

Media Release

The Hon Ros Spence MP
Minister for Agriculture
Minister for Community Sport
Minister for Carers and Volunteers



Tuesday, 21 May 2024

HELPING TIMBER WORKERS TRANSITION TO NEW OPPORTUNITIES

The Allan Labor Government's Forestry Transition Fund has helped an East Gippsland timber worker to successfully transition from working in a mill to running his own small business.

John Alen was made redundant when Parkside Mill, in Bairnsdale, closed at the end of last year, leaving him to look for another job or follow a dream of running his own business.

Having already built his own house and a lifetime of working in the timber industry behind him, he saw a gap in the local market after installing a kitchen for a family friend.

John successfully applied for and received a \$16,240 grant from the Forestry Transition Fund, enabling him to purchase tools and a trailer for his new kitchen installation business Riverview Installations, so he could become self-employed.

Riverview Installations installs flatpack kitchens, including those from Bunnings and Ikea, in Bairnsdale and the surrounding area. The business also helps homeowners to measure and design their own kitchen.

John is finding demand for his skills and time is growing, and he is considering employing another worker or apprentice later this year.

The Forestry Transition Fund provides grants up to \$1 million for businesses and industry groups to expand, diversify or start new businesses. Applicants that provide direct and ongoing employment to former native timber workers will receive a \$20,000 wage subsidy per worker in addition to their grant.

For more information visit vic.gov.au/forestry.

Quote attributable to Minister for Agriculture Ros Spence

"The Forestry Transition Fund supports job creation and business development, and Riverview Installations is a great example of that."

Quote attributable to Member for Eastern Victoria Tom McIntosh

"We are particularly pleased that local native timber workers like John Alen, will not only find new opportunities through this funding, but their families and the broader community will also benefit."

Quotes attributable to Riverview Installations John Alen

"When the grant came through, I purchased all my tools and my trailer, which is pretty much my business. I've installed quite a few kitchens now and the demand is growing."

"I was lucky that I got the right help and support to enable me to pursue what I wanted to do."