

TIMBER QUEENSLAND MEDIA RELEASE

Timber crisis looms for Queensland

QUEENSLAND'S building industry will be unable to match the State's unprecedented population and housing growth unless urgent action is taken to significantly expand the State's timber plantations.

Timber Queensland CEO Rod McInnes this week pointed to 2005 Treasury figures that showed Queensland would need 1.2million new dwellings over the next 25 years to meet the state's predicted population growth.

He said over the next decade, demand for sawn timber will almost double from 983,000m³ in 2005 to 1.4million m³ in 2014 – a growth in demand the state simply cannot meet on current trends.

Timber Queensland estimates new plantings of 60,000ha of softwood plantations and 52,000ha of hardwood plantations, and a doubling of the productivity of cypress forests are required immediately to meet the future demand.

The situation became even more serious earlier this year when \$5 million worth of trees – equivalent to more than one year's supply – were lost as Cyclone Larry cut a swathe through Northern Queensland's tree stocks.

"Unless we plant new forests now, we will become increasingly reliant on imported timber, often from forest less well-managed than our own," Mr McInnes said. "The situation may also lead to the use of alternative building materials not as sustainable or environmentally friendly as timber – and in many cases not manufactured in Queensland.

"Unless action is taken soon, the state could lose valuable economic support for many rural and regional communities as well as opportunities for jobs growth and economic development."

Mr McInnes said the slow progress of the Western Hardwoods negotiations was interfering with industry's long-term development.

"As long as the Government is preoccupied with the issue of native forest management, green preferences and other matters, focus on expanding the plantation estate for the industry's future requirements is diminished," he said.

Timber Queensland is planning to hold a Plantation Roundtable involving State and Federal Governments, along with plantation growers and processors.

"The aim of the Roundtable will be to identify areas where support is needed to build appropriate economic models for plantation establishment in Queensland," Mr McInnes said. "We need to look at significant issues like identifying land that is suitable for plantations in terms of cost, soil type and rainfall levels and capturing the non-wood benefits that can be derived from plantations, such as carbon storage."

Enquiries to: Rod McInnes on (07) 3254 1989 / 0419 704 028

Timber Queensland Ltd

500 Brunswick Street, Fortitude Valley, QLD 4006

PO Box 2014, Fortitude Valley BC, QLD 4006

Ph: (07) 3254 1989 Fax: (07) 3254 1964

Email: admin@timberqueensland.com.au

Website: www.timberqueensland.com.au

