

Timber recycles carbon

TIMBER QUEENSLAND MEDIA RELEASE

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Timber Queensland welcomes federal Labor support of industry's future

The Queensland timber industry has welcomed a number of important measures in the recent federal Labor policy package announced by Shadow Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Joel Fitzgibbon, to further grow this renewable industry.

"The timber industry in Queensland directly supports over 10,000 jobs across the state and a further 15,000 indirect jobs. The Queensland industry also makes an economic contribution of \$3.5 billion each year," said Timber Queensland CEO Mick Stephens.

"In particular, Labor has committed to supporting 13 regional forestry hubs with \$13 million in funding over four years, including one in South East Queensland and another in North Queensland.

"The Labor policy builds on an earlier announcement by the Prime Minister in February who committed \$12.5 million in funding to kick-start new forest industry hubs, with the Queensland hubs to be implemented from 2020.

"A focus on regional policies can address basic needs such as infrastructure, training and investment facilitation," said Mr Stephens.

"There is already a well-established industry in South-East Queensland with both plantation softwood and native hardwood processing and value adding operations. Key regional issues include roading access to improve supply chains, manufacturing costs such as energy, future skilled workers, and supply from state-owned land and further development of private forestry.

"In the Far North, there is an equal opportunity to develop and grow a sizeable timber industry. New tree plantings to support existing softwood processing operations, and further development of crown leasehold and private native forests including indigenous forestry are exciting opportunities," he said.

"Given the significance of these two regional hubs in Queensland, we would be seeking a minimum of \$1million in seed funding for each hub. We understand this would be consistent with commitments already made by the Government for a number of hubs elsewhere in Australia.

"The removal of the so-called water rule by Federal Labor would also enable timber plantations to compete on a level-playing field with other carbon offset activities in the Carbon Farming Initiative. The removal of this regulatory impediment can help facilitate new plantings at the right scale in areas close to processing activities such as around Mareeba in North Queensland."

"The Shadow Minister's comment at the press release that *Labor has no plans to lock up any more forests* provides clear certainty of their position on supporting native forestry production.

"Native forestry can play a significant role in the further development and growth of the industry in Queensland, given large areas of crown leasehold and state forests. While these areas are managed under state tenure and jurisdiction, we welcome the support of Federal Labor for continued native forestry in Australia," Mr Stephens concluded.

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