

Timber recycles carbon



TIMBER QUEENSLAND MEDIA RELEASE

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Queensland industry committed to growth in native forest and plantation timber resources to meet rising housing demand

Queensland's peak body for the forest and timber industry is committed to ensuring the right policy settings are put in place by government to generate investment and expansion of forest resources to meet the rising demand for housing and construction.

"A key issue facing the industry is a lack of policy certainty over future access to public and privately managed native forests for sustainable hardwood production, as well as minimal incentives and measures to promote plantation and farm forestry expansion to increase timber supply," said Timber Queensland CEO Mick Stephens.

"The *Queensland Sustainable Timber Industry Framework* policy announced by the Government addresses a number of recommendations put forward by industry, although we remain cautious about the levels of available supply and impacts on the local hardwood sector until we receive further clarification around the policy," Mr Stephens said.

"We welcome the Government's recognition of the importance of the industry for housing materials and the need to build our sovereign capability in timber production which supports local jobs."

Timber Queensland supports a number of broad policy commitments made by the Government, including:

- maintaining a baseline with no reduction in timber supply levels between 2025 and the end of 2034 and that industry needs 'contractual certainty', which should help provide the confidence for the native hardwood sector to invest where 10 years of state resource security is contractually provided;
- establishment of a Category F land use, which can provide private native forest owners the confidence to undertake applied management through a long-term right to harvest with an appropriate management plan;
- support for forestry education and extension services so that farmers and landowners including First Nations can implement best forest management practices to increase timber productivity, environmental and forest health benefits;
- wood processing innovation support to increase resource recovery and downstream production efficiencies in the sector; and
- plantation and farm forestry expansion to increase future timber availability.

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In order to maintain and grow timber supply levels from state and private native forests, Timber Queensland will be seeking assurances that:

- native hardwood permits are issued as soon as possible for permit holders from the former South-East Queensland (SEQ) supply zone through to 2026 based on current contract volumes for compulsory sawlogs, optional sawlogs and poles;
- longer-term permits through to 2034 are put in place for equivalent volumes within a sustainable yield envelope for former SEQ permit holders as soon as possible;
- further detail is provided on the agreed state supply volume to be provided through to 2034 including location and resource quality from available crown land;
- adequate business assistance is provided for transport impacts from the reduction of harvest area in the South-East Queensland Regional Plan Area from January 2025, as well as for permits issued through to 2034 in terms of any changes in resource quality and mix of log grades and products from the sourcing of equivalent volumes from other crown land;
- the 'Category F' instrument be explored as an alternative environmental control for private native forestry activities, compared to the *Vegetation Management Act* which targets broad-scale agriculture and is not fit for purpose for sustainable timber production with selective harvesting practices; and
- priority be given to private native forestry extension which has significant potential to grow and increase timber supply over the next few decades.

"Another issue has been a lack of investment in new plantations and farm forestry plantings. We are keen to work with government to promote the right trees in the right place for future timber supply."

"Major impediments for farmers include high-up front costs of tree establishment, limited access to forestry management expertise and lack of awareness of the on-farm benefits such as shade and shelter for livestock and supplementary income from timber and carbon sequestration."

"It will be important that any plantation support measures take into account the farm-level goals of the landowner as well as commercial realities such as correct species choice, sufficient scale and locations close to processing facilities and markets."

"As a whole, the funding commitment by the Government of \$200 million for the framework policy is significant, which if implemented appropriately can position the industry with an opportunity to increase timber supply for housing and construction demand."

"Our mission is to protect and grow the Queensland timber industry and we will continue to hold the government of the day to account in terms of commitments, barriers and opportunities for growth," Mr Stephens said.

For further information contact:

Clarissa Brandt, Strategic Relations & Communications Manager, 0416 350 328

Timber Queensland Ltd

30 Boothby Street, Kedron, QLD 4031

PO Box 231, Kedron, QLD 4031

Email: admin@timberqueensland.com.au Website: www.timberqueensland.com.au