

A photograph of a forest landscape with tall trees and green foliage, partially obscured by a green geometric shape.

14 October 2021

New research helps preserve Leadbeater's Possums

New research led by VicForests has found that preserving and creating midstorey forest connectivity is critical to maintaining Leadbeater's Possum populations.

Presenting at Forestry Australia's National Conference this week, VicForests' spatial data scientist Dr. Ruizhu Jiang detailed what these findings meant for the species' future.

"After the Leadbeater's Possum was listed as critically endangered in 2015 we began combining sightings of this species across multiple years with the latest high-resolution LiDAR data to create what we call a habitat suitability model, which allows us to pinpoint where this possum likes to live."

"While protecting hollow-bearing trees, which is something we already do as part of our operations, is important, actions should be taken to build sustainable forest midstorey pathways for Leadbeater's possums to safely navigate through."

Extensive pre-harvest surveys ensure current habitat is protected via VicForests' retention harvesting systems and the regeneration of forests incorporating Dr Jiang's research allows VicForests to better plan for future habitat connectivity for the Leadbeater's Possum.

This paper marks the culmination of years of hard work not only for Dr. Jiang but several members of VicForests and the University of Melbourne.

"It's great to close this chapter on our research but our work is far from finished," Dr. Jiang said.

"As forest people, we are passionate about Victoria's wonderful forests and their many species, and research such as this helps us understand how they live and how we can better protect them."

ends

Contact – VFS.media@VicForests.com.au