

PRIVATE NATIVE FOREST FORUM 2017: RESOLUTIONS SUMMARY

Private Forestry Service Queensland (PFSQ) hosted a Private Native Forest (PNF) Forum on the 9th November in Gympie. The Forum, attended by 80 people considered the extent and importance of the PNF resource in southern Queensland, the critical role that it will play in the future timber supply and the impediments currently impacting on the management of the resource.

The outcome of the day was a set of urgent priority resolutions that were agreed upon, by the majority of participants and that, we hope will gain support and momentum from the broader industry.

We urge you to support these resolutions by return email.

Resolutions on improving the *security, availability, health and quality* of the Private Native Forest resource in southern Queensland.

1. Issue

Harvest security is the major recurring factor impeding landholder investment into the management of the resource. Forest management is a long-term activity that provides rural employment opportunities and environmental benefits. For Forest Owners to make long-term investment decisions (20 to 60 years) they need to have secure rights to use the land for forestry purposes in the long term.

1. Resolution: that the Private Native Forestry Forum delegates:

Urge the Queensland Government to establish a Vegetation Category (Category F) similar to Tasmania's Private Timber Reserves (1989) within Queensland's Planning Act. A private timber reserve is an area of private land set aside for forestry purposes and registered on the title.

2. Issue

Silvicultural thinning of non-commercial stems is traditionally undertaken by chemical injection, which is expensive, uses high volumes of residual herbicide, and leaves a framework of dead trees which pose a long term WH&S risk. The rapidly developing Biomass industry provides a unique opportunity to utilise the grossly over-stocked section of the stand, providing financial incentive for thinning, supporting rural employment, producing a local biofuel and increasing the health and quality of the forest.

2. Resolution: that the Private Native Forestry Forum delegates:

Urge the Qld Government to recognise that emerging technologies can enable landholders to carry out best practice silvicultural thinning for the improvement of forest health and productivity. Further, delegates wish to

emphasise that these technologies would only utilise the non-commercial and non-habitat portion of the stand that would normally go to waste.

3. Issue

Many Forum presenters and delegates raised the following issue regarding government policy: Inconsistent policy and regulatory changes adversely impact investment confidence. Farmers are not inclined to invest in improving the health and productivity of their forests, without a consistent policy and regulatory environment. The following issue was not raised at the forum, due to lack of time but addresses one aspect of those concerns.

Namely:

Managing a native forest practice - *A self-assessable vegetation clearing code*, was revised in 2014 in line with the introduction of a range of self-assessable vegetation clearing codes introduced by the Queensland Government. One of the changes made during the Code revision was the introduction of a list of regional ecosystems (REs) in which harvesting and thinning could be undertaken. The clear intent of the code was to limit a native forest practice to the regional ecosystems that only supported recognised commercial species however in the compilation of the list up to sixty legitimate REs were omitted e.g. 11.11.15 - *Eucalyptus crebra woodland on deformed and metamorphosed sediments and interbedded volcanics – Current remnant forest area – 521,000 ha (pre-European extent – 890,000 ha)*. *E. crebra* is the second highest harvested species by volume after spotted gum in Queensland and it is discriminatory to those landholders prevented from managing and eventually harvesting within those REs.

3. Post Forum Resolution: that the Private Native Forestry Forum delegates:

Urge the Queensland Government to immediately amend the ‘*Managing a native forest practice - A self-assessable vegetation clearing code*’ to include all Regional Ecosystems that support a dominance or codominance of hardwood commercial species.

Sincerely

