

16 August 2023

The Hon. Mark Furner  
Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries  
By email: [agriculture@ministerial.qld.gov.au](mailto:agriculture@ministerial.qld.gov.au)  
Cc: [charles.caruso@daf.qld.gov.au](mailto:charles.caruso@daf.qld.gov.au)

## **Implementing the Native Timber Action Plan**

Dear Minister,

Queensland Conservation Council (QCC) welcomes the priorities earmarked for the remaining term of this government, including election commitments outlined in the Portfolio Priority Statements<sup>1</sup>.

With regard to overseeing the implementation of the Native Timber Action Plan (NTAP), QCC would welcome opportunities to assist you in delivering strategic outcomes that will contribute to Queensland's modernising agenda.

We have identified key priorities that we would like to support your government to see deliver during this term of government, which we would like to discuss in detail with you and your team.

### **Directions paper release**

We understand the NTAP process produced a draft directions paper which will soon be released for public feedback.

We respectfully request that QCC be given the opportunity to review so that we may provide a statement around any positive directions outlined, for consideration and inclusion in media statements if appropriate.

### **Recommendations:**

1. Provide an exposure draft of the NTAP/Future Forestry directions paper, and 24 hours notice to QCC so that we might provide a positive media statement if appropriate.
2. Support the appointment of a QCC representative if the Native Timber Advisory Panel is to continue.

### **Planned timber exit from public native forests**

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<sup>1</sup> Charter letter <https://cabinet.qld.gov.au/ministers-portfolios/mark-furner.aspx>

Queensland contains the greatest area of native forest, and the largest area of multiple-use public native forestry in Australia. Our forests have provided invaluable resources to the community but their highest value into the future will be as tourism destinations and for biodiversity conservation.

QCC is encouraged by the Palaszczuk Government's intention to exit timber harvesting in some areas of southern Queensland, indicated in your Department's summary of the Native Timber Action Plan<sup>2</sup>. We understand logging is planned to cease in the Eastern Hardwoods region by 2026 and in the South East Queensland Regional Plan Area in 2024.

Further we consider your department has a key role to play in ending forest degradation and land clearing on private land and encourage DAF to take a leadership role in improving private native forestry practices.

### **Recommendations:**

3. Commit to undertaking a regional comprehensive review process toward an action plan in the Western Hardwoods region, Central Queensland, North Queensland and Northern Cape York regions.
4. Review forest stewardship, operational planning and reporting processes to ensure that logging activities are referred under the *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*
5. An increase in annual Forestry Business Unit funding to support regional development toward hardwood timber production, including fostering pathways to Forest Stewardship Council certification for landholders (e.g. via group certification).
6. An increase in research and development funding for the Forestry Business Unit to work with regional councils and stakeholders including QCC to attract investment to Queensland regions in industry-leading technology e.g. engineered wood products from short-rotation and lower grade native species.

### **Supporting regional jobs through protected area growth**

With the Brisbane 2032 Olympics and Paralympics approaching, the need to ensure world class visitor experiences that showcase and celebrate Queensland's unique natural assets has never been greater.

Studies have shown national parks generate at least \$6 for every \$1 invested in their management, and when one considers the flow-on impacts to local hospitality and tourism, that figure is closer to \$10.<sup>3</sup>

We hope you will join us in taking a collaborative approach to the exit of native forestry, one where regional voices are heard and subject matter experts work together with all levels of government to modernise Queensland forestry, in step with community expectations.

#### **Recommendations:**

7. An increase in annual Forestry Business Unit funding to establish ongoing regional community engagement work (e.g. extension officer program) toward social acceptance of the benefits of both native forest retention and tree farming as part of agricultural systems and the Queensland regional landscape.
8. An increase in Forestry Business Unit funding to lead the development of a coordination plan and procedures with Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Environment and federal environment department, toward full and proper enforcement of state and national threatened species and nature protection laws.

#### **Timely transfer of HCV forests to protected area estate**

It is encouraging to see that transfer of high conservation value (HCV) areas to the protected area estate is an important priority in your portfolio<sup>4</sup>.

QCC actively supports the State Government's Protected Areas Strategy 2020-2030. The successful implementation of this strategy will require addition of more than 14 million hectares of HCV ecosystems to protected areas. This vast area cannot solely be acquired through private land purchases, and must include reallocation of public land.

To achieve protected area growth in a timely fashion we believe coordination ought to be prioritised and a cross-departmental working group established with key stakeholders including QCC.

Better outcomes for nature can be achieved if the Department of Environment and Science, Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, other departments and stakeholders work together to identify areas for priority transfer. We respectfully request that information on operational plans, strategic policy and planning relating to state forests be published by your departments. We make the same request to the environment department in its responsibility for non-commercial aspects of management.

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<sup>3</sup> Dr Sally Driml, Associate Professor Richard Brown, Ms Claudia Moreno Silva (2020) "Estimating The Value Of National Parks To The Queensland Economy," Discussion Papers Series 636, School of Economics, University of Queensland, Australia.

<sup>4</sup> Charter letter

We respectfully request that in order to support this work, your Department also provides access to any data that could support identification of high conservation value areas for priority transfer, within this term of government.

**Recommendations:**

9. Support the establishment of an interdepartmental working group on protected area growth and management including State departments of Agriculture & Fisheries, Environment & Science, Resources, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders & Treaty; Treasury.
10. Consistent with the intent of the Right to Information Act 2009 and in step with other state forestry departments, adopt an open data policy and establish a portal where operational and planning documents are published.

Yours sincerely,

Nicky Moffat

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Nicky Moffat', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Protected Areas Campaigner  
Queensland Conservation Council  
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