



Media release

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**Fraser Coast Council first in Queensland to adopt Wood Encouragement Policy
to benefit environment and health**

Fraser Coast Council will be the first local council in Queensland to adopt a Wood Encouragement Policy, the focus of which is to ensure wood is considered for the initial stages of public building projects.

The policy requires responsibly sourced wood to be considered, where feasible, as the first-choice construction material in all new-build and refurbishment council funded projects. This follows recent changes to the National Construction Code which allow for timber construction up to 8 storeys without additional approvals.

David Rowlinson, Planet Ark's Make It Wood Campaign Manager, welcomed the announcement.

"We are delighted to see the Fraser Coast Council show real environmental leadership in Queensland by adopting this policy," he said.

More than 20% of Australia's carbon emissions come from constructing and maintaining the built environment, so making the switch to wood as a major building material is a key strategy for addressing climate change.

"Responsibly sourced, certified timber is the only major building material that helps tackle climate change. Timber is renewable, it absorbs carbon from the atmosphere and stores it in the wood, and there are fewer carbon emissions associated with its production when compared to building materials such as concrete or steel. Wood is also cost-effective, quick to construct, and has proven health and wellbeing benefits," Mr Rowlinson explained.

Planet Ark has worked closely with Timber Queensland to promote the significant environmental benefits that building with timber provides.

"Fraser Coast Council is to be congratulated for leading the way in Queensland with the introduction of this policy which not only supports the forest and timber industry but will generate significant carbon benefits," said Timber Queensland CEO Mick Stephens.

Mr Stephens said the policy also supports jobs, growth and investment.

This announcement follows the adoption of similar Wood Encouragement Policies by two regional and nine local councils in Australia including Latrobe City Council and Wellington Shire in Victoria, and joins others around the world, including Rotorua in New Zealand, Hackney in London, British Columbia in Canada, Finland, France and The Netherlands.

As an example of the environmental benefits of these policies, the Library at the Dock in Melbourne is Australia's first six-star Green Star council-owned building constructed from modern engineered mass timber. It stores 500 tonnes of carbon in its cross-laminated timber structure, locking it out of the atmosphere for the life of the building.



Planet Ark's *Wood – Housing, Health, Humanity*ⁱ report, commissioned for the Make It Wood campaign, found exposure to wood products and interiors has positive physiological and psychological health benefits, similar those created by spending time in nature.

An increasing number of architects who design buildings for healing and learning are incorporating significant amounts of wood into their structures to capitalise on its health and wellbeing benefits.

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ⁱ *Wood – Housing, Health, Humanity*, Planet Ark, September 2014 <http://bit.ly/1LgoRcR>

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