

Tuesday, June 28<sup>th</sup> 2011

## Timber plans receive tick of approval

The approval of VicForests' Timber Release Plans has been published in the Victorian Government Gazette.

VicForests' Director, Planning, Lachlan Spencer, said approval of the Timber Release Plans (TRPs) is crucial in providing certainty for the native timber industry.

"New Timber Release Plans have been developed for the Benalla-Mansfield, Central, Central Gippsland and Dandenong Forest Management Areas to replace existing Plans which expire on June 30<sup>th</sup> 2011," Mr Spencer said.

"Timber Release Plans show the location of areas which may be sustainably harvested and regenerated over the next five years.

"They also indicate the prescriptions which harvesting operations must comply with in different locations.

"This approval of the TRPs by the Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) gives VicForests the opportunity to develop future harvesting schedules and provides contractors and customers with an understanding of our long term plans.

"Amendments were also made to Timber Release Plans for the East Gippsland, Tambo and North-East Forest Management Areas.

"These amendments include the removal of areas which are no longer planned for harvesting or have been harvested and successfully regenerated. New areas have also been added to allow for the planning of future harvesting operations," he said.

Mr Spencer said changes to the Timber Release Plans will not increase the amount of timber harvesting taking place in Victoria

"Each year, VicForests harvests and regenerates less than 0.1% of the native forest in Victoria," he said.

"This limit is set in an Allocation Order and approved by the Minister for Environment and Climate Change under the Sustainable Forests (Timber) Act 2004 and is not impacted by the approval of Timber Release Plans.

"VicForests consulted closely with a range of stakeholders when developing and amending the Timber Release Plans. These stakeholders included local councils, conservation groups and other interested parties.

"This consultation period is a crucial part of this process and all submissions received from the community provided to DSE to assist them with their decision regarding the approval of the Timber Release Plans," Mr Spencer said.

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