

Friday February 27, 2015

## **VicForests' annual Regrowing Program begins**

VicForests will commence planned regeneration burns across Eastern Victoria in the coming weeks.

VicForests' General Manager, Operations, Bradley Winthrop, said the burns are a vital step in regrowing previously harvested forest areas.

"We are very conscious of the community's sensitivity towards fire and want to ensure people are not alarmed by smoke they may see as a result of this process.

"The burning of harvested areas is one of the most visually confronting stages of the regeneration process and an image that is often circulated out of context. It is however an essential step in the regrowing of forest as Victoria's eucalypt forests regenerate naturally by fire.

"Carrying out these burns is a way of closely replicating the process that occurs in nature," said Mr Winthrop.

"These burns play a crucial role in ensuring the sustainability of our forests by creating an environment which encourages the regrowth of trees native to the area," he said.

The burns are generally completed within a day or evening and monitored by trained VicForests and Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) staff who are onsite throughout.

"Following on from last year, some regeneration burns will be conducted in the evening or at night in keeping with VicForests' newly integrated lower intensity burning practices or to take advantage of cooler weather conditions.

"We conducted stage one of a lower intensity burning trial in 2013 with very encouraging results. Burning at lower intensity has protected site specific environmental values.

"This new technique of burning will be applied to our regrowth retention coupes as well as many areas that have specific special values that must be protected and retained".

Mr Winthrop said the burns are part of a larger planned burning program being undertaken in conjunction with the DELWP.

"VicForests has developed detailed plans in relation to its burning program with DELWP.

"All burns will be authorised by DELWP prior to ignition and will be closely monitored by crews on location. Informing the broader community of these burns is undertaken through the formal DELWP notification process," he said.

"We would like to reassure the community that a thorough planning process has been completed prior to the commencement of this year's regeneration burning program.

Residents who would like more information can contact the Victorian Bushfire Information line on 1800 240 667 or go to [www.delwp.vic.gov.au/fire-and-emergencies](http://www.delwp.vic.gov.au/fire-and-emergencies)

Hearing impaired residents can call the following numbers for more information:

- TTY users phone 1800 555 677 then ask for 1800 240 667
- Speak and Listen users phone 1800 555 727 then ask for 1800 240 667
- Internet relay users connect to the NRS then ask for 1800 240 667.

Timber Harvesting Safety Zones will be in place during burn operations for the safety of the public and those conducting the burns. For more information go to [www.vicforests.com.au/timber-harvesting-safety-zones](http://www.vicforests.com.au/timber-harvesting-safety-zones).