

TIMBER QUEENSLAND MEDIA RELEASE



21 March 2019

This International Forests Day hug a tree and a forester

By the time you've had breakfast on your kitchen table, read the paper and closed your front door this International Forests Day, there is a good chance you've had several interactions with wood-based products but not made the connection with forests and foresters.

With origins dating back to World Forestry Day established by the Food and Agriculture Organization in 1972, 21 March has been marked as a special day to recognise the many environmental and sustainable development benefits we derive from our forests.

This celebration has grown with the United Nations General Assembly declaring in 2012 that this day be recognized worldwide as International Forests Day. The theme for 2019 is *Learn to Love Forests*.

Queensland has 40 per cent of the nation's native forests, with over 52 million hectares of native forest as well as 230,000 hectares of timber plantation forest.

Mick Stephens, Chief Executive of Timber Queensland, said forests are a renewable resource that provide us with a broad range of benefits and need to be loved for all of their values.

"Queensland's diverse forests provide the community with a range of cultural, recreational, spiritual, environmental and economic benefits, and we encourage their long-term stewardship and management to ensure these values are maintained for future generations".

"We've got our forests and timber to thank for most of our built environment, which can bring the outdoors into our homes and offices and increase our connections with natural materials" said Mr Stephens.

"Foresters play an important role in the sustainable use and management of many public and private forests across the state. Foresters are intrinsically attracted to the outdoors and the environment and simply love our forests. The management of pests and disease, timber production, recreation, cultural heritage, fire, clean water and wildlife are all in a day's work for a typical forester.

They can also be found diligently working on advanced mapping systems, environmental planning and community education, and spread the word about the careful management and value of our forests".

"Forests are a natural asset that can keep giving and by managing them sustainably we not only support the prosperity and well-being of many local communities, we can make a valuable contribution to reducing our carbon footprint," he said.

"Well-managed forests and use of timber products can remove significant amounts of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and reduce greenhouse gas emissions".

"This year we should celebrate by not only hugging a tree, but also our local forester," he said.

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IMAGE – Josephine Carle, Intern Forester, Private Forestry Service Queensland hugs a tree