

## Media Release

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### **Common sense finally prevails in Australian bushfire research – Drought not forestry the reason why Black Summer was so severe**

The Australian Forest Products Association (AFPA) has welcomed new research highlighting that forestry operations and timber harvesting are not to blame for the devastating 2019-20 Black Summer Bushfires.

The research paper authored by six of Australia's most eminent forest ecology and bushfire scientists and published in the *Australian Forestry* journal, *No evidence that timber harvesting increased the scale or severity of the 2019/20 bushfires in south east Australia*, reviewed the evidence of the relationship between harvesting and fire extent and severity from these fires, and found that:

*"The proportion of forested conservation reserves burnt in these fires was similar to that for public forests where timber harvesting is permitted, and the proportion of forest burnt with different levels of fire severity was similar across tenures and over time since timber harvest."*

The Chief Executive of AFPA Ross Hampton said, "All too often activist scientists make the self-serving claim that forest harvesting increases bushfire severity. This claim is not supported by the science - just last year some of them had to retract a published report after it was found to have significant errors.

"The authors of this new research have examined the scientific evidence and reaffirmed the scientific consensus that forest harvesting in multi-use forests in southeast Australia was not to blame, rather, it was the preceding years of drought were the major factor. When it doesn't rain vegetation dries out and becomes easier to burn."

"It is pleasing to see this research team, led by globally recognised leaders in forest science Professor Rod Keenan from the University of Melbourne and Professor Peter Kanowski from ANU, who served on the COAG Inquiry on Bushfire Mitigation and Management, have moved beyond the sensational pseudo-science to verify what caused the Black Summer bushfires to be as severe as they were."

"We commend the researchers and the Institute of Foresters Australia for their important and evidence-based research," Mr Hampton concluded.

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