



Social Impact Assessment



TIMBERLANDS
Pacific

SAFETY
FIRST
ALWAYS 

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Timberlands Pacific acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land on which we operate. We pay our respects to their Elders, past, present and emerging and the continuation of their cultural, spiritual and educational practices

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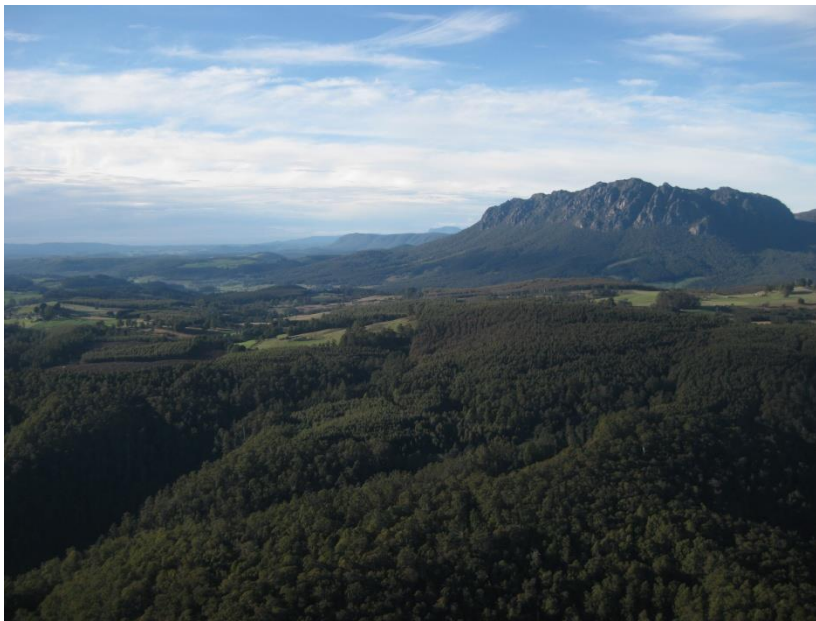
Generic Risk Assessment undertaken: 23 January 2023

Next Assessment: Before 11 April 2029

1 Background

Regardless of size, all forest operations have a social impact. This can be both a positive and a negative impact, and these effects need to be understood to be managed appropriately. This Social Impact Assessment aims to establish the social impact of general forestry operations managed by Timberlands Pacific Pty Ltd (TPPL).

Timberlands Pacific is currently the Manager of two forest estates within Australia; the Taswood Estate and the Penola Plantations. The **Taswood Estate** is a 54,000 hectare predominantly *Pinus radiata* plantation located in the north of Tasmania. This Estate provides around 650,000 tonnes of wood products annually. The **Penola Plantations** is a 47,000 hectare *Pinus radiata* plantation, mainly located on the boarder of South Australia and Victoria known locally as the Green Triangle. Penola Plantations produces approximately 850,000 tonnes of wood products annually.



Photograph 1: Aerial photograph taken in the north west of Tasmania. Wilmot forest in the Taswood Estate is located at the foot of the Gog Range behind Mt Roland.

Both the Penola Plantations and Taswood Estate forest assets are owned by investment trusts. The fund manager responsible for both investment trusts is New Forests Pty Ltd.

2 Generic Social Impact Assessment

A Social Impact Assessment is an analysis of the range of impacts that an activity can have on the communities that surround it. In this instance, it is an assessment of the range of impacts the Taswood Estate and Penola Plantations, may have on communities located in Northern Tasmania and the Green Triangle.

Initially, a social impact assessment was undertaken independently for each Estate. However, it became clear that 'general' issues faced by each community bore no relation to the state they were located in. Issues such as operational planning, truck movements and environmental concerns are more closely related to plantation management in general, than specifically to Tasmania or the Green Triangle.

This realisation has led to a single social impact assessment across all Timberlands Pacific managed operations. Timberlands Pacific has processes in place to identify general and site-specific concerns and impacts as they arise. Identified impacts are assessed on a case by case basis to ensure that appropriate management solutions are implemented. These assessments are kept on file by Timberlands Pacific for future reference and may be made available to stakeholders on request.

