

# Media Release

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



Wednesday, 7 July 2021

## PLANTATION TIMBER TRANSFORMED INTO HIGH-END PRODUCTS

Heyfield's Australian Sustainable Hardwoods is set to become the first company in Australia to manufacture engineered plantation floorboards, backed by funding from the Andrews Labor Government.

Minister for Agriculture Mary-Anne Thomas visited the Australian Sustainable Hardwoods (ASH) mill in Heyfield today to announce that the mill and three other businesses across Gippsland would share in more than \$2.3 million in grants through the Victorian Timber Innovation Fund.

ASH has received \$1.6 million to install a new manufacturing line to produce engineered flooring made from plantation shining gum and radiata pine plywood and to expand both its online and retail outlet. This will make ASH the only company in the country to manufacture this kind of high-value plantation product.

A new retail outlet will sell the floorboards as well as some of their existing products, such as staircase and furniture components. It will also create a market and secure the supply chain for ASH's expanded line of plantation-based products into the future.

This will help to open new markets as ASH prepares to transition from native timber joinery to products manufactured from plantation timber.

In addition to ASH, three other grant recipients across Gippsland are diversifying their businesses by experimenting with new products using different timber sources:

- \$397,000 for Radial Timber in Yarram to introduce a small log line and experiment with processing plantation timber
- \$246,000 for Longwarry Sawmill in Longwarry to use recycled and reclaimed timber to make new timber products
- \$40,000 for Brunt's Harvesting in Orbost to undertake a feasibility study for transition to plantation harvesting.

The Labor Government is working to transition the native forest industry to a range of new opportunities by 2030 through the Victorian Forestry Plan, setting up a strong plantation-based sector.

### **Quote attributable to Minister for Agriculture Mary-Anne Thomas**

*"The Victorian Timber Innovation Fund is supporting businesses to develop new ways of working with new sources of supply, and retaining local jobs while doing so."*

### **Quote attributable to Member for Eastern Victoria Jane Garrett**

*"This is a significant boost to Eastern Victoria's forest industry. The initiative taken by these businesses to get in early, plan for their future and try new things will place them well in Victoria's future timber industry."*

### **Quote attributable to Australian Sustainable Hardwoods Managing Director Vince Hurley**

*"The grant from the Victorian Timber Innovation Fund has enabled ASH to commence construction of the new engineered flooring line which is a first for Australia – resulting in more jobs in regional Victoria."*