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TIMBER QUEENSLAND MEDIA RELEASE

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TIMBER CRISIS: LNP acts while Labor just talks

Thousands of displaced timber workers will look to the LNP for a measure of hope to save their industry from going under says peak industry body Timber Queensland.

Timber Queensland's CEO Rod McInnes said investment is at a standstill in Queensland's \$2.4bn per annum timber industry and jobs are being shed as the industry reels from the effects of the global financial crisis and the corporate thuggery of the Bligh Government's wholly-owned plantation business – Forestry Plantations Queensland (FPQ).

"FPQ is a wholly Government owned corporation who is using it's monopoly supply power to ramp up royalties and refusing to allow those royalty rates to be arbitrated, they are withdrawing contracts at whim and providing no commitment to long term supply," said Rod McInnes.

"There is a simple way to halt this untenable situation and help prevent timber job losses, but at this stage the LNP are the only party to have made a solid commitment to solve the problem," he said.

"Responsible Labor Ministers are ducking their responsibilities saying they can't interfere in the business. Well who can? Every business has to be responsible to someone. This rogue business is thumbing its nose at everyone, including the Premier, whilst presiding over a billion dollars of publicly owned plantation assets with no accountability," he said.

"At least the LNP has agreed to establish a tribunal to let an umpire decide the appropriate royalty. All we've had from the Government is a commitment to discuss the issues if re-elected. Whilst that commitment is appreciated, we've been discussing those matters for the last two years and **nothing has changed**.

"Unless there is a serious commitment otherwise, a re-elected Bligh Government is unlikely to change anything ensuring thousands of timber jobs are at risk, as businesses downsize their Queensland operations and Queensland's timber needs will come from other countries and jurisdictions some with forest environment practices much worse than ours.

"It's time the Bligh Government showed some ticker by committing to these simple requests to maintain our industry if re-elected – after all its not going to cost anything – just add more jobs and economic value to Queensland.

"We need a commitment to arbitrate price in royalty disputes, long term supply contracts to underpin existing and new investment and a clear Government plan to maximise Queensland's self-sufficiency in timber needs adding economic value and more jobs in rural and regional Queensland," he said.

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