

Thursday, June 2<sup>nd</sup> 2011

## Audit results confirm compliance

VicForests has achieved a high level of compliance following independent audits assessing its operations against more than 2000 criteria.

The Department of Sustainability and Environment's Forest Audit Program assessed VicForests' compliance with the legislation, regulations and government policies in place to ensure sustainable forest management practices.

VicForests' Director, Corporate Affairs, Nathan Trushell, said the audits showed:

- VicForests' harvesting operations were 93% compliant with the audit criteria,
- 96% of coupes harvested on the Timber Release Plans were compliant,
- Harvesting levels in Melbourne's water catchments were 100% compliant, and
- Harvesting levels in Special Management Zones were 100% compliant.

"The latest audit results confirmed VicForests' operations are highly compliant with the legislation which governs native timber harvesting in Victoria," Mr Trushell said.

"The Module 5 Environmental Audit assessed VicForests' harvesting operations against more than 2000 criteria. These operations were found to be 93% compliant.

"No severe non-compliances were noted, with investigations into 2073 different audit criteria showing only two major non-compliances.

"The majority of other non-compliance findings were deemed to have no environmental impact, negligible or minor impact.

"The coupes assessed as part of this audit were chosen based on their environmental risk, with the audit targeting more coupes with a higher risk of environmental impact," he said.

"The two major non-compliances related to machines entering rainforest or buffers in place to protect rainforest. However, no rainforest was harvested.

"The Module 6 Environmental Audit investigated 354 coupes on VicForests' Timber Release Plans with 99.9% of the harvested area found to be compliant.

"The audit assessed 5644 hectares harvested by VicForests with the area of non-compliance equalling just four hectares.

"Harvesting operations in Melbourne's water catchments were 100% compliant, while operations in areas designated as Special Management Zones were also 100% compliant.

"This audit identified no imminent environmental hazards or unacceptable risks.

"VicForests is committed to continuously improving our practices and the results of these audits should give the community confidence in relation to sustainable timber harvesting operations in Victoria," Mr Trushell said.

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