

Media Release

Ms Mary-Anne Thomas MP
Minister for Regional Development
Minister for Agriculture



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HELPING FORESTRY COMMUNITIES PLAN FOR THEIR FUTURE

The Andrews Labor Government is continuing to back communities affected by changes to native timber harvesting with targeted funding to help manage the transition and seek new job opportunities.

Minister for Agriculture Mary-Anne Thomas today announced the Local Development Strategy grants of up to \$400,000 – available to 11 key forestry communities where native timber harvesting and processing is an important source of jobs and economic activity.

Placing the power in community hands, the grants will be available to local groups who can work with their council and the Victorian Forestry Plan Transition Team to help safeguard the community's economic future.

Through the grants, communities will be able to undertake long-term diversification planning to support their local economy and adapt to new industries – increasing job opportunities for workers.

The areas where groups will be eligible for Local Development Strategy grants are Noojee, Benalla, Orbost, Swifts Creek, Nowa Nowa, Koondrook, Murrindindi area (Alexandra, Taggerty and Marysville), Corryong, Heyfield, Yarram, Yarra Ranges (Powelltown, Yarra Junction and Warburton).

Implementation of the community plans will be supported by the \$36 million Victorian Forestry Plan Transition Fund, which will be available more broadly across the state.

The Forestry Business Transition Voucher program has also been extended to allow more forestry businesses to apply for tailored and specialist support.

Voucher applications are now open until 30 November 2021, with up to \$25,000 available to help forestry-dependent businesses assess their capabilities, options and strategies for transition.

These programs are all key parts of the Labor Government's \$120 million Victorian Forestry Plan, designed to support communities and businesses through the transition away from using native timber.

For more information about the support available visit vic.gov.au/forestry.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Agriculture Mary-Anne Thomas

"We're supporting workers and their families through this time of change with an inclusive plan for the transition away from native timber harvesting."

"This funding will put power directly into the hands of local communities – helping them plan for the future based on their strengths and priorities."