

Media Release

24th April 2018

Federal Court grants interim injunction

VicForests will defend an application for an injunction brought by the Friends of Leadbeaters Possum Inc (FLBP).

The court today granted an interim injunction regarding six coupes until 2 May, 2018, when the Court will hear arguments about whether a final injunction will be imposed.

The coupes were included in an Amended Statement of Claim filed by FLBP. The amended Claim now alleges that VicForests' operations in the Central Highlands are not in accordance with the Regional Forest Agreement because it had not complied with State-based regulation.

VicForests CEO Nathan Trushell said he remained confident that VicForests' operations were compliant.

The Amended Statement of Claim follows a previous Claim that did not proceed because FLBP failed to substantiate a threshold question of law.

"We will defend our record and oppose this injunction." Mr Trushell said.

"VicForests undertakes a comprehensive and heavily regulated planning process prior to any harvesting, and we believe our operations are compliant with the RFAs."

"VicForests harvests only select timber that has been allocated to it by the State Government. This totals 6% of public forest areas, and we harvest only 0.04% of forests in any given year," he said.

"The livelihoods of many of our contactors is dependent on continuing a planned harvest schedule. Unfortunately, as a result of this interim injunction, we will suspend or will not commence harvesting in six coupes until the Court makes a final decision." Mr Trushell said.

"The native timber industry contributes hundreds of millions of dollars and thousands of jobs to regional Victoria each year," Mr Trushell said.

VicForests regrows all harvested areas with the same type of forest that was originally there – and the vast majority of Victoria's native forests will never be harvested.

The six affected coupes are: Backdoor, Farm Spur Gum, Camberwell Junction, Vice Captain, Dry Spell and Dry Cleaner; all in the Central Highlands RFA area.

Ends

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