

# Media Release

## Investing in bushfire prevention strategies

26 March 2015

Senator Richard Colbeck, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Agriculture welcomed the announcement of a \$1.5 million bushfire prevention trial which will help reduce the impact of bushfires in Australia.

The mechanical fuel reduction trial was announced by Prime Minister Tony Abbott at the Forest Industry Gala Dinner at Parliament House last night.

“We are allocating funds for this trial as part of our \$15 million National Bushfire Mitigation Program, which aims to implement long-term bushfire mitigation strategies and better fuel reduction programmes,” Senator Colbeck said.

“This trial will examine the effectiveness of mechanical fuel removal in forests that are close to towns or where conservation values could be compromised by fuel reduction burning.”

Senator Colbeck said mechanical fuel reduction is a relatively new concept in Australia despite being widely adopted in the United States and Canada.

“There are number of benefits from this practice as an alternative to controlled burning, including community concerns over air quality, not being limited by weather conditions and managing fuel loads that are close to built-up areas,” he said.

“The mechanical removal method will also create the potential of utilising a market from the sale of biomass fuels – this will provide additional benefits the community, the industry and the environment.”

Senator Colbeck said the Coalition is committed to a competitive and sustainable Australian forestry sector and is working to revitalise the industry.

The trial will be run over three years and coordinated by forestry agencies around Australia and the Australian Forest Products Association.