

TIMBER QUEENSLAND MEDIA RELEASE

Industry Welcomes Forest Policy Unit

Premier Beattie's announcement in December that a Forest Policy Unit would be established in the Department of Premier and Cabinet is welcomed by Queensland's \$2.7 billion per annum forest and timber industry says industry peak body Timber Queensland.

Timber Queensland CEO Rod McInnes said "We have been encouraging the Government for sometime with support from the Conservation Movement to establish a small high-level unit within Government to:

- Bring the long running Western Hardwoods process to a conclusion.
- Provide long term resource security to South-West Queensland's economically important cypress pine industry.
- Facilitate the continued implementation of the internationally acclaimed South East Queensland Forestry Agreement.
- Assist in the development of Queensland's greenhouse friendly sustainable plantation industry."

Rod McInnes went on to say.

"The Western Hardwoods process began in 2002, the Premier announced the Government's preferred position for an outcome in December 2004, and now two years later the issue is still unresolved. The industry in the Western Hardwood region and the communities supported deserve a quick and sensible resolution."

"Similarly the cypress pine industry needs certainty to move forward. Cypress pine is a naturally durable (ie termite resistant) native timber which can be sustainably managed for long term environmental and economic benefit."

"Queensland's population growth has created increasing demand for timber to the extent that we need a further 100,000 hectares of intensely managed plantations to meet this demand going forward. Filling this demand from imported timber, often from countries where forest practices are much worse than in Queensland, is not the answer. Additionally, plantations remove carbon from the atmosphere and release oxygen providing tangible benefits to greenhouse gas emissions."

"Establishing this unit in the Department of Premier and Cabinet should allow a co-ordination across all Government agencies to assist in dealing with these issues" Rod McInnes continued.

"We look forward to working with this unit, other Government agencies and stakeholders to ensure Queenslanders continue to have access to sustainably managed, environmentally friendly and economically produced timber and timber products" Rod McInnes concluded.

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