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TAS Government paves way for mechanical fuel reduction to tackle bushfires

The Australian Forest Products Association (AFPA) welcomes the Tasmanian Premier's announcement that he will introduce legislation to make it easier to mechanically remove vegetation to create fire breaks.

AFPA has been urging all Australian governments to recognise the effectiveness of mechanical fuel reduction to complement prescribed burns as a bushfire mitigation tool, following the recent catastrophic bushfire season.

Tasmanian Premier Peter Gutwein announced a suite of bushfire mitigation measures yesterday in his State of the State address, which also included additional resources for managing fuel loads across the State.

"I commend the Tasmanian Premier for acknowledging the critical role that mechanical fuel reduction can play as part of the State's bushfire mitigation strategy," AFPA CEO Mr Ross Hampton said.

"This fire season has shown that the multiple approaches by multiple land managers and agencies when it comes to fuel load reduction isn't working, and that many jurisdictions struggle to meet prescribed burn targets."

"In many fire-prone countries the use of Mechanical Fuel Reduction alongside hazard reduction burns has proven highly effective in keeping communities safe and helping preserve forests areas."

The terms of reference for the Australian Government's Royal Commission into the bushfires include 'preparedness and resilience responsibilities, which includes land management and hazard reduction measures'.

"We are urging the Commission to investigate Mechanical Fuel Reduction as part of a whole-of-landscape approach to managing Australia's 132 million hectares of native forest, as part of its review."

"AFPA recently released a report, [Using Fire and Machines to Better Fire-Proof Our Country Towns](#), which makes the case for mechanical fuel reduction, showing its effectiveness overseas, and providing examples where it could have reduced bushfire risk in Australia," Mr Hampton concluded.

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