In all circumstances, Timberlands Pacific ensures that:

- Social impact assessments are conducted in a timely and open manner;
- Records of stakeholders are maintained via a list of interested and affected individuals, companies and organisations, including whether they agree to be contacted during stakeholder engagement practices;
- Effective and timely communication occurs with stakeholders affected by operations; and
- Community or other stakeholder complaints and/or requests are recorded and responded to constructively and in a timely manner.



Photograph 2: Dr Goodes forest. A high point in the Penola Plantations

2.1 The Affected Communities

The following local Government areas are impacted by Timberlands Pacific’s management activities:

2.1.1 Tasmania

Break O’Day, Dorset, Launceston, George Town, Latrobe, Kentish, Central Coast, Waratah-Wynyard, Burnie and Meander Valley.

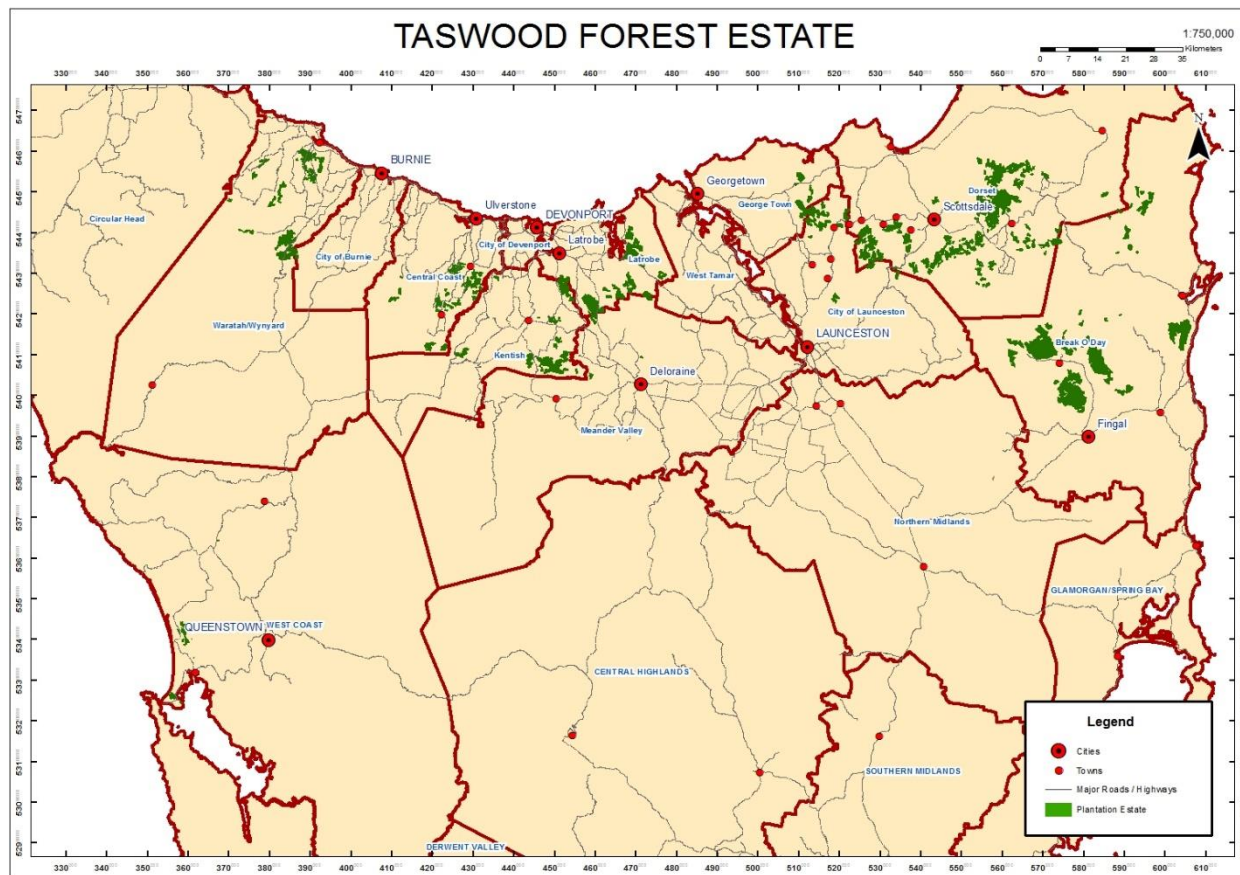


Figure 1: A map of the Taswood Estate (green patches) and the overlapping local government boundaries

2.1.2 Green Triangle

- South Australia: Wattle Range Council, Grant District Council
- Victoria: West Wimmera Council, Glenelg Shire, Southern Grampians Shire

