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VicForests gets stamp of approval for sustainability

VicForests has been successfully re-certified to the Australian Standard for Sustainable Forest Management for the ninth year running.

The Australian Forestry Standard (AFS) is a certification that provides consumers with the assurance that the timber products they are buying comes from sustainably managed forests.

VicForests' Chief Executive Officer Robert Green said that this re-certification is a great example of how VicForests is continuously improving and adapting its operations as a leader in sustainable and ethical timber production.

"We take our responsibilities very seriously and are continually looking at ways in which we can balance the need to protect environmental values while also meeting the demand for locally sourced, sustainable timber.

"Our staff are very passionate about what they do. Every operation is carefully planned before harvesting to ensure threatened species and habitat are protected and the area regrows to its natural state."

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

There are nine criteria that must be met to receive certification including the need to protect biodiversity, maintain forest productivity and forest health, protect soil and water, maintain carbon cycles and to maintain and enhance social and economic benefits.

VicForests is audited every nine months by the accredited auditors in order to retain its certification. The most recent re-certification audit took place in December 2015.

"The report stated that VicForests has consistently and continuously improved and kept pace with the changes to the timber industry," Mr Green said.

VicForests was also praised for its management systems with significant improvements being made to maps and other key planning and communications tools.

Training and assessments were listed as areas to improve on.

"We are currently reviewing these procedures and will work to improve them over the coming months," Mr Green said.

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 certification report please visit www.vicforests.com.au.