



SENATOR THE HON. JONATHON DUNIAM

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Mr Bob Gordon
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Dear Mr Gordon,

Bob,

I'm writing to advise you of the Morrison Government's announcement of an additional \$50 million in bushfire assistance recovery for the forestry industry.

The Morrison Government recognises that there is an opportunity to rebuild better and stronger, following this bushfire disaster and COVID-19 pandemic. Today the Prime Minister announced a \$40 million Forestry Recovery Development Fund that will secure and create jobs, especially in our regional communities that have been hardest hit by the bushfires.

The Government will deliver this grant funding in partnership with businesses to invest in innovation, to diversify the industry, value add to timber products and protect against impacts of future fires across the industry. The funding will be through grants of between \$1 million and \$5 million per applicant, for completion of projects within three years and will require matching funds from industry.

The development of innovative production lines will enable the forestry industry in bushfire affected regions to continue to produce sustainable, renewable Australian materials for the manufacturing, construction and building industries. These production lines will also provide regional jobs and guarantee the economic future of many regional communities.

Also announced today is a \$10 million investment in the establishment of storage facilities for processed wood products, fire-affected salvage logs, and other forestry products in Victoria, New South Wales and South Australia. I continue to work with those State Governments to match this funding and deliver the storage assistance over the 2020-21 financial year.

The storage of both raw logs and processed wood products makes sense, and provides capacity to processors who are accumulating large volumes of stock in light of these compounding circumstances.

This assistance will help reduce the volume of fire-damaged trees that rot away and will secure valuable wood for our economic recovery and building Australian homes.

These measures are on top of the assistance currently available to the industry:

- \$15 million Salvage Log Transport Assistance to support transport of salvaged burnt logs to storage and processors;
- Bushfire recovery small business \$10,000 grants, small business recovery grants, up to \$50,000;
- Farm foresters are also eligible for grants up to \$75,000 under the Emergency Bushfire Primary Industries Grant scheme.
- Concessional loans, available to help businesses get back on their feet with up to \$500,000 available with no repayments or interest for the first 2 years, and a concessional rate for the remaining term of the loan.

Rebuilding and diversifying the industry in the wake of the bushfires is critical to the survival of regional communities. Establishing this fund and calling for proposals will enable the industry to deliver, in partnership with Government, economic certainty and jobs both right now, in the rebuild from the bushfires and also into the future.

You can find attached both my media release and the joint media release with the Prime Minister and the Minister for Agriculture.

I can assure you I understand the long term nature of this industry and I look forward to continuing to engage with industry on ways the Government can assist in the short, medium and long term.

Yours sincerely



Jonathon Duniam

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Thank you for
all
you do.