

# Media Release

**The Hon Lily D'Ambrosio MP**

Minister for Energy, the Environment and Climate Change  
Minister for Solar Homes



Wednesday, 30 June 2021

## MAJOR OVERHAUL FOR THE TIMBER CODE OF PRACTICE

The Andrews Labor Government is overhauling the Code of Practice for Timber Production to provide much needed certainty for conservationists, the forestry industry and the Conservation Regulator.

The review makes significant improvements to the Code and addresses a number of deficiencies raised by the industry and community, in order to ensure the Government delivers on the Victorian Forestry Plan.

The Code plays a crucial role in regulating Victoria's native timber industry and protecting our unique environment. That role has been undermined by a range of drafting errors, mistakes and inconsistencies introduced in 2014 by the previous Coalition Government which created uncertainty for conservationists and the forestry industry.

The most significant proposed changes to the Code include restoring a clear definition of the Precautionary Principle based on an internationally recognised language used by the United Nations and the precedent set in the Brown Mountain case, which has been the approach followed by DELWP and the Conservation Regulator to date.

Recent court decisions have undermined certainty about the application of the Precautionary Principle. Allowing court decisions to provide precedents for industry has proven to be slow and convoluted. This will establish a clear definition that everyone can understand and apply.

The proposed change to the Code means the Precautionary Principle will apply when there is any threat of serious or irreversible environmental damage. It will be mandatory to apply this test before timber harvesting.

The Conservation Regulator and timber harvesters can both identify when there is serious or irreversible environmental damage. In these situations, harvesting can proceed in a way that avoids and protects critical habitat.

The Government is continuing to examine aspects of the Code that may require amendment in the short-term, and will do a comprehensive review of the Code by December 2023. The Code needs to be clear and enforceable to ensure that Victoria's Conservation Regulator can protect our environment appropriately.

The Government is releasing these proposed changes through Engage Victoria so the Victorian community can contribute to the review and give feedback.

### **Quote attributable to Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change Lily D'Ambrosio**

*"This review is all about getting clarity – for conservationists and for the industry. When we have clear, black and white definitions, we can better ensure that threatened species and habitats are protected."*

### **Quote attributable to Minister for Agriculture Mary-Anne Thomas**

*"These proposed changes, coupled with the government's efforts to continue to examine aspects of the code, will support us to deliver on the Victorian Forestry Plan."*