

Media Release

Ms Mary-Anne Thomas MP
Minister for Regional Development
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BOOSTING MANUFACTURING JOBS IN LODDON MALLEE

The Andrews Labor Government is backing a specialised truck-trailer manufacturing business in Macedon to create more jobs and upskill around 150 workers.

Minister for Regional Development and Member for Macedon Mary-Anne Thomas today visited Barker Trailers' site in Woodend to meet some of the new and recently upskilled workers at the company, which received funding through the Labor Government's *Regional Skills Fund*.

Mark Cummings joined Barkers Trailers in 2019 in the blast room - where the welding is done before painting. Mark was offered crane operating training which led to further opportunities and upskilling, progressing his career with the company.

After completing three training courses over three years, he now works as a supervisor with the company.

The training project has created nine new jobs across the company's Woodend and Maryborough operations while 17 existing staff have moved into new roles.

Almost 40 per cent of the workers gained new skills through accredited programs.

Training programs ranged from health and safety, compliance, painting, fabrication, sales or engineering. The project complements the company's investment in new upgrades to its machinery and production systems.

Barker Trailers is a major employer in the region, with manufacturing sites at Woodend and Maryborough and has been recognised for its investment in training and people – winning industry awards for workforce skills development.

The company has operated in the region since 1974 and is still run by family members of Ernie and Arthur Barker, the brothers who originally founded the company.

During its 48 years, Barker Trailers has manufactured more than 10,000 customised truck-trailers for the road transport industry.

The project is part of the Government's more than \$36 billion investment across regional and rural Victoria since 2015.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Regional Development and Member for Macedon Mary-Anne Thomas

"Businesses like Barker Trailers are so important to the local economy, which is why backing companies that prioritise staff growth and development is critical."

"We are upskilling more workers, creating new jobs and providing more opportunities for the local community."