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Timber Industry Strategy

TCA would like to thank all involved in the development of the recommendations for the Timber Industry Strategy. It will help provide a secure and sustainable future for the timber industry. Much of the stakeholder input was sort in 2006/7 and there have been some changes since then that need to be considered before completion of the strategy.

Of these funding of initiatives and projects is most important. Too often programs are undertaken by Government only to have them reduced or wound up just as results are starting to come through. The TIS is a long term outlook and funding and development initiatives need to viewed on a long term basis as well. Recent cuts to DPI private forestry are an example of the above point.

Duplication of resources and information is something the industry is often guilty of. Recommendation 8 refers to undertaking a skills audit. Much has been done by Forestworks to address the issue of skills shortages and providing and central point for training inquiries. More funding to this organization would result in better delivery of information regarding careers.

In the Green triangle region there is unfortunately cross border politics which may result in unnecessary duplication of training programs. The Vic and SA governments need to work together to enable better delivery of services.

The purchasing of simulators for harvesting and haulage training programs needs to be undertaken to help address the skills shortage that will occur as plantation harvesting comes online.

The development of plantations is a point of debate within communities. Local government planning has been identified as a problem for plantation companies. TIS seek to address this but now local government is starting to put its nose into native forest issues and attempting to influence decisions outside its jurisdiction. Changes need to be made to stop local governments impeding native forest operations

TCA would also like to see more socio economic modeling done in helping determine forest policy. The Victorian government has undertaken this in recent times but there is room to do more thorough and complete reporting on this important factor. Use of programs such as Remplan to assist in this should be encouraged.

The timber industry can provide the answer for many of the challenges of climate change but it will need a concerted effort from government and industry to educate the wider public on these benefits. TCA looks forward to continue working with Government to see many of the recommendations in the TIS implemented

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