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Gympie Council the latest to adopt a Wood Encouragement Policy

Gympie Regional Council has become the second Queensland municipality in as many weeks to adopt a Wood Encouragement Policy (WEP), which aims to drive the use of timber products in local building and construction projects.

The Council adopted this policy at its first meeting in 2017, and comes a week after Fraser Coast Council became the first Queensland municipality to adopt a WEP.

Chief Executive Officer of the Australian Forest Products Association (AFPA), Mr Ross Hampton, welcomed the Council's decision led by Gympie Council Mayor Mick Curran, supported by Timber Queensland on the move, which is better for the environment and will benefit many local businesses.

"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. Gympie Council is to be congratulated for supporting local jobs with the adoption of this policy," Mr Hampton said.

"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 Gympie 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 Gympie Regional Council and adopt their own wood encouragement policies."

Gympie Regional Council is the 11th Local Government association or municipality in Australia and New Zealand (NZ) to adopt a WEP.

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

Media Contact: Bernadette Cording
AFPA Communications Manager
(m) 0409 962 250 (e) bernadette.cording@ausfpa.com.au