

# Forests and Water

## Forests are integral for water quality and quantity

Forests play a key role in maintaining and improving water quality and quantity through a range of vital ecological processes. In Victoria, VicForests carefully plan and manage our timber harvesting operations to protect water quality and quantity, rivers and waterways.

## HOW DOES VICFORESTS PROTECT WATER QUALITY AND WATER QUANTITY?

The protection of water quality is one of six core principles under the Code of Practice for Timber Production 2014 and the associated Management Standards and Procedures.

## WHAT DOES VICFORESTS DO TO PROTECT WATERWAYS AND WATER QUALITY?

To protect our waterways and water quality, VicForests:

- Utilise the grasses and shrubs alongside permanent creeks or waterways to act as a natural protective barrier, 'trapping' sedimentation that may move from a forestry coupe and preventing it from flowing into the creek or waterway. These buffers range from anywhere from 20 metres for smaller waterways to 100 metres wide for larger creeks.
- Where we can we 'connect' these areas to other protected areas which provides better habitat for wildlife to travel through.
- Ensure roads are carefully built and maintained to minimise the amount of soil erosion. For instance, to prevent water from running off the road and towards the creek, we use drains to make sure the water travels through thick grasses so that any sediment in the water can 'drop' out of the water and into the grasses.
- Stop operations in many areas during winter when the risk of impacts to water quality is at its highest.
- Keeps machinery out the drainage lines when harvesting trees from inside this area.

## THE IMPACT OF FIRE ON WATER CATCHMENTS

The biggest threats to Victoria's water supply and quality are large scale forest fires. This is because young trees soak up more water than mature trees and forests regrowing after fire leave less water available to run off into rivers and dams.

VicForests, and its contractors, are actively involved in fire management and fire fighting in forests across Victoria including those in Melbourne's water catchments.

Along with water, the other valuable resource produced from our forests is high quality native timber, which is used daily by most Victorians. The timber is completely renewable and the regrown forests become vibrant forest habitats wildlife.

