

QLD Minister for Primary Industries, Fisheries and Rural and Regional Queensland
The Honourable Tim Mulherin
Tuesday, July 20, 2010

New 20/20 vision of Queensland's timber plantations

A strategy aimed at supporting the future expansion of the State's \$4 billion forest and timber industry and increasing employment in that sector was released today.

Minister for Primary Industries, Fisheries and Rural and Regional Queensland Tim Mulherin said the new strategy would see the State Government step up its encouragement of increased investment in Queensland's timber plantation sector.

The Queensland Timber Plantation Strategy 2020 signals a new direction for the government, Mr Mulherin said.

The strategy establishes a fundamental change in the role of government from direct ownership of timber plantations to one of leadership and strategic direction setting.

The recent sale of the Queensland Government's plantation estate to the private sector has opened the way for a more commercially focused approach to the state's timber plantations.

The aim of the Strategy is to provide an investor-ready environment for a competitive, sustainable timber plantation sector.

Over the next decade, the Queensland Government will concentrate on five core areas to support new investment:

- new land-use planning framework
- legislative and policy reform
- investment initiatives
- industry development support
- community education

Mr Mulherin said the timber plantation sector is a key component of Queensland's \$4 billion forest and timber production value chain, and offers real investment potential.

New investment opportunities are supported by a positive market outlook for timber products driven by strong population growth and increasing demand for housing and other timber-based products, he said.

The new land-use planning framework will recognise timber plantations as a legitimate form of agricultural cropping for general land use planning purposes.

A timber plantation development assessment code will be established to bring timber plantations more in line with long-term agricultural cropping activities in Queensland's planning framework.

We will also seek to remove any impediments to timber plantation investment and growth in Queensland legislation and administrative systems.

The Queensland Tree Tenure System is currently being reviewed and the Timber Utilisation and Marketing Act 1987 has been reviewed with a recommendation to repeal the Act.

The Queensland Government is delivering targeted industry development through investment in priority plantation research and the resourcing of industry development officers to help build the capacity of the sector.

The Strategy also includes working with the timber plantation sector, prospective investors and peak bodies to identify, clarify and support new market opportunities for timber plantations.

These include potential opportunities arising from international and/or national emission trading schemes, voluntary emission offsets and bioenergy opportunities.

As part of the follow through work required to implement this strategy a DEEDI led working group, consisting of key stakeholders including the LGAQ and Timber Queensland, will be formed to assist the development of a standard code within the Queensland Planning Provisions under the Sustainable Planning Act 2009 to ensure that the codes final application throughout the regions of Queensland is workable for all parties.

This strategy will help facilitate exciting prospects for the timber plantation sector that will contribute to the growth of agribusiness in Queensland, Mr Mulherin said.

For a copy of the Queensland Timber Plantation Strategy 2020, visit www.deedi.qld.gov.au or call 13 25 23.

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