



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

**For immediate release**

**Monday 19 December 2005**

### **Timber auction yields positive result for industry and rural communities**

VicForests' latest timber auction of sawlogs, firewood and fencing timbers in commercial lots from Gippsland State Forests yielded a successful result which the company believes will be good for industry and rural communities.

All timber cutters that placed a bid through the sealed bid auction were offered coupes in which they could harvest timber for commercial firewood, posts poles and split timbers. This provides a good basis for the continuation of commercial firewood supplies for communities dependent on firewood for heating.

Successful bidders were from Powelltown, Chum Creek, Bairnsdale, Benalla and Nowa Nowa.

Regional Manager, West Gippsland, Mr Nathan Trushell said that reasonable and appropriate guidelines would ensure that harvesting meets current safe work practice requirements VicForests' environmental sustainability standards..

"All bidders were required to demonstrate a capacity to meet the community's expectations in terms of occupational health and safety and environmental management," Mr Trushell said.

"The public can be assured that the timber that they purchase from these sellers has been sourced according to stringent guidelines that is sourced from non-wildlife habitat areas and which is via legal harvesting

"VicForests is committed to working with the Department of Sustainability and the Environment in a bid to halting illegal logging operations, which puts the forest environment under threat," he said.

"This is a unique sales approach to VicForests which will ensure ongoing access to commercial quantities of firewood to meet rural communities

The State Government's 2003 Policy '*Our Forests, Our Future*' indicated that all sales of commercial forest produce would take place on an open market basis. Private cutting for domestic firewood is unaffected under this auction.

**ENDS**

***Further information please phone Nathan Trushell, 03 5172 2133 or 0428 586 297.***