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## VicForests appoints biodiversity specialist

VicForests has appointed Dr Chela Powell to the role of Conservation Biologist.

Daniel Sedunary, VicForests' Manager, Tactical Planning, said Dr Powell will assist VicForests with the protection of biodiversity in Victoria's State forests.

"VicForests is very pleased to announce Dr Chela Powell has joined our Planning team," Mr Sedunary said.

"Dr Powell's role will focus on the protection of endangered species, liaising with external flora and fauna experts, and working with our staff to improve their knowledge base.

"Her work will also include coordinating fauna surveys prior to harvesting operations and developing policies to ensure the protection of species discovered during the survey process.

"We are looking to build an even greater understanding of biodiversity management issues associated with our harvesting operations.

"Victoria's forests, and their flora and fauna, are protected by a detailed legislative framework which considers environmental, social and economic factors.

"The appointment of a Conservation Biologist will allow VicForests to improve its procedures and further protect this biodiversity," Mr Sedunary said.

Dr Powell has a Bachelor of Science majoring in Conservation Biology from Monash University and completed her PhD at the University of Melbourne.

"This new role is a fantastic chance to build on the forest knowledge of VicForests and our staff," Dr Powell said.

"Our native animals don't live in only one type of forest area. We need a clearer understanding of the habitat use and breeding patterns of our fauna across not only State forests but also in national parks and reserves.

"VicForests is looking to move away from small scale studies to undertake surveys which extend across the broader landscape and different forest types.

"By sharing information with other biodiversity specialists and incorporating the use of technology such as non-invasive cameras to survey for animals we can gain a much better appreciation of the way fauna moves within Victoria's forests.

"This opportunity is not simply about educating VicForests' staff but also about sharing their existing knowledge and learnings in collaborative projects with other organisations," Dr Powell said.

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