



Briefing Sheet September 2004

TASMANIA'S SAWMILLS

Tasmania's sawmills vary greatly in size, the largest processing up to 68,000 m³ per annum and the smallest around 350 m³ per annum (Table 1). All plantation based sawmills are located in the northeast of the State in proximity to the plantation resource. The established mills process radiata pine however the new FEA mill is processing plantation eucalypt. Native forest based sawmills produce approximately 64% of Tasmania's sawn timber output and plantation mills 36%.

Table 1: Tasmania's major sawmills

Plantation mills	Location	Type	Licensed output (m3)	Unit
AUSPINE LIMITED	TONGANAH	a sawmill	68,000	m3/yr
F.E.A. TIMBER PTY LTD	GEORGE TOWN	wood processing	55,000	m3/yr
FRENCH ENTERPRISES PTY LTD	SCOTTSDALE	a sawmill	49,000	m3/yr
THE NEW MATPINE PTY LTD	EXETER	milling & processing	10,000	m3/yr
TOTAL			182,000	m3/yr
Native forest mills	Location	Type	Licensed output (m3)	Unit
GUNNS LIMITED	SMITHTON	milling & processing	50,000	m3/yr
GUNNS LIMITED	AUSTINS FERRY	milling & processing	42,000	m3/yr
GUNNS LIMITED	LAUNCESTON	sawmill & chipper	24,000	m3/yr
GUNNS LIMITED	WESTERN JUNCTION	a sawmill	15,000	m3/yr
KEVIN MORGAN PTY LTD	PROSPECT	sawmill & chipper	15,000	m3/yr
NEWOOD HUON PTY LTD	JUDBURY	a sawmill	14,000	m3/yr
JARMAN	EXETER	a sawmill	13,000	m3/yr
BRITTON BROTHERS PTY. LTD.	SMITHTON	a sawmill	10,000	m3/yr
CLENNETT INDUSTRIES PTY LTD	BRIDGEWATER	a sawmill	8,000	m3/yr
H & K TIMBER PTY LTD	PROSPECT	a sawmill	8,000	m3/yr
MUSKETT	RICHMOND	a sawmill	8,000	m3/yr
BARBER	LAUNCESTON	a sawmill	7,500	m3/yr
MCKAY INVESTMENTS PTY LTD	ST HELENS	a sawmill	7,500	m3/yr
BRANXHOLM SAWMILLS (TAS) PTY. LTD.	BRANXHOLM	a sawmill	6,500	m3/yr
GLOVER	EAST TAMAR	a sawmill	6,000	t/yr
NEWTOWN TIMBER AND HARDWARE P/L	MOWBRAY	milling & processing	6,000	m3/yr

