

## TIMBER QUEENSLAND MEDIA RELEASE

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16 November 2017

### Industry welcomes Labor's support for timber development

Timber Queensland has welcomed Queensland Labor's recent policy commitments to support development of the state's forest and timber industry if elected.

Timber Queensland Chief Executive Mick Stephens said 'Their commitment to support the industry and promote initiatives which improve economic strengths, add value and support training and innovation in the timber industry is to be commended'.

Key initiatives announced by Queensland Labor include:

- a commitment to the responsible management of state-owned native forests for selective timber production;
- promoting greater awareness of the benefits of using timber, and support of related wood encouragement policies adopted by the Gympie and Fraser Coast councils;
- recognition of the need for new opportunities for training to meet the future demand for workers skilled in the latest harvesting and processing techniques; and
- a Rural Economic Development Grant program that can support regional industry based initiatives.

Labor's timber industry statement can be found [here](#).

'We particularly acknowledge Labor's interest in our proposal for a forestry harvesting training centre in Maryborough to support the skills needs of industry', Mr Stephens said.

'There is a strong need for trained workers in all facets of the industry supply chain including forestry harvesting and haulage. This centre would help provide additional training capacity for the state as well as build on the strong industry presence in the region,' Mr Stephens said.

Mr Mark Blackberry, Director of the largest forestry harvest and haulage company in the state, said 'This is a critical need for industry given an expected shortfall in trained operators in coming years. In the Wide Bay Burnett region alone, we expect an annual demand for 90 forestry operators. A new forestry harvesting training centre in the region could effectively train around 180 people over the next three years'.

'We are pleased Labor has taken a bipartisan approach to recognising the importance of the industry, with the LNP earlier committing to a dedicated forestry and timber [program](#) if elected', Mr Stephens said.

The Timber Queensland policy [statement](#) makes a strong case for Government to focus on key timber industry regions across the state, given their potential to grow and add further value to regional economies and jobs.

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