



Australian Government

Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry  
Bureau of Rural Sciences

# Australia's PLANTATIONS

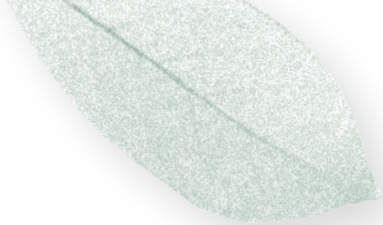
2009 INVENTORY UPDATE

## KEY POINTS

- The National Plantation Inventory provides an annual update of timber plantation areas in each state and territory to highlight trends in plantation development.
- In 2008, the total area of Australia's plantation estate increased to 1.97 million hectares, comprising about 0.95 million hectares (48%) of hardwood species, 1.01 million hectares (52%) of softwood species and a small area of mixed plantings.
- 72 319 hectares of new plantations were reported established in 2008, 20% less than in 2007. The new area comprised 66 011 hectares of hardwoods and 6 308 hectares of softwoods.
- In the past ten years the total plantation area has increased by about 55%. The increase is almost entirely hardwood plantations, the area of which nearly trebled. The softwood plantation area increased by 8%.

Further information is available at

[brs.gov.au/plantations](http://brs.gov.au/plantations)



# TOTAL ESTATE

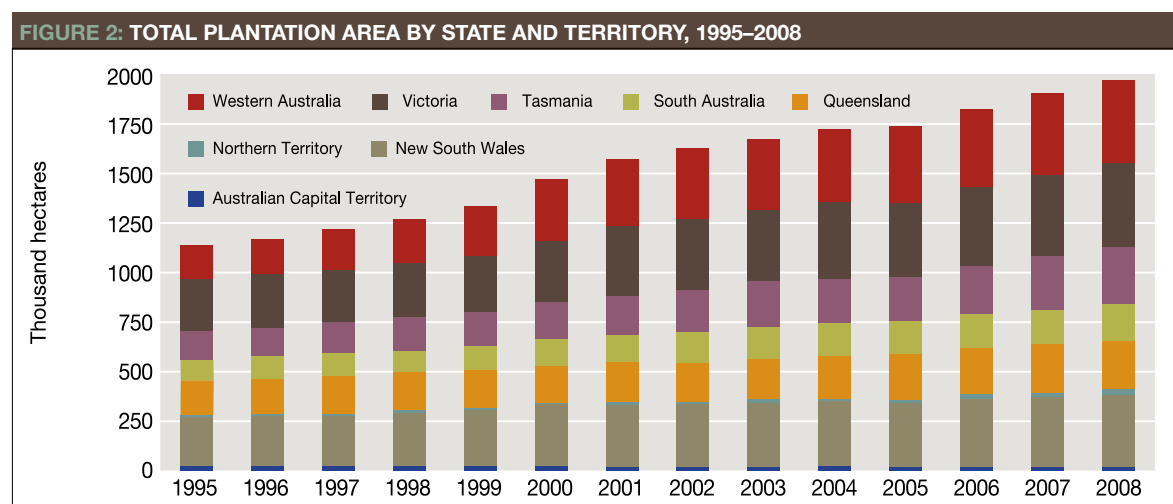
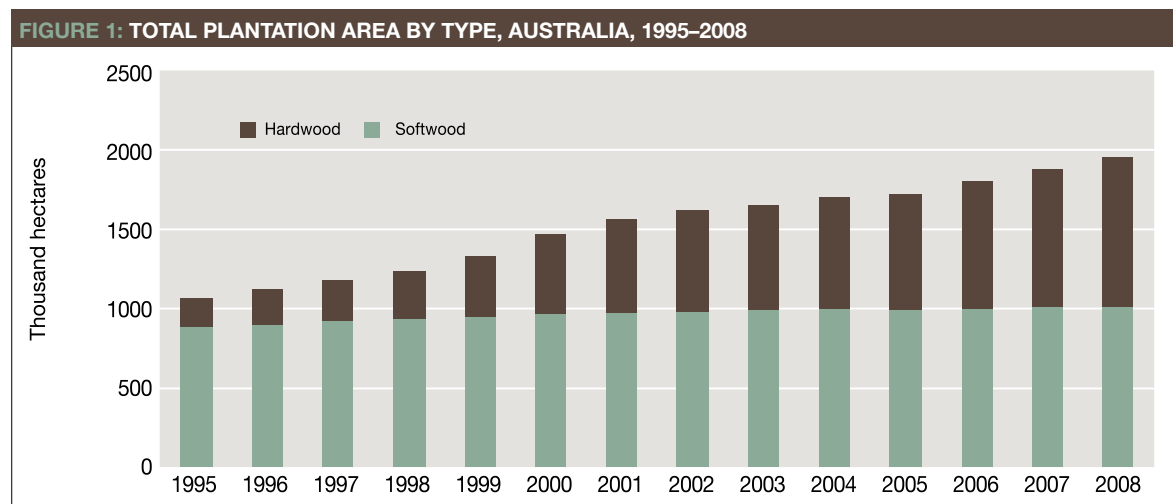
Australia's timber plantation estate continues to expand (Figures 1 and 2). In 2008, the total recorded area of timber production plantations was 1 972 535 hectares (Table 1) compared with 1 902 903 hectares in 2007. The increase of about 70 000 hectares (3.7%) results from new planting of 72 319 hectares and updated data on previously planted areas. The updated data are the result of factors including re-measurement of recently planted sites and change of land use after harvesting or wildfire.