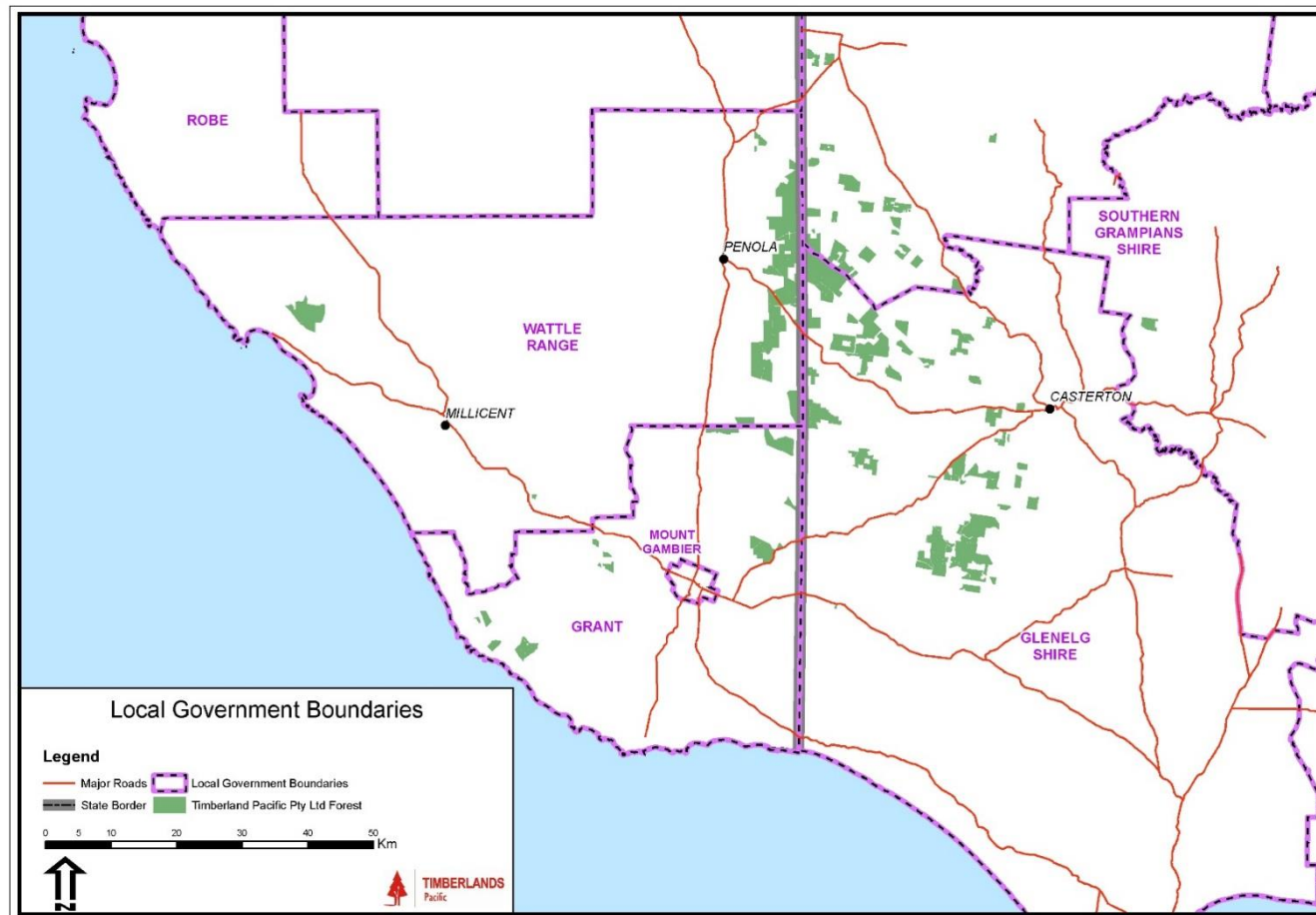


Figure 2: A map of the Penola Plantations (green patches) and the overlapping local government boundaries

2.1.3 Profiling

The following data was obtained from the 2021 Census. Data will be updated when the next census becomes available.

Table 1: The population characteristics and social profile of communities surrounding TPPL managed Estates, 2021 Census

	Green Triangle Local Average	Tasmania Local Average	South Australia State Average	Tasmania State Average	Victoria State Average
Average Age (yrs)	48	46.9	40.6	41.6	37.9
Youth <15 yrs (%)	16.8	16.3	17.3	16.9	18.2
Working Aged People 15- 64 yrs (%)	59.2	59.9	63.2	62.7	65.4
Gender Distribution (males/100 females)	106.7	101.1	97.8	98.4	97.8

Table 2: Populations and main industries by region (data from Australian Bureau of Statistics and Regional Statistics, 2021 Census)

State	Local Government Council	Population	Change since last census	Principal Occupations and Industries
Tasmania	Break O'Day	6,936	11.9	Health care and social assistance, accommodation and food services, retail trade, agriculture forestry and fishing.
	Dorset	6,991	3.6	Agriculture, forestry and fishing, accommodation and food services, retail trade, health care and social services.
	Launceston	71,906	7.5	Health care and social assistance, retail trade, education and training, accommodation and food services.
	George Town	7,213	5.8	Manufacturing, agriculture, forestry and fishing, retail trade, health care and social assistance.
