

Wood Processors and Manufacturers Association of NZ 2026 General Election Manifesto

*“We are the industry voice advocating for wood as the key
to New Zealand’s economic and sustainable future”*

Who we are

The Wood Processors and Manufacturers Association of NZ (WPMA) is a national, voluntary industry body representing companies that convert harvested logs into finished wood products such as sawn timber, pulp, panels, laminated products, mouldings, engineered wood, and emerging bio-forest product solutions. WPMA supports a sector employing more than 38,000 direct staff, mostly in the regions. Our members export over \$3.2 billion in value added wood products and generate around \$2 billion in domestic wood sales each year.

Context

The world is entering a period of softwood fibre shortage, and New Zealand is one of the few countries with a surplus and a sustainable forestry sector. This creates a significant opportunity that we should move quickly to capitalise on. A thriving, innovative wood processing and manufacturing sector enables our industry to create high-value jobs, strengthen regional communities, reduce emissions, and build a more resilient, prosperous New Zealand. Our sector is the key to increasing the value of wood exports from our forests.

Looking ahead to the 2026 general election, WPMA calls on the new Government to deliver:

A national commitment to supporting value-added wood processing and manufacturing

- Prioritise policies that shift New Zealand from exporting raw logs to high-value wood products.
- Develop regulatory settings that encourage investment, innovation, and long-term planning.
- Framing wood processing as critical to economic recovery and regional employment.
- Support investment in forest bio-products such as biofuels, biomaterials, and wood-based chemicals.
- Establish procedures for the inspection of imported timber products to ensure that they meet New Zealand performance, sustainability, and legality requirements.

Market access and trade

- Support trade policies that open markets for high-value wood products.
- Provide support to programmes such as the Value-Added Wood Exports Growth Accelerator, which aim to increase the value of wood exports and investment in domestic processing to grow our sector.
- Provide support to removing trade barriers that hinder market growth.
- Ratification and enforcement of the New Zealand-India Free Trade Agreement.

Domestic infrastructure that enables industry growth

- Improve road, rail, ports and coastal shipping networks to reduce transport bottlenecks and costs.
- Support regional infrastructure investment in processing hubs and industrial zones.
- Ensure environmental regulations are effective, consistent, and workable for processors and manufacturers, and decisions are made in a timely manner.
- Ensuring the long-term supply of affordable energy and fuel to enable future industry growth.
- Continue with and expand the accelerated depreciation schedule introduced within the 'Investment Boost' tax policy.

Timber as a national building and construction solution

- Provide support for timber-option policies in public and private construction.
- Support government procurement that considers locally processed, low-carbon timber products.
- Promote mass timber as a climate and earthquake -friendly alternative to steel and concrete in mid-rise and commercial buildings.
- Support building code modernisation to enable innovation and reduce barriers to timber adoption.

Workforce development and skills for the future

- Develop in cohesion with industry long-term vocational training and apprenticeships in wood processing and manufacturing.
- Support immigration settings that address critical skill shortages while growing domestic talent.
- Promote safe, modern workplaces through industry-government collaboration.

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