In 2008, the total area of softwood plantations was 1 013 776 hectares, about 0.4% more than in 2007. The total area of hardwood plantations was 949 505 hectares, 7.5% more than in 2007.

Hardwoods now constitute more than 48% of all plantations, compared with 41% in 2003 and 25% in 1998.

Figure 3 shows the proportions of hardwood and softwood plantations in each state and territory in 2008.

Plantations established for wood production cover a small proportion (0.25%) of Australia's total land area and the plantation area is smaller than that of several agricultural crop and land uses (Table 2).

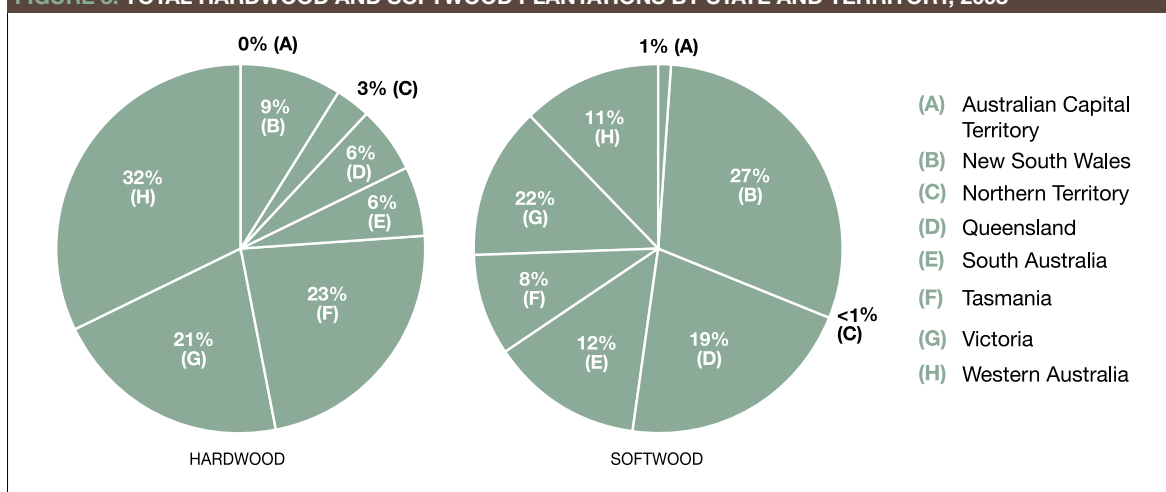


**TABLE 1: TOTAL PLANTATION AREA, BY STATE AND TERRITORY, 2008 (HECTARES)**

	Hardwood	Softwood	Other categories <sup>1</sup>	Total
Australian Capital Territory	0	7 870	0	7 870
New South Wales	81 667	285 566	2 821	370 054
Northern Territory	27 299	2 239	0	29 538
Queensland	59 298	189 191	2 108	250 597
South Australia	58 426	122 871	457	181 754
Tasmania	217 068	76 972	100	294 140
Victoria	200 739	219 910	1 463	422 112
Western Australia	305 007	109 158	2 305	416 470
<b>Total</b>	<b>949 505</b>	<b>1 013 776</b>	<b>9 254</b>	<b>1 972 535</b>
<b>Change since 2007</b>	<b>+7.5%</b>	<b>+0.4%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>+3.7%</b>

