

*Timber recycles carbon*

## **TIMBER QUEENSLAND MEDIA RELEASE**



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**2 September 2024**

### **Miles Government pulls election stunt and makes a mockery of new timber policy**

The peak state body for the forest and timber industry in Queensland has accused the Miles Labor Government of pulling an election stunt to appease environmental activists with scant regard for its own timber policy, environmentally sound land management and the many regional communities and thousands of people dependent on the timber industry.

Timber Queensland Hardwood Division Chair Curly Tatnell said the recent public pronouncement by the Government to form a Glider Park in South-East Queensland with pre-determined areas of mapped forest makes a mockery of the consultative framework the Premier established less than two months ago.

“The first meeting of the advisory group under the Government’s new timber policy only took place on 15 August. This group is tasked with providing advice on the scope and options for timber supply and protected areas to be worked through to the middle of 2025,” said Mr Tatnell.

“From 2025 the hardwood industry will already face a 40% reduction in state timber supply in the region due to a unilateral decision by the Government in 2019 to cease timber harvesting in the South-East Queensland Regional Plan area,” he said.

“Now we have the Government railroading further forest areas to be taken out of production with no consultation with the group or testing of the scientific validity of mapped areas or other alternatives for glider protection. There is also no information on timber supply impacts. This is disingenuous and an insult to the workers and families in our sustainable native forest industry.

“We have written to the Premier seeking assurances for long-term contract certainty for native hardwood sawmillers from state forests which has fallen on deaf ears and put \$140 million of planned investment for timber production and 6000 jobs at risk.

“We do not support the locking up of forests where there is clear evidence that well managed state forests provide superior environmental and economic outcomes for the community.

“It also makes a mockery of the Government’s aim to maintain current timber supply levels from 2025 to 2034 as an essential building material in the middle of a housing crisis”, Mr Tatnell said.

“Grandstanding by environmental activists and a rushed announcement by a government to win over green voters should not determine forest and timber industry policy. Decisions on the long-term management of forests should be evidence-based with empirical data and genuine consultation rather than ideological opinion.”

“We believe State forests should already be considered part of the protected area system, just like National Forests in the United States and other multiple-use and cultural landscapes across the world, given that state forests are managed in accordance with strict environmental

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regulation and adopt selective harvesting practices to maintain permanent healthy forests with timber, recreation and biodiversity outcomes.”

**ENDS**

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### **Background**

A growing body of research<sup>1 2</sup> has found that state forests in Queensland can provide superior long-term environmental benefits than if they were managed as formal reserves, due to their adaptive management and contributions to the provision of biodiversity, recreation, timber production, fire prevention and lower emissions through the carbon captured in forests and in harvested wood products. Biodiversity values are managed in state forests through codes of forest practice and other provisions for the protection of species such as the Greater Glider. State revenue from selective timber harvesting also helps offset management costs and pay for fire prevention, recreation assets and biodiversity protection.

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<sup>1</sup> Indufor & Natural Capital Economics 2022. Assessing the net benefits of multiple-use native forest management in Queensland. Report prepared for the South & Central Queensland Regional Forestry Hub with funding from the Australian Government, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry. The study adopted an ecosystems approach, by incorporating *regulating* services such as biodiversity conservation and carbon sequestration, *provisioning* services such as timber and honey production and *cultural services* such as recreation and tourism.

<sup>2</sup> Venn TJ (2023). Reconciling timber harvesting, biodiversity conservation and carbon sequestration in Queensland, Australia. *Forest Policy and Economics*: 152.