



Photograph supplied by Kennedy's Classic Aged Timbers

The strategy

The *Queensland timber plantation strategy 2020* articulates the Queensland Government's policy objective of securing sustainable growth in the timber plantation sector to deliver a range of economic, social and environmental benefits to Queensland. It is a whole-of-government strategy that will coordinate and enhance the Queensland Government's efforts to support the timber plantation sector.

The guiding principles for the strategy are consistent with national and Queensland forest policies and strategies, and include:

- recognition that the market and economic considerations will determine the eventual size, composition and location of Queensland's timber plantation estate
- recognition that the long-term nature of timber plantation investment requires stable and transparent government policy settings in order to minimise changes to government policy and regulation over time
- recognition that the successful implementation of this strategy will require close and ongoing collaboration between industry and government
- the need for a competitive business environment
- a commitment to identify and address legislative and administrative impediments that adversely affect the timber plantation sector
- assurance that actions by government to assist timber plantation sector development demonstrate net economic, social and environment benefits to the wider community
- support for the sustainable management of commercial timber plantations in accordance with best practice international forest management principles and forest certification systems
- review and refinement of the strategy to ensure that it is delivering its overall objective.

The Queensland Government will concentrate its timber plantation development activities in five focus areas over the duration of the strategy, which include:

1. land-use planning framework
2. legislative and policy projects
3. investment initiatives
4. targeted industry development support
5. community education.

The Queensland Government will collaborate with industry participants and stakeholders to implement the strategy and, in particular, work with relevant partners to scope and implement appropriate projects in relation to specific actions.

Focus area 1: Land-use planning framework

The Queensland Government has established a policy position that timber plantations are a legitimate primary production activity and therefore should be treated more in line with other cropping activities for general land-use planning purposes in Queensland.

However, some local governments have introduced relatively complex development assessment processes for timber plantations in their planning schemes. In particular, establishing new timber plantations as impact assessable development by some local governments represents a significantly higher regulatory burden (with considerably more uncertainty about the outcome) compared to other cropping activities that are generally not subject to any formal local government development assessment processes.

Action 1.1

We will recognise timber plantations as a legitimate form of agricultural cropping for general land-use planning purposes in the Queensland Planning Provisions developed under the *Sustainable Planning Act 2009*.

Action 1.2

We will develop a timber plantation development assessment code within the Queensland Planning Provisions and cap the level of assessment for timber plantations at 'code assessable' in local government planning schemes by December 2010 (in consultation with local governments and the timber plantation sector).

This important policy initiative will help to ensure that the development assessment process for timber plantations is more in line with long-term agricultural cropping activities, and improve the consistency of timber plantation development assessment processes in Queensland.

Action 1.3

We will provide technical assistance to local governments and the timber plantation sector, as required, regarding the implementation and operation of the timber plantation development assessment code.

Action 1.4

We will facilitate regular discussions between representatives from the Queensland Government, local governments, the Local Government Association of Queensland and industry to discuss and resolve timber plantation planning issues.



Focus area 2: Legislative and policy projects

The timber plantation sector requires a stable, transparent and supportive regulatory environment that encourages new investment, innovation, accountability and continued growth in Queensland's timber plantation estate.

Changes to government policy and regulation is a key investment risk factor for the timber plantation sector. This strategy will reduce the risk of such changes by providing a clear, whole-of-government commitment to legislative and policy frameworks that support the growth of the timber plantation sector.

Action 2.1

We will finalise transfer of the right to manage and operate timber plantations on state-owned land to the private sector as part of the Renewing Queensland Plan.

This will inject significant new private investment into the Queensland timber plantation sector, improve the operation of the timber product market and eliminate the inherent distortions arising from direct state government participation in the market for timber products.

Action 2.2

We will develop timber procurement and sustainability policies that recognise credible international third-party certification as meeting the highest possible environmental standards, thereby supporting Queensland-produced plantation timber products.

Action 2.3

We will review and address Queensland legislation and administrative arrangements, as appropriate, to identify and seek to resolve impediments to timber plantation investment and growth.

A review of the Queensland Tree Tenure System (QTTS – contained in the *Forestry Act 1959*, the *Land Title Act 1994* and the *Land Act 1994*) is underway and the Queensland Government will provide its position with respect to the future operation of the QTTS as part of the review process. *The Timber Utilisation and Marketing Act 1987* has been reviewed with a recommendation to repeal to the Act.

Action 2.4

We will work with other levels of government to facilitate supportive policy environments for the timber plantation sector, particularly in relation to issues such as the National Water Initiative outcomes, carbon trading, illegal logging, renewable energy initiatives, biosecurity systems, harvested wood product and climate change accounting framework issues, and timber procurement policies.

Action 2.5

We will collaborate with the Australian Government to seek to remove the existing export controls on Queensland unprocessed plantation-sourced timber products contained in the Australian Government's *Export Control Act 1982* and its subordinate legislation.

