

# Steps to a successful native forestry enterprise in central Queensland



## Why forestry?

Native forestry presents a productive option for the forest that is on your freehold property. Native forestry can offer your enterprise a source of long term, stable income that is not dependent on high inputs, intensive management or subject to the ravages of drought or large fluctuations in pricing. While maintaining a healthy forest ecosystem, native forestry provides areas of shelter for stock, helps to maintain a water balance in the catchment, play a role in controlling weeds while producing an income from the sale of timber.

## Background

Native forestry is an enterprise unlike many others in rural Australia, it is a low input, long term, enterprise practiced on many properties in central Queensland. However forestry can significantly contribute to the income of a property over time. Forestry is unique in the sense that it needs few management inputs, utilises land that would otherwise be unproductive, creates opportunities for multiple benefits such as grazing production gains and maintains a healthy natural ecosystem.

Many people have their forest harvested at some stage, with often very limited knowledge of forestry principles, legislation and current markets and timber values.

This guide has been designed to steer forest managers through the 'basic' requirements of a modern, successful native forest enterprise in CQ, no matter if they are new to forest management or have been practicing forestry for many years.

Prepared by Ross Miller, 2005



## 7 steps to a successful native forest enterprise:

- 1 Identify what you have and investigate some basic forestry practices for your district
- 2 Identify areas on your property with potential for native forestry
- 3 Get a basic understanding of forestry principles
- 4 What legislation is relevant
- 5 Forest assessment
- 6 Forest management planning
- 7 Implementation of forest management

### Identify what you have and investigate some basic forestry practices in the region

Do you have any trees or forest on your property, if so what kind and approximately how much area. If you are unfamiliar with trees in your local area you can find more information out by talking to your neighbours, the Landcare network, or local Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Water vegetation management officers. If you are still stuck, the Queensland Herbarium can identify plant samples, to find out more about this service contact the Queensland Herbarium [www.epa.qld.gov.au/herbarium](http://www.epa.qld.gov.au/herbarium)

When investigating some basic forestry practices in the region you will find that forestry practices include timber harvesting, fire, road & track construction, monitoring, silvicultural thinning, seed collection and much more.

A good place to start for this information is some local processors and industry groups, forestry organisations, such as the Australian Forest Growers and neighbours with forestry experience.

- You will need to know if the trees that you have are currently used by local processors sawmillers, and if so what log dimensions do they accept.
- What happens before/during/after harvest
- Previous experiences from locals selling/managing timber
- Is your timber suitable, if not how can you make it suitable?
- What is the best way to manage the forest

### Identify areas on your property with potential for native forestry

Using the knowledge obtained above, identify the areas on your property with potential for native forestry. Mapping this resource is a good way to identify how much you have and where this resource is located. This information will come in handy doing a forest assessment and a forest management plan.

### Obtain a basic understanding of forestry principles

This is best done by reading up on the forestry principles, or attending a workshop or field day to learn the basics. Understanding the principles will help you make the right management decisions.

Cutting the 'scarf' out of a tree



far right  
Milling Gum Topped  
Box, Rock Timber,  
The Caves Qld

## Obtain information about relevant legislation

The most obvious is the Vegetation Management Act 1999, but many others exist which may need attention by the owner and or contract workers. Information on the 'forest practice' exemption in the Vegetation Management Act 1999 (VMA) is a good start. Other relevant legislation may include:

- Timber Utilisation and Marketing Act 1987
- Fire and Rescue Services Act 1990
- Integrated Planning Act 1997
- Workplace Health and Safety Act 1995
- Aboriginal cultural heritage Act 2003
- Local government laws
- Nature Conservation Act 1992
- Environmental Protection Act 1994

You will find that to qualify as a 'forest practice' under the 'VMA' you must notify the Department of Natural Resources and Mines of you forest practice and your forestry operations must be consistent with the relevant code of practice. See: <http://www.nrm.qld.gov.au/vegetation/forestpractice.html> for further forest practice information.

## Forest assessment

Forest assessment is important as it tells you approximately what you have, the condition of the forest and timber volumes. A forest inventory should be conducted in order to determine how much timber is available to harvest and the 'forest condition'. The results of the inventory will form the basis of management decisions, such as thinning and harvesting.

Interpretation of the forest inventory is just as important as the inventory itself. This will need your understanding of forestry principles, along with local markets and legislation.

## Forest management planning

Forest management planning is a brief document that outlines your management intent for your forest, and brings all your forest management information together. It will help you to determine which management activities you should undertake and when. Forest management plans are also useful in demonstrating 'forest practice', even when your operations are consistent with any code of practice.

## Implement forest management plan

The implementation of the forest management plan involves all the on ground operations in the forest, which have been mapped out in your forest management plan. Some thought should be given as to how this is done and what is required to be successful.

Implementing the forest management plan is the last and most important action in successful forest management enterprise.

Through all the other steps you have identified the resource, gained forestry knowledge, looked at relevant legislation, assessed the forest and set out management goals & actions in the forest management plan.

It is now a simple task of following the forest management plan, through the steps, however it is important that after all this work that the plan be followed in the relevant timeline.

Now is a good time to be investing in your future, getting your forest into good condition. This is necessary to avoid the 'I should have done that 20 years ago' situation.



A White Cypress  
Pine forest

Further information  
and fact sheets  
in this series can  
be obtained by  
contacting the  
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Inc on 07 4936 2422