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VicForests corrects misinformation

VicForests has sought to correct misinformation being presented to the community as part of a campaign targeting Reflex paper.

“The timber provided to Australian Paper to produce Reflex is sourced using fully sustainable, world-class forestry practices,” Nathan Trushell, VicForests’ Director, Corporate Affairs, said.

“No old growth forests are used in the production of Reflex. The vast majority of timber supplied to Australian Paper comes from forests which have re-grown following bushfires in 1939.

“VicForests regenerates all harvested areas following its operations to ensure the forest re-establishes. This ensures these forests are available to be used in a variety of ways by future generations.

“VicForests encourages the community to purchase environmentally conscious office paper. Choosing Reflex means people are buying an Australian-made product, produced using timber which comes from sustainably-managed, local forests.

“Many of the overseas produced office paper alternatives do not come with the same environmental guarantees,” he said.

Mr Trushell said almost 90% of the 7.8 million hectares of native forest in Victoria is unavailable or unsuitable for timber harvesting.

“VicForests applies scientifically developed precautions in all its operations to minimise the potential for timber harvesting to impact on endangered species. This includes:

- Retaining trees in all harvested areas to provide habitat for native fauna
- Leaving buffer zones where no harvesting is permitted alongside rivers, creeks and other key environmental features
- The undertaking of field surveys by VicForests’ staff in all areas prior to harvesting to identify potential Leadbeater’s Possum habitat
- The creation of exclusion zones where no timber harvesting operations are permitted when an area meets the criteria for Leadbeater’s Possum habitat

“VicForests does not harvest any pre-1900 Ash trees in order to protect these as future habitat for native fauna.

“There are also 4.7 million hectares of national parks and conservation reserves in Victoria where no harvesting is permitted at all,” he said.

“Detailed research by the Department of Sustainability and Environment has found that a complete stop of timber harvesting in Melbourne’s water catchments would see a total increase of as little as 1% in water yield over the next 40 years.

“VicForests’ harvesting operations are closely monitored to ensure they do not impact on Melbourne’s water quality including regular audits by Melbourne Water and DSE,” Mr Trushell said.

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