	Meander Valley	21,153	7.9	Retail trade, health care and social assistance, manufacturing, agriculture, forestry and fishing.
	Latrobe	12,705	16.1	Health care and social assistance, manufacturing, retail trade, construction, agriculture, forestry and fishing

	Kentish	6,778	7.5	Manufacturing, retail trade, agriculture, <u>forestry</u> and fishing
	Central Coast	23,278	6.5	Health care and social assistance, retail trade, education and training, construction
	Waratah/ Wynyard	14,641	5.4	Health care and social assistance, manufacturing, retail, education and training.
	Burnie	20,441	5.9	Retail trade, manufacturing, health care and social assistance.
South Australia	Wattle Range	12,127	1.3	Agriculture, forestry and fishing, manufacturing, retail trade
	Grant	8,862	5.8	Agriculture, forestry and fishing, manufacturing, retail trade, health care and social assistance
Victoria	West Wimmera	3,977	1.7	Agriculture, forestry and fishing, health care and assistance, retail trade
	Southern Grampians Shire	16,488	2.6	Agriculture, forestry and fishing, health care and assistance, retail trade
	Glenelg Shire	20,056	1.6	Manufacturing, agriculture, forestry and fishing, health care and social assistance.

2.2 Analysis of social impacts

The Census data suggests that the communities surrounding the Taswood Estate and Penola Plantations are similar. They can be generalised as rural, with a strong participation in the Primary Industries, such as agriculture and forestry. The towns surrounding the forests are predominately made up of people in the middle of their working life (late 30's to late 40's).

