



National Association of
Forest Industries



Media Release

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Industry welcomes Federal Bushfire Inquiry recommendations

The National Association of Forest Industries (NAFI) has welcomed important recommendations of the Federal Senate Inquiry into *The incidence and severity of bushfires across Australia*.

NAFI Chief Executive Officer, Allan Hansard, said the report made commonsense recommendations which, if implemented, would result in reduced bushfire risks and improved outcomes for communities, the environment and natural resource based industries such as forestry.

“NAFI has consistently advocated the need for a strategic national approach to bushfire management, including most importantly a regular program of fuel reduction to reduce the risks of large scale catastrophic bushfires,” said Mr Hansard.

“The implementation of a national policy for bushfire management (Recommendation 1) is a good starting point, as outlined in NAFI’s submission and appearance before the committee.

“The Senate Committee has correctly identified fuel reduction as a significant and effective tool to reduce high intensity bushfire risks. The recent 2009 Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission has similarly identified fuel reduction as an important factor, seeking a minimum annual target of 5 per cent of prescribed burning on public land.

“However, better coordination is desperately needed across the range of agencies with multiple responsibilities for land management and across state borders.

“In this sense, NAFI strongly supports the recommendation that the Commonwealth seek agreement with the states to evaluate the adequacy of fuel reduction programs applied by public land management agencies in high bushfire risk areas, and audit their implementation.

“Other recommendations that the Commonwealth publish all fuel reduction plans and related audit findings on a national database (Recommendation 6) and that funding arrangements be made conditional on Commonwealth evaluation and auditing of fuel reduction programs, are similarly welcomed. This would provide greater accountability and provide an incentive for fuel reduction targets to be met.

“However, we are mindful that previous inquiries have made similar recommendations in the past that have fallen on deaf ears.

“NAFI is calling on the Government and the Opposition to implement these initiatives as soon as possible to deliver improved public safety and land management outcomes. We also repeat our call for the Federal Government to convene a national summit on bushfire management,” he said.

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