.

Organisational Profile and Brand

- Strengthen AFPA's public profile and brand, ensuring the association is recognised as a credible, authoritative, and constructive voice on forest products policy, sustainability, and industry development.

Work, Health and Safety

Driving excellent WHS performance across AFPA

- Comply with AFPA WHS obligations and systems, including all statutory requirements.
- Consistently deliver excellent WHS results.
- Acts as a role model; pursues safety for a positive WHS culture; encourage others to do the same.

Accountability

The Chief Executive Officer is accountable to the Board of Directors for the strategic direction, performance, and governance of AFPA, as well as the safety and wellbeing of all staff. The CEO must comply with all AFPA policies, procedures, and the association's Code of Conduct.

Position Requirements

- Tertiary qualification in business, public policy, law, communications, or a related discipline.
- Demonstrated experience in a CEO, executive director, or equivalent senior leadership role within a peak body, industry association, government agency, or complex membership-based organisation.
- Proven track record in government relations and public advocacy, with the ability to influence policy outcomes and build durable relationships across the political spectrum.
- Significant experience engaging with senior government, industry, and media stakeholders, including ministers, ministerial advisors, departmental secretaries, and sector executives.
- Proven capacity to manage competing priorities, lead through ambiguity, and deliver results in a fast-paced advocacy environment.
- Experience in or strong knowledge of the forestry, agriculture, natural resources, or land use sectors; experience leading a membership-based association is highly desirable.

Special Conditions

- Must undertake domestic and/or international travel as required to successfully undertake duties.
- Must hold and maintain a valid Australian Drivers Licence.
- Australian Citizenship.

Forest Facts

All AFPA tree growing members are 100% globally certified

Australia's forestry operations are carbon positive, and our plantations are storing 258 million tonnes of carbon

A tiny fraction of the forest (0.06%) is harvested each year and all the native forest managed by AFPA members is regenerated by law. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), sustainably harvesting and regrowing forests for timber and other fibre products, when one accounts for the carbon stored in the end products, delivers the best climate change mitigation results.

There is around 1.7 million hectares of commercial plantation forestry in Australia

The Australian Forest industry plants around 70 million plantation trees every year, covering an area equivalent to 136,000 football fields

Forest industries directly employ 80,000 people and another 100,000 indirectly. Forest industries are the major employer in many regional towns

Australia has a \$2 billion trade deficit in wood products

The Australian Forest industries contributes \$24 billion to the economy every year

The Application and Selection Process

Applications

Closing date: Sunday, 19 July 2026.

Applications:

All applications are to be received by Derwent. To apply, please go to www.derwentsearch.com.au and “Search Jobs” where you will find links to submit your application. Your application should include a resume and a cover letter highlighting your suitability.

Inquiries:

Please contact Derwent by email publicsector@derwentsearch.com.au and we will reply with appropriate information and/or arrange a convenient time to speak. You may also contact Emma Alberici, Partner Derwent on 0419 683 660.

Merit based selection process

The selection panel will assess applicants against the selection criteria to select a short list of applicants to be invited to attend an interview with the section panel. Candidates may also be invited to attend a pre-screening interview with Derwent to support the panel’s decision making.

Candidates may be required to attend additional interviews and or complete additional assessments such as a presentation task, or psychometric testing.

Reference Checks

Candidates at an advanced stage of consideration will be requested to provide at least two referees who may be contacted before an offer is made. Any written references provided will also be checked.

Pre-employment verification and background checks

Before an offer of employment is made, the following checks will be undertaken:

- Academic Qualification Check
- Professional Membership Check
- Criminal History Check
- Financial Regulatory Check
- Bankruptcy Check
- Media and public commentary searches.

Candidate Care

We are committed to ensuring that potential applicants and candidates are treated respectfully and fairly. Derwent consultants are available to field inquiries and ensure that applicants are informed about developments as they become available. Candidates who are shortlisted and complete assessments, including interviews, will be offered a feedback session to discuss their experience and the assessment results.

Candidates with a Disability

Derwent aims to ensure people with disability can access secure and sustainable employment opportunities and are respected for their skills and capabilities. If required, we will provide reasonable adjustments such as access, equipment or other practical support at relevant stages of the recruitment process. You can specify in the application if you have necessary adjustments, or please inform us at any stage, and we can arrange reasonable adjustments on your behalf. If you need to contact us about reasonable adjustments during the recruitment process, please contact publicsector@derwentsearch.com.au



**Thank you for your interest in the
Australian Forest Products Association (AFPA)**