

Australians have been urged to rally behind the fresh produce industry by buying domestic fruit and vegetables in the face of likely price rises due to severe environmental and climatic challenges.

Andrew Young, the CEO of Brisbane Markets, highlighted that the industry had been hit hard by dual impacts of bushfire and the drought.

“Growers are doing it tough, but the best way Australians can help these businesses - many which have been run by families for generations - is to keep buying fresh fruit and vegetables even if they have to pay a little bit extra,” said Young.

“With the on-going support of Australians, our growers will get through this challenging period just as they have overcome difficult times in the past.”

Brisbane Markets receives produce from more than 7000 growers and Young said the bushfires coupled with the persistent drought were impacting fruit and vegetable production areas across Australia, as well as road transport both within and between States.

“This is creating supply issues in relation to a range of products, including many vegetable lines, and unfortunately the impact could run over an extended period particularly in relation to infrastructure and the damage caused to the likes of tree and vine orchards,” he said.

“As supply volumes tighten, that was likely to be reflected in price increases for many product lines. Even with these challenges, the cost of eating fresh fruit and vegetables in Australia to support a healthy diet remains very reasonable.”

Earlier this week, Nine News reported that fresh produce prices [could rise by as much as 50%](#) across the country due to the bushfires. This rise would be largely due to logistical issues, it said.

Ausveg spokesman, Shaun Lindhe, reportedly warned that leafy greens such as broccoli will be worst hit, but said he couldn't say by how much.

"There have been some farms damaged by the fires but probably the logistical issue that have resulted from highway closures and power outages have had an impact," Lindhe was quoted as saying.

He also urged Australians to continue to buy plenty of fresh produce, adding there if there are some aesthetic differences, it's still high quality and good enough to eat.

"Continue to buy local and support farmers and it has the knock-on effect of supporting regional communities," he was quoted as saying.

Last week, the head of Apple and Pears Australia said that the devastating bushfires had [already affected three major growing areas](#).

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 in early January.

In addition, dozens of wine grape growers were reportedly [affected in the Adelaide Hills](#).