

TIMBER QUEENSLAND MEDIA RELEASE

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Queensland industry condemns rogue native log exporter and calls for greater action on regulatory compliance

The Queensland timber industry has condemned the actions of a native log exporter who has been fined for the unlawful tree harvesting in the Rinyirru National Park in Far North Queensland.

Chair of the Timber Queensland Hardwood Division, Curly Tatnell, said that this sort of rogue activity does not represent the responsible behavior of the broader hardwood industry who work under strict forestry and environmental management regulations.

“Put simply, removing trees in a formally protected area is simply wrong and we do not condone this sort of behaviour as an industry whatsoever”.

“Over the past four years we have consistently raised our concerns with both the Australian and Queensland Governments over rogue native log export operators and the tide of suspect exports. This most recent incident simply lends more weight to our legitimate concerns.”

“Unfortunately, if concrete action is not put into compliance monitoring by the relevant authorities there is a very real risk of more suspect practices by fly by night operators who do not necessarily have in mind the long-term interests of the industry, landowners nor sustainable forest management,” said Mr Tatnell.

Timber Queensland has recommended a number of key actions to combat non-compliant exports, but this will take time given the complexity of regulation and overarching federal and state requirements. These include:

- including Queensland native hardwood log exports in the Commonwealth illegal logging regulation, to ensure greater due diligence and additional regulatory power for federal enforcement;
- adequate resourcing for compliance monitoring and coordination across relevant state and Commonwealth agencies responsible for forestry and environmental regulation; and
- the undertaking of compliance audits of export operators and export permits on a regular basis, rather than simply relying on ‘whistleblower’ information for any suspect activity.

“We have previously called for a native log export suspension from Queensland for at least two years, which could be reassessed after that time, in terms of progress against the necessary measures needed to confidently assess compliance,” Mr Tatnell said.

Over 12 months ago, Timber Queensland prepared a detailed bulletin [here](#) and a fact sheet [here](#) on the issue of lack of state and federal compliance enforcement for native log exporters.

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The Timber Queensland submission into the review of the Illegal Logging Prohibition Regulation can be found [here](#).

Details about the unlawful harvesting of trees in Far North Queensland can be found [here](#).

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