

## COMMENT ON FIRES

This not a time for blaming anyone for these extreme fires, it is a time to offer support and collaboration in rebuilding our lives. As each one of us is reassessing how to adapt to our changing world, we ask that the timber industry and Governments re-examine options for a future timber industry.

Millions of animals have died, many more will die from injuries and starvation. Loss of air and water quality is a threat to health. Many industries and livelihoods inside and outside the forestry industry have suffered losses.

Remaining forest and habitat are more precious than ever.

David Shoebridge MP put a question on the Parliamentary Notice paper on 5th February asking for figures by region on what proportion of the State Forests available for logging was burnt in the summer bushfires.

He received an answer on 21st February, advising him that the figures were now on the [Forestry Corporation website](#). The figures appeared on the Forestry Corporation website on the same day. In the Eden Region 79% was burnt; in the Southern Region 81% was burnt. [Scroll to bottom of the page](#).

Note also that Forestry Corp virtually admits on this page that the decades of intensive logging for woodchips have made the fire impacts worse, saying that "the region is characterised by even-age regrowth forests".

The current dire situation reinforces the recent calls by conservation groups for a moratorium on native forest logging.

We call now for Governments to complete quickly the transition out of native forests into plantations. Nationally, plantations already provide for most of our domestic and export wood needs.

SERCA recognises that many of the timber workers have valuable trades and other skills and there are ways for them to transition to sustainable work in the region. For example, the Forestry Corporation has [spoken of urgent priority tasks](#), 'a race against time', requiring 'all hands on deck', recovering and treating burnt plantation trees for milling, and replanting areas to replace young trees too badly burnt. Much more is possible with Government assistance in retraining.

This is a terrible time for everyone and now is the time to be thinking and acting in a positive way about future options - community, industry and Governments.

