



paper plants the planet's trees

Fact: Largely because of demand for paper, Australia's forestry plantations have grown by over 50% in the last decade – to over 2 million hectares!

A discussion paper at the FAO, the global agency for forests and agriculture, noted:

The public perception is that the more paper and wood products are consumed, the more deforestation is going to take place. This is not true in many cases.¹

In its five-yearly forest resources assessment, the FAO stated:

Large scale planting is significantly reducing net loss of forests globally. The area of planted forest is now 7% of the world's total forest area.²

The Australian Government's five yearly 'State of the Forests Report' shows:³

- In 2009, the total area of Australia's plantation estate increased to 2.02 million hectares from 1.34 million hectares 10 years ago, an increase of 51%
- Hardwood plantations have experienced significant expansion. Almost all of Australia's hardwood plantations have been grown to make paper
- Plantations for making paper now constitute around 49% of all plantations, compared with 29% in 1994⁴
- Australia has 147.4 million hectares of native forests, almost exactly the same as a decade ago, with more and more being placed into permanent reserves.

So, in summary:

	Softwood plantations	Hardwood plantations	Total
1999	0.94 million hectares	0.4 million hectares	1.35 million
2009	1.02	0.99	2.02 million
Growth	0.08	0.59	0.67 million
Decadal growth (%)	8%	150%	51%

As can be seen, demand for paper has contributed the vast bulk of Australia's extraordinary plantation growth (hardwood plantations) over the past decade.

1. FAO Advisory Committee on Paper and Wood Products, Shanghai 6/6/2007. ('Public Perception of Forestry Industry and the Environment.')

2. FAO's global five-yearly Forest Resources Assessment, 2010.

3. State of Forests Report, 2008, Australian Government

4. Australia's Plantations, 2010 Inventory Update, BRS/ABARE, Australian Government (additional reference document)