

TIMBER QUEENSLAND MEDIA RELEASE



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Queensland State and Local Governments urged to consider 'wood first'

The Queensland State and Local Governments are being urged to consider wood as the preferred material of choice for all public sector building and construction procurement projects by peak industry body Timber Queensland, who today launched their state-wide 'wood encouragement' campaign.

Working in conjunction with Planet Ark Environmental Foundation, Timber Queensland Chief Executive Mick Stephens explained how using more wood in building and housing can reduce our carbon footprint.

"Timber is a renewable material that uses little energy to produce compared to emission intensive building materials, such as steel and concrete. Trees use the sun and photosynthesis to produce timber, rather than rely on fossil fuel inputs, and remove carbon emissions from the atmosphere in the same process" said Mr Stephens.

"Switching to a greater use of timber in buildings can generate significant carbon benefits. For example, if half of all new residential dwellings built in Queensland in any one year were 'timber maximised', this would equate to a saving of 600,000 tonnes of carbon emissions per year compared to other materials, or 6 million tonnes over a 10-year period," he said.

For these reasons, many Governments around the world are adopting a Wood Encouragement Policy (WEP) as part of their procurement practices to better capture carbon abatement benefits in construction. These include New Zealand, Canada, France, Finland and the Netherlands, as well as many local governments in Australia, including the Latrobe City (Victoria), Tumut (NSW), Wattle Range (SA) and Nannup (WA) councils.

Presently, these are no councils in Queensland that have such a policy.

As part of the campaign launch, Timber Queensland and Planet Ark are visiting a number of local councils in the southeast region this week, including the Moreton Bay, Gympie and Fraser Coast Regional Councils, to promote greater awareness of a WEP for sustainable building outcomes.

A WEP requires responsibly sourced wood to be considered as the first-choice construction material in all new-build and refurbishment projects. Such a policy would not mandate the use of wood, but rather require its full consideration as a preferred building material when it is equally fit-for-purpose.

"We look forward to promoting a Wood Encouragement Policy in public building and housing procurement, which can assist with the Queensland Government's Climate Action Plan. We urge the Queensland Government to adopt such a policy as part of the Action Plan", Mr Stephens said.

The increased use of timber also has the added benefit of supporting regional industries, which directly employ more than 13,000 people across the State, and 21,000 indirect jobs.

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