

## VicForests Receives Strong Endorsement from Responsible Wood Audit

VicForests, today, released the results of its May 2018 Australian Forestry Standard (AFS) Surveillance Audit report for Responsible Wood certification.

The audit endorsed VicForests' strong management practices and found the organisation conformed across all AFS indicators.

The report made note of VicForests' continual improvement of its management systems and the emphasis it placed on harvest planning and preparation, and the protection of biodiversity values.

General Manager of Corporate Affairs, Alex Messina, said VicForests was proud of its Responsible Wood AFS certification which has been maintained for more than 10 years.

"This is a clear endorsement of VicForests' management systems including harvesting operations and protection of biodiversity such as the Leadbeater's Possum and Greater Glider," Mr Messina said

"VicForests harvests native timber resources in a sustainable manner which protects local biodiversity and ensures the long-term future of Victoria's forests.

"We go to great lengths to regenerate harvested areas with the same forest type that was there prior to harvesting. What we harvest, we grow back.

"Our practices are based on industry best-practice and a scientific approach to forestry management."

VicForests has maintained Responsible Wood (Australian Forestry Standard) since 2007 and undertakes regular independent audits to monitor its management systems and operations in accordance with these requirements.

The Responsible Wood standard is endorsed by the international Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC) – the largest such system in the world which covers around 240 million hectares of forest across 30 countries and equates to around two-thirds of the world's total certified forest area.

The report highlighted one previous minor non-conformity which had been identified in an earlier audit. Corrective action to address this issue is in progress however the non-conformity was raised in this report as it has not yet been completed. This action is expected to be completed by December 2018.

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

VicForests will work with industry, stakeholders and the community to ensure it continues its strong record of sustainable timber harvesting and is best placed to achieve continued re-certification of Responsible Wood standard.

VicForests has also announced plans to seek Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) Controlled Wood standard by 2020.

The May 2018 AFS Surveillance Audit report is available at the VicForests website at [www.vicforests.com.au](http://www.vicforests.com.au).

**ENDS**

*Background:*

- *There is 7.1 million hectares of public forests across Victoria, about 94 per cent of which is protected in parks, reserves or is unsuitable for native timber harvesting.*
- *VicForests harvests around 3000 hectares per year, or 0.04 per cent. This represents, nominally, the equivalent of 4 in every 10,000 trees.*
- *VicForests is certified under the Responsible Wood certification. All commercial native timber harvesting enterprises across Australia are certified under this system including Queensland, New South Wales, Tasmania, South Australia and Western Australia.*