

Media Release

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



Friday, 31 May 2024

NEW ROUND OF TIMBER INNOVATION GRANTS OPENS

The Allan Labor Government is continuing to provide support to local businesses and workers in timber industry communities with applications for Round 3 of the Victorian Timber Innovation Fund (VTIF) now open.

Minister for Agriculture Ros Spence today announced that eligible native timber businesses are able to access up to \$1 million in grant funding per business to diversify away from native timber harvesting and create new jobs in their communities.

As part of Round 3, support will include a Grant Application Assistance Service for the first time. Businesses can apply for vouchers of up to \$7,500 which will provide them with access to a panel of Registered Service Providers. These Providers will help businesses to prepare and submit strong submissions for the grants program.

Eligibility for Round 3 has also been extended to harvest and haulage sub-contractors, chip truck drivers and other businesses which were heavily dependent on the native timber industry. Businesses who take up other forestry transition support packages can still access the VTIF.

Round 2 of the Timber Innovation Fund will support 29 successful applications from 28 native timber businesses totaling over \$7 million.

Gippsland Logging and Earth Moving received \$330,000 of VTIF funding to transition from native hardwood haulage to plantation haulage and retain their current workers. They have modified their existing heavy equipment, including installing a new crane system to their prime mover.

Pyrenees Timber, based in Beaufort, is using its \$86,000 of VTIF funding to support the business to modify the existing storage shed, upgrade the loading pad and purchase a purpose-built auger enabling the company to store olive pits that will be used by the Beaufort & Skipton Health Service to fuel their biomass heating system.

VTIF supports businesses to transition away from the native timber industry and diversify their business operations to pursue opportunities in other industries that will support jobs and the communities that depended on the native timber industry.

This can include businesses switching their operations to plantation timber, construction and earthmoving services to both maintain existing jobs and create new sustainable jobs.

For more information on the Victorian Timber Innovation Grants Program, call 1800 318 182 or visit deeca.vic.gov.au/forestry.

Quotes attributable to Agriculture Minister Ros Spence

"The variety of projects which businesses are putting forward shows their innovative approach to moving away from a sole reliance on the native timber industry and diversifying into new and exciting opportunities."

"We are providing crucial support to empower businesses and workers to take advantage of new opportunities within their communities as they transition away from the native timber industry into a new sustainable future."

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