

Thursday, January 20th 2010

Regenerated Forest Highlights Sustainability

VicForests has successfully regenerated more than 5500 hectares of Victoria's forest, including 2350 hectares in the Central Highlands region.

The 2010 Coupe Finalisation Process Report, released by the Department of Sustainability and Environment, has confirmed the regeneration of forest areas across eastern Victoria.

"VicForests ensures the forest fully re-establishes in all areas following its harvesting operations," Brad Winthrop, VicForests' Director, Operations, said.

"VicForests will hand over management responsibility for 5517 hectares of State forest to the Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) following successful regeneration work.

"This outcome highlights VicForests' commitment to the sustainable management of Victoria's forests.

"Following harvesting operations, VicForests sows seeds from trees native to each local area to ensure the same mix of species present on a site prior to harvest grows back.

"VicForests actively monitors these areas after seeding to ensure regeneration is occurring. The areas are then audited by DSE to confirm this process has been successful," he said.

Mr Winthrop said VicForests maintains responsibility for all harvested areas until they are regenerated.

"The regeneration of our forests after harvesting is a detailed process which can take more than three years to complete successfully. The areas accepted back by DSE have been regenerated and monitored by VicForests over a long period," he said.

"More recently, VicForests completed its largest ever aerial seeding program in 2010 aimed at regrowing forests throughout the east of the State.

"This program resulted in the amount of native forest re-seeded in 2009/10 exceeding the area that was harvested, with more than 5300 hectares of forest re-seeded and only 5047 hectares harvested during this time.

"Drought and poor seed crops had made regrowing our forests difficult in previous years and had resulted in a backlog of areas requiring regeneration. However, VicForests' extensive regeneration program has assisted with addressing this backlog.

"VicForests is now within 7.5% of its regeneration target and has stockpiled Victoria's largest supply of eucalypt seeds for use in future programs," Mr Winthrop said.

The area handed back to DSE includes 513 hectares which were successfully regenerated to the required standard by VicForests before being burnt by wildfire.

Media Contact: David Walsh