<sup>1</sup> Includes areas of mixed hardwoods and softwoods and areas for which tree species were not reported.

**FIGURE 3: TOTAL HARDWOOD AND SOFTWOOD PLANTATIONS BY STATE AND TERRITORY, 2008**



**TABLE 2: PLANTATIONS AND OTHER LAND USES, AUSTRALIA**

Land use	Area (million hectares)	Proportion of total land area (%)
Total land area	769	100
<b>Plantation forests</b>	<b>1.97</b>	<b>0.25</b>
Native forests and woodlands	147	19.2
Agricultural and horticultural crops		
- wheat	12.3	
- horticulture	5.7	
- barley	4.2	
- canola	1.2	
- others	6.0	
- Total	29.4	3.8
Grazing	385	50.0

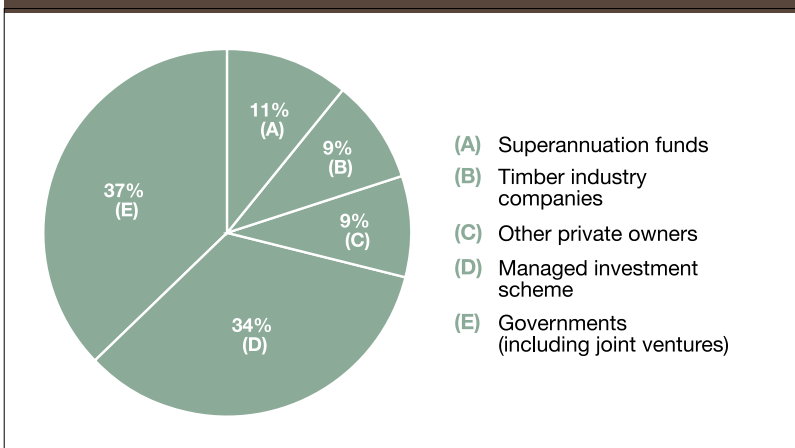
Sources: Australian Bureau of Statistics 2005–06 Agricultural Census; National Forest Inventory.

# OWNERSHIP

Public plantations now make up about 33% of the total plantation estate, private plantations 61% and jointly-owned plantations 5% (Table 3). The jointly-owned plantations include, for example, eucalypt plantations established by government agencies on farmland in New South Wales and Queensland for sawlog production and pine plantations established under salinity management programs on farmland in Western Australia. They also include some plantations established on public land using non-government sources of funding.

Figure 4 shows the total plantation area by ownership category that enables different sources of funding to be identified. The jointly owned plantations are apportioned to industry categories, leading to slightly different public and private ownership proportions than Table 3. The proportion owned by managed investment schemes increased from 33% in 2007 to 34% in 2008. The government-owned sector also increased marginally.

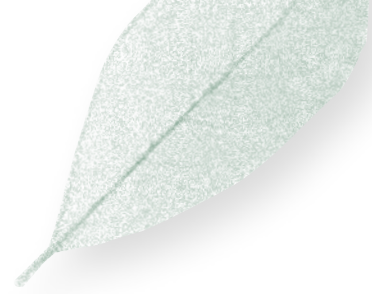
**FIGURE 4: OWNERSHIP OF THE TOTAL PLANTATION ESTATE BY INDUSTRY CATEGORY, 2008**



