

9.7 WOOD FIRST POLICY

Date Adopted	Next Review	Officer Responsible
1 April 2015	1 February 2017	Senior Strategic Advisor, Economic Development

Policy Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the character of the Rotorua District reflects our history and recognizes the importance of the forestry sector to our local economy. This will be achieved by:

1. Facilitating and encouraging the use of wood as a preferred, sustainable, building material for all projects in the district.
2. Requiring that wood is used in council projects.
3. Actively supporting and advocating for wood and the wood industry, locally, regionally and at a national level.

Policy:

Background

Rotorua sits at the heart of New Zealand's forestry industry. This policy is an acknowledgement of the importance of the forestry and wood processing industries to the district's economy. The source for the following information is *Shaping a Wood First Policy for the Rotorua District Council, 2014*.

- 1 New Zealand's forests are man-made, sustainably grown and renewable wood crops.
- 2 Rotorua is the founding city of the World's Plantation Forest Industry. The whole concept of growing wood crops was developed in Rotorua in the early 20th century and is now practiced world-wide.
- 3 Rotorua remains the epicentre of the New Zealand Forest and Wood industry to this day. Approximately 40% of New Zealand's wood is harvested within a 100 Km radius of Rotorua.
- 4 The wider Forest and Wood industry is the largest direct employer in Rotorua. Forestry and Logging together with Wood Product Manufacturing contribute about 9% of Rotorua's GDP. Additionally, there is a huge spinoff of supporting businesses that service the Forest and Wood Industry within Rotorua.

- 5 Using wood helps to limit climate change, because wood is a natural carbon sink. Every tonne of wood material used in construction saves about 5.7 tonnes of carbon dioxide from being released into the atmosphere.
- 6 Wood is strong, lightweight and flexible.
- 7 Rotorua is a seismically active area and wood building systems have been proven to be seismically safe, even in severe earthquakes.
- 8 Wood requires less energy to manufacture than any other building material.
- 9 Wood is cost-effective, visually appealing, warm and inviting.
- 10 Wood buildings are easy to renovate, expand and adapt to changing uses.

Policy Outcomes

A Wood First focus has the potential to impact positively on each of councils' *Rotorua 2030* goals. In terms of the *2016 Priorities*, Wood First has been identified as a flagship project that will contribute towards the development of our district's economic base.

RLC will lead by example by:

- Promoting RLC as a Wood First council.
- Developing an assessment toolkit for all council led building projects to see how wood might be incorporated as a component in the design.
- Encouraging contractors to include wood options in their proposals to council.

RLC will engage with and support the local forestry, wood products and building industries by:

- Acting as a facilitator to encourage growth and investment in the local forestry and wood products industry, including the service industries that support it.
- Participating in efforts to see Rotorua recognised as a Centre of Excellence for the forestry and wood products sector.
- Taking an ambassadorial role to encourage excellence in timber architecture and design.

RLC will commit to being an advocate for the forestry industry at a local, regional and national level by:

- Supporting other councils to adopt Wood First practices and policies.
- Acting as a leader in encouraging councils to link together to support the forestry industry.
- Taking a lead role in working with central government and its agencies to support and grow the forestry sector.

Management

Grow Rotorua has led the development of the policy and action plan and will continue to assist with the implementation of the action plan to February 2017.

The policy will be promoted and actioned within the Rotorua community via the council portfolios.

Council will maintain processes, as described via the Wood First Action Plan. Elected members and managers will be kept informed of activities occurring under the umbrella of this policy.

Policy mechanism

The policy will be implemented as described in the Wood First Action Plan.

Accountability/monitoring

The Strategy and Partnership Group is responsible for the implementation of the policy. Progress will be monitored annually and reported to elected members.