

Willmott Forests Fire Update

Monday 17 August 2009

Multiple fires reported throughout the Bombala region of NSW.

– 4.30pm ‘Fires categorized as “Contained” and now being “Blacked out’.

On Sunday 16 August 2009, multiple fire sites were reported across the Bombala region. Strong winds reportedly gusting up to 120km/hr exposed debris heaps previously burnt during Forests NSW (FNSW) site clean up works in April 2009.

Standard FNSW forestry practice for the use of second rotation land includes burning off debris and litter remaining from previous commercial plantation or native forest harvesting operations in early winter (i.e. April 2009). It is reported that within these windrows, subsurface hot spots or previously unexposed heat was uncovered by wind and fanned by the unusually strong land gales. Despite winter snow falls, rainfall and extremely cold conditions fires have originated on a number of fronts.

FNSW and Willmott Forests field personal from Bombala and the Murray Valley regions joined to actively fight the fires which were burning in an easterly direction.

A containment line earlier pushed in by dozer through Willmott Forests’ Woolison plantation was breached with fire burning into plantation trees up to an estimated distance of 30+ metres. Firefighting crews successfully fought this breach with the assistance of helicopters which bombed the fire with water and fire retardant.

As at 4.30pm the fire was successfully contained following a dramatic reduction in wind strength.

The regions’ crews are now mopping up and “blacking out” burnt areas and will continue to remain active with blacking out and containment works throughout these areas.

The combined area of the fire damage is yet to be determined. Growers with trees that have been adversely affected will be notified within the days ahead.

For further updates please monitor the **Willmott Forests’ website**.