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VicForests review findings misrepresented

VicForests has labelled some media reporting of a Department of Treasury and Finance review into its operations as “incorrect and misleading”.

VicForests’ CEO, David Pollard, said the review by consultancy firm URS recognised many of the significant achievements from VicForests’ first five years of operations – despite media claims to the contrary.

“VicForests strongly believes the interpretation of the review included in a recent article in The Age is incorrect and misleading,” Dr Pollard said.

“The review by URS actually revealed that VicForests has achieved many of the objectives set out by Government when our organisation was created in 2004.

“Some media outlets have chosen to focus on the recommendations for improvement contained within the review, rather than present a balanced picture of the overall report.

“These outlets have misrepresented the findings and the tone of the review, and have certainly not provided the public with an accurate reflection of this document or VicForests’ overall performance.

“In reality, the review found that VicForests’ business model remains valid, native timber production in Victoria is now more transparent and also acknowledged VicForests’ efforts in achieving certification to the Australian Forestry Standard.

“Importantly, the report indicates that VicForests has performed well against its environmental objectives.

“There are two very different perspectives on this issue – one is the actual content of the review itself, and the second is the incorrect manner in which this content has been interpreted by outlets such as The Age,” he said.

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

“The review proved particularly useful in identifying which areas of VicForests’ operations require further improvement.

“This includes suggestions to improve the efficiency of the harvest and delivery of timber to mills under the Mill Door Sales system,” he said.

“VicForests has already recognised many of the concerns raised in the review and have begun addressing these while also considering economic realities and the influence of events outside VicForests’ control, such as bushfire, on our operations.

“Victoria’s forests continue to be well managed to meet a range environmental, social and economic outcomes,” Dr Pollard said.

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