

Friday, November 25th 2011

VicForests reports on sustainability initiatives

VicForests has released its Sustainability Report for 2011.

VicForests' acting CEO, Robert Green, said the report highlights the organisation's environmental, social and economic sustainability initiatives.

"VicForests is proud to be part of a truly sustainable native forest industry and continuing to improve our environmental sustainability remains a crucial component of VicForests' operations," Mr Green said.

"VicForests has significantly enhanced its management of environmental values in 2010/11 through the commencement of pre-harvesting surveys for threatened species, additional training for staff and the appointment of a conservation biologist.

"We have also developed a long-term outlook which predicts the future availability of timber resources. This outlook incorporates the impact of events such as the 2009 bushfires and will help ensure future harvesting levels continue to be sustainable.

"However, we have also made substantial progress in relation to our social and economic sustainability.

"This includes engaging more closely with indigenous groups and providing cultural awareness training for staff, while the introduction of VicForests' Community Support Program in 2010/11 has provided grants to a variety of not for profit groups to assist with initiatives which will benefit their local communities.

Mr Green said VicForests again posted a profit despite the challenges faced by the industry as a result of difficult market conditions for timber products.

"Native forestry is a complex and difficult business," he said.

"Few other industries are as sustainable as native forestry which produces renewable, recyclable materials that most of us use and appreciate every day.

"We do not shy away from the fact there are issues we need to continue to focus on including the regeneration of harvested areas affected by drought and bushfire in recent years.

"However, we have done significant work in relation to this issue and look forward to reporting on the successful regeneration of thousands of hectares of harvested forest in the coming months," Mr Green said.

VicForests harvested a total of 4979 hectares in 2010/11 and provided almost 1.7 million m³ of timber to customers across the State.

Media Contact: David Walsh

T: 03 9608 9562 M: 0409 571 580 E: david.walsh@vicforests.com.au W: www.vicforests.com.au