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Fraser Coast Council adopts 'Wood Encouragement' policy

The Fraser Coast Council is the first council in Queensland to have a 'Wood Encouragement' policy (WEP). The WEP has the goal of driving construction in the region towards timber products, an outcome which is better for the environment and will benefit many local businesses.

The Chief Executive Officer of the Australian Forest Products Association, Mr Ross Hampton welcomed the Council's decision led by Mayor, Councillor Chris Loft, supported by Timber Queensland.

'All over the world in countries such as Canada and France, governments are making the decision to change their tender processes to better accommodate timber. Fraser Coast Council is to be congratulated for leading Queensland with the adoption of this policy', said Mr Hampton.

'The reasons policy makers are taking this stance is simple. Timber products are completely renewable, biodegradable and store carbon, playing a positive role in reducing greenhouse gas emissions. In Fraser Coast Council's case the benefits are clearly economic as well. The region is one of the premier timber producing areas in Australia.

Nationally forest product industries provide some 120 000 jobs across the full value chain, mostly in regional areas. These jobs are generally clustered around regional areas, such as in Gippsland, Tasmania, south east Queensland, the Green Triangle of South Australia and Victoria, northern and southern NSW, Central Tablelands and the Tumut area of NSW, and Southwest WA.

Mr Hampton said, 'It is my hope that all councils in these areas will follow the lead of Fraser Coast Council and adopt their own wood encouragement policies'.

Under the Fraser Coast Council wood encouragement policy, projects valued over \$250,000 are required to consider the use of timber in design briefs and contracts.

The Fraser Coast Council joins ten other local government associations and councils around Australia and New Zealand (NZ) that have adopted WEPs including: the Australian Local Government Association, Kyogle Council, Tumut Shire Council, Municipal Association of Victoria, Wellington Shire Council, East Gippsland Shire Council, Latrobe City Council, Wattle Range Council, Shire of Manjimup, Shire of Dardanup, Shire of Nannup and Rotorua Lakes Council (NZ).

AFPFA represents forest growers, harvesters, and manufacturers of timber and paper products.

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