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TWO SIDES FAST FACTS

THE FACTS ABOUT PAPER PRODUCTION IN AUSTRALIA

Contrary to popular thinking, going paperless or using less paper **does not save trees.**

- Most of Australia's wood (83.4%) is harvested from planted forests.¹
- A majority (76%) of these planted forests are privately owned.²
- In Australia, 2.0 million hectares of industrial planted forests were available for commercial wood production in 2010–11, an increase from 1.8 million hectares in 2005–06.³
- When people use less paper and other forest products, forest owners may plant less trees and invest less time and money on sustainable forest management.
- Paper production and consumption helps prevent these private forests from being sold and lost to non-forest use eg. agriculture or infrastructure development.
- 'The single biggest direct cause of tropical deforestation is conversion to crop land and pasture, mainly for subsistence.'⁴
- Planted forests are essential for the transition to the green economy. Well-managed planted forests are a vital element in the global forestry mix .⁵
- Planted forests accounted for 171 million tonnes of the forest carbon stock in 2010.⁶
- The benefits of preserving and generating forest land over using land for infrastructure or agriculture include:
 - + Prevention of soil erosion
 - + Improved water quality – fighting salinity
 - + Providing habitat for native birds and wildlife
 - + Reducing the use of fertiliser and chemicals



- Using less paper has nothing to do with harvesting less trees. Despite the past five (5) years showing decline in paper use, key forest regions in Australia are harvesting more trees to produce many different products.
- The volume of logs harvested from planted forests increased by 8.6% from 18.6 million cubic metres in 2006–07 to 20.2 million metres in 2010–11. ⁶ Even if there is less virgin fibre consumption for paper – trees are still being harvested for use within the timber industry.
- Whilst it seems logical to assume going paperless equals less trees, this is not supported. In fact, studies show that in general “the global regions with the highest levels of industrial timber harvest and forest products output are also the regions with the lowest rates of deforestation.” ⁷
- Harvesting trees from native forests in Australia is NOT for the pulp and paper industry but for the timber industry to build homes, commercial buildings and general consumption products. ⁸
- Some of the residue and waste wood from harvesting native forests is used to make paper, if it were not supplied to paper producers it would likely be left on site as waste or exported. ⁸
- Currently there are around 10.6 million hectares of native and planted forests certified in Australia. This consists of 10.1 million hectares certified under the Australian Forest Certification Scheme (AFCS) and 900,000 hectares under the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC). This totals to includes about 400,000 hectares of forests certified under both schemes. ⁹
- More than half of all fibre used in Australia to make paper now comes from recycled material. Australia is one of the leading countries in the use of recovered paper for paper production. ⁹

The best way to act as an environmentally responsible company is to ensure your paper suppliers are sourcing their raw material in a local, responsible and sustainable manner.

SOURCES

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