

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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PREPARING GROUND FOR VICTORIA'S PLANTATION TIMBER FUTURE

The Victorian Government is supporting a sustainable future for Victoria's forestry industry with formal expressions of interest opening for investors and plantation developers to expand the state's plantation timber supply.

The *Gippsland Plantations Investment Program* will significantly grow Victoria's timber stocks by providing incentives for new industrial-scale plantings as part of the Government's record \$110 million investment in plantation timber.

Five-out-of-six trees harvested in Victoria are already from plantations, with the state having the largest area dedicated to timber plantations in Australia. The program will result in more than 30 million trees being planted over the next decade – increasing Gippsland's existing plantation estate by at least 35 per cent.

Expressions of interest are being sought from experienced and capable plantation investors, developers and managers to invest in Victoria's future plantations in a way that is sensitive to the environment and local communities, and creates jobs.

Successful respondents will contribute to the design of the program ahead of a final competitive application process.

The program will operate alongside a farm forestry initiative led by VicForests, which will provide opportunities for Gippsland landholders to participate in smaller-scale plantation development. There will be ongoing engagement with interested Gippsland landholders and communities as the program develops.

New plantations will support forestry and manufacturing jobs over coming decades by providing the scale needed to enable new investment in state-of-the-art wood processing and manufacturing, and the development of new products that use plantation fibre for growing markets, such as engineered wood products.

This is a future growth market that the government will help to turn into jobs growth and prosperity for regional communities, and is already being supported by initiatives such as the Gippsland centre of the National Institute for Forest Products Innovation.

This launch also follows the recent announcement of the Victorian Forest Nursery in East Gippsland that will produce around 5 million seedlings each year, which could support plantings and reforestation of around 5,000 hectares annually and create up to 30 jobs.

The Gippsland Plantations Investment Program is part of the Victorian Forestry Plan's commitment to transition from native forest harvesting to a plantation-based sector by 2030.

To find out more or register an expression of interest, go to the Buying for Victoria platform at tenders.vic.gov.au.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Agriculture Jaclyn Symes

"We're making new timber plantations viable in Gippsland, creating jobs across the supply chain and securing investment in the sector for its long-term future."

"To ensure the best transition to a plantation-based industry, we are investing in new plantations and programs that support innovation, so that these growth markets turn into jobs and economic value for regional communities."

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