



MEDIA RELEASE

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VicForests Set to Work with Harvest and Haulage Industry

VicForests will take over the management of native timber harvest and haulage in the east of the state from 1 July 2006. These tasks were previously conducted by four separate syndicates of timber processors.

Rather than sell logs in the forest at the stump, logs will be sold harvested and delivered to the mill site under an arrangement known as Mill Door Sales.

Mill Door Sales allows VicForests to better adapt to changing and new markets for timber products that are expected to arise from the introduction of the new pricing system. It will also allow timber processors to concentrate less on production and focus more on processing and marketing of products.

"This will establish a more conventional customer and supplier relationship," explained Barry Vaughan, Regional Manager, East Gippsland. "You wouldn't expect a timber buyer to come to a sawmill and cut their own boards."

VicForests will also seek to improve environmental, safety and regeneration outcomes through the direct management of contractors.

VicForests has been working with the syndicates to effect the transition on 1 July 2006.

Mr Vaughan acknowledged the important role of the syndicates and said that Tambo Logging Company and Snowy Harvest and Haulage have been engaged in discussions with VicForests to ensure that the transition occurred as smoothly as possible. He said that many people in the community are aware of the special role of timber syndicates through their support of local events and groups.

"The community should not notice any major change in the way that timber harvesting occurs in their district as a result of the introduction of Mill Door Sales," Mr Vaughan said.

Some syndicate staff have moved to VicForests and their skills and experience is regarded as an asset that will be a particularly important part of the transition stage.

"VicForests recognises that this is a significant shift for harvest and haulage contractors and we want to support those contractors and provide them with as much certainty as possible," Mr Vaughan said.

"A Code of Behaviour between VicForests and contractors has been developed to help support the relationship between the two parties into the future.

"On the whole, contractors have shown a willingness to work together with VicForests to look at this as a positive opportunity for their workforce.

"Equally, VicForests staff are proving that they are keen and ready to rise to the challenge of this different way of operating and the collaborative effort that will result from the direct working relationship with contractors," he said.

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