



## **Strategic plan of the Board of the Forest Practices Authority 2020–21 to 2022–23**

**Mission statement** – The Forest Practices Authority (FPA) is an independent body responsible for the administration of Tasmania’s forest practices system under the *Forest Practices Act 1985*.

**Vision** – The FPA is recognised for its expertise and effectiveness in promoting high standards of forest practices through a cooperative and balanced approach to advising, researching, monitoring and enforcing the requirements of the forest practices system.

### **Key strategic objectives of the FPA:**

1. a high performance organisation
2. providing a safe workplace for the organisation’s workers
3. fostering effective communication and cooperation with stakeholders
4. independent and effective compliance programs
5. pro-actively adapting to emerging issues and change.

## **STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1: HIGH PERFORMANCE ORGANISATION**

### **Goal 1: An effective board**

The board will provide high level strategic guidance and review of the operations of the FPA. It will do this primarily through regular meetings and the work of its committees, including:

- Audit and Risk Committee
- Compliance Committee
- Finance Committee.

The committees will be supported by the Chief Forest Practices Officer (CFPO), Business Manager and FPA senior staff as required.

#### **Performance measures**

- 1.1.1 All committees have terms of reference under which regular reports are made to the board.
- 1.1.2 The board conducts an annual review of its performance against this strategic plan.
- 1.1.3 Board has knowledge and understanding of the regulatory instruments it applies and of the principles of administrative law that apply to regulatory decision making.
- 1.1.4 Board provides timely advice to the Minister on business continuity and succession planning.

### **Goal 2: High performance of the FPA's core business**

The performance and morale of FPA staff is critical to the effective operation of the forest practices system. The FPA will provide a working environment for its staff that fosters high levels of productivity, recognition and job satisfaction. Business goals will be subject to annual reporting and review at the program level and at the individual officer level.

#### **Performance measures**

- 1.2.1 Detailed annual reports and forward programs (annual and three-yearly goals) are prepared and subject to review by the board and external stakeholders, including the Forest Practices Advisory Council, by August each year.
- 1.2.2 The detailed programs will include goals for continuing improvement in research, planning advice, training and monitoring.
- 1.2.3 Performance management reviews are conducted for each officer by September each year.
- 1.2.4 FPA staff are recognised and valued for their expertise and productivity through publications, conferences and feedback from stakeholders and senior managers.
- 1.2.5 FPA staff have access to, and take up, suitable training and personal development opportunities for continuing professional development.
- 1.2.6 The FPA has a structured and accessible documentation system.
- 1.2.7 Staff have knowledge and understanding of the regulatory instruments they apply and the principles of administrative law that apply to regulatory decision making.

**Goal 3: High standards achieved by Forest Practices Officers (FPO)**

FPOs play a critical role in the operation of the forest practices system. The FPA will actively support the achievement of high standards by its FPOs.

**Performance measures**

- 1.3.1 The FPA will conduct and maintain training programs for FPOs including on the preparation of high standard FPPs and administrative law relevant to the forest practice system.
- 1.3.2 The FPA will actively communicate with, and support, FPOs to maintain high levels of motivation and competence.
- 1.3.3 The board will ensure that FPOs are appointed and that their performance is monitored in accordance with the FPA's policies and procedures.
- 1.3.4 The FPA will establish a code of conduct for FPOs and develop a peer review system for FPOs.

**STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2: PROVIDING A SAFE WORKPLACE FOR THE ORGANISATION'S WORKERS**

**Goal 1: Maintain an active action plan for work health and safety (WHS)**

The FPA will conduct regular audits and maintain an action plan to ensure that it meets its legislated obligations and provides its workers with a safe and healthy workplace.

**Performance measures**

- 2.1.1 The FPA will conduct quarterly internal audits and arrange external audits at least once a year to ensure that it meets its legislated obligations.
- 2.1.2 A WHS meeting of all staff will be held quarterly to discuss and review WHS issues.
- 2.1.3 The FPA will actively promote and support training and opportunities for staff to maintain health and safety and respond to emerging issues.
- 2.1.4 The Board will receive monthly reports on any WHS issues.
- 2.1.5 The Board will review summaries of audit reports on an annual basis.

**STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3: FOSTERING EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION AND COOPERATION WITH STAKEHOLDERS**

**Goal 1: Foster an effective Forest Practices Advisory Council**

The FPA will actively promote good communication and engagement with the Forest Practices Advisory Council (FPAC).

**Performance measures**

- 3.1.1 The FPA will seek advice from FPAC on forest practices matters, including any significant changes to legislation, policies or planning procedures.
- 3.1.2 The FPA will provide executive support in organising regular meetings and papers for FPAC.
- 3.1.3 The CFPO, and where possible the Chair of the FPA, will attend all meetings of FPAC.

**Goal 2: Clearly and transparently communicate the role of the FPA**

The FPA will to the best of its capacity use various media to transparently communicate its role in the administration of the forest practices system.

**Performance measures**

- 3.2.1 The FPA will ensure that its website is maintained to provide high quality, effective information about the operation of the forest practices system and the FPA.
- 3.2.2 The FPA will conduct workshops and field days for key stakeholder groups, including local government and other parts of the Tasmanian Government.
- 3.2.3 The FPA will publish at least two editions of *Forest Practices News* per year.
- 3.2.4 The FPA will actively pursue opportunities and activities to promote the role and relevance of the forest practices system to the broader community.
- 3.2.5 The FPA will establish, maintain and promote a contemporary Communication and Engagement Strategy that is relevant to all its stakeholders.

**Goal 3: Foster close dialogue with key stakeholders**

The FPA will work to maintain close and constructive communication with Tasmania's forestry industry, Sustainable Timbers Tasmania, Private Forests Tasmania, the Department of State Growth, the Department of Primary Industries, Water, Parks and the Environment and other key stakeholders to foster a mutual understanding of perceptions, needs and priorities.

**Performance measures**

- 3.3.1 The FPA will work to maintain close communication with the forest industry at an enterprise level. An important element of this will be periodic meetings during each year with larger enterprises individually and jointly. Involvement from the FPA in these meetings will include the CFPO and board members where appropriate.

- 3.3.2 The FPA will build and maintain relationships with other key stakeholders, including local government, ENGOs, private landowners and other regulators, through regular meetings involving the CFPO, staff and board members where appropriate.
- 3.3.3 The FPA will build and maintain relationships with key agency stakeholders at a State and Commonwealth level, in order to appreciate and understand, and advise if requested, on the regulatory implications of policy changes that affect Tasmanian forests.
- 3.3.4 Key outcomes of the Board’s meeting deliberations will be published in a monthly communique.
- 3.3.5 The FPA will conduct information and education activities to increase the awareness and understanding of the forest practices system within the community, with an emphasis on rural landowners and operators.
- 3.3.6 The FPA will continue to encourage and support training and education programs in forest practices that are conducted by the forestry sector for its workers.
- 3.3.7 The FPA will recognise and publicise excellence in the application or adoption of forest practices in the Forest Practices News and the wider media as appropriate, and formally acknowledge such excellence through biennial forest practices awards.

**Goal 4: Maintain an active relationship with the Minister**

The FPA will provide advice on forest practices policy and implementation to the Minister.

**Performance measures**

- 3.4.1 The Chair and CFPO will meet the Minister at quarterly intervals or as required to maintain an active relationship with the Minister and his/her advisors, and to keep the Minister informed of developments affecting the forest practices system.

**STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 4: INDEPENDENT AND EFFECTIVE COMPLIANCE PROGRAMS**

**Goal 1: An effective process for assessing the implementation and effectiveness of forest practices plans**

The FPA will allocate its resources to most efficiently and effectively deliver its independent monitoring functions under the Act.

**Performance measures**

- 4.1.1 The annual program for monitoring and assessment of compliance with the provisions of forest practices plans is completed by August each year according to the FPA's protocols.
- 4.1.2 The FPA will continue to improve the means by which it assesses the effectiveness of provisions in forest practices plans for key environmental outcomes.
- 4.1.3 The implementation of the protocols for monitoring & assessment is reviewed by the board's Compliance Committee on a regular basis.

**Goal 2: A fair and appropriate process for investigations and compliance actions**

The FPA will allocate resources to enable the timely investigation and responses to alleged non-compliances in an appropriate manner, and will ensure that the response matches the potential seriousness of the matter and that all parties are afforded natural justice. In carrying out its compliance activities the FPA will ensure that its staff and contractors are able to work in a safe and effective manner.

