

Media Release

24 November 2021

Activists will not cancel Christmas – but who will deliver it?

Green lawfare stopping sustainable businesses is now holding the economy and people's livelihood to ransom.

A perfect storm has brought us to an impossible situation just before Christmas, after what has already been two incredibly challenging and uncertain years. Ham-strung by activist litigation, Victoria's native forest industry is facing stood-down contractors, dwindling supply and skyrocketing timber prices.

So, will Christmas be cancelled? It will certainly look different when goods are held up and deliveries delayed. Retailers need pallets to transport beer, fresh food, seafood, wine, or Christmas presents for the children. The imminent native timber shortage affects manufacturing, warehousing, and distribution centres across the country.

"We call on the Victorian Government to fix this mess. When they announced a stop to native harvesting by 2030, they guaranteed timber supply for Victorians until then. At the rate things are going, nothing will be available to harvest by 2022, let alone by 2030. This Government said that the changes to the Code of Practice for Timber Production would resolve green lawfare. It hasn't – it has only emboldened the litigants," said Deb Kerr, CEO of VFPA.

VicForests has been served and injunctioned to the point that native forestry is effectively shutting down now, forcing the State-owned business to stand down contractors just before Christmas after an already tough two years.

And while there is timber available from windblown trees and strategic fire breaks in national parks, policy impediments means that VicForests is not allowed to recover it. Instead, it is left on the ground to rot, turning from valuable timber into a fire hazard.

"VFPA has called on the Government to introduce emergency legislative change to resolve this litigation. We also call on the CEOs of all major supply chain participants to make their concerns known to the Victorian Government – it's time for the Premier and his team to fix this mess," Ms Kerr concluded.

###

Media Contact:

Ulrike Andresen-Nikolai - VFPA Public & Media Relations Manager
(m) 0437 559 360 (e) ulrike.andresen-nikolai@vfpa.com.au



About

The Victorian Forest Products Association (VFPA) represents all elements of the value chain from both sustainable harvesting of plantations and multiple-use natural forest resources. VFPA is a policy development and advocacy group which represents the interests of Victoria's sustainable forestry. We collaborate strongly with other industry bodies to ensure the best outcomes for forestry in general and our members more specifically. Our charter provides autonomy to manage state issues. We collaborate with the Australian Forest Products Association (AFPA) on any issues that transcend state borders and have national implications.

VFPA represents forest growers, harvesters,
and manufacturers of timber and paper products.