

HOW MUCH WOOD DO WE USE?

by P. Barrett

Before we grab a "crystal ball" and start forecasting the future consumption of wood and wood products for any particular country or state, it is necessary to have a few basic facts on which to work. Some of these facts include total sawlog production and the per capita consumption of the various categories of processed wood. Having observed trends in production and consumption over the years it is then time to make projections as to the rate of increase in the population, future trends in consumption etc., and so finish up with an "educated guess" on total timber requirements by say, the year 2,000 A.D.

These noted are intended to provide information for the last five years, by States of the Commonwealth, of -

- (1) Total Sawlog Production
- (2) Proportion of Sawlogs from Crown Land
- (3) Per capita figure for -

(a) Sawnwood Availability which includes the sawn equivalent of plywood and veneer but excludes sawn sleepers.

(b) Plywood Distribution - 3/16" basis.

(c) Hard Fibreboard Distribution - irrespective of thickness.

(d) Particle Board Distribution - irrespective of thickness.

(e) Paper and Paper Products Availability.

(4) Production of Railway Sleepers.

The figures quoted were obtained from the 1964 Forestry and Timber Bureau Report and Timber Supply Reviews.

(1) TOTAL SAWLOG PRODUCTION

The figures in Table 1 are for removals of sawlogs, peeler logs and logs for sawn sleepers from both Crown Land and Private Property.

Table 1 - Total Sawlog Volume
(Millions of Cubic Feet G.T.V.)

State	1960-61	1961-62	1962-63	1963-64*	1964-65*
N.S.W.	76.5	68.6	75.5	81.7	N.A.
Vic.	65.6	62.3	65.2	71.7	"
Qld.	54.3	46.2	50.1	53.0	"
W.A.	48.6	49.0	48.5	49.7	51.0
Tas.	35.2	31.4	34.4	35.5	N.A.
S.A.	21.4	22.4	21.6	22.5	"
A.C.T. + N.T.	1.0	1.0	1.1	1.3	"
Total	302.6	280.9	296.5	315.4	N.A.

* Provisional

It will be noticed in the above table, and in other tables to follow, how the "credit squeeze" reduced production in 1961/62. South Australia and Western Australia were the only States unaffected.

(2) PROPORTION OF SAWLOGS FROM CROWN LAND

Table 2 gives the percentage, by volume, of sawlogs obtained from Crown Land. It will be observed that Victoria and Western Australia rely most on Crown Land timber while Queensland obtains about half its volume from private property. It is also noticeable that the proportion of logs from Crown Land tends to increase in most States.

Table 2 - Percentage Log Removals From Crown Land

State	1960-61	1961-62	1962-63	1963-64 ^o	1964-65 ^o
Vic.	78.8	78.5	79.5	81.2	N.A.
W.A.	77.7	80.0	79.7	79.4	80.8*
S.A.	67.9	65.2	74.9	71.7	N.A.
Tas.	67.3	67.3	70.7	71.1	71.7*
N.S.W.	58.8	61.9	64.1	64.7	N.A.
Qld.	47.1	47.0	46.5	54.6	"
A.C.T. + N.T.	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	"
Total	65.8	67.3	68.7	70.4	N.A.

^o Provisional

*From Annual Report

(3) PER CAPITA "CONSUMPTION"

As the quantity of stocks on hand for some materials, before and after a given period, may not be easily obtained, the word "consumption" is commonly replaced by "availability" or "distribution".

(a) Sawnwood Availability

The per capita figures in Table 3 include sawnwood and the sawn equivalent of plywood and veneer but excludes sawn sleepers.

Table 3 - Sawnwood Availability
(Per capita - super feet)

State	1960-61	1961-62	1962-63	1963-64 ^o	1964-65 ^o
Tas.	264.0	254.9	263.0	248.4	250.6
S.A.	155.0	155.9	144.3	175.2	183.7
Qld.	190.7	153.3	154.4	172.9	171.8
W.A.	163.5	163.4	151.4	164.7	172.4
Vic.	163.5	143.1	146.8	144.3	146.2
N.S.W.	142.4	125.0	128.3	139.6	144.8
* Total	162.7	144.1	145.5	154.4	157.9

*Includes A.C.T. & N.T.

^o Provisional

It is of interest that the trade is gradually recovering from the setback occasioned by the "credit squeeze". However, Tasmania, Queensland and Victoria are still well below their 1960-61 figure, but South Australia has improved its trade quite sharply over the past two years. On a per capita basis, Tasmania is still by far the greatest consumer of sawnwood.

(b) Plywood Distribution

Except for the Northern Territory, for which complete figures are not available, Western Australia leads the States in the per capita use of plywood. The industry does not appear to show the same recovery as sawnwood, possibly as a result of the great expansion in the production of particle board (see Table 6).

