

# TIMBER QUEENSLAND POLICY STATEMENT

## PRIVATE NATIVE FORESTS

December 2003

Private native forests represent a critical component of supply to the timber industry in Queensland, currently accounting for over 60% of the hardwood timber resource. Timber Queensland envisages that private native forests will continue to make a substantial contribution to timber supply.

Effective management of private native forests can deliver a full suite of forest values, including timber products, soil and water protection, and flora and fauna conservation, while providing a valuable resource for grazing. Appropriate timber harvesting operations offer an opportunity to improve stand structure, reduce fire hazards, and improve grazing capacity.

Certainty of wood supply is critical to the timber industry's long-term security. On State land, Timber Queensland acknowledges that the greatest security is likely to come from an orderly transition to a plantation-grown resource, as endorsed in the South East Queensland Forests Agreement. Timber Queensland strongly supports the ongoing establishment of commercial scale hardwood timber plantations as a means to achieving resource security.

However the importance of private forests to wood supply is such that the industry is, and will continue to be, reliant on this avenue for supply in the foreseeable future.

Private native forests present landholders with an important financial asset. For instance, timber values are specifically costed by the Government when freeholding leasehold land. Landholders have a legitimate expectation that this asset will continue to maintain value, and any actions of Government that impact on the asset must appropriately recognise the change in value.

When harvesting native forests on private land, Timber Queensland is committed to management practices that seek to maintain environmental values and the productive state of the forest. To that end, Timber Queensland is committed to:

- developing a Code of Practice for private native forests that better defines responsibilities under the *Vegetation Management Act 1999*. However, any such code must be appropriate to Queensland circumstances, and lead to improved environmental outcomes on the ground;
- using silvicultural practices that maintain or improve the long term productivity of private native forests;
- supporting the use of property planning as a means to ensuring that timber harvesting operations fit within a broader property management context and are appropriate to on-ground conditions.

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The conservation of biodiversity in Queensland should be achieved via a hierarchy of mechanisms, with the greatest focus being through dedicated conservation reserves followed by the complementary management of State Forests, voluntary conservation agreements for priority private forest areas, and appropriate management of remaining private native forests. As such, private native forests need not deliver the same level of biodiversity protection as that delivered by State land.

Timber Queensland supports the ongoing management of private native forests to provide renewable timber resources and ongoing returns to landholders, whilst maintaining environmental and conservation values.

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