

23 April 2015

Leadbeater's Possum and timber industry can co-exist

The peak national body for the forest, wood and paper products industry has called on the Federal Environment Minister to ensure recent measures to protect the Leadbeater's Possum are recognised in the national Recovery Plan for the species.

The Minister announced yesterday his decision to list the Leadbeater's Possum as nationally 'critically endangered'. The Leadbeater's Possum is found in the forests of the Central Highlands region of Victoria and was impacted as a result of the devastating 2009 Black Saturday fires.

"The timber industry has actively assisted in the development and implementation of conservation efforts and management measures to protect the Leadbeater's Possum. These include the adoption by the Victorian Government of all 13 recommendations from the Leadbeater's Possum Advisory Group", said the Chief Executive Officer of the Australian Forest Products Association, Mr Ross Hampton.

"The Advisory Group, co-convened by industry and Zoos Victoria, focused on supporting the recovery of the possum while maintaining a sustainable timber industry. It identified measures to enhance the protection of the species and address critical issues such as the provision of suitable habitat".

"It will be critically important for these measures to be recognised in the update of the national Recovery Plan for the Leadbeater's Possum".

"Thousands of businesses and families throughout Victoria also derive their livelihood from timber and paper production activities from the Central Highland region. Everyone wants to ensure the possum's survival - but equally we must ensure the survival of the businesses which put food on the table of 21,000 families in Victoria".

"We look forward to the review process, given these new protection measures and our goal of ensuring a sustainable future for the Leadbeater's Possum and the timber industry."

AFPA represents forest growers, harvesters, and manufacturers of timber and paper products.

For any further information, please contact:

Elizabeth Goodfellow

AFPA Communications & New Media Officer

(m) 0409 962 250 elizabeth.goodfellow@ausfpa.com.au

www.ausfpa.com.au



<http://twitter.com/afpaonline>