

Media Release

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Leadbeater's Possum more prevalent than thought – full audit of all parks urgently needed

Building on the detection of more than 1000 colonies of Leadbeater's Possums in native forest harvest areas, the discovery of Leadbeater's Possums in the [Yarra Ranges Forest](#) suggests that the critically endangered species is more prevalent than previously thought.

"The Victorian Forest Products Association (VFPA) calls on the Victorian Government to undertake a cross tenure survey of all parks - not just forest harvest areas - to fully understand the distribution and population abundance of this iconic species," said Deb Kerr, CEO of VFPA.

The Victorian Government undertakes surveys of forest coupes to be harvested, but this is just 0.034% of the public land estate. Surveys by VicForests following harvest shows that Leadbeater's Possums are found in these harvested areas as little as five years after harvest.

While Leadbeater's Possums nest in hollows of older trees, their feeding habitat is the harvested area with a mix of acacia understorey. The Victorian Government's decision to phase out native timber harvesting will put at risk this iconic species as its feeding habitat declines with the decline in active forest management through harvest activities.

"However, the full distribution and abundance of this species are largely unknown, which this new detection proves. It is time the Government undertook a cross tenure survey to fully map the species prevalence," concluded Ms Kerr.

About

The Victorian Forest Products Association (VFPA) represents all elements of the value chain from both sustainable harvesting of plantations and multiple-use natural forest resources. VFPA is a policy development and advocacy group which represents the interests of Victoria's sustainable forestry. We collaborate strongly with other industry bodies to ensure the best outcomes for forestry in general and our members more specifically. Our charter provides autonomy to manage state issues. We collaborate with the Australian Forest Products Association (AFPA) on any issues that transcend state borders and have national implications.

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