



22 July 2016

Guy Barnett, Minister for Building and Construction

Speech to Mid Rise Timber Building Seminar

Welcome to Launceston and thank you for giving your time to assist us grow and develop jobs and industry in Tasmania.

I particularly want to thank Ric Sinclair from Wood Solutions who has flown in from Melbourne and will provide us with an overview of the effect of the recent changes to Mid Rise Timber use in the Building Code.

I am pleased to be here with you today as the new Minister for both Building and Forestry.

In the recent State Budget the Treasurer, the Hon Peter Gutwein MP, my predecessor as both Building and Forestry Minister announced funds to boost Industry and Jobs in Tasmania – particularly for the Building and Forestry Sectors and in part relevant to our discussion this afternoon. The Government announced it will provide:

- \$60 million for an affordable housing package that will put roofs over peoples' heads and create jobs in the building and timber industry right around the State;
- New funding of \$5 million for investment in police housing, and this is in addition to the \$2 million program that was previously allocated for police housing on the West Coast;
- A doubling of the grant available to first home builders from \$10,000 to \$20,000, backdated from 1 January 2016 through to 30 June 2017; and
- An additional \$30 million towards the Northern Cities Development Initiative, taking the total investment to \$90 million. This initiative will see the Coordinator-General working in close collaboration with Northern Tasmanian councils to help revive communities through infrastructure projects, including Devonport Living City, the Launceston University of Tasmania Campus Relocation Project, and enhancing the presence of the University of Tasmania at West Park in Burnie.

Importantly, the State Government's \$75 million to underpin the UTAS Northern Tasmanian education and economic transformation project is now fully funded.

The forestry industry is also being rebuilt under this Government. Forestry Tasmania is being placed onto a sustainable pathway and a solution for the southern residues challenge is being finalised.

The private sector is stepping up and exciting options for other innovative uses for certified plantation and native timber are being developed. The Government wants to support these innovative options for growth:

The Budget allocates \$1.25 million towards a Wood and Fibre Processing Innovation Program, which will help develop innovative uses for wood and fibre, such as for higher value engineered building products as well as biomass for renewable energy and heat production. It will also focus on increasing the use of timber and agricultural residues to create value-added products and includes targeted programs for the Dorset and Huon regions and the private forestry sector as well;

Working with industry, the Government will develop the State's first ever policy to encourage the use of more certified timber and wood products in Government building projects. It is expected that this policy will commence in 2017, and its development is in light of recent ground-breaking changes to the National Construction Code, which now allow for timber to be used for construction in more classes of commercial properties. It also builds on the already announced agreement with the University of Tasmania to consider certified timber in the Northern Transformation Project; and

We will also work with the industry and provide up to \$500,000 in matched funding for strategic marketing of Tasmanian forestry products to help grow the industry and expand export markets.

As I mentioned earlier and as many of you would be aware, from 1st of May, the new *2016 National Construction Code* (NCC) allows the construction of mid-rise timber buildings up to 25m effective height (approx. 8 storeys), under the NCC Deemed to Satisfy (DTS) provisions for Class 2 (apartment), Class 3 (eg. hotels) and Class 5 (office) buildings.

Recent projects by leading Australian developers and builders have proven in practice that these systems can provide more cost effective construction solutions than traditional alternative approaches.

Prior to the change the use of timber was limited to 3 storeys.

The purpose of today's Seminar is threefold:

Firstly, I think it is important for key people in both the Building and Forestry sectors to know about and understand the National Construction Code Changes – I will hand over to Ric in a moment to do just that.

Secondly, I think it is important that if we are developing a policy of Government using timber in buildings that you have some input in how we do that at this very early stage.

And lastly, the evidence internationally is that the change to using Timber in larger buildings has driven a massive jump in the use of Timber in buildings, therefore I would like your input into how we can take advantage of the changes that Ric is about to outline both in Tasmania and through developing markets outside of Tasmania.

These two workshop elements will be facilitated by Dale Webster from Consumer, Building and Occupational Services.

I know it's Friday afternoon so I want to assure you that we will move through the agenda quickly and have you away in good time.

Thank you again for your valuable time.