

TIMBER QUEENSLAND MEDIA RELEASE

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Regional council collaboration can boost timber industry growth

The Queensland timber industry has applauded the Gympie Mayor Mick Curran in promoting the further development of the forestry and timber industry in the local and surrounding regions.

Hosting a timber industry forum earlier this week, the Mayor consulted with industry representatives from across the region to identify pathways for greater collaboration, innovation and growth of the industry.

Timber Queensland Chief Executive, Mr Mick Stephens, said "With forecast demand in building and construction, and the strong environmental credentials of timber as the ultimate renewable, the growth prospects for the industry are very good."

In order to capitalise on these opportunities, industry representatives from across the supply chain identified a number of critical needs for future growth. These included roading infrastructure, training, greater utilisation of wood processing waste such as promotion of bioenergy, and enhancement of long-term wood supply from state-owned and private forest resources.

"We presently have some serious road network issues, for example, where we cannot get B-double access for many critical routes to get product to market. This will require some significant funding and collaboration across the various tiers of government," Mr Stephens said.

Mr Adan Taylor, Chair of the Australian Forest Contractors Association, said "The forestry industry is now a highly innovative and mechanised industry using sophisticated equipment in harvesting and processing operations. We have a real local need for greater training capacity to ensure suitably qualified workers into the future."

The Wide Bay Burnett Regional Organisation of Councils (WBBROC) was identified as a useful mechanism for delivering greater local government coordination with industry on priority issues, as well as to advocate with higher tiers of government.

"The timber industry has a significant presence across the six councils making up the WBBROC region and we look forward to providing input into its economic development strategy. There will also be important links with the state government's agenda to grow the timber industry and generate more jobs from key regional areas," said Mr Stephens.

The Gympie Mayor Mick Curran said "The timber industry contributes over 815 direct and indirect jobs in the Gympie area alone, with almost \$400 million in forestry and wood manufacturing output. This industry needs to be a strategic sector going forward given its significant potential to grow."

PHOTO ATTACHED - Curly Tatnell of DTM Timber discusses industry growth with Mayor Mick Curran and Mick Stephens, CEO, Timber Queensland.

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