

MEDIA RELEASE

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Supreme Court ruling encourages commitment by forest managers

Last week's ruling in the Supreme Court overturning charges against two conservationists will do little to alter the practices of forestry professionals, Chief Operating Officer, VicForests, Mr Peter Ford said today.

"The ruling makes it abundantly clear that there are strict guidelines by which everyone involved in native forestry needs to abide. It does not have other implications for forest harvesting, as has been suggested," Mr Ford said.

"VicForests is determined to look to the future to ensure that practices continue to be environmentally sound," he said.

VicForests is responsible for the sustainable harvest and sale of timber from State forests in Eastern Victoria. It is bound by a rigorous regulatory framework that includes the Sustainable Forests (Timber) Act, Regional Forest Agreements and the Code of Forest Practice for Timber Production.

Recent EPA audits in East Gippsland found excellent levels of environmental compliance. The annual audit measures operational compliance with the Government's regulatory framework for native forest management.

"The Supreme Court judgement will allow VicForests to go forward with our work and to continue to focus on achieving the highest standards of environmental protection. The task of achieving high level environmental compliance is something that we take very seriously," Mr Ford said.

"Sustainable forest management is reflected by continual improvement and as such, VicForests will continue to make its practices available for scrutiny through external audits," he said.

VicForests' Sustainable Forest Management Policy will be published in the coming weeks. It outlines the organisation's policy commitment in relation to its ecological, operational and social responsibilities.

The organisation is also working towards forest management certification, which has a strong focus on environmental protection and auditing.

Anyone requiring further information on VicForests forest management practices should phone 9608 9500 or email vfsadmin@vicforests.com.au

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