Table 4 - Plywood Availability
(Per capita - Sq.Ft. 3/16" basis)

State	1960-61	1961-62	1962-63	1963-64 ^b	1964-65 ^b
W.A.	31.9	27.3	29.3	28.3	32.2
S.A.	28.9	25.7	25.7	26.0	29.1
N.S.W.	26.8	24.1	22.6	22.7	21.2
Vic.	20.6	18.6	18.3	17.9	20.4
Qld.	25.4	17.7	15.0	16.4	16.0
Tas.	15.0	10.8	9.1	13.4	13.2
* Total	24.4	22.0	20.4	21.3	21.5

*Includes A.C.T. & N.T.

^b Provisional

(c) Hard Fibreboard Distribution

The per capita figures are given in square feet, irrespective of thickness.

This industry, which competes with plywood and more recently, particle board, does not appear to be increasing its per capita distribution. A feature of Table 5 is the low usage of this material in Western Australia.

Table 5 - Hardboard Distribution
(Per capita - Sq. Feet)

State	1960-61	1961-62	1962-63	1963-64 ^b	1964-65 ^b
Qld.	32.3	32.8	33.7	37.4	35.8
S.A.	20.0	19.4	22.3	25.3	27.2
Tas.	24.9	24.3	23.9	23.1	24.1
N.S.W.	21.7	22.5	21.6	24.2	24.8
Vic.	22.7	22.8	23.8	24.4	24.0
W.A.	8.6	7.4	7.8	7.6	8.6
* Total	25.6	23.6	24.9	27.2	25.2

* Includes A.C.T. & N.T.

^b Provisional

(d) Particle Board Distribution

The per capita figures are given in square feet, irrespective of thickness.

Table 6 clearly shows the rapid expansion of the particle board industry over the last five years. The per capita distribution for the Commonwealth has increased more than six-fold and all States share in the expanded use of the material.

Table 6 - Particle Board Distribution
(Per capita - Sq. Feet)

State	1960-61	1961-62	1962-63	1963-64 ^p	1964-65 ^p
S.A.	0.6	1.7	2.5	3.5	5.6
N.S.W.	0.8	1.2	2.0	3.0	4.9
Vic.	0.7	1.2	2.0	2.6	4.6
Qld.	0.5	0.9	1.2	2.0	3.5
W.A.	0.5	0.9	1.4	2.0	3.4
Tas.	0.1	0.3	0.3	1.4	2.4
* Total	0.7	1.2	1.8	3.0	4.5

* Includes A.C.T. & N.T.

^p Provisional

(e) Availability of Paper and Paper Products

Per capita figures are given in pounds and refer only to Australia as a whole. To show the increase in usage the figures for 1938-39 are given for comparison.

Table 7 - Paper and Paper Products Availability
(per capita - Lb.)

Category	1938-39	1960-61	1961-62	1962-63	1963-64*
Newsprint	57.5	77.0	58.3	62.8	69.8
Printing & Writing	15.8	31.2	21.0	29.3	28.6
Other Paper	18.1	40.9	41.3	42.7	46.3
Paperboard	21.3	53.3	47.4	55.1	58.2
Total	112.7	202.4	168.0	189.9	202.9

* Provisional

(4) PRODUCTION OF RAILWAY SLEEPERS

Although this item does not come under per capita usage it is thought that the information will be of general interest, particularly as West Australian sleepers are well known throughout many countries of the world.

Hewn sleepers are shown as a percentage under the total for each State. The category "Hewn" is used to refer to sleepers produced within the forest, but it should be noted that most sleepers included in this category are now produced within the forest by portable powered circular saws.

Figures for 1938-39 are shown for comparison.

Table 8 - Production of Railway Sleepers
(Millions of Super Feet)

	1938-39	1960-61	1961-62	1962-63	1963-64*
N.S.W.	30.2	50.3	65.1	48.6	41.6
Hewn %	99	49	50	50	54
W.A.	39.4	39.9	47.2	45.1	43.6
Hewn %	48	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Qld.	17.6	28.2	22.2	27.4	38.2
Hewn %	51	2	2	3	3
Vic.	9.1	29.9	23.2	21.8	25.7
Hewn %	81	79	86	76	73
Tas.	3.0	3.8	3.8	3.4	3.6
Hewn %	100	73	79	83	85
S.A.	6.6	1.2	1.9	1.9	1.8
Hewn %	70	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Total	105.9	153.3	163.4	148.3	154.6
Hewn %	69	34	36	30	29

* Provisional

"Hewn" sleepers continue to represent about half of the sleeper production for New South Wales, while the figure for both Victoria and Tasmania would be about 80%. Western Australia and South Australia have long since ceased the production of "hewn" sleepers and only very small quantities are supplied in Queensland.

In view of the very high demand over the past 18 months for sleepers for the broad-gauge link to Kalgoorlie and the complex of iron ore railroads in the North-West, the last figures for production in W.A. are of interest.

1964-65 = 50.4 million su.ft.

1965 = 60.1 " " (Calendar year)

Source : Cwlth Statistician - Monthly Returns.

It is hoped that the foregoing set of tables will serve as a useful reference to those interested in wood use in Australia and particularly Western Australia.