

Willmott Forests Fire Update

Monday 2 February 2009

The fires reported on Friday 30 January 2009 located in Gippsland have now been categorised as safe according to the Country Fire Authority (CFA) website.

CFA, Department of Sustainability & Environment (DSE), Parks Victoria and Hancock Victorian Plantations' fire fighters have successfully completed back burning activities north of Mirboo North in the area of Sampson's Road, Old Thorpdale Road and Pines Road. Work is continuing on the consolidation of fire control lines.

Residents are advised that there are still pockets of burning land within the fire area.

Although there is still a high level of smoke visible in the area, this will start to reduce over the next few days.

The size of the fire remains at 6,385 hectares of which approximately 2,550 hectares was mixed Pinus radiata age Hancock Victorian Plantation (HVP) plantation.

152.9 hectares of young Willmott Forests plantation aged between 1 and 2 years was located within the perimeter of the burn area and is expected to have been lost. Senior Willmott Forests staff will be on site later this week once access is secured to assess these areas to determine the final affected area.

Confirmed property losses are: 29 houses, 78 sheds and 9 motor vehicles. Assessments of property losses will resume later this morning.

Although there has been a slight scaling down of resources, Emergency Services are still patrolling the area and conducting assets protection as well as fire reduction tasks.

With favourable weather conditions prevailing today it is hoped that containment of any further spread will be achieved. Growers are advised however, that warmer weather is again forecast later this week so considerable risk of fire remains.

At this stage Willmott Forests has its own fire fighters on standby within their local regions, although if required, they are ready to be utilised as possible replacement / relief of fire fighters in the coming days.

No other fires are reported within Willmott Forests' other regions, although Willmott Forests fire fighting crews remain in readiness should a fire start anywhere across our regions.

Information regarding the Gippsland, Victorian fires can be obtained from the DSE on the below link:

<http://www.dse.vic.gov.au/DSE/nrenfoe.nsf/LinkView/519C51D981DAE41FCA257257000A5163E2ACC26BB87D6BFC4A2567CB000DB12D>

Further information can be obtained from the CFA in Victoria on the below link:

http://www.cfa.vic.gov.au/incidents/incident_summary.htm

Summary:

152.9 hectares of Willmott Forests managed plantation has been affected by fire.

This area being:

Creamery Road 2.5 - 2006 PDS, Planted in 2007	– 48.8 hectares
Creamery Road 3.1 - 2006 PDS Planted in 2007	– 31.7 hectares
Creamery Road 3.3 - 2007 PDS Planted in 2008	– 17.1 hectares
Strzelecki Hwy 3.5 - 2007 PDS Planted in 2008	– 5.3 hectares
Stocks Road 3.4 - 2007 PDS Planted in 2008	– 0.2 hectares
Ten Mile Creek 2.4 - 2006 PDS Planted in 2007	– 49.8 hectares