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BUNNINGS SHOULD LISTEN TO FOREST INDUSTRY WORKERS AND REVERSE VIC TIMBER DECISION

The blockade by timber trucks of Bunnings' Traralgon store and a promise by timber workers to undertake more of the same, should cause Bunnings management to reconsider its short-sighted decision to close its doors on Victorian hardwood timber and the thousands who work in Victorian native forest industries, according to the Australian Forest Products Association (AFPA).

The Chief Executive Officer of AFPA Ross Hampton said, "Bunnings claims that it has made this decision because it does not stock 'illegal timber'. However, it is completely wrong to equate the tightly regulated, sustainably managed Victorian timber harvesting operations with the globally recognised definition of 'illegal logging' which is unsanctioned, unregulated and leading to deforestation" (where cleared forests are not regenerated).

"According to Interpol, between 15 and 30 per cent of the timber trade in the world is 'illegal'. That means more than \$70 billion dollars worth of globally traded timber comes from illegal sources. None of that timber comes from the State government agencies which run accredited, audited and sustainable native forestry operations in this country."

Mr Hampton continued, "On top of that, Bunnings has moved prematurely in not even waiting for the foreshadowed appeal of the Federal Court case on which it has based its decision."

"There are just 4 trees out of 10,000 used in native forestry in Victoria and it is 100 per cent regrowth forestry. It is certified to the world's largest global certification scheme called PEFC (trading as Responsible Wood). Old growth trees are protected. Every tree that is used is regenerated. It is completely sustainable environmentally and a vital driver of jobs in many regional Victorian towns.

"The tens of thousands of forest industry workers right around Australia, their families, and their communities appeal to Bunnings to announce it will reverse its decision," Mr Hampton concluded.

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