GUNNS LIMITED	DELORAINÉ	a sawmill	5,000	m3/yr
MCKAY INVESTMENTS PTY LTD	GLENORCHY	a sawmill	5,000	m3/yr
NEVILLE SMITH AND CO PTY LTD	MOWBRAY	timber processing	5,000	m3/yr
CLENNETT INDUSTRIES PTY LTD	DOVER	a sawmill	4,000	m3/yr
ROBINSON	LOWER BARRINGTON	a sawmill	4,000	m3/yr
SIMONS	MT DIRECTION	a sawmill	3,700	m3/yr
BOOTH	KARANJA	a sawmill	3,500	m3/yr
RICHARDSON	AVOCA	a sawmill	3,000	m3/yr
TAPSELL	SCOTTSDALE	a sawmill	3,000	m3/yr
WYNWOOD SAWMILLING PTY LTD	WYNYARD	sawmill	3,000	m3/yr
BLENKHORN AND JORDAN PTY LTD	RAILTON	sawmilling	2,900	m3/yr
NYLEK PTY LTD	DELORAINÉ	a sawmill	2,500	m3/yr
PORTA (TAS) PTY. LTD.	GEEVESTON	a sawmill	2,500	m3/yr
WATSON'S TIMBER PTY LTD	HUONVILLE	a sawmill	2,500	m3/yr
ST PATRICKS RIVER SAWMILL PTY LTD	NUNAMARA	timber processing	2,500	m3/yr
BARDENHAGEN PTY LTD	LILYDALE	milling & processing	2,000	m3/yr
BISHOP	GOWRIE PARK	a sawmill	2,000	m3/yr
CORINNA SAWMILLS PTY LTD	WYNYARD	a sawmill	2,000	m3/yr
HARBACK SAWMILL PTY LTD	MIDWAY POINT	a sawmill	2,000	m3/yr
ROBINS PTY LTD	SASSAFRASS CREEK	a sawmill	2,000	m3/yr
TORENIUS	FORCETT	a sawmill	2,000	m3/yr
WALTERS	FRANKFORD	a sawmill	2,000	m3/yr
JOHNSON	CAMPBELL TOWN	a sawmill	1,800	m3/yr
SWEETING	LONGFORD	a sawmill	1,600	m3/yr
KELLY PTY LTD	DUNALLEY	a sawmill	1,500	m3/yr
MCCONNON	LEVENDALE	a sawmill	1,500	m3/yr
NORTH EAST HARDWOODS	BRANXHOLM	a sawmill	1,500	m3/yr
BAKES	GOWRIE PARK	a sawmill	1,300	m3/yr
HILL	NORTH MOTTON	a sawmill	1,000	m3/yr
TOTAL			320,000	m3/yr

There are 44 native forest based sawmills processing greater than 1,000 m³ per annum. Two very large mills process about one third of the total Crown and private sawlog yield. These and other larger mills have considerable capacity to kiln dry their output. As a result their primary focus is on the production of higher value kiln dried boards. Smaller mills, particularly those reliant on lower grade logs such as category 2 & 8, have traditionally focused more on the production of framing grade and utility grade products for the Tasmanian domestic market.

There are several sawmills that specialise in the milling of Tasmanian specialty timbers such as blackwood and myrtle. The largest of these, Britton Brothers and Corinna are located in the State's northwest adjacent to the largest tracts of rainforest.

Sawmilling is a significant driver of the timber industry in Tasmania. There is a statutory requirement that a minimum of 300,000 m³ of high quality eucalypt veneer and sawlog be made available annually.

Socio economic importance

Current employment in the Tasmanian timber industry is given in Table 2. Sawmilling, at 1,750 jobs, is an important component of timber industry employment, constituting nearly 28% of the total timber industry jobs and approximately 50% of the manufacturing jobs.

Table 2: Employment in Tasmanian forestry

Category	Total
Growing, harvesting & management*	
Harvesting & plantation establishment contractors	2,583
Forest management**	517
<i>Total*</i>	<i>3,100</i>
Native forest processing	
Sawmilling, dressing and woodchipping***	1,120
Furniture & craftwood industries****	339
Pulp, paper & panel manufacturers	215
Secondary processors**	178
<i>Total</i>	<i>1,852</i>
Plantation processing	
Sawmilling, dressing and woodchipping***	630
Newsprint	350
Paper	290
Panels	110
<i>Total</i>	<i>1,380</i>
Total (all categories)	6,332

Table 2 notes:

*ABS catalogue number 8221.6, data May 2004

**Grist *et al.*, 2000 – ABARE report on Tasmanian timber industry jobs

***Total sawmilling jobs 1750 (ABS June 2000 & ABARE 2000) broken down into native forest and plantation jobs in proportion to the volume milled: see www.twff.com.au - Tasmania's sawmills

****www.twff.com.au – Tasmania's specialty timber industry report p15.

Data not referenced was obtained from company web sites and by direct enquiry.

Some sawmills, although small, are the only processing industry in a rural community and have provided limited but important employment opportunities. The sawmilling businesses provide corresponding flow-on effects to the communities where they are located.

Trends

There has been a gradual declining trend in the number of sawmills in Tasmania and in the amount of people employed in them. In 1980 there were 205 sawmills, now there are less than 50. The decline in the workforce is related to increasing centralisation of production, rationalisation of mills and automation of machinery.

More information: www.twff.com.au