

The devastating bushfires in Australia have so far affected three major apple- and pear-growing areas, according to an industry representative.

Apple and Pears Australia CEO Phil Turnbull said the Adelaide Hills in South Australia were hit prior to Christmas. Meanwhile, the New South Wales areas Bilpin and Batlow were impacted over the weekend.



"South Australia has reported that approximately 25 hectares were damaged, with some growers more heavily impacted than others," Turnbull said.

"Bilpin in the Blue Mountains in NSW has reported extensive fires but in several cases the fires were kept out of the main orchards with damage occurring on the perimeters of the orchards."

"It is too early to determine the extent of the damage in Batlow, as some growers are only beginning to gain access to their properties. Extensive netting damage has been reported."

The apple and pear industry has faced an "inordinate amount of challenges" over the last year, he said. As well as the fires, there is the on-going drought, hail storms, bird and flying fox damage, as well as excessive heat

"One thing that has come through this period is both the resilience and goodwill of everybody in the industry," he said.

"A lot of work needs to be done over of the coming weeks to get the industry the support it needs and back on its feet. In particular, APAL will be working closely with our state counterparts, to both support and represent the needs of the growers, regions and

industry."

He urged industry members to call APAL on 03 9329 3511 if they require any support during this period.

"On a final note, a huge level of thanks to all the rural fire services throughout Australia - the commitment and selflessness of these individuals cannot be repaid," he added.