

Thursday, August 12<sup>th</sup> 2010

## Legal action against VicForests dropped

Legal action against VicForests has been withdrawn.

VicForests' CEO, David Pollard, welcomed the withdrawal of the charges today by a group attempting to bring a private prosecution alleging unauthorised timber harvesting operations in the Central Highlands.

"The withdrawal of the charges against VicForests was an inevitable conclusion," Dr Pollard said.

"There was no legal basis for the prosecution as VicForests' operations are authorised operations under the Sustainable Forest (Timber) Act 2004.

"It was unfortunate that the group attempted to bring an action against VicForests before clarifying the details of its own case.

"Their actions appear to have been designed to maximise publicity, rather than to show a genuine interest in caring for our forests.

"This is a worrying approach to such a serious issue.

"VicForests has never been provided with the full details of the claims made by the group against our organisation," he said.

Dr Pollard said detailed legislation governs VicForests' operations.

"VicForests continues to review its operations in the Central Highlands to ensure that no breach of the Forest Management Plan has occurred," he said.

"No old growth Ash forest is harvested in Victoria's Central Highlands region.

"VicForests is committed to sustainable timber harvesting in Victoria and all our operations comply with strict environmental regulations.

"Less than 0.1% of the native forest in Victoria is harvested each year and VicForests actively regenerates, or regrows trees, in all areas where harvesting takes place.

"VicForests acknowledges there are some groups which do not support native timber harvesting. However our industry plays an important role in meeting Victoria's demand for hardwood timber," Dr Pollard said.

VicForests will not pursue costs from the community group for expenses already incurred as part of this action.

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