Focus area 3: Investment initiatives

Timber plantations are long-term operations with crop cycles that can last up to 50 years. They are also non-liquid assets with relatively high establishment costs, high risks and long periods of time between investment for establishment and income generated from the sale of timber. These characteristics mean that attracting investment in new timber plantations has been difficult.

Action 3.1

We will ensure delivery of the final phase of a 20 000 hectare native hardwood plantation estate (to be delivered by the new plantation operator), that will:

- provide a resource supply for the timber processing sector following the end of hardwood logging from state-controlled native forests
- encourage new private investment in timber plantations and processing in the region.

Action 3.2

We will undertake a timber plantation land capability and suitability project in consultation with relevant stakeholders.

The outputs from this project will broadly inform investment decisions of investors in timber plantations and processors, as well as assist state and local government strategic planning processes.

Action 3.3

We will prepare web-based and other information products to promote timber plantation investment opportunities in Queensland.

Action 3.4

We will identify and facilitate commercial opportunities for timber plantations that may arise from carbon trading (in cooperation with industry participants and stakeholders).

This will include reviewing Queensland legislation to ensure that Queensland businesses can effectively participate in potential international and/or national emission trading schemes, as well as other voluntary emission offsets.

Action 3.5

We will collaborate with the Australian Government, peak industry bodies and other stakeholders to identify potential new investment sources for new timber plantations.

Action 3.6

We will give potential major investors in the timber plantation sector access to Queensland Government project facilitation services.



Focus area 4: Targeted industry development support

The Queensland Government, in consultation with industry participants, will deliver a range of targeted industry development actions for the Queensland timber plantation sector to facilitate sustainable growth and deliver net economic benefits to the wider community.

Action 4.1

We will identify a dedicated unit within the Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation (DEEDI) to coordinate the implementation of this strategy and provide an initial contact point for information about the Queensland timber plantation industry.

Action 4.2

We will continue to identify and invest in targeted priority research and development projects to support the development of the timber plantation sector.

Key investment areas currently include:

- development of commercially proven, improved planting material suitable for Queensland's climate and growing conditions
- development of effective timber plantation management strategies
- tree physiology research to support a range of commercial outcomes, including carbon sequestration
- identification of cost-effective control strategies for endemic pests and diseases
- development of profitable and sustainable early return wood products and production processes, including sustainable systems to protect in-service forest products from deterioration.

Action 4.3

We will collaborate with the timber plantation sector, training providers, other Queensland Government agencies and Forestworks (the industry's training advisory body) to ensure that the industry has access to appropriate training and skills development opportunities in Queensland.

Action 4.4

We will support the timber plantation sector to develop and maintain an effective biosecurity framework in line with the objectives of the *Queensland biosecurity strategy 2009–14* and with national biosecurity arrangements.

Action 4.5

We will support timber plantation sector growth through DEEDI's Plantation Industry Development project, which delivers two industry development officers.



Action 4.6

We will work with the timber plantation sector, prospective investors and peak bodies to identify, clarify and support new market opportunities for timber plantations, particularly in relation to international and/or national emission trading schemes, voluntary emission offsets and bioenergy opportunities.

Action 4.7

We will continue to progress whole-of-government actions led by the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service (and involving the Department of Environment and Resource Management and other relevant agencies) to make the timber plantation sector and rural communities more resilient to bushfire risk. This will be achieved through increased levels of inter-agency cooperation with respect to fire protection policy development and planning, and fire management strategies.

Action 4.8

We will identify and plan for the sector's future infrastructure requirements within or adjacent to Queensland's timber plantations.

Action 4.9

We will encourage large and small timber plantation growers and processors to use credible 'third party' forest certification and chain-of-custody schemes to support ongoing market access for Queensland timber plantation products and enhance the overall sustainability of the sector.

Action 4.10

We will work with industry organisations and networks to help build their capability to support industry growth.

Action 4.11

We will promote small-scale timber plantings as part of integrated farming enterprises to help enhance the viability of timber plantation estates in key regions.



Focus area 5: Community education

In Queensland, commercial timber plantations on private land are a relatively new and immature form of primary production compared to traditional industries such as horticulture, cropping, and grazing. The Queensland Government will work with timber plantation companies and other stakeholders to help improve community understanding and acceptance of the timber plantation sector in key regions.

Action 5.1

We will initiate and support research projects to provide robust information about the timber plantation sector and its social, economic and environmental benefits.

Action 5.2

We will work with industry to build collaborative relationships with key stakeholders such as local governments, the Local Government Association of Queensland, other land users and industries to identify actions to improve the understanding of the timber plantation sector in key regional communities.

Action 5.3

We will regularly communicate the economic, social and environmental benefits of sustainable, well-managed timber plantations.



