

April 14, 2010

Public Consultation Period Closed

The public consultation period regarding proposed changes to VicForests' Timber Release Plans has closed.

Lachlan Spencer, VicForests' Regional Manager – Central Highlands, said amendments are proposed each year to assist with planning future operations.

“VicForests received submissions from the community regarding some of the amendments proposed to its Timber Release Plans during the recent public consultation period. This period has now closed,” Mr Spencer said.

“Public submissions are currently being considered by VicForests and amendments will be made to our proposed plans where appropriate.

“Following this, these amended Timber Release Plans will be submitted to the Department of Sustainability and Environment for approval.

“To ensure this process is transparent, all submissions VicForests received from the community will be forwarded to DSE to assist them in their considerations,” he said.

VicForests will respond in writing to everybody who provided a submission.

“Some community members raised concerns around the total area that has been included on the Timber Release Plans,” Mr Spencer said.

“However it is important to keep in mind that the majority of coupes have only been added to the TRPs for planning purposes and will not be harvesting in the immediate future.

“Each year VicForests harvests approximately 5500 ha, or less than 0.01% of Victoria's total forested area.

“This limit is set in an Allocation Order and approved by the Minister for Environment under the Sustainable Forests (Timber) Act 2004. Changes proposed to the Timber Release Plans will not result in an increase to this figure.

“The areas included in the plans may be harvested over a three to five year period, and no new area will be harvested until the plans have been approved by DSE.

“VicForests is committed to regenerating all areas it harvests and invests significant resources into ensuring this process is successful.

“The regeneration of harvested areas is a detailed process which can take more than three years to complete successfully.

“More than 5400 hectares of regenerated forest was submitted to DSE for verification and approval during the 2008/09 year,” Mr Spencer said.

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