

ABC Claims of Illegal Harvesting

VicForests refutes claims made by ABC regarding illegal harvesting.

The ABC have based their story on a narrow interpretation of the Sustainable Forests (Timber) Act 2004. Under the Act, VicForests must comply with the terms and information described in the Allocation Order as gazetted.

VicForests is confident its operations are consistent with the Allocation Order including the forest zoning scheme.

This matter was subject to an investigation by DELWP and no action was taken against VicForests.

VicForests takes its obligation to responsibly harvest native forest timber seriously.

All timber harvesting and regeneration operations have and will be conducted in conformance with Victoria's strict environmental regulations and the State's Forest Management Zoning scheme.

VicForests continues to support improvements to harvesting regulations and practices and will work with responsible agencies towards this goal.

ENDS

Background:

- *There is 7.1 million hectares of public forests across Victoria, about 94 per cent of which is protected in parks, reserves or is unsuitable for native timber harvesting.*
- *VicForests harvests around 3000 hectares per year, or 0.04 per cent of that area.*
- *VicForests is certified under the Responsible Wood certification.*
- *High Conservation Values (HCVs) are protected through rigorous conservation practices including exclusion zones for threatened species and buffer zones to prevent encroachment on rainforest areas.*
- *VicForests protects any Leadbeater Possum or colonies through a 12.6-hectare Timber Harvest Exclusion Zone, equivalent to about 6 MCG fields. This protection has been consulted and agreed upon with a wide range of independent scientists, regulators and environment groups.*
- *VicForests also applies Greater Gliders protection zones, throughout East Gippsland, of 100 hectares in areas where more than 10 Gliders are found in a one-kilometre line.*
- *VicForests is committed to the highest standard of regeneration. VicForests replants all the areas that are harvested, replanting areas with the same trees that were there previously.*