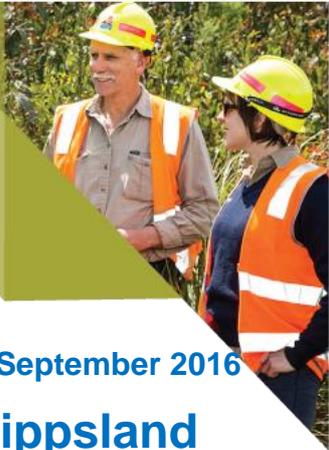


# Media Release

A photograph of two people wearing high-visibility safety vests and hard hats, standing outdoors in a wooded area. The image is partially obscured by a green geometric shape.

21 September 2016

## Exciting discovery of Spot-tailed Quolls in East Gippsland

Two rare and threatened Spot-tailed Quolls have been discovered in the Bendoc region in East Gippsland.

Spot-tailed Quolls are the largest carnivorous marsupial on mainland Australia, they are easily identified by their brown coats, with conspicuous white spots over their body and tail. The species is currently classified as endangered on mainland Australia.

The detections are only the second time the species has been found in over five years of VicForests pre-harvest surveys.

Dr Chela Powell, Manager, Biodiversity Research & Development for VicForests said this discovery is very significant as detections of these animals have been quite rare in recent years across East Gippsland.

“This is an exciting find. We captured images of what appears to be two different Spot-tailed Quolls on remote, infra-red cameras during one of our targeted pre-harvest fauna surveys.

“Before this discovery there had only been one sighting in over five years of pre-harvest surveys by across the East Gippsland region,” Dr Powell said.

VicForests ensures that important biodiversity values, including threatened species such as Spot-tailed Quolls, are identified and appropriately protected from timber harvesting operations.

This includes engaging independent ecologists to conduct targeted surveys in areas planned for harvest on sites which are most likely to contain threatened species.

“When a Spot-tailed Quoll is detected in an area planned for harvest, VicForests works with the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) to create a Special Management Plan to protect the animal from any harvesting operations.

“The area that contains the most ideal habitat for the species is reserved and excluded from harvesting operations,” Dr Powell said.

The planning stage of any harvesting operation is a long and detailed process that can take over a year to complete.

“Targeted threatened species surveys are part of our planning process that is undertaken before any harvesting operations occur.

“The Spot-tailed Quoll plays an ecologically important role as Victoria’s largest native predator,” Dr Powell said.



# Media Release

VicForests is committed to managing state forest to protect important forest habitat and to regrow the forest after harvesting to allow threatened species persistence in the long-term.

