



VAFI

VICTORIAN ASSOCIATION OF FOREST INDUSTRIES

Tuesday, December 4 2007

ENVIRONMENT COMES SECOND IN WILDERNESS SOCIETY CAMPAIGN

The Victorian Association of Forest Industries (VAFI) has accused the Wilderness Society of again deliberately misrepresenting facts in order to sway public opinion against Victoria's forest industry.

Earlier today a Wilderness Society spokesperson claimed on ABC radio that only 2% of East Gippsland's old-growth forest is utilised for high value products. A statistic the VAFI Executive Director, Philip Dalidakis, says is both misleading and unsupportable.

"The Wilderness Society is once again prepared to trash the truth in an attempt to run their wildly inaccurate and ideologically driven theories," Mr Dalidakis said.

"The facts are that almost 80% of Victoria's old-growth forests are protected in reserves and only 218 hectares of East Gippsland's old-growth was harvested in 2006/07."

"Contrary to the views of extremists, the Victorian forest industry is not intent on destroying our forests," Mr Dalidakis said.

"The amount of high quality timber harvested will vary each year, so it would be highly irresponsible and unsustainable to simply take out the best logs every year as our forests would degrade over time."

"Native timber harvesting is aimed at producing high value wood products. The industry is then able to use pulp wood to produce products that are part of everyday life, such as high quality printing paper, magazines, children's books and even bibles," Mr Dalidakis said.

Mr Dalidakis also commented on the high level of regulation employed by the Victorian industry and its certification as amongst the world's best.

"When you consider that only 0.14% of Victoria's total forest area is harvested in a year, you start to have a better understanding of how sustainable the Victorian timber industry really is," Mr Dalidakis said.

-ends-

MEDIA CONTACT: JOHN LISTON

Ph: (03) 9611 9005 Mobile: 0400 956 741 Email: jliston@vafi.org.au Internet: www.vafi.org.au

MEDIA RELEASE