



MEDIA RELEASE

Immediate Release

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Developing the North: land suitability, workforce planning and First Nations engagement

Land suitability, labour demand and training capacity are focus areas for North Queensland Regional Forestry Hub projects released today for an expression of interest (EOI) process closing 29 March 2023.

Hub Manager Hulton King said opportunities exist for plantation forestry growth in North Queensland, including new plantation investments and agroforestry activities, carbon farming initiatives and new fibre and wood product innovations.

“A spatial assessment of the Hub region for plantation suitability will assist in identifying an expected range of prospective returns and land areas that may be financially viable for plantation investment, addressing information needs and opportunities for investment in future projects,” said Mr King.

The project will account for both biophysical, commercial and policy drivers for prospective forestry, assisting the Hub in informing the Commonwealth Government on improved investor returns and smarter resource management options.

Given the focus on opportunities to progress growth, the North Queensland Regional Forestry Hub is also pleased to announce it is working with Kimberly Cultural Connection’s Director, Cissy Gore-Birch in developing protocols to assist the Hub on meaningful engagement with Traditional Owners, Prescribed Body Corporates (PBC), Representative Bodies, Aboriginal Communities and other Stakeholders operating on Native Title land and other tenures managed and owned.

Mr King said Cissy Gore-Birch is a Jaru/Kija woman with connections to Balangarra with almost 30 years of experience in community development, young people & youth, governance & decision making, native title, economic development, tourism, and conservation and land management.

“The protocols will be socialised across a number of workshops, with an aim to eventually develop a robust mechanism to de-risk commercial pathways for Indigenous-led and co-managed forestry operations across Northern Australia,” said Mr King.

Mr King said conducting a comprehensive assessment of the Far North Queensland forestry industry’s labour demand and training capacity is imperative as the industry plans for future development.

“The forestry sector in the North Queensland Region is facing substantial challenges to recruiting and retaining suitably skilled and qualified workers,” he said.

“Industry consultations to date have identified multiple issues, including an ageing and regional workforce, and perceptions around the timber and forestry sector as a secure career path. There are also considerations for advances in forestry technology and driving gains in safety and efficiency.”



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Government, industry, and educational institutions will need to work together to address these challenges to maximise opportunities.

Links to the EOI documents and submission forms can be found on the [hub website](#).

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The North Queensland Regional Forestry Hub is assessing priority issues to determine the technical issues, needs and opportunities to progress growth. Funded by the Australian Government through the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, the Hub is seeking to fund projects that will help grow our forest industry through improved investor returns, smarter management and utilisation of forestry resources, traditional owner engagement and a renewed community understanding and engagement in forestry.