**TABLE 3: TOTAL PLANTATION AREA BY STATE AND TERRITORY AND TREE OWNERSHIP CLASS, 2008 (HECTARES)**

State	Public	Private	Joint <sup>1</sup>	Total
Western Australia	81 035	302 995	32 439	416 470
Northern Territory	0	29 538	0	29 538
South Australia	86 035	95 719	0	181 754
Queensland	197 074	50 752	2 771	250 597
New South Wales	246 815	118 434	4 805	370 054
Australian Capital Territory	7 870	0	0	7 870
Victoria	4 352	410 719	7 040	422 112
Tasmania	31 186	203 512	59 443	294 140
<b>Total</b>	<b>654 368</b> <b>33.2%</b>	<b>1 211 669</b> <b>61.4%</b>	<b>106 498</b> <b>5.4%</b>	<b>1 972 535</b>

<sup>1</sup> This includes some small areas for which ownership details were not reported.



# NATIONAL PLANTATION INVENTORY REGIONS

The National Plantation Inventory (NPI) regions are geographic groupings based mainly on supply of timber to industries. Table 4 and Figure 5 show that, in 2008, Western Australia (which is a single NPI region) had about 21% of the total plantation estate, including 32% of all hardwoods. The Green Triangle had the next largest proportion with 17% (17% of all hardwoods and 16% of all softwoods). The Murray Valley had 18% of the total softwood estate, the highest proportion of any NPI region.

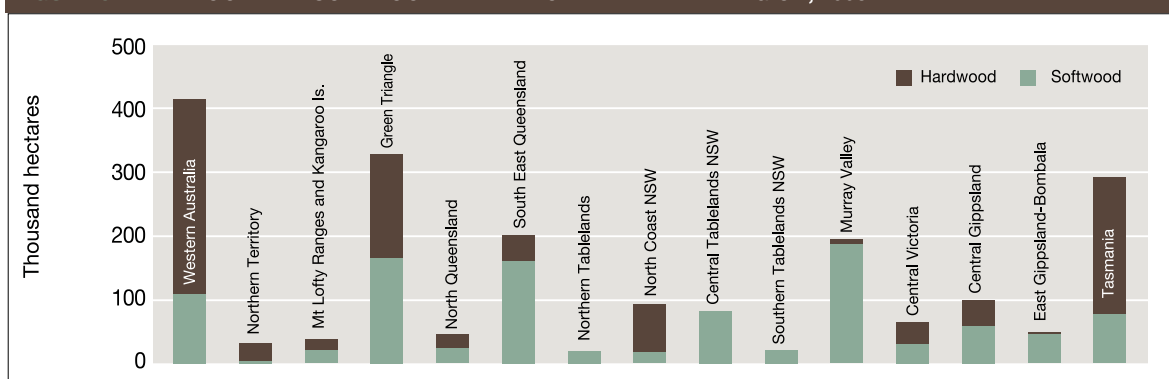
**TABLE 4: TOTAL PLANTATION AREA BY NPI REGION, 2008 (HECTARES)**

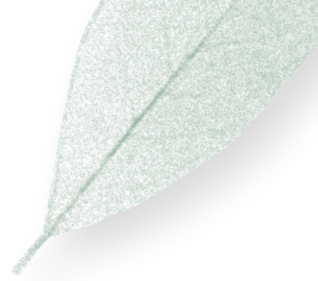
Region <sup>1</sup>	Hardwoods	Softwoods	Other categories <sup>2</sup>	Total
Western Australia	305 007	109 158	2 305	416 470
Northern Territory	27 299	2 239	0	29 538
Mount Lofty Ranges and Kangaroo Is.	17 653	19 445	144	37 242
Green Triangle	162 357	166 389	2 040	330 786
North Queensland	18 595	25 368	1 000	44 963
South East Queensland	40 602	161 410	1 108	203 120
Northern Tablelands	1 224	14 869	314	16 407
North Coast New South Wales	76 267	16 069	984	93 320
Central Tablelands New South Wales	984	80 274	0	81 258
Southern Tablelands New South Wales	416	21 602	1	22 019
Murray Valley	7 018	187 272	124	194 414
Central Victoria	31 620	31 311	40	62 971
Central Gippsland	39 066	58 803	828	98 697
East Gippsland-Bombala	4 330	42 594	266	47 190
Tasmania	217 068	76 972	100	294 140
<b>Total</b>	<b>949 505</b>	<b>1 013 776</b>	<b>9 254</b>	<b>1 972 535</b>

1 If the exact location of plantations is not known, in some cases it is difficult to assign them to specific regions. The data presented here are a reliable guide but might be revised later. The boundaries for these regions are shown in the report 'Australia's Plantations 2006'.

