

Media Release

The Hon Gayle Tierney MP

Deputy Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council
Minister for Training and Skills
Minister for Higher Education
Minister for Agriculture



Wednesday, 24 August 2022

GIPPSLAND TIMBER COMMUNITIES SUPPORTED DURING INDUSTRY TRANSITION

Swifts Creek is Victoria's fourteenth town to be given financial support by the Andrews Labor Government as the timber industry transitions away from native forests to a sustainable plantation-based future.

Minister for Agriculture Gayle Tierney today announced that Swifts Creek will receive a \$500,000 grant through the Labor Government's *Local Development Strategy* grants program.

The *Local Development Strategy* grants program is part of the Victorian Forestry Plan and supports towns to diversify where native timber harvesting is a significant source of jobs and employment.

The program is designed to be community-led, and available for local groups and businesses who can work with their council and the Victorian Forestry Plan Transition Team to help safeguard the community's economic future.

East Gippsland Shire Council will manage the funding and employ an independent project manager to engage with locals, community groups, businesses and government over a two-year period. A community reference group will also support the work.

Swifts Creek will join a further 13 towns, including neighbouring Orbost, which have already started similar work.

The communities will also have access to the \$22 million Community Transition and Development Fund and the \$36 million Victorian Forestry Plan Transition Fund which will also support communities in transition to implement new strategies.

The Local Development Strategy grants are a key part of the more than \$200 million Victorian Forestry Plan, ensuring communities are well supported through the transition. For more information visit vic.gov.au/forestry.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Agriculture Gayle Tierney

"Our Government is supporting timber communities in East Gippsland. The Local Development Strategy grants program will create long-term employment opportunities in the region."

"Representatives from the Victorian Forestry Plan Transition Team have been meeting with the Swifts Creek community for the last seven months and have had positive discussions about the town's future."

Quote attributable to Member for Eastern Victoria Tom McIntosh

"This grant will place the power in the Swifts Creek community's hands to take control of their future, seek new opportunities and create more jobs."

Quote attributable to East Gippsland Shire Council Mayor Cr Mark Reeves

“Swifts Creek is a strong, resilient community and Council is looking forward to supporting residents to develop their community-led strategy.”