

Candidate Information Pack

Organisation: Australian Forest Products Association
(AFPA)

Position: Chair

Consultant: Michelle Gardiner, Managing Partner

Date: June 2026

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Contents

Advertisement	3
The Organisation	4
Role Description	7
The Application and Selection Process	8

Advertisement

Chair

- Australian Forest Products Association (AFPA)
- Lead the Board of Australia's peak forest products industry body at a critical moment for the sector
- Located anywhere in Australia

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 the people across 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 Chair who can lead the board, build strong relationships with key stakeholders, understands the regulatory and political environment of peak body leadership and can position the sector for long-term strength.

The Role

The Chair leads the governance and strategic direction of the Australian Forest Products Association (AFPA), working in close partnership with the CEO to advance the interests of the forest products sector.

The Chair presides over the Board, ensures effective governance, and supports the CEO to drive AFPA's policy positions across government and industry. The role requires active engagement with members, state branches and affiliated state associations, federal and state governments, and a broad network of industry and community stakeholders.

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 Chair must be capable of providing confident, credible leadership across all of these fronts, supporting AFPA's advocacy agenda with clarity and conviction.

AFPA has branches in NSW, Victoria, South Australia, and Tasmania and works with affiliated organisations in QLD and WA. The Chair must be skilled at building consensus across a diverse membership while maintaining a coherent and effective national position.

The Person

The successful candidate will bring a track record of senior board leadership which may include experience in one or more of the following areas - corporate Australia, peak bodies, government agencies, or complex industry organisations. The ability to support and work in partnership with the CEO as they navigate government relations, high-stakes advocacy, and represent an industry publicly and credibly across government and industry forums are core requirements.

Experience in or adjacent to the forestry, agriculture, natural resources, or land use sectors would be highly regarded but not essential, as would familiarity with the federal and state policy landscape relevant to Australian forest industries. Demonstrated experience in board governance and engaging with a diverse membership base is essential.

The Chair will set the tone for an effective and cohesive Board. They will bring both the strategic perspective to guide the sector's advocacy agenda and the leadership character to build a productive partnership with the CEO and a high-performing organisation with a modern workplace culture.

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 Michelle Gardiner on email publicsector@derwentsearch.com.au or call 02 9223 1855.

To apply: Please provide a cover letter highlighting your suitability for the role and a resume by the due date.

Applications close: Sunday, 12 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 all elements of the value chain – 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 four branches in New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, and Tasmania and works closely with affiliated organisations in WA and QLD.

The forest products industry is one of Australia's largest industries, 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 solution – 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 when downstream processing of wood products is included.
- A proven climate solution – sustainably grown timber stores carbon and provides a low-emissions alternative to steel and concrete in 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>

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

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 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, and 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:	Chair
Location:	Anywhere in Australia
Indicative Commitment:	~25 business days per annum
Tenure:	Minimum 3 years

Position Overview

The Chair is AFPA's only independent board position. The role is pivotal through a critical leadership transition, anchoring the Board, partnering closely with the incoming CEO in year one, and bringing genuine governance rigour. The commitment is approximately 25 days per annum, with a heavier load in the first 12 months. Remuneration is flexible, with a staged fee structure under consideration. Strong board credentials, personal standing, and the capacity to invest real time are the priority. Sector expertise, while valued, is secondary.

The Chair will build a strong and productive working relationship with the CEO, and will support them to engage effectively with members and a broad network of government, industry, and community stakeholders - advancing the interests of the sector across federal and state policy environments.

Position Description:

- **Board Leadership:** Leading the board and ensuring its effectiveness in setting and implementing strategy.
- **Meeting Management:** Setting agendas, managing the conduct, frequency, length and effectiveness of board meetings.
- **Strategic Oversight:** Monitoring the organisation's performance, risk management, and compliance.
- **CEO Performance Management:** Ensure the CEO's performance metrics are aligned with the organisation's Strategic Plan and assessed regularly to recognise outperformance and correct underperformance.
- **Stakeholder Liaison:** Acting as the primary link between the Board and the CEO, and where appropriate support the representation of the organization to external stakeholders.
- **Governance & Integrity:** Ensuring the board functions in accordance with its constitution and high-level corporate governance practices.
- **Board Composition:** Overseeing director performance evaluations and succession planning.

Key Capabilities:

- **Chair Expertise:** Demonstrated success in board-level roles, chair experience is ideal. At a minimum, experience as a committee chair.
- **Executive Experience:** A seasoned and highly commercial executive with either a CEO or C-suite background, has experience through several business and strategic cycles and demonstrably applied learning from those experiences.
- **Governance Expertise:** Strong experience in corporate governance and board-level management, ideally for a member-based organisation.
- **Industry Knowledge:** Familiarity of the Australian Forest Products Sector is desirable but not essential.
- **Network:** Senior existing relationships across Government and the Private Sector is desirable but not essential.
- **Independence:** Free from material conflicts of interest.
- **Constructive Scepticism:** Ability to maintain a balanced relationship with the CEO and management.
- **Conflict Resolution:** Ability to recognise and navigate effectively through the inherent conflicts that exist within a vertically coordinated membership base and an organisation that covers both a state and federal political spectrum.,
- **Strategic Capability:** proven experience building and/or implementing a strategic plan across short- and long-term time frames.
- **Strong Stakeholder Management Skills:** with an ability to build and maintain strong relationships with key stakeholders, including government, associated agencies, regulatory bodies and industry leaders, to enhance the company's reputation, foster partnerships and drive business growth.
- **Mentor capability:** An experienced mentor that can coach and support the CEO and maintain accountability.

The Application and Selection Process

Applications

Closing date: Sunday, 12 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 Michelle Gardner, Derwent Managing Partner on 02 9223 1855.

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 selection 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)**