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8 April 2021

Queensland industry call for a regulatory crackdown on native hardwood log exports

The Queensland timber industry is calling for a crackdown on regulatory compliance for native hardwood log exports and a suspension of federal export licences from Queensland until such time as an adequate compliance regime is put in place.

Chair of the Timber Queensland Hardwood Division, Curly Tatnell said given the magnitude of our concerns over non-compliant native log exports, Timber Queensland are taking the unprecedented step to recommend to the Australian Government an immediate suspension of native hardwood log export licences.

“Over the past three years we have consistently raised our concerns with both the Australian and Queensland Governments over rogue native log export operators and the rising tide of suspect exports. These operators have been able to avoid scrutiny through a simple tick and flick export licence exercise with no systematic auditing or checking of their regulatory requirements. There has been no tangible action on compliance or enforcement during this time,” said Mr Tatnell.

Some of the major concerns of industry include breaches of state and federal environmental regulation, poor biosecurity practices, misreported volumes or log categories to avoid detection and unsafe work practices.

“Not only is this a threat to the environment and good forest management, it is damaging the local hardwood industry and reputation of the industry as a whole. It really is a kick in the guts to the thousands of workers and local timber businesses that are fully compliant with the regulatory requirements. Fly by night operators, flagrantly abusing the rules cannot be tolerated by industry and should not be tolerated by Governments,” Mr Tatnell said.

Timber Queensland has recommended key actions to combat non-compliant exports, but this will take time given the complexity of regulation and overarching federal and state requirements.

“We are calling for an export suspension for at least two years, which could be reassessed at that time for up to five years, in terms of progress against the necessary measures needed to confidently assess compliance,” he said.

Key measures include a review of the shortfalls and risks of the current compliance regime, development of appropriate protocols and processes for auditing and compliance, and related intergovernmental agreement and coordination across both levels of Government.

Timber Queensland has prepared a more detailed bulletin [here](#) together with a fact sheet [here](#).

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