Since the 2021 Census:

- All communities surrounding the Taswood Estate and Penola Plantations have seen an increase in population. This is contrary to the previous census where the majority of communities experienced a decrease;
- Tasmanian communities surrounding the Taswood Estate had an average age of 46.9, an increase of 3.5%. The average age for communities in the Green Triangle experienced an increase of 5.2% to 48;
- All communities have seen a decline in the percentage of youth (under 15 years of age);
- All states have experienced a 1-2% decrease in the percentage of the population of working age (15-64 years of age); and
- Agriculture, forestry and fishing remains the higher employing industries across the majority of communities around the Taswood Estate and Penola Plantations.

Local Timberlands Pacific staff consultation and analysis of Timberlands Pacific stakeholder communications, has identified the following key indicators for consideration in this social impact assessment.

2.2.1 Local populations involved in the primary industries

Forestry and primary land uses, like agriculture, have co-existed for many years. The Green Triangle has been a “forestry” region for decades, and communities have developed and thrived due to the industry. Tasmania likewise, has had strengthening ties between the community and the forest industry.

In the late 2000’s, there was upheaval in the forestry industry because of the collapse of Managed Investment Schemes (MIS). In Tasmania, Timberlands Pacific continued to employ local contractors and staff and maintain its operational programs. The importance of work continuity to the families surrounding the Estate was strong, resulting in Timberlands Pacific developing strong relationships with communities, contractors and employees. These relationships are assisting the industry to achieve sustainable growth.

In the Green Triangle, MIS collapses affected Timberlands Pacific staff and contractors. Penola Plantations commenced operations under Timberlands Pacific management on the 1 November 2012 with a key objective to provide commercially sustainable forest operations which instantly provided medium to long term stability for contractors.

Timberlands Pacific continues to use local contractors and local workers where capability and labour availability allow.

2.2.2 New and transient populations including Life-Styler’s and Tourists

New and transient populations tend not to have a direct functional relationship with forestry, that is, they are not dependant on forestry for employment. They are often unfamiliar with forestry and rural practices and can be a source of friction for forestry activities.

Social impacts to this group may be more perceived (e.g. impacts of herbicide spraying, visual and aesthetic landscape changes, burning and smoke emissions) than actual. Timberlands Pacific utilises a Stakeholder Engagement process to assist staff positively address any concerns or issues arising from this group. The Timberlands Pacific website calls for ‘interested’ stakeholders to contact Timberlands Pacific and register their interest to receive relevant stakeholder communications.

2.2.3 Native title

Timberlands Pacific acknowledge that the land and any traditional sites are significant to the local First Nations people. Requests from First Nations communities to access to either the Taswood Estate or Penola Plantations for traditional use will be granted, provided there are health and safety concerns from operational activities.

2.2.4 Risk of uncontrolled fire

The perceived, and real fire risk that large continuous plantations generate is one of the most significant potential impacts on surrounding communities. The experience of fire is different between the Green Triangle and Tasmania. As a result of the Royal Commission into the 2009 Victorian Bushfires, numerous policies have been implemented across both sites in line with the recommendations.

All neighbours of both the Penola Plantations or Taswood Estate are encouraged to contact the regional office to discuss specific concerns regarding common boundaries and general fire management strategies.

Green Triangle

The Green Triangle's extremely hot, dry summers, brown landscape and frequent summer lightning storms have led to a very high level of community engagement regarding fire. Catastrophic fire events experienced in the 1980's have shaped the way the threat of fire is managed in the Green Triangle and reflects heightened community expectations. As a result, there is significant emphasis on achieving a quick response to fire threats, often lead by industry managed fire brigades. Industry brigades are generally deployed alongside both South Australian and Victorian Country Fire Brigades and fall within the government framework. Timberlands Pacific staff are trained in firefighting and are an industry brigade and regularly respond to plantation fire events on the region.

Industry brigades operate as a registered brigade with the same command structures in place as the Country Fire Service (CFS) and Country Fire Authority (CFA). Fire break maintenance programs are a very high priority and general plantation design is legislated and consistent across the landscape regardless of land tenure. This integrated protection, preparedness and dedication to a rapid co-ordinated response typically results in very small fires with little or no property loss from plantation fire events.

