

Media Release

15 December 2016

VicForests' sustainability certification extends to western Victoria

VicForests has successfully extended its certification to the Australian Forestry Standard (AFS) to include community forestry operations in western Victoria.

Nathan Trushell, Acting CEO VicForests, said that this is the first time VicForests has sought certification for its community forestry operations.

"VicForests' have been certified to the AFS for ten years now and we are very pleased to officially include our western Victorian operations within that certification.

"With over 60 customers in western Victoria we saw it as essential to extend our certification to cover our community forestry operations.

"All VicForests' customers will now be able to purchase timber from us with the independent assurance that it comes from sustainably managed forests," Mr Trushell said.

There are nine criteria that forest managers must meet to receive certification including the need to protect biodiversity, maintain forest health, protect soil and water and to maintain and enhance social and economic benefits.

VicForests is audited every nine months by accredited auditors in order to maintain its certification. The most recent surveillance audit took place in September 2016.

"Our staff should be very proud of the audit results," Mr Trushell said.

"The report stated that excellent progress has been made in training and our systems have been enhanced to support the taskforce process and updates regarding threatened species detections," he said.

The auditors also commended VicForests staff for showing strong support for the certification process and actively improving practices both in the field and in their system. It was suggested that VicForests should improve on its documentation and procedures for assessing and recording risks.

"We have updated our risk assessment instructions for staff and will work on improving our procedures over the coming months, Mr Trushell said.

The AFS is internationally recognised by the world's largest forest certification scheme, the Program for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC).

VicForests is responsible for the sustainable harvest, regrowing and commercial sale of timber in Victoria. VicForests supports thousands of jobs state wide and plays a vital role in sustaining the economy in rural areas.

For further details or to view a copy of the audit report please visit www.vicforests.com.au/audit-reports.

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