2 Includes areas of mixed hardwoods and softwoods and those for which tree species were not reported.

**FIGURE 5: HARDWOOD AND SOFTWOOD PLANTATION AREA BY NPI REGION, 2008**





# NEW PLANTATIONS

New plantations are those established on land not previously used for plantation forestry. A total of 72 319 hectares were reported established in 2008 (Table 5), about 20% less than in 2007. This is the first decline in the new area reported since 2003 (Figure 6). Managed investment schemes funded about 81% of the new plantations in 2008, similar to the average for the previous five years. Government agencies planting on public land and in joint ventures on private land established 14%. Timber industry companies and other private owners established the remaining 5%.

Tasmania had the largest area of new plantations, with nearly 27% of the national total. New South

Wales, Queensland, Victoria and Western Australia had 15–17% of the remainder each. The Northern Territory and South Australia had about 5% each.

Continuing the trend from the 1990s, most (86%) new plantations established in 2008 are privately owned. Ninety-one percent are hardwoods, most of which are short rotation crops managed primarily for pulpwood production. Softwood plantations established by a range of public and private sector organisations and companies accounted for the remaining 9% of new area planted in 2008. All of the softwood plantations are managed for sawlog production.

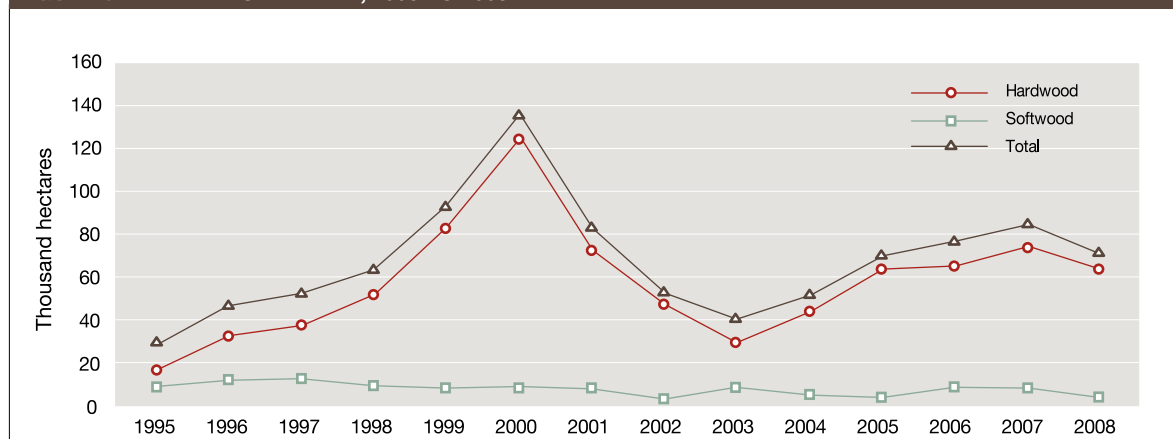
**TABLE 5: NEW AREAS BY STATE AND TERRITORY, 2008 (HECTARES)**

	Public		Private		Joint		Total	
	HW	SW	HW	SW	HW	SW	HW	SW
New South Wales	39	478	11 012	443	0	0	11 051	921
Northern Territory	0	0	3 610	0	0	0	3 610	0
Queensland	1 366	440	8 346	0	140	0	9 852	440
South Australia	128	0	3 325	0	0	0	3 453	0
Tasmania	2 325	0	14 981	1 967	694	0	18 000	1 967
Victoria	998	0	8 755	484	0	0	9 753	484
Western Australia	17	15	9 139	0	1 137	2 481	10 293	2 496
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>4 872</b>	<b>933</b>	<b>59 168</b>	<b>2 894</b>	<b>1 971</b>	<b>2 481</b>	<b>66 011</b>	<b>6 308</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>5 806</b>		<b>62 062</b>		<b>4 452</b>		<b>72 319</b>	
<b>Proportion of Total</b>	<b>8%</b>		<b>86%</b>		<b>6%</b>			

No new plantations were established in the Australian Capital Territory.

