

TIMBER QUEENSLAND MEDIA RELEASE

Sustainability to be our competitive advantage

Timber Queensland breaks new ground with sustainability & climate change commitments

The Queensland timber industry today announced new commitments that set it apart from traditional forest industry thinking. Timber Queensland said it had decided to embrace the community's increasing expectation that business go 'beyond sustainability' by enhancing rather than simply maintaining the capacity of future generations to meet their needs.

Chief Executive, Rod McInnes said that, given the large projected increases in Queensland's population and demand for resources, any industry that wanted a long term future had to plan to enhance the capacity of future generations. He said that along with climate change, sustainable resource production and use were the biggest sustainability challenges facing the state,

"Another 500,000m³ of additional timber will be required in Queensland by 2020 to meet projected demand, yet there is understandable concern to extend greater protection for Queensland's forest estate, particularly state forests. So while new plantations and increased timber recycling are helping to meet spiralling demand, native forest resources are shrinking and we are becoming ever more depending on imports—much of it of suspicious origin."

"Meanwhile, Queensland's greenhouse emissions are projected to skyrocket when the once-off emissions saving benefit of land clearing cuts is gone. Our native forests and plantations are vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and we face growing concern over the greenhouse contribution of the construction industry, one of our biggest customers."

"Under the circumstances, our board has decided that we need to plan now for significant changes consistent with future resource demand and constraints. We see no future in fighting the community's legitimate expectations, but we see profitable opportunities if we embrace the challenges. We think it is possible to meet and exceed community expectations, and in doing so secure our own long term future as an industry.

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“Today we announce a list of priorities to which Timber Queensland’s membership is now committed. They focus on two areas: sustainable timber production and use, and enhancing Queensland’s response to climate change. These priorities include:

- Exit all state native hardwood forests as part of a transition to plantations and private wood;
- No clear-felling of native forest, no export wood-chipping of native forests;
- No clearing (or conversion) of remnant native forest for the establishment of plantations;
- No inappropriate use of chemicals such as 1080 against native animals;
- No logging of old growth forests, forests of high conservation value, and rainforests on State land;
- Ensuring industry uses best management practices on private land;
- A 10-fold increase in timber recycling or re-use in Queensland by 2020;
- Seeking internationally recognised certification for all timber harvested in Queensland - including FSC as well as existing certification under the Australian Forestry Standard;
- Support an end to the import of illegally and unsustainably produced timber;
- Support broadly based and nation-wide greenhouse emissions trading;
- Expand timber plantations by at least 50% by 2015 to enhance Queensland’s greenhouse sinks;
- Encourage dedicated forest carbon sink (ie. not-for-harvest plantings) development in Queensland
- Support locally relevant sustainable building and greenhouse abatement measures in the construction sector;
- Support new policies that encourage the use of timber resources for bioenergy;
- Greater R&D to help Queensland forestry adapt to the risks posed by climate change;”

Mr McInnes acknowledged that the commitments went significantly further in some areas than traditional industry attitudes but said that Timber Queensland made no apology for that.

“We have considered our circumstances in Queensland and made what we believe to be appropriate judgments about resource security and consumer confidence in our markets over the long term. We respect the right of other jurisdictions to make their own judgments about their circumstances.”

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3 October 2006**

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