

## Victoria's Native Timber Industry

There are around 7.8 million hectares<sup>1</sup> of native forest in Victoria.

Almost 90%<sup>2</sup> of these forests are unavailable or unsuitable for timber harvesting operations.

This includes approximately 4.8 million hectares<sup>3</sup> of native forest in Victoria which is protected in national parks and conservation reserves.

### Why do we harvest native forest?

Each year, VicForests harvests timber from approximately 5500 hectares<sup>4</sup> or less than 0.1% of Victoria's native forest – under strict environmental regulations.

This timber is used in hardwood products such as high quality furniture, flooring and other building materials as well as in quality writing and office paper.

VicForests plays an important role in meeting the community demand for wood products.

Despite harvesting such a small area, VicForests is able to supply around one-third of Victoria's timber.

However, the demand for hardwood timber products in Victoria is greater than we can supply domestically.

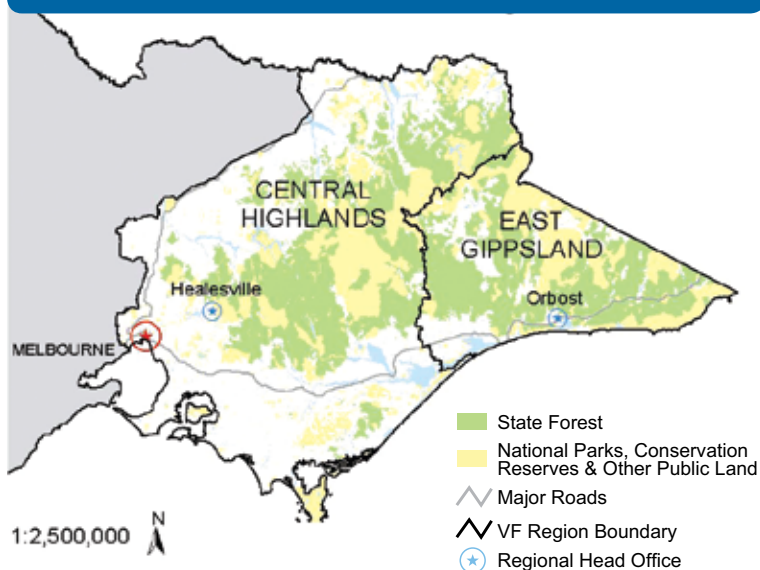
A small amount of hardwood sawlog timber is sourced from commercial forest plantations, while the remainder of the hardwood used across Victoria imported from interstate or overseas.

Unfortunately, many of the countries supplying this wood do not have the same strict regulations relating to timber harvesting as we have in Victoria.

The vast majority of hardwood timber plantations in the State are harvested for pulplog. This timber is used to produce paper-based products.

VicForests operations are vital to reducing the amount of timber imported into Victoria.

### VICFORESTS' REGIONS



## The Native Timber Industry in Victoria

The native timber industry in Victoria is directly responsible for providing more than 3000 jobs<sup>10</sup>.

VicForests currently supplies timber to approximately 40 sawmills throughout State.

These mills, along with the broader native timber industry, provide a wide variety of employment opportunities to people in rural and regional communities.

Following harvesting, VicForests regenerates our forest to ensure trees regrow in all areas where operations take place.

This regeneration is a detailed process which can take more than three years to complete successfully (see **VicForests' Regeneration Fact Sheet** for more information).

## Amount of native forest harvested

The area of native forest currently harvested in Victoria each year has declined significantly since 1980s and '90s.

The Victorian Government's 'Our Forests, Our Future' policy resulted in a significant reduction in the amount of timber harvesting that occurs in our forests<sup>5</sup>.

This policy recognised the timber industry's important role in Victoria's economy while also supporting expansions to the conservation reserve system.

An analysis of the logging history in Victoria shows the amount of area harvested across the State has now returned to levels very similar to those of the 1970s:

1970's – an average of 5180 hectares was harvested each year<sup>6</sup>

1980's – an average of 7470 hectares was harvested each year<sup>7</sup>

1990's – an average of 6900 hectares was harvested each year<sup>8</sup>

Currently, VicForests harvests around 5500 hectares of native forest in Victoria each year<sup>9</sup>.

Modern technology now allows VicForests to utilise more of the timber produced from our forests than ever before, meaning significantly less timber is left unused on the forest floor.

## Pulp wood

VicForests' operations are designed to maximise the amount of high quality sawlog that can be provided by our forests.

However, not all the timber produced from these forests can be used for appearance and structural grade products.

The timber which does not meet the high standard required for sawlog is utilised as pulplog and goes to the production of some of the most widely used timber products of all – quality writing and office paper.

This ensures we are making the best possible use of the timber from our forests. The other alternative would be to leave this timber to rot on the forest floor.

<sup>1</sup> Australia's forests at a glance 2010 (Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry)

<sup>2</sup> Victoria's State of the Forests Report 2008 (Department of Sustainability and Environment)

<sup>3</sup> Victoria's State of the Forests Report 2008 (Department of Sustainability and Environment)

<sup>4</sup> Sustainability Report 2009 (VicForests)

<sup>5</sup> Victoria's State of the Forests Report 2008 (Department of Sustainability and Environment)

<sup>6</sup> VicForests Logging History

<sup>7</sup> VicForests Logging History

<sup>8</sup> VicForests Logging History

<sup>9</sup> Sustainability Report 2009 (VicForests)

<sup>10</sup> VAFI/VicForests Survey of Victorian Sawmills 2010

