



Timber recycles carbon

TIMBER QUEENSLAND MEDIA RELEASE



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For immediate release

WELLINGTON GOT IT WRONG ON LOGGING

Independent Nicklin MP Peter Wellington has been disappointingly selective in comments attributed to him in recent press articles regarding logging in the West Cooroy timber plantation says peak industry body Timber Queensland.

Timber Queensland's CEO Rod McInnes attended a Government briefing last Friday and has said he, Peter Wellington and community representatives were thoroughly informed about the issue.

"Queensland's \$2.4 billion per annum timber industry, which has 20 000 workers in over 1000 business units is disappointed Peter Wellington chose to ignore the facts he was briefed about to curry political favour with a handful of his constituents," said Mr McInnes.

Mr McInnes said attendees at the meeting were told:

- The 15 hectare site at Cooroy is a plantation i.e. planted trees not endemic to the area for the purpose of timber supply.
- This site is part of the South East Queensland Forestry Agreement struck in 1999, between the State Government, Conservation Groups and the Timber Industry in which the industry agreed to transition from native hardwood forests to plantations, immediately reserving almost 500 000 hectares of forest with another 700 000 hectares progressively reserved.
- Whilst the Government may get \$180 000 in royalties from the disputed plantation, the high value hardwood products produced from those logs (decking and flooring) will provide employment to around 30 mill workers and have a market value of over \$2 million as well as storing thousands of tonnes of carbon for the life of those products.
- Forest harvesting operates to a strict code of practice. If any wildlife or other biodiversity issues are of concern the harvesting process is altered or abandoned to suit. Queensland's Forest practices are internationally recognised and independently certified. The harvesting of the plantation in question met all the code of practice requirements.

"Plantation harvesting is part of industry's long term future. If we can't harvest plantations, Queenslanders will have to use timber products from other countries where forest harvesting practices are less rigorous than ours, not to mention consuming more of the planet's oil reserves in transporting that timber to Queensland," said Mr Rod McInnes.

ENDS

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BACKGROUND



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Government offers no logging resolution

NICKLIN MP Peter Wellington says he has been left stunned and disappointed by the attitude of government officials in charge of controversial logging operations in the West Cooroy forest.

During a meeting in Brisbane on Friday, the independent MP and community representatives hoped to resolve the impasse over logging of the 15-hectare site which has upset residents. They say they were not consulted and sensitive wildlife is being put at risk. Instead of being offered a solution on Friday, Mr Wellington and the community members were told that if the 15 hectares could not be logged another 200 hectares of forest would have to be cleared somewhere to replace the volume of timber lost.

"It really was a case of subtle blackmail - if we didn't sit quietly and allow the 15 hectares to be logged we stood to lose 200 hectares in the same area or somewhere else," Mr Wellington said.

"We were hoping alternatives would be put on the table but we were simply briefed about why it was so imperative these 15 hectares be logged."

The loggers have been relying on the Regional Forestry Agreement drawn up 10 years ago to proceed with tree felling in the sensitive wildlife corridor. Although the logging has been stopped until premier Anna Bligh makes a decision, Mr Wellington said he was stunned to find out how little the government stood to make in royalties from the timber.

"I was stunned when I was told the royalties would only be \$180,000, which is not much when you think of the amount of staff and equipment that is involved. When I asked them why they had not consulted with the community, they said 'we contacted the immediate neighbours who we thought would hear the chainsaws'."