

## Special Audit Assessment of VicForests’ Harvesting Activities Against the Allocation Order

### Response from the Department of Environment Land Water and Planning – Policy and Planning Division

The Department of Environment Land Water and Planning manages several data sets critical for the management of state forests, including timber harvesting. The forest management zone schema includes spatial data that zones forest areas for the purposes of general or specific uses. Specific uses relate to the achievement of conservation outcomes such as the protection of threatened species and ecosystems where harvesting activities are excluded or subject to additional controls.

As a result of funds received for the forest protection surveys and for the regional forest agreement upgrade, significant investment (approx. \$25M) is going into more proactive assessment of threatened species occurrence, and into resource assessment and mapping of important attributes such as rainforest and old growth in priority forest management areas east of the Hume Highway.

The generation of new information on threatened species occurrence not only allows better protection of species *in situ*, but improved understanding of their distribution and requirements to support better management across the landscape.

DELWP is developing processes and capability to improve its approach to zoning and the updating of supporting spatial layers. DELWP provides responses to recommendations 5 and 6 below:

Assessment’s recommendations	DELWP response and actions
5. DJPR consider an annual reconciliation between the Allocation Order and key datasets (i.e. the FMZ schema) and a subsequent gazettal, so as the Allocation Order accurately reflects timber resources available to VicForests via the Allocation Order.	<p><b>Response</b> Agree.</p> <p><b>Actions</b> DELWP notes DJPR’s response and DELWP will improve the timeliness of Forest Management Zoning updates.</p>
6. DELWP and DJPR continue to improve spatial data relating to the zoning of forests and the allocation and use of timbers.	<p><b>Response</b> Agreed</p> <p><b>Actions</b> DELWP will work with DJPR to formalise existing inter-agency arrangements that will improve spatial data relating to the zoning of forests and the allocation and use of timbers.</p>