

Decision Tree

A CROP FOR THE FUTURE



In this Guidance Note

In this guidance note, we get an overview of the WA softwood plantation sector including the size of the estate, markets, current supply and demand and projections going forward. We explore why expansion is critical, while learning how farm forestry can provide benefits to your existing agricultural enterprise and generate an income.

Supply and demand

A common question: when is the best time to plant trees?

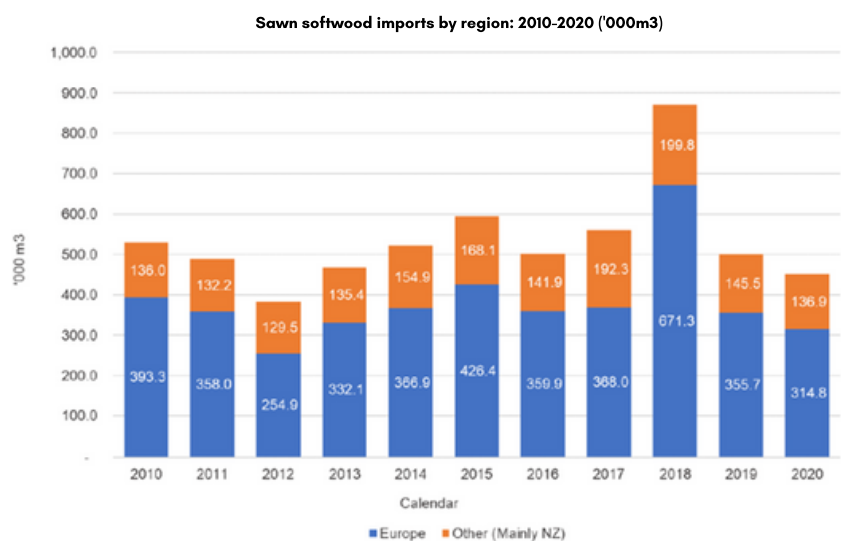
The best answer is 10 years ago, the second-best answer is today.

Demand for timber and fibre products is rapidly increasing. While there are many reasons why demand for timber and fibre products are on the rise, perhaps the most understandable reason is simply because the population in WA is increasing.

Already, the importation of sawn timber equal to the output of four sawmills the size of Wespine are required to meet Australia's current demand.

The shortfall will become even worse in WA, with trends showing an increase in timber framed housing, which uses more than twice the amount of timber per dwelling than double brick.

Double brick construction is proving to be too heavy for the types of soils that new housing developments are being built on. Either tens of thousands of dollars worth of additional earthworks and foundations are required, or lighter weight building methods must be used.



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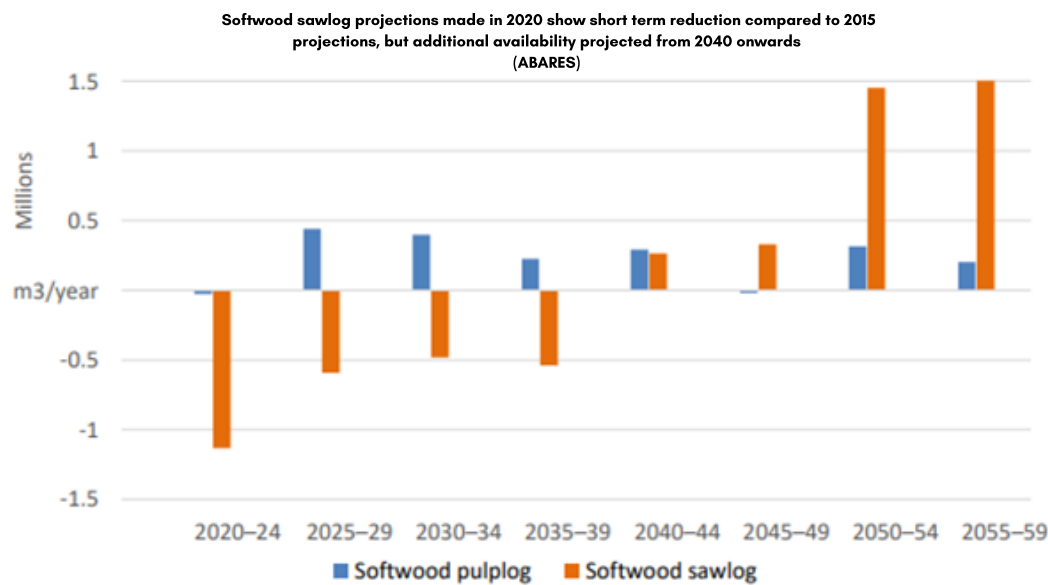




The demand for timber is expected to quadruple worldwide by 2050, according to the World Bank.

A growing population and a declining timber resource means that WA is facing a growing forest and wood products deficit.

It is anticipated without action, the area of softwood will decline from a peak of more than 90,000 hectares to less than 50,000ha by 2032.



Expansion

Due to the declining trend of the softwood estate, both the State and Federal Governments have developed policies and programs to assist in getting more trees in the ground.

'Growing a better Australia - a billion trees for jobs and growth' is the Federal Government's policy to plant a billion more plantation trees, getting the right trees at the right scale in the right places.

It covers policies on growing the forest industries, creating regional forestry hubs, reducing barriers to forestry expansion, using forest resources smarter, growing community understanding of forestry and benefits of trees in production forests.

Expanding the farm forestry estate aligns with State Government's priorities to create jobs and deliver on stronger regional economies and communities. In September 2021, the State Government announced funding of \$350 million over 10 years for softwood plantation expansion.

This should provide at least an additional 33,000ha of softwood timber plantation and the planting of up to 50 million pine trees.

Benefits

Need more reasons to start planting?

Farm forestry can improve agricultural productivity in many ways, including:

- providing shelter for stock and crop
- controlling salinity
- decreasing soil erosion caused by wind

Other benefits include:

- increasing biodiversity
- restoring habitat
- improved water quality
- an alternative source of diversified income for landowners
- harvesting can be timed to coincide with market cycles.



Tree Alliance 

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