

A photograph of a forest with tall trees, partially obscured by a green geometric shape in the top right corner.

10 February 2020

ABC corrects wrong claim of illegal harvesting

The ABC has corrected its report on 19 December 2019 claiming that VicForests had illegally harvested outside its Allocations Order.

The ABC amended the article and stated: “Editor’s note: This story has been edited to clarify that no formal finding of illegality has been made.”

VicForests had complained to the ABC about the article after it was published.

VicForests made its complaint after a similar earlier incident in a 2018 story, in which the ABC also incorrectly claimed VicForests had harvested illegally.

On that occasion, the Audience and Consumer Affairs Investigations Manager said the ABC accepted that the relevant online story: “stated incorrectly that ‘An ABC investigation recently found VicForests had illegally logged some areas because it was operating outside of its allocation’.” This claim was corrected some months after the complaint.

VicForests has submitted to the ABC that it has not upheld its own Editorial Standards 2.1 and 2.2:

2.1 Make reasonable efforts to ensure that material facts are accurate and presented in context.

2.2 Do not present factual content in a way that will materially mislead the audience. In some cases, this may require appropriate labels or other explanatory information.

VicForests awaits a formal response from the ABC to the complaint submitted in response to the December 2019 article.

VicForests reiterates that it is confident that all its current harvesting operations are consistent with the Allocation Order and that it takes its responsibility to harvest native timber seriously.

ENDS