

Media Release

29 March 2018

VicForests sets strict conservation at Noojee Backdoor coupe

VicForests announced today that it would retain habitat areas around about 20 habitat trees identified through field assessments and three night surveys of the Noojee Backdoor coupe, scheduled for harvesting towards the end of April.

Alex Messina, VicForests General Manager Corporate Affairs said “This is part of a routine and thorough pre-harvest process designed to double check and update desktop data before any harvest.

“Our Ecologists have methodically walked the coupe to check for habitat trees and are in the process of developing a conservation plan.

“Their plan will protect potential habitats for key species, in this case potential Greater Glider habitats, so any Gliders could move along continuous forest and occupy habitat trees if they chose to.”

During the surveys, three Greater Gliders were detected near the north-west boundary of coupe in habitat trees, and one Greater Glider in the Special Protection Zone along McCarthy Spur Road.

There is no current prescription for Greater Gliders in the Central Highlands, however, VicForests voluntarily applies conservation measures to proactively protect the species. An Action Statement for the Central Highlands is being developed.

“Our daytime assessments had detected habitat elements in the coupe that could provide hollows for some wildlife species,” Mr Messina said.

Mr Messina said that the forest is a dynamic environment, as are the animals that live within it, which is why VicForests’ planning process involves multiple checks and balances.

“Forest animals tend to move around and although one survey may not detect any wildlife, another may show a presence not previously recorded,” he said.

VicForests also invited community members to attend the night survey walks with its Ecologists.

“Some residents told us they wanted to understand VicForests surveys first hand, so we offered an open invitation to attend surveys with our Ecologists,” Mr Messina said.

The walks followed a public drop-in day in Noojee during which residents expressed they preferred VicForests to add extra 100m buffers in the coupe for visual purposes.

“We’ve agreed to incorporate the buffers to provide visual screening of the coupe from the town centre.

Mr Messina said that VicForests provides significant employment and economic activity in regional Victoria and harvests a renewable resource while applying rigorous and strictly regulation biodiversity controls.

-ends-