

Tuesday 11 February 2014

## **Audit confirms VicForests successfully hands back 100 per cent of regenerated forest**

An audit conducted on behalf of the Department of Environment and Primary Industries (DEPI) published this week, has recommended the acceptance of 100 per cent of forest land regenerated by VicForests last year.

The Forest Audit Program module, "Regeneration and Finalisation" recommended the hand back of over 300 regeneration and thinning coupes which have met the standard for successful regeneration. These areas will now be removed from VicForests' Timber Release Plan.

VicForests acting CEO, Lachlan Spencer, said: "We are very pleased with this year's regeneration result. It has been a successful year that will see record amount of over 6,500 hectares accepted by DEPI as adequately regrown.

"This is the largest area of regeneration to be handed back to DEPI since VicForests' inception in 2004.

"As we adjust harvest levels to ensure the long term sustainability of our operations, there will be a fluctuation in the areas handed back from year to year but we are particularly proud of this very positive result," said Mr Spencer.

The audit considered the risk of harm to the environment resulting from coupe regeneration and finalisation activities as well as thinning operations conducted by VicForests in State forests in eastern Victoria.

Thinning is the removal of a proportion of trees in a coupe. The purpose for thinning is to provide more growing space for the remaining trees, which leads to an increase in growth of the remaining trees.

Three recommendations were made to VicForests on areas that needed improvement. These were relating to insufficient paper work in one case and two instances of reporting that needs attention.

Mr Spencer said: "We accept the three recommendations made by the auditors and will make the necessary changes to improve these areas. We welcome the scrutiny and operate in an environment of continual improvement. Regular auditing ensures areas of concern are addressed and rectified.

"Ensuring that we regenerate our forests is an integral part of what we do at VicForests. We want future generations to have the same opportunities to use and enjoy the natural environment and Victoria's State multi-use forests," he said.