**Performance measures**

- 4.2.1 All reported potential breaches of the Act are investigated in accordance with the FPA's protocols.
- 4.2.2 The FPA's investigation protocols will ensure that the FPA's staff and contractors are not exposed to undue risk of threats, injury or intimidation. Appropriate training will be provided and specialist enforcement resources will be engaged as required.
- 4.2.3 A random sample of investigation files is audited by the board's committee against the protocols for investigations and enforcement on a regular basis.

**Goal 3: Transparent reporting of information through the FPA's reports**

The FPA will actively report on its compliance work in a transparent manner whilst noting the requirements at law for natural justice and the protection of personal information.

**Performance measures**

- 4.3.1 The outcomes of the FPA's investigation and enforcement actions will be published in the monthly communique.
- 4.3.2 The outcomes of the FPA's assessment and compliance work will be published in the FPA's annual report.
- 4.3.3 During the life of the plan coordinate and publish a five-yearly State of the Forests report.

**STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 5: PROACTIVELY ADAPTING TO EMERGING ISSUES AND CHANGE**

**Goal 1: Identify and respond to changing circumstances**

The FPA will keep abreast of changes in the circumstances within which it operates, including external factors such as technical, socio-economic, environmental, industry, community, and government circumstances, and internal factors such as staff and FPO capacity, *Forest Practices Code* adequacy, and staff and business management systems, to ensure the Authority is able to continue to deliver against its statutory task as effectively and efficiently as possible.

**Performance measures**

- 5.1.1 Develop, and review annually through the Audit and Risk Committee, a Strategic Risk Management Plan with board, CFPO and senior management involvement and with board sign off.
- 5.1.2 The board will continue to identify any developments which call for action by the FPA to ensure its ongoing effectiveness and efficiency, and to put in train appropriate action.
- 5.1.3 The FPA will seek additional sources of funding, including grants and consultancies, as required to supplement its income so as to maintain the expertise and capacity of its staff to deliver core services to FPOs.
- 5.1.4 The FPA will incorporate new elements, processes and/or prescriptions into the *Forest Practices Code* and associated instruments where the Board is satisfied that there are demonstrated to be substantive improvements, and after appropriate levels of stakeholder consultation.
- 5.1.5 The FPA will monitor developments in relation to the land use planning system, to ensure compatibility with the regulatory scope and purpose of the forest practices system.

**Goal 2: Maintain an adequate research and effectiveness monitoring program**

The FPA will conduct research and collaborate with other research bodies to improve the scientific information that supports the forest practices system.

**Performance measures**

- 5.2.1 A research and effectiveness monitoring program will be incorporated into a three-year FPA budget plan.
- 5.2.2 Findings from research and effectiveness monitoring will be published in appropriate scientific journals, conference proceedings and other media.
- 5.2.3 Findings will be translated into operational practice through improved planning tools and training programs.
- 5.2.4 Research relevant to key aspects of the forest practices system will be actively pursued through funding from internal and external sources, with a focus on maintaining research capacity and relevance and optimising collaboration with other researchers through joint projects and supporting post-graduate students.

**Goal 3: Position the forest practices system at the forefront of changes in the operating environment**

The FPA will pro-actively review the role of the forest practices system into the future to ensure that it adapts to changes in the operating environment, including the increasing importance of plantations and the future relationship of the system to forest certification systems.

**Performance measures**

- 5.3.1 The FPA will actively develop options and promote discussion on potential changes to ensure that the forest practices system best responds to any changes in the regulatory and business environment, including forest certification.
- 5.3.2 The FPA will consider the issues associated with –
  - (a) the sustainable management of Tasmania’s forests with particular reference to content of three-year statutory plans.
  - (b) the ongoing protection of areas of forest that are reserved from harvesting because of the existence of special values that are identified in forest practice plans.
  - (c) the development of flexibility in the requirements and prescriptions in forest practices plans that enable the content and length of plans and plan prescriptions to be adapted as appropriate, to reflect matters such as the nature of the forest, its location, the land tenure and the nature of the proposed forest activity.
- 5.3.3 The FPA will provide advice to the Minister on potential changes to improve the legislation that governs the forest practices system, including any changes to the governance arrangements that will improve the independence, transparency and efficiency of forest regulation into the future.