

# Media Release

8 February 2017

## Legal costs between VicForests and environmental group settled out of court

Legal costs relating to a dispute between VicForests and an East Gippsland environment group have been settled out of court with each party paying their own expenses.

This settlement follows an offer made by the environment group in January to discontinue the legal proceedings which related to harvesting on three sites in East Gippsland.

VicForests' Acting CEO, Nathan Trushell, said the proceedings were brought by the environment group in relation to the protection of threatened species.

"This has been an expensive exercise to show we were following the rules," Mr Trushell said.

"Hundreds of thousands of dollars have been spent in legal fees which have resulted in minimal changes.

"This money could have been better spent on surveys or returned to the State as part of a larger dividend paid by VicForests.

"The environment group continually amended their case which led to more expense and time wasted.

"Following the settlement we are now able to re-commence harvesting on the sites," Mr Trushell said.

All of the threatened species detected on the three sites by VicForests and community groups are being protected appropriately by VicForests.

"These are precautions we undertake as part of our detailed planning processes," Mr Trushell said.

"It took the best part of a million dollars to confirm what we already knew."

VicForests now has the option to re-schedule harvesting operations on these sites but no date has been set for work to re-commence.