

Timber recycles carbon

TIMBER QUEENSLAND MEDIA RELEASE



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For immediate release

INDUSTRY CRISIS

Investment stalls: 20 000 Forest Industry jobs to go

Over 20,000 forest and timber workers could soon lose their jobs, thanks to the belligerence of wholly Government owned and monopoly supplier Forestry Plantations Queensland (FPQ), says industry peak body Timber Queensland.

Timber Queensland CEO, Rod McInnes said since the Labour Government created this monopoly supply corporation two years ago, the forestry industry has struggled to deliver a profit, let alone attract investment and grow.

“Queensland’s plantation processing industry has been beaten up with royalties ramped up with no opportunity for appeal, contracts that underpinned new investment and jobs withdrawn, and the first, and probably last, new mill being built in Queensland in years denied log supply under acceptable commercial terms,” said Rod McInnes.

“Despite our protestations, the Bligh Government is unmoved by these issues forcing industry into expensive legal action to obtain justice,” he said.

“Now, with the Global Financial Crisis affecting Queensland, our industry is hanging in by its fingernails trying to maintain jobs in the worst market conditions experienced for many years, whilst the Government appears not to care.

“Unless the Government directs FPQ to arbitrate price disputes and negotiate wood supply agreements of a duration that supports investment, hundreds of millions of dollars of new investment will not occur and existing investments will run down until operations are uncompetitive and will eventually shut down – shedding thousands of jobs.

“We don’t want a free kick. What we want is an independent umpire to settle pricing disputes, meaningful engagement from this out-of-control Government owned monopoly supplier and supply contracts of a duration that support investment (15 years +); no different to any other resource processor.

“And yet the Bligh Government sits on its hands and ignores the plight of our 20000 workers,” he said.

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

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Rod McInnes said Timber Queensland has written to both Labor and the LNP asking them what they will do about these issues if they form Government after March 21st.

“It will be interesting to see whether the next Queensland Government would move to support our industry or ignore the plight of our 20,000 workers making Queensland import its timber needs or, worse still, have to use less environmentally friendly building materials,” said Rod McInnes.

ENDS

For further information contact:

Rod McInnes CEO Timber Queensland: (07) 3254 1989 / 0419 704 028