

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

27 March 2020

## VicForests rejects Wilderness Society claims

VicForests completely rejects claims made online by The Wilderness Society, headed “Illegal Logging in Australia – Are You Buying into It”.

Contrary to inferences in the article, paper that Australians are printing on is not sourced from illegally harvested wood in Victoria.

There have been no findings by authorities of the “illegalities” claimed by the Wilderness Society. VicForests complies the legislative and regulatory framework for timber harvesting in Victoria

The Wilderness Society claims that paper companies don’t comply with the Illegal Logging Prohibition Act when buying VicForests’ timber.

This is wrong.

Australian paper companies are compliant in buying timber from our operations.

Further to this, we are certified under the Australian Responsible Wood Standard, endorsed by the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification - the largest such standard in the world.

Under that standard, which we have maintained since 2007, we are independently audited every nine months.

Beyond that, we are regularly and rigorously monitored by Victoria’s Office of the Conservation Regulator, including through the Victorian Government Forest Audit Program.

The Wilderness Society article appears to have been sourced from a previous report in The Age, which was also unfounded:

- That report wrongly stated that breaches had been recorded and reported by the Victorian Auditor-General; in fact, the Auditor General has never done so.
- Data about roading cited by The Age related to a four-year-old Forest Audit Program (FAP) report, and those issues have been addressed
- In the latest 2017-18 FAP report, VicForests achieved 81% compliance on roading construction, with overall operational compliance of 84%.

VicForests is sometimes scrutinised by the Victorian Auditor-General. There has been no report by the Auditor-General making findings against VicForests about Illegal Logging Prohibition Act breaches.



VicForests can state categorically that it is compliant with the Illegal Logging Prohibition Regulations. Reports to the contrary and incorrect, misleading and disappointing.

The public rely on accurate information being provided by all parties about native forestry – including The Wilderness Society.

***ENDS***