

# TIMBER QUEENSLAND MEDIA RELEASE

## Western Hardwoods Process – A Farce

The Western Hardwoods Process initiated 3 years ago by the Beattie Government, supposedly modelled on the successful SEQ Forestry Agreement of 1999, is dead in the water according to timber industry peak body Timber Queensland.

On 13 December 2004 the Premier announced a plan for Western Hardwoods which included:

- Giving in to the Conservation Movement demands to exclude logging from about 1 million hectares of State forests immediately.
- A 20 year transition to plantations.
- The Government to voluntarily buyout at least 25% of total allocated log volume.
- Harvesting in remaining State forests to continue for a further 7 years utilising sawlogs down to 30cm DBH, with wood supply for the remaining 13 years to come from private forests.
- The hardwood plantation estate would be expanded to 20,000 hectares, building upon initial SEQ plantings to provide wood supply after the 20 year transition.

As a result of industry concerns regarding resource security for the transition period, the Government further advised on 25 February 2005 it would provide 20 years compensatable Wood Supply Agreements to industry.

In the eight months since the Premier's initial announcement:

- Not one interested miller has been bought out.
- No new plantations have been established or commissioned.
- All of the State Government's commercial forestry operations, including the 1 million hectares of Western Hardwood forests, have been certified to the Australian Forestry Standard which is internationally recognised by the Program for Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC), along with 123 million hectares worldwide as World's Best Practice in Forest Management, thus calling into question the need for the immediate reservation of the 1 million hectares other than for political purposes.
- The Conservation Movement has said it is unlikely to support 30cm logging, thereby refusing to accept/endorse the Premier's plan.

cont.

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- There has been no agreement regarding log classification standards for the Western Hardwoods Region.
- Industry has met all deadlines imposed by the Government for response to proposed outcomes etc.
- The private wood supply for 13 years has not been verified or secured, nor has an acceptable Code of Practice to ensure sustainability in harvesting this resource been produced.
- Hardwood supply is only assured until 30 September this year.
- The Government has now decided to “backdoor” the cypress industry by removing 20% of the standing millable log volume from production, despite assurances that it would not preempt the outcome of long-term planning for the cypress industry during the Western Hardwoods Process.

Timber Queensland CEO Rod McInnes said “This is a most unfortunate and disappointing state of affairs. Despite industry’s willingness to consult and negotiate regarding the long-term security and development of our industry, it appears the Government couldn’t care less about the hundreds of workers and their families or the many small communities that depend on our industry for survival”.

“It appears the Government is only interested in pandering to the conservationists by locking up forests which have been internationally certified as being managed to World’s Best Practice” Rod McInnes concluded.

Ends.

For further information please contact Rod McInnes on 07 3254 1989 or 0419 704 028.

31 August 2005

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