

Senate Finance and Public Administration Committees

Answers to questions on notice

Agriculture, Water and the Environment Portfolio

Committee:	Senate Finance and Public Administration Committees
Inquiry:	Lessons to be learnt in relation to the Australian bushfire season 2019-20
Hearing Date:	29 May 2020
Division/Agency:	Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment
Topic:	Funding allocation to the forestry industry for salvage logging activities
Question Date:	4 June 2020
Question Type:	Written

Senator Rice asked:

In relation to the \$15m of funding allocated to the forestry industry for salvage logging activities:

- a) How this will be allocated, to which businesses and sectors of the industry (i.e. plantation and native forestry) and in what proportions?
- b) Specifically how much is going or anticipated to go to businesses engaged in native forest wood supply chains?
- c) Where funding will go through state governments – do those governments therefore decide on who is a recipient? Or is that decided at the federal level?
- d) Which 'private entities' (or which types of entities) are anticipated to receive funding?
- e) And will the businesses have to apply or meet certain criteria?

Answer:

- a) The funding aims to support the additional costs of transporting salvaged burnt logs from harvest to processing mills or storage facilities. This may include transporting the logs further distances than normal, needing more trucks to transport the burnt logs due to increased weight, or the need to transport a higher volume of harvested logs than normal as a result of the fires and the limited time available for harvesting of salvage logs. The proportion of plantation compared to native forestry sourced logs has not been pre-determined, as it is demand driven assistance, however the majority of salvage activities are being undertaken in plantation forests. The funding will not be provided to state owned forestry companies.
- b) As above, the assistance will be demand-driven and money has not yet been allocated to that level of specificity.
- c) All funding will go through state governments, following agreement by the NSW and Victorian governments to match the Australian Government funding for transport assistance. The state governments are responsible for the operation and delivery of the programs within their jurisdictions. Final decision-making for funding recipients will be determined according to program criteria developed at a state level, with input from the Australian Government. In NSW the guidelines have been released and applications are already being accepted. In Victoria we are working with the state government to finalise the details of delivery.

- d) The funding aims to support the transport of salvaged burnt logs from harvest to processing mills or storage facilities, with specific arrangements set out at a state level. It is expected that the funding will be provided primarily to processing mills in NSW. The details are being finalised for Victoria.
- e) In NSW, they have to submit an online application and meet specific eligibility criteria. The Australian Government and Victorian Government are having ongoing discussions to finalise the details of delivery.