

Media Release

The Hon Jaclyn Symes MLC

Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council

Minister for Regional Development

Minister for Agriculture

Minister for Resources



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NEW NURSERY TO GROW MORE TIMBER AND GIPPSLAND JOBS

Victoria's forestry transition will be supported with the creation of a new state-owned nursery in East Gippsland, which will also help local forests and economies recover from the devastating 2019-20 Victorian bushfires.

Establishment of the \$10 million Victorian Forest Nursery will increase the eucalypt seedling supply chain and create up to 30 new jobs, most of which will be ongoing.

The Victorian Government's *Gippsland Plantations Investment Program* will provide a \$2 million grant to VicForests to establish and manage the nursery, on the former P.R. Adams sawmill site at Nowa Nowa in East Gippsland, with planning requirements being worked on ahead of project commencement in the coming months.

The Program is part of the Government's \$110 million investment in plantation timber. It supports the Victorian Forestry Plan and the timeline it sets to transition from harvesting native forests to a plantation-based sector.

Currently five-out-of-six trees harvested in Victoria are from plantations and the state has the largest area dedicated to timber plantations in Australia. The nursery is expected to have a production capacity of up to 5 million seedlings each year, which could support plantings and reforestation of around 5,000 hectares annually.

Production of eucalypt seedlings will support bushfire recovery replanting, forestry coupe regeneration, timber plantations and farm forestry programs in Gippsland as state forest harvesting decreases over the next decade.

The East Gippsland community will benefit from new learning opportunities developed in consultation with the Forestec campus of TAFE Gippsland, along with options to reskill and employ existing timber industry workers. The nursery will also present opportunities for involvement and collaboration with local Aboriginal organisations.

The VicForests Forest Nursery complements the Government's Gippsland Centre of the National Institute for Forest Products Innovation, announced in July. Consistent with the Victorian Timber Innovation Fund, assistance will be provided to develop new products using plantation timber as the sector transitions and evolves.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Agriculture Jaclyn Symes

"We're supporting the future of our timber industry by securing jobs the whole Gippsland community can benefit from."

"The seedlings grown at this exciting new nursery will support the future of our timber industry by securing new jobs and new plantations, and support the regeneration of our forests."

Quote attributable to Member for Eastern Victoria Jane Garrett

"We're excited to create a nursery to bring new jobs to East Gippsland to support the transition to a plantation-based timber industry."

Quote attributable to Member for Eastern Victoria Harriet Shing

"This initiative will also help to ensure that local community members are able to benefit from the employment opportunities of plantation tree harvesting, consistent with the Victorian Forestry Plan."

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