

Monday 20 April 2020

AFPA welcomes NSW government bushfire recovery package and focus on forest product industries

The Australian Forest Products Association (AFPA) has welcomed today's announcement by the NSW Government that it is establishing a \$140 million Bushfire Industry Recovery Package and ensuring a strong focus on the State's forest product industries damaged by the catastrophic fires.

Speaking on Sydney Radio 2GB today Deputy Premier and Minister responsible for Disaster Recovery the Hon John Barilaro said, "This will help the timber industries, the mills and haulage companies, to invest so they can actually get access to that burnt timber. A significant announcement, a \$140 million package supporting jobs in agriculture, horticulture and timber so we can make sure there's a future for those sectors."

The Chief Executive of AFPA Ross Hampton has welcomed the package.

"With this announcement the NSW Government's providing a clear sign that primary industry and regional NSW is a priority, and our renewable forest product industries are an important part of that," he said.

"The bushfires have had a devastating impact on all sectors of our industry, from forest growers to harvest contractors to hardwood and softwood timber processing and manufacturing. In areas like the Tumut/Tumbarumba region, the softwood timber industry is the major economic driver. The fires, combined with the current CoVid-19 crisis, is causing a major slowdown in sales of timber for construction, which is affecting those regional communities. This package could be the shot in the arm that's needed to help recover."

"It will also support the hardwood timber industry along the coast affected by the bushfires, which is also struggling. The forest products industries are mostly based in regional NSW, and when they are affected negatively, the communities who directly rely on them for jobs feel the pain as well. This package may be aimed at industry, but its relief will flow on to everyone."

"We will urgently engage with the NSW Government on how the funding will be distributed, and I look forward to seeing the recovery package implemented quickly," Mr Hampton concluded.

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