



Timber Queensland Submission on SEQ Outdoor Recreation Strategy

**Timber Queensland Limited
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28 March 2007

Timber Queensland is the peak body for the timber industry in Queensland, which has a turnover of \$2.7 billion and directly employs more than 19,000 people. We make this submission on behalf of our members who work in the native forests and plantations in South East Queensland.

At the outset, we would like to make it clear that the timber industry is very concerned about the potential for serious injury or death arising from the inappropriate interaction between visitors and forest operations in plantations or native forests used for timber production.

The timber industry has worked very hard to improve safety within the industry over a number of years. This has generally involved ensuring much greater control of risks within the workplace. The native forests and plantations that supply the timber industry are a workplace; which involves not only the harvesting area where trees are harvested and loaded, but the access network used for transporting logs out of the forest. These operations give rise to a very high potential for serious injury arising from inappropriate interaction of forest visitors.

The timber industry has implemented many internal measures on the harvest site to address safety, as well as measures such as strictly enforced communication protocols to ensure that all involved in forest operations are aware of vehicle movements and site visitors. Visitors to worksites are also either supervised when on the worksite, or undergo an induction program. Unregulated visitors do not, and often cannot, comply with such measures.

The timber industry is very concerned about any activities that would see an increase in unregulated visitors to production forests. We can think of no other workplaces where visitors would be free to roam about without controls on how they interact with working machinery and other activities that could risk lives.

The industry acknowledges that production forests are occasionally used for organised recreation events, such as car rallies. These are generally short events and involve controlled access to the forest. The industry has no problem with such activities continuing, although would not be keen to see any significant increase in these activities where they interrupt production activities.

The industry also acknowledges that there are a number of long term recognised recreation areas within production forests. Where access routes are properly constructed and further access to production areas is appropriately controlled; then we similarly accept that these areas should remain available for use by the public. The industry is concerned about the establishment of new recreation areas within production forests, particularly where access is along haulage routes or where the activities are likely to result in further uncontrolled access to production areas.

Timber Queensland believes that the tenure changes in SEQ arising from the SEQFA should not result in any further demand for recreation activities in plantations or remaining production native forests. To highlight this point, rather than contemplating an increase in the number of visitors to plantations, the plantation industry is seeking a significant reduction in the number of unauthorised visitors, and much higher level of control over legitimate visitors to plantations to reduce the incidence of inappropriate access to the workplace.

The timber industry is also concerned about the costs associated with any increased recreation pressure in production areas. The plantation and forest management agencies seek to realise an economic return from forest utilisation, and any additional visitor facilities or management costs must not be carried by the forest managers at the expense of the timber industry.


The majority of the 'difficult to locate' outdoor recreation activities that occur in production forests could equally occur on private land. Timber Queensland supports any measures by the Government to facilitate the use of private land for such activities. There are numerous means for encouraging development of such facilities, rather than the 'least cost' option of directing development into a dangerous workplace. Timber Queensland anticipates that the identification and implementation of such measures will be a large focus of the proposed Strategy.

Overall, Timber Queensland believes that unregulated outdoor recreation represents an added safety risk that cannot be contemplated by the timber industry. Further recreation opportunities to meet growing demand should be directed away from production forests towards non-production forests or purpose specific areas on private land. We could not support any strategy that would either intentionally or unintentionally result in any further unregulated access to plantations or production forests. Timber Queensland would be keen to be involved in any further discussions on these matters as you develop the SEQ Regional Outdoor Recreation Strategy.

Our ref:jb.rm:mar009

15 March 2007

Dave West
General Manager
Forestry Plantations Queensland
PO Box 3196
South Brisbane Qld 4101

Dear Mr West, 

RE: FPQ Visitor Use Strategy

Timber Queensland has been engaged by yourself and Jim Dickens on the development of a Visitor Use Strategy for the plantation forests managed by Forestry Plantations Queensland (FPQ).

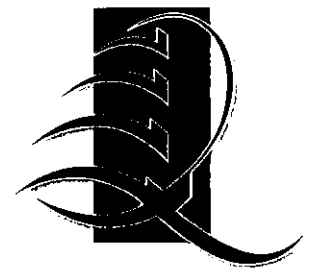
At the outset, we would like to make it clear that the timber industry is very concerned about the potential for serious injury or death arising from the inappropriate interaction of plantation visitors with forest operations.

The industry does not wish to see any further relaxation of visitor controls into plantation forests. In fact, the industry has serious concerns about the current level of unauthorised activity in the plantations, reported to be in the order of 250,000 visitors to the Beerburrum forest complex alone.

The timber industry has worked very hard to improve safety over a number of years, often involving much greater control of risks within the workplace. The forest plantations that supply the timber industry are a workplace, and involve not only the harvesting area where trees are harvested and loaded, but the access network used for transporting logs out of the forest. These operations give rise to a very high potential for serious injury arising from inappropriate interaction of forest visitors.

The timber industry has not only implemented internal measures on the harvest site, but also measures such as strictly enforced communication protocols to ensure that all involved in operations are aware of vehicle movements and site visitors. Unregulated plantation visitors do not, and often cannot, comply with such measures.

All timber processing facilities require that visitors are registered upon entry, and if not subject to a site induction, they are generally accompanied by an employee. These measures have been introduced because it is recognised that visitors without knowledge of the activities and work procedures on the worksite are at a much higher risk of accidents and injuries.



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The industry acknowledges that plantations are occasionally used for organised recreation events, such as car rallies. These are generally short events and involve controlled access to the forest. The industry has no problem with such activities continuing.

The industry also acknowledges that there are a number of long term recognised recreation areas within plantations; and where access routes are properly constructed and further forest access is appropriately controlled, then we similarly accept that these area should remain available for use by the public.

However, rather than contemplating an increase in the number of visitors to plantations, the plantation industry is seeking a significant reduction in the number of unauthorised visitors, and much higher level of control over legitimate visitors to plantations to reduce the incidence of inappropriate access to the workplace.

We do not support any policy that would either intentionally or unintentionally result in any further unregulated access to plantation forests. We can think of no other workplaces where visitors would be free to roam about without controls on how they interact with industry.

We would be keen to work cooperatively with FPQ to ensure that your Visitor Strategy appropriately deals with these issues, and is supported by industry as a whole. Timber Queensland will also be making a submission to the SEQ Outdoor Recreation Strategy outlining these views. I look forward to seeing your draft Visitor Use Strategy in the near future.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rod McInnes". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rod McInnes
CHIEF EXECUTIVE