

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



Friday, 30 September 2022

PLANTING MILLIONS MORE TREES FOR THOUSANDS OF JOBS

The Andrews Labor Government is shoring up Victoria's timber supply and supporting the forestry sector's transition, with an unprecedented investment in a new plantation estate backing thousands of Gippsland jobs.

Minister for Agriculture Gayle Tierney today announced the Labor Government is investing \$120 million – the single largest investment in plantation establishment in the state's history – in an agreement with Hancock Victorian Plantations (HVP), planting an extra 16 million trees in a new estate.

The new plantation will underpin 2,000 new and existing jobs in regional Victoria, and cover an area equivalent to 7,000 MCGs.

HVP, one of the largest private plantation companies in Australia, will match the Labor Government's investment almost dollar-for-dollar to buy, lease and manage the more than 14,000 hectares of softwood plantations.

To protect timber supply for our construction industry, the new plantations have the potential to bring international processors to the region – boosting the state's production of much-needed building products.

The investment will also contribute to Victoria's nation-leading emissions reduction targets by removing approximately 7.8 million tonnes of carbon dioxide over the next 25 years – the equivalent of removing more than 60,000 cars from the road per year.

This long-term investment through the Gippsland Plantation Investment Program underpins the Victorian Forestry Plan – the Labor Government's roadmap to ensure a long-term and sustainable future for Victoria's forestry industry – and for the Victorian workers who rely on it.

Victoria is home to Australia's largest timber plantation estate, with five out of six trees currently harvested across the state now coming from plantations – over time, this investment will make it six out of six.

Plantings will begin in 2023, subject to final approvals.

For more information, visit vic.gov.au/plantations.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Agriculture Gayle Tierney

"This is all about guaranteeing the jobs in the timber sector that Victorian workers and communities rely on – as we expand Gippsland's softwood supply, we're delivering new opportunities for our timber industry."

"This is the biggest investment in Victorian history in new plantation establishment – making sure we have a strong, sustainable timber supply for decades to come."

Quotes attributable to Member for Eastern Victoria Harriet Shing

"This investment will deliver one of Australia's largest softwood plantations to Gippsland, and it is a vital part of industry support and jobs growth as transition continues across the region."

"We are determined to support Gippsland workers and projects now and into the future, continuing our record funding for projects across the region."

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Quote attributable to Hancock Victorian Plantations Chief Executive Officer Stephen Ryan

“HVP Plantations welcomes the opportunity to work with the Government to deliver one of the most significant plantation forestry developments in the last 20 years.”