

Media Release

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SAFPA hails bolstered landscape bushfire protection

As South Australia enters a more challenging fire season, South Australia's forest industries have hailed the bolstered landscape bushfire protection measures that when joined up will provide better protection for our regional communities and industries than ever before.

"This season in the South East will see the rollout of the new \$2.3 million fire camera network, the continued use of our fire towers, the two new aerial observation helicopters in addition to the four government-funded aerial firefighting appliances including three SEATs and one Blackhawk, our industry-funded aerial firefighting appliance, a new source of water to fight fires at Callendale along with bolstered Forest Industry Brigades working with the CFS and its volunteers", Mr Nathan Paine, Chief Executive Officer of the South Australian Forest Products Association (SAFPA) said.

"After enjoying several years of below average fire danger, this is our first year back with an El Nino weather pattern and we know that this year and the years to come will be more difficult than the past few seasons. Whilst bushfires are unpredictable we are better prepared than ever and our plan will be to detect fires early and hit them hard and fast to ensure we are protecting life, property and the regional economy," continued Mr Paine.

"We only have to look at the devastation wrought by bushfires on Kangaroo Island and of course the Black Saturday fires on the east coast to know how important it is that we are prepared and we congratulate the Government for continuing to invest in protecting our community and our industries from bushfires. Our bushfire history illustrates the importance of being armored and educated to the best of our ability to protect our plantation estates, as fires are unpredictable and will always be a part of our landscape".

"Our forest industries directly invest well over \$5 million each and every year into our own fire prevention, detection and firefighting - that includes more than 300 firefighters, a firefighting helicopter, along with our specialist firefighting tankers and associated equipment" said Mr Paine.

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“SAFPA expresses its thanks to the Malinauskas Government for this additional investment and in particular Minister Scriven for the delivery of \$2.3 million into landscape level fire detection network and Minister Szakacs for the additional investment in aerial firefighting appliances which is part of the broader \$26.7 million being invested in increasing aerial firefighting fleet across South Australia,” said Mr Paine.

Importantly, this year’s efforts will be supported by a new large capacity Fire Dam at Callendale that was constructed immediately adjacent to a major drain allowing water to be fed into the dam. Its construction will support the industry funded helicopter and other fire suppression units. This Fire Dam was achieved through industry collaborating with the South East Drainage Board and the local CFS. This exciting proof of concept initiative is a forerunner to establishing more strategically placed, large capacity, fire water storage dams. (images are attached)

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Media Contact:

Nathan Paine, CEO, SAFPA (m) 0448 445 177 (e) nathan.paine@safpa.com.au



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