

Timber recycles carbon

TIMBER QUEENSLAND MEDIA RELEASE



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Queensland's plantation softwood industry gearing up for the future

With long-term demand for renewable timber products predicted to rise, Queensland's softwood plantation timber growers and manufacturers are ramping up planting and production capability for the future.

Peak industry body Timber Queensland's CEO Mick Stephens said investment in greater operational capability in forestry and timber processing and manufacturing was taking place to position the industry more strongly to meet this demand.

"Despite the current challenges of COVID-19, and the impacts of the recent bushfires in New South Wales, we are pleased that major industry players are looking to the future with new and planned investment in Queensland which will grow local business and jobs in the future."

The largest single grower, HQPlantations is undertaking a significant planting program of 6,400 hectares, across both their Southern Pine and Araucaria plantations to maximise timber production.

HQPlantation's CEO Jeremy Callachor said the company is also investing to protect forest habitats and timber production from wildfire.

"This year we plan to undertake around 17,000 hectares of hazard reduction burning and will invest \$2.8 million in six new fire tankers and commence a three-year radio network upgrade at a cost of \$5 million," said Mr Callachor.

"We're also continuing investment in research, development and extension programs in silviculture and tree breeding to enhance forest productivity and improve fibre quality for the market," he said.

In addition, AKD Softwood has growth and investment plans for their Caboolture sawmill that will double log intake after recently recommencing operations after a brief closure period due to a storage shed fire.

"AKD are incredibly proud of the team that have worked hard together to get us to this point, and they will now lead us through this period of growth", commented AKD CEO Shane Vicary.

"Key investment in additional processing capacity and working collaboratively with HQPlantations secures current jobs as well as provide additional permanent roles," said Mr Vicary.

"We plan to double the volume of timber, providing security of supply and by investing in a new Continuous Drying Kiln to lift drying capacity we're producing a stable and consistent product for the market," he said.

Responding to growing demand for engineered wood products was the driver behind Hyne Timber's new \$23 million glue laminated timber plant located in Maryborough. This facility will sustain 40 jobs once fully operational and generated 80 jobs during construction, including the engagement of 40 local contractors worth over \$5 million to the local economy.

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Hyne Timber CEO, Jon Kleinschmidt said the support of the Queensland Government's Jobs and Regional Growth Fund not only enabled the establishment of the new plant, but has secured regional jobs for years to come.

"This new plant delivers a 400% expansion on existing capability with all the feedstock coming from our own secure supply being our own Mill in the Tuan Forest near Maryborough which employs a further 200 people," said Mr Kleinschmidt.

Mick Stephens said HQPlantations, AKD Softwood and Hyne Timber's high-profile innovations are just part of the many Queensland forest and timber industry businesses that deliver over \$3 billion to the state economy and support almost 25,000 jobs.

"We are excited by these opportunities and Timber Queensland will shortly be releasing its policy platform as part of the upcoming state election, which will outline key Government settings that can grow this important regional industry further", he said.

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