

Friday, May 2, 2014

## VicForests implements recommendations and seeks additional information

VicForests is seeking information regarding the site of any Leadbeater's Possum detection to assist in ensuring these sites are protected in line the recently released recommendations of the Leadbeater's Possum Advisory Group.

"One of the Advisory Group's key recommendations is the creation of 200 metre exclusion zones around the site of any LBP detection in the last 15 years," VicForests' General Manager, Stakeholders and Planning, Nathan Trushell said.

"These buffers are the equivalent of 12 hectares and we want to ensure we have the most up to date information regarding all detection sites to ensure they are protected in line with the new LBP recommendations.

"If community members have additional information which has not been provided to VicForests or the Department of Environment and Primary Industries then we request this information be forwarded as soon as possible.

"The sooner we have access to this type of information, the sooner we can ensure these sites are adequately protected.

Mr Trushell said VicForests has already implemented a number of the Advisory Group's recommendations.

"Work on identifying additional areas which are excluded from timber harvesting has been completed including applying a 100m buffer to all modelled old growth forest in the Leadbeater's Possum range," he said.

"Our staff are now applying the updated guidelines in place to identify and protect Leadbeater's Possum habitat when undertaking pre-harvest surveys. The new guidelines mean areas with ten potential habitat trees, rather than 12 are now considered Zone 1A and require exclusion.

"Harvesting operations are being delayed for two years in areas identified by the Advisory Group as having a high probability of containing Leadbeater's Possum colonies. These areas have now been marked for exclusion from any operations to allow surveys for the species to take place.

"A 200m buffer has been applied to all known Leadbeater's Possum colonies detected in the last 15 years including those in the Victorian Biodiversity Atlas, but detections brought forward by community members will also form an important part of the process to protect these areas.

"We would encourage anyone with information regarding detection sites to contact us on 5969 9000 or go to our website – [www.vicforests.com.au](http://www.vicforests.com.au)," Mr Trushell said.