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Review endorses VicForests

A detailed, external review commissioned by the Department of Treasury and Finance has endorsed VicForests' operations and business model.

VicForests' CEO, David Pollard, said an assessment of VicForests' first five years of operations by consultancy firm URS revealed the organisation had achieved many of the objectives set by Government when VicForests was created in 2004.

"The review by URS recognised VicForests' significant achievements in the five years since its inception," Dr Pollard said.

"These include increasing the transparency and accountability around native timber production in Victoria, undertaking a reform agenda to create market-based pricing for timber products and achieving certification to the Australian Forestry Standard.

"The review also found that VicForests' business model remains valid.

"Importantly, the report indicates that VicForests has performed well against its environmental objectives, largely complying with a complex legislative framework and implementing systems to ensure future compliance," he said.

Dr Pollard acknowledged the need for VicForests to continually improve its practices.

"The review did identify areas of VicForests' operations which require further improvement – particularly in relation to managing risks associated with the harvest and delivery of timber to mills under VicForests' Mill Door Sales system," he said.

"Many of the concerns raised in the review have already been recognised by VicForests and we are in process of developing methods to address these where appropriate in areas such as logistics efficiency, stakeholder engagement and resource availability estimations.

"The report acknowledges the difficulties presented by VicForests' operating environment including our organisation's responsibility to balance its need to be profitable while ensuring a viable future for Victoria's timber industry.

"This includes the need for VicForests' to continue harvesting Victoria's forests at sustainable levels, allowing these forests to be managed to meet a range of environmental, social and economic outcomes.

"VicForests is confident we will further improve the profitability of our business as we recover from the impact of recent, significant fire events and realise the full effect of the reforms implemented within the timber industry," Dr Pollard said.

VicForests is the Government Business Enterprise responsible for the sustainable harvest, regeneration and sale of timber from Victoria's State forests.

VicForests harvests and regenerates approximately 5500 hectares, or less than 0.1% of Victoria's native forest, each year.

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