

Tuesday, December 13<sup>th</sup> 2011

## Plan offers certainty and sustainability

VicForests has welcomed the release of the Timber Industry Action Plan (TIAP) by the Minister for Agriculture and Food Security today.

VicForests' Acting CEO, Robert Green, said the Plan will play a vital role in securing the long-term future of the timber industry in Victoria.

"The Timber Industry Action Plan will provide greater certainty around access to timber resources, allowing investment and development to take place with confidence," Mr Green said.

"This will undoubtedly strengthen the ability of Victoria's sustainable timber industry to meet the significant demand for wood and wood products.

"The Plan includes a commitment for VicForests to review sustainable harvest levels on an annual basis to incorporate the impact of major events such as bushfires on the available timber resource.

"Harvesting levels will continue to be adjusted to ensure they remain sustainable, with information regarding timber yields to be made available each year.

"VicForests delivered on this commitment in 2011 by providing industry with a Resource Outlook briefing which incorporated the impact of the 2009 bushfires on the area of forest available for harvest.

"As part of the Plan, VicForests will also complete a review of our sales mechanisms to ensure timber from our State forests continues to be sold through an appropriate, commercially prudent process. This may also include longer-term sales agreements to provide industry with further resource security," he said.

Mr Green said the Timber Industry Action Plan acknowledges the important role played by the timber industry in fire suppression.

"VicForests, and our contractors, will remain a committed part of fire fighting efforts in Victoria's State forests," he said.

"VicForests also supports the Timber Industry Action Plan's endorsement of independent third-party certification of forest management practices to provide guarantees timber has been sourced in an environmentally responsible way.

"VicForests' operations are certified to the Australian Forestry Standard, which has been developed specifically for Australian forests and is recognised by the world's largest forest certification scheme – the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification," Mr Green said.

Victoria's has 7.8 million hectares of native forest with less than 0.1% of this area harvested and re-established each year.

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