

# Media Release

**The Hon Jaclyn Symes MLC**

Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council

Minister for Regional Development

Minister for Agriculture

Minister for Resources



Wednesday, 2 December 2020

## **BUSHFIRE AFFECTED TIMBER TO BE SALVAGED FOR THE FUTURE**

Precious timber burned by last year's bushfires will be saved from going to waste, thanks to help from the Andrews Labor Government.

The 2019-20 bushfires saw significant damage to softwood plantations and native forests in eastern Victoria, with more than 1.2 million hectares of public native forest estate burnt as well as 6,400 hectares of pine plantations in the North East.

To support the industry to recover as much burnt timber as possible before logs deteriorate, the Labor Government has developed the \$2.5 million Bushfire Recovery Timber Storage Grants to support the storage of 125,000 green tonnes of salvage timber.

Financed in part through the Commonwealth Government's Salvage Storage Fund, Victorian timber and forestry businesses can apply for funding to support the storage of the salvaged timber.

Salvaging and storing the timber will not only mean it can still be used, but also boosts the supply of timber being processed and reduces the amount of harvesting of unburnt timber.

Eligible businesses can apply for grants of up to \$500,000 to support the costs associated with storing timber above their usual volumes from 1 January 2020 to 30 June 2021.

The grants will cover a range of activities that help keep unprocessed and processed wood viable or expand existing storage capacity, including rental or leasing costs, equipment hire and additional costs for water.

No harvesting of unburnt areas within the fire footprint will take place in 2020, with current salvage harvesting primarily focused on fire-killed ash, fire-killed plantations and other severely burnt forest areas. Salvage occurs within existing harvesting areas and the volumes allocated.

Salvage harvesting is subject to additional environmental regulations, over and above operations in unburnt forests. The Conservation Regulator will continue monitoring salvage operations including using protocols to protect unburnt areas and the retention of dead large hollow bearing trees and wildlife corridors.

Applications will be open until 16 December 2020. For more information and to apply visit [rdv.vic.gov.au/timber-storage-grants](http://rdv.vic.gov.au/timber-storage-grants).

### **Quotes attributable to Minister for Agriculture Jaclyn Symes**

*"It's critical that we make the most of our timber resources – these grants will help businesses be more resourceful while burnt timber is still viable by covering the extra costs associated with its storage."*

*"I invite all eligible businesses to apply for the Bushfire Recovery Timber Storage Grants to boost their supply now and over the coming months."*