

Jarrimber Submission

Jarrimber is a Western Australian business that was established over 15 years ago by Todd Smith. Todd is in partnership with Joe Furfaro.

Jarrimber manufactures quality solid hard timber furniture and custom cabinetry from new and recycled Jarrah, Marri and Tasmanian Oak timber in Osborne Park in Perth, where it also has a large showroom.

Jarrimber uses high grade timber and hand crafts furniture to a high quality. The business employs nine staff including two apprentices undertaking their Certificate III in Cabinet Making under the watchful eye of a master tradesperson. It has always engaged apprentices, and will engage more when the current ones complete their tenure.

Jarrimber does some “on-site” construction work in the form of cabinet and bathroom installations in new homes and for residential renovations. It also does some onsite commercial cabinetry work for businesses.

Jarrimber is not currently considered a part of WA’s building and construction industry as the work is not considered to meet the definition of ‘construction industry’ in the *Building and Construction Industry Training Fund and Levy Collection Act 1990* (WA) and is not therefore eligible for Construction Training Fund (CTF) funding through employer grants, for engaging an apprentice, or other CTF subsidies such as supplementary skills training funding or any apprentice allowances.

In September 2021, the McGowan Government made a historic decision to protect WA’s native forests and end logging from 2024.

The impact of this decision on companies like Jarrimber means they will need to diversify their business model and deliver new products using new technologies and materials to sustain their business and their workforce.

In October 2023, the State Government announced that eligible small businesses can now apply for a Small Business Development and Diversification Grant to help businesses diversify and invest in job creation. The program provides grants of up to \$400,000 to businesses with a demonstrated reliance on the native forest industry. Eligible businesses must demonstrate that 50% of their turnover is derived from native forestry or 50% of a business model is focused on servicing the industry.

Jarrimber has applied twice for these grants and was unsuccessful both times in securing grant monies.

Jarrimber is considering diversifying its business into on-site cabinet making and installation, and timber flooring installation in the residential housing sector, using what is left of its stock of hardwood and possibly move into imported timber from offshore or other renewable timber grown here in Australia.

Further engagement of apprentices is directly linked to market demand and business viability for Jarrimber who are compelled to diversify into activity in the residential construction sector in an ‘offsite’ capacity.

A change to the definition of 'construction industry' in the Act to include other methods of construction, would go some way to addressing the eligibility requirements of Jarrimber apprentices and continue to make taking on an apprentice a viable business decision for the company.

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Todd Smith

Joe Furfaro