

Media Release

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



Wednesday, 18 December 2024

MORE SUPPORT FOR VICTORIAN FORESTRY COMMUNITIES

Victorian forestry towns and communities are being supported to create local jobs, take advantage of new business opportunities and plan their own future thanks to backing from the Allan Labor Government.

Minister for Agriculture Ros Spence today opened Round 2 of the \$22 million Community Development Fund, which will support projects and opportunities that will boost the local economy of forestry towns.

Two grant options are available, the first stream will make up to \$500,000 for communities to undertake project management and to upskill community members to help identify future economic opportunities.

The second stream will make \$500,000 available for initiatives identified by local Innovation Working Groups and through the Local Development Strategies.

Innovation Working Groups include members of the community that are working to diversify their town's local economy where native timber harvesting was a significant source of jobs. These groups are community led and reflect local priorities and ambitions.

Innovation Working Groups can also apply for up to an additional \$1.5 million to pursue investment opportunities identified as part of the Local Development Strategy to create jobs and boost the local economy.

The communities of Orbost, Nowa Nowa, Swifts Creek, Yarram, Heyfield, Noojee, Murrindindi, Yarra Ranges, Benalla, Corryong and Koondrook are eligible to apply.

Funding is open to community organisations, business groups, educational and research organisations, businesses, local councils and utility service providers to implement projects and supporting infrastructure.

An Expression of Interest component and funding rounds will streamline the process and ensure communities that started their Local Development Strategy (LDS) program later have equal access to support.

More than \$3 million in funding has already been awarded through the initial round of the Community Development Fund grants program to support communities as they transition to their next phase.

Funding for projects from Round 1 of the program included a \$300,000 grant for community skills building and training for the Murrindindi community.

The Swifts Creeks community received \$500,000 for the extension of the Swifts Creek Future LDS, to develop and progress innovative projects including nature-based tourism and primary industry production.

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

Quotes attributable to Minister for Agriculture Ros Spence

"We're supporting communities to implement the opportunities they've identified in their Local Development Strategies so they can build a strong and economically sustainable future."

"There are already great innovative projects coming from local communities and this funding will help bring more ideas and opportunities to fruition."

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