



Timber Release Plan

What is The Timber Release Plan?

The Timber Release Plan (TRP) is a five-year rolling plan that identifies areas called coupes that may be harvested for timber over the next three to five years.

The TRP lists the coupes, their locations, the type of forest within and the method of harvesting that would be used in each one.

The coupes are placed on the TRP by VicForests planners who identify these areas from what is available in state forest for approved timber harvesting activities.

The TRP is reviewed and amended on an annual basis unless an exceptional circumstance, such as a major bushfire, triggers an earlier review.

Once the proposed TRP has been approved, the planning process continues into each individual coupe and operations are modified as new information becomes available.

Will all areas on the Timber Release Plan be harvested?

No. The TRP may list a large number of areas to be harvested over the next three to five years, however, this is not indicative of the area that VicForests will actually harvest.

When a TRP has been approved, VicForests Planners continue to plan and check those approved areas for any additional information or factors that need to be considered to protect environmental values. This includes threatened species detections, flora and fauna protection, water catchments, historical or cultural significance and more.

This new information found during planning results in further modifications of areas, and in some cases the removal of entire areas from the TRP during the annual update.

VicForests needs to plan and allow operational flexibility to meet customers contractual obligations in timber production.

VicForests is also required to have an approved TRP before any road construction work can begin on coupes. This work can take up to two years to complete before harvesting begins and sometimes requires approval from DELWP.

Timber Release Plan process



Planning Process

VicForests planners undertake a detailed planning process to identify areas to be placed on the TRP.

This is an annual process that requires intensive field and desk based assessments to identify new areas to be included in the plan or any areas that need to be removed.

Each new area considered for the TRP is subject to assessments that look at potential forest biodiversity, social, historical, cultural, soil and water issues that may require management prior to and during the proposed operation.

Planning for how each site will be successfully regenerated also commences at this early stage.

Planners continue to survey and check areas on the TRP even once the proposed TRP has been approved.

Proposed TRP

A proposed TRP is published on the VicForests website that identifies which coupes may be harvested over the next three to five years.

The TRP lists the schedules, coupes, locations, types of forest and method of harvesting that would be used.

Maps indicating locations of the coupes are also provided on the website including the schedule of the coupes.

Public Consultation Period

The proposed TRP is submitted to VicForests' stakeholders including DELWP, Melbourne Water and Parks Victoria for a review and feedback period.

VicForests releases the proposed TRP to the public to include any other stakeholders or members of the community who wish to review our initial plans when they are available and provide comment where appropriate.

Community feedback is sought on specific operational aspects of our proposed new harvesting locations or boundary changes. This is an opportunity to provide comment regarding concerns with:

- The timing of harvesting operations
- The use of particular Haulage routes
- The proximity of proposed harvesting to private property or public use areas
- The identification and protection of forest values within specific harvesting sites.

All feedback and comments on the proposed TRP are reviewed by VicForests and where appropriate the plan is amended.

TRP Approval

Once all feedback has been reviewed, the TRP and annual planning process is reviewed to ensure consistency with all legislative requirements before being submitted to VicForests Board and gazetted by the Victorian Government.

Changes to the TRP are generally made on an annual basis although they can be made at other times where exceptional circumstances occur such as major bushfires.

Coupe Plan Development

After the proposed TRP has been approved, the planning process continues by further developing individual coupe plans, and where necessary, including any new information made available.

The coupe plan is developed closer to when harvesting takes place to ensure the most up-to-date information is used.

VicForests planners continue to work on mapping, threatened species identification, protection of special environmental values and forest management within individual coupes that have been placed on the TRP.

If any new information is found, or environmental values identified, planners modify operations with the appropriate protection measures and amend the rolling plan in the next TRP review.

Allocation Order

The Allocation Order is the document which allows VicForests access to State forests timber resources under the Sustainable Forests (Timber) Act 2004.

This document is provided by the Minister for Agriculture and published in the Victorian Government gazette.

The Order allocates VicForests with timber resources in State forests and permits us to undertake management activities associated with harvesting and selling.

It also specifies what forest types are available, how much total area in hectares is available for harvest in each forest type, describes the maximum area that may be harvested in defined five-year periods and specifies any other conditions and limitations that apply to the allocated timber resources.

For more information visit:

<http://agriculture.vic.gov.au/agriculture/forestry/timber-allocation-order>

TRP Documentation and Maps

A schedule of all proposed changes and maps indicating approximate coupe locations are available on our website at www.vicforests.com.au/proposedtrp

Please email vfs.trp@vicforests.com.au if you wish to be informed of future harvesting plans.