

TIMBER QUEENSLAND POLICY STATEMENT

Recycling and end of life disposal of timber

February 2006

Timber Queensland acknowledges the importance of recycling and end of life disposal as a key element contributing to the environmental credentials of building products. Timber is already the world's most sustainable building material that is readily available, and further initiatives to reduce waste and increase the level of recycling and reuse are important to maintain this position.

Timber Queensland encourages the expansion of legitimate timber recyclers and residual wood users as an important part of the timber industry, and valuable contributors to Timber Queensland's sustainability objectives. More effective recycling and re-use of the estimated 270,000 m³ of wood that is currently disposed of to landfill will add to the potential resource base of timber in Queensland. This also provides important opportunities for further economic growth, value adding and long term job creation in the timber industry.

Reducing waste in the timber production, construction and manufacturing phases is the first element of minimising timber waste associated with timber and timber products. More effective sawing, manufacturing and building practices all have a role to play in improving recovery of useful product from the available resource.

Recycling and remanufacturing of sawn timber products is an important existing element in the life cycle of timber products. This can involve the re-use of structural and appearance products, as well as remanufacturing into value added products such flooring, joinery, decking etc. Timber Queensland supports advancement of this sector, through research and development, improved marketing, more effective processing, and consistent and reliable product specifications and standards.

Further to this, Timber Queensland also supports the use of waste wood in reconstituted board or engineered wood products. Recycled wood is extensively used in reconstituted wood products throughout Europe and America. The development of manufacturing facilities and techniques to use recycled wood as a resource for Queensland production of these products is an important element of improving the use of waste wood.

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Timber Queensland acknowledges the use of timber residues for the generation of environmentally sustainable heat and/or power as an important opportunity to reduce waste and recover energy with positive environmental credentials. This practice is well established internationally throughout many countries particularly within Europe.

A key impediment to more extensive use of waste wood is the separation of timbers and removal of contaminants, including preservative treated timber, soil, metals, glass etc. Some of these wood products, such as some preservative treated timber or painted timber which are currently disposed of in landfill have the potential to be re-processed, removing these contaminants and rendering them suitable for a range of product applications. Timber Queensland supports further research and development as well as increased manufacturing capabilities to improve the recovery of useful products from timber of this nature.

Finally when all other avenues for use have been exhausted there are some timbers that are simply not able to be re-used, with disposal to landfill being the last and only option. Disposal of such products should be in appropriate landfills that pose no potential harm to the environment.

The timber industry is keen to participate in programs to reduce wood waste, and Timber Queensland urges the Queensland Government to both support and facilitate more effective recycling and use of this important resource. Suitable policy and planning support including an inventory of the volume and nature of available waste wood, implementation of mandatory disclosure and registers for all potential sources of recyclable timber; as well as physical and / or financial support for research and development, sorting, re-use or recycling facilities will be important elements of this.

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