



Sustainable
Timber
Tasmania

FACT SHEET No.12

Old growth forests

Key points

- Over one million hectares of old growth forest in Tasmania is protected in reserves.
- All giant trees growing on Sustainable Timber Tasmania managed land are protected.
- Small amounts of selective harvesting will continue into the future to provide high quality sawlogs and special timbers.
- From 2016/17, Sustainable Timber Tasmania does not clearfell any coupes containing more than 25 per cent mapped old growth.



Old growth forests are a source of highly prized specialty timbers such as myrtle, sassafras, huon pine, celery-top and blackwood.

What are old growth forests?

Old growth forests are mature forests where the effects of any previous disturbance is now negligible. Old growth forests have many special values which the forest management system and forest managers seek to balance.

They are ecologically important because they provide habitat in a range of tree sizes, large logs and trees with hollows. Their aesthetic and cultural values are recognised as being important to the Tasmanian community.

They are also a source of valuable high-quality eucalypt sawlogs and special timbers, such as myrtle and celery-top pine which is often used by craftsmen and specialist furniture makers.

Sustainable Timber Tasmania manages its forests, including old growth forests, to sustainably balance these competing values.



One million hectares of old growth forest protected in reserves.

Protection of old growth forests

Old growth forest occurs across all land tenures. Of the 1.2 million hectares of forests classified as old growth in Tasmania, 85 per cent – or over one million hectares – is permanently protected in reserves. This area exceeds the Tasmanian Government's obligation to reserve at least 60 per cent of its old growth forests.

Less than four per cent (35,700 hectares) of old growth forest is potentially available for timber production on land managed by Sustainable Timber Tasmania.

Giant trees

Some areas of old growth forest contain giant trees. Tasmania's giant trees are the tallest hardwoods in the world.

Sustainable Timber Tasmania has a Giant Tree Policy, which requires all trees over 85 metres in height or 280 cubic metres in volume to be protected.

Harvesting in old growth forests

During 2015/16, Sustainable Timber Tasmania completed its transition out of clearfelling coupes containing Old Growth (defined as those coupes with more than 25 per cent mapped old growth). From 2016/17, no coupes containing Old Growth will be clearfelled.

Into the future, small amounts of harvesting will continue in coupes containing small proportions of old growth. Sustainable Timber Tasmania needs this timber so to honour its contracts to supply high quality sawlogs and veneer logs and special timbers to local sawmills.

We use a number of methods to retain old growth values in harvested areas, including:

- A planning system that retains mature habitat across the production forest landscape;
- Using partial harvesting methods, to leave patches of standing forest in the harvesting area; and
- Using selective harvesting methods to harvest special timbers.



A Conservation Planner documenting one of the giant trees found in our forests.



Icarus Dream, 97 metres tall in the Styx Valley.