

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

**For immediate release**

**Friday 3 March 2006**

### **Mt Stirling timber harvesting underway**

A timber harvesting operation commenced recently, two kilometres west of King Saddle, Mt Stirling. The harvesting is taking place in a 25 hectare Alpine Ash coupe within the Mansfield State forest, near the intersection of Circuit Road and Mt Number Three Road.

There has been extensive timber harvesting in the Mt Stirling area in the past, and this has played a significant part in Mansfield and Victorian history.

"In the late 1950s and early 1960s, the Mt Stirling Road and Circuit Road were constructed by the Forest Commission Victoria and the sawmilling industry, to access stands of 1850-origin Alpine Ash forest", said Peter Scales, Senior Forest Officer, VicForests at Mansfield.

"This resource was in high demand after the completion of the salvage of 1939 Black Friday-burnt Ash forests closer to Melbourne," he explained.

Millions of superfeet (tens of thousands of cubic metres) of logs were extracted from areas accessed by these roads in the 1960s, 1970s and early 1980s. The logs were processed by sawmills in Mansfield (as many as 12 at its peak) and transported to Melbourne by road and rail. Mansfield was a 'timber town' at that time, with logging and sawmilling supporting a significant part of the population.

The log trucks all passed over the Delatite River bridge at Mirimbah, which was recently replaced by the Mt Buller-Mt Stirling Alpine Resort Management Board through a State government funding initiative, at a cost of around \$750,000.

"The new bridge provides continued access to Mt Stirling for a variety of users, including cross country skiers, and summer recreational visitors to Alpine Resort, State forest and Alpine National Park areas", Mr Scales said

"It also provides on-going access for the timber industry, which will continue to have a presence in the Mt Stirling area in the future".

This year's harvesting is expected to conclude in May, and the area will then be regenerated in Autumn 2007.

Visitors to the area are reminded that during the harvesting, Circuit Road will be closed for public safety, between Mt Number Three Road and King Basin Road, 6am to 6pm weekdays with the exception of public holidays. However, access to popular destinations such as Craig's Hut and Pineapple Flat remains open, via alternative routes such as the Howqua Gap.

A copy of the fact sheet 'Timber Harvesting at Mt Stirling' can be obtained at the Mansfield Visitor Information Centre or at the VicForests website [www.vicforests.com.au/ind-fr-about-frame.html](http://www.vicforests.com.au/ind-fr-about-frame.html) and clicking on 'Publications'.

**ENDS**

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