Tasmania

Tasmania by contrast, has moderate to cool summers to those experienced in the Green Triangle. Some rural communities have been in conflict with the forest industry for several years, beginning in earnest in the late 2000's, over the use of burning in the autumn months to reduce harvesting residues. Tension surrounding smoke emissions has led to forest managers changing their practices in planning, monitoring and reporting controlled burns.

The quantity of fuel reduction and harvest residue burning has decreased in the past 10 years with intolerance of the broader public to any smoke in the atmosphere increasing. Severe bushfires experienced in 2004, 2013 and again in 2016 amplified the community's apprehension of fire risk, particularly property loss. This is a consideration when planning the use of fire as a forest management tool.

Taswood Estate fire management is contracted to Sustainable Timber Tasmania (STT) and includes rigorous fire break maintenance works programs, use of fire towers in periods of high fire danger, forest patrolling and if required a direct and co-ordinated response to any bushfire in collaboration with the Tasmanian Fire Service, Tasmania Parks and Wildlife Service (Parks), Police and State Emergency Services (SES). Arson attack is the most common cause of bushfires in Tasmania.

2.2.5 Generic impacts for all populations and communities

School bus routes - truck movements can create heightened safety risks on rural school bus routes during scheduled bus times. Timberlands Pacific may restrict truck movements during these times, impose speed restrictions or divert routes where possible when requested by the local community.

General truck movements - continual and concentrated truck movements may have visual and noise impacts on the people living along transport routes. Members of the public sharing these roads, particularly narrow or single lane back roads, may be concerned by passing distances and general road safety issues. All contractors are required to adhere to National Heavy Vehicle legislation which includes requirements for fatigue management and other measures to increase safety of drivers and other road users.

Noise - forests and forestry operations are typically located away from population centres, so noise rarely has a significant social impact. Noise from machinery and transporting however can impact on the rural communities. In cases where noise is a concern for neighbours, Timberlands Pacific may arrange restricted hours of operation.

Use of local contractors - local contractors are used where skills and labour availability permit. Timberlands Pacific employs approximately 60 local contracting companies.

Use of local business – Timberlands Pacific utilises local business to support the company’s activities wherever possible.

Provision of local employment – Timberlands Pacific currently employ 46 staff across both sites. New staff or replacement positions are sourced from the local community if they meet the skills and qualifications required for a role. All staff receive ongoing training to ensure the required levels of competencies are maintained for the role.

Operational activities – potential impacts to local communities from operational activities are considered during operational planning. This process, including neighbour notifications in advance of operation, is contained in Timberlands Pacific’s standard operating procedures. The assessment and management of special values (such as water quality, threatened fauna and flora etc.) are outlined in Special Values Management Plans. Cultural Heritage (both Aboriginal and Historic) management is outlined in Cultural Heritage Management Plans. If common issues arise from the consultation process, they are resolved by following a stakeholder consultation process.

3 Reassessment of Social Impacts

3.1 Generic Social Impact Assessment

Communities change over time and the types of impacts from management activities can change depending on the type of communities surrounding the forests. The generic social impact assessment will be reviewed every five years and from time to time as required.

3.2 Site Specific Social Impact Assessment

A site-specific social impact assessment refers to impacts or issues that arise from discrete forest activities that require more detailed analysis than the broadscale generic indicators.

A site-specific social impact assessment may be undertaken as part of stakeholder engagement planning:

- When harvesting or other operations are likely to have a significant impact on neighbours. This may be prompted by stakeholder feedback from notifications in the first stages of planning;
- Before and after major changes to forest management in an area. e.g. harvesting in a new catchment; or
- Before a proposed sale of forest assets or major industry or company changes.

Where operational activities are ongoing and likely to have minimal impact, a stakeholder engagement plan will not be undertaken.



Photograph 3: Penola Plantations adjoining neighbouring native forest



Photograph 4: NW Tasmania with many different land uses, including the Taswood Estate