

## **Lessons of COVID will help guard supply chains as bushfire season looms: AFGC**

Vital food and grocery supply chains will be better protected this bushfire season by manufacturers, transport providers, retailers and governments drawing on the experience of recent floods, bushfires and the COVID pandemic to plan for disruptions, the Australian Food and Grocery Council (AFGC) says.

AFGC CEO Tanya Barden said the National Disaster Preparedness Summit held this week by the federal government was an important initiative that enhances information sharing and collaboration ahead of a hot, dry summer where bushfire risks are heightened.

"We are a nation that faces frequent weather events and food and grocery manufacturing is a vital sector that has a very complex network of supply chains," Ms Barden said.

"We commend the government for bringing all the stakeholders together for the disaster preparedness summit to raise awareness and enhance coordination between government and industry to keep supply chains open during what is expected to be a challenging summer."

"Over the past few years of major floods, bushfires and COVID, we have experienced massive supply chain disruptions but the food and grocery manufacturing sector has kept supermarket shelves stocked.

"These events can have multiple impacts: growing regions can be impacted and leave agricultural produce in short supply, or it may be supply lines that get ingredients to manufacturers, or from manufacturers to supermarkets.

"Often these are short-lived events and in recent years we have had a high degree of coordination among all levels of government and supply chain partners to share information and minimise disruption. So it is reassuring for industry and consumers that planning is already in place."

Ms Barden said in the longer term it is vital to have government policies that support improved transport networks and a resilient and sustainable domestic food and grocery manufacturing industry.

**For more information contact AFGC media team on [media@afgc.org.au](mailto:media@afgc.org.au) or (02) 6273 1466**