'Public' comprises plantations owned by governments; 'Private' comprises plantations owned by superannuation funds, timber industry companies, managed investment schemes and other private owners; 'Joint' comprises plantations owned jointly by public and private entities.

**FIGURE 6: NEW AREAS PLANTED, 1995 TO 2008**



# REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

## **Bureau of Rural Sciences publications:**

Australia's Plantations 2006  
Australia's Plantation Log Supply 2005–2049  
Australia's State of the Forests Report 2008  
Australian forest profiles – information sheet series of eight titles: Acacia, Callitris, Casuarina, Eucalypts, Mangroves, Melaleuca, Rainforest and Plantations; plus a poster: Australia's forests

## **Bureau of Rural Sciences publications can be obtained from:**

P: 1800 020 157 F: 02 6272 2330  
E: salesbrs@brs.gov.au  
www.brs.gov.au/plantations

## **NATIONAL PLANTATION INVENTORY**

*The National Plantation Inventory (NPI), managed by the Bureau of Rural Sciences (BRS) as part of the National Forest Inventory, has reported on Australia's timber plantations since 1997. It publishes annual updates of the national plantation resource, presenting information on total plantation area, new planting and ownership to assist strategic forest industry planning and decision-making.*

*Data for NPI updates are collected by a survey of growers, grower representatives and state and territory agencies. The survey records the total plantation estate each year and plantations newly established on land that had not previously been used for plantations. Plantations are added if they had not previously been recorded, revised if earlier data were in error and deleted if the plantations have been permanently removed. A substantial area of plantations is harvested each year and some areas are destroyed. Replanting might not take place for some time after harvesting but, unless advised of a change in land use, the NPI records such fallow land as plantation. Although all care is taken to reconcile data, inconsistencies in the area reported from year to year are likely to occur.*

*Individual grower information submitted to the NPI is confidential. For reporting purposes, data from individual growers are aggregated within regions or states and territories and are not provided individually to other parties without the consent of the data owner.*

*The data presented here do not capture all small-scale, farm forestry planting, although they do include those farm forests reported in the BRS publication Australia's Plantations 2006.*

*All values in the tables have been rounded hence column and row totals may not tally exactly.*

## **PREFERRED WAY TO CITE**

### **THIS PUBLICATION**

Gavran, M. and Parsons, M. 2009. *Australia's Plantations 2009 Inventory Update*, National Forest Inventory, Bureau of Rural Sciences, Canberra.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The National Forest Inventory gratefully acknowledges the assistance and cooperation of plantation growers and grower representatives who contributed data for this report.

## **© Commonwealth of Australia 2009**

This work is copyright. Apart from any use as permitted under the *Copyright Act 1968*, no part may be reproduced by any process without prior written permission from the Commonwealth. Requests and inquiries concerning reproduction and rights should be addressed to the Commonwealth Copyright Administration, Attorney-General's Department, Robert Garran Offices, National Circuit, Barton ACT 2600 or posted at [www.ag.gov.au/cca](http://www.ag.gov.au/cca).

ISBN: 978 1 921192 33 3

## **DISCLAIMER**

The Commonwealth of Australia acting through the Bureau of Rural Sciences has exercised due care and skill in the preparation and compilation of the information and data set out in this publication. Notwithstanding, the Bureau of Rural Sciences, its employees and advisers disclaim all liability, including liability for negligence, for any loss, damage, injury, expense or cost incurred by any person as a result of accessing, using or relying on any of the information or data set out in this publication to the maximum extent permitted by law.

# CONTACT DETAILS

**National Forest Inventory  
Bureau of Rural Sciences**

GPO Box 858, Canberra ACT 2601  
P: 02 6272 4034 E: [nfi.info@brs.gov.au](mailto:nfi.info@brs.gov.au)  
[www.brs.gov.au/plantations](http://www.brs.gov.au/plantations)

[www.brs.gov.au/plantations](http://www.brs.gov.au/plantations)

