

Media Release

The Hon Gayle Tierney MP
Minister for Training and Skills
Minister for Higher Education
Minister for Agriculture



Tuesday, 13 December 2022

SUPPORTING OUR TIMBER WORKERS

The Andrews Labor Government is dedicated to supporting timber workers as the state transitions away from native timber harvesting.

During this challenging period, we will continue to provide support to sawmills and forest contractors to ensure workers are retained and paid.

To provide industry certainty, VicForests will be resourced to continue support payments to contractors and mills, securing mill and harvest contracting businesses and their workers. Eligible businesses who have not yet applied are encouraged to do so.

We will immediately establish a new Worker Support Service in the Latrobe Valley to support workers who may be affected in future.

Additionally, we are actively engaging with Opal Maryvale Mill to minimise job impacts from the timber shortage and accelerate the mill's transition away from native timber harvesting.

Opal has assured the Government there will be no immediate job losses before Christmas. We are currently exploring with Opal pathways to defer any potential stand downs and redundancies for as long as possible beyond Christmas to give workers additional certainty.

We will continue to engage with stakeholders on options to address timber shortages and source alternative supply.

Despite these challenges, we are getting on with the job of delivering the Victorian Forestry Plan with more than \$200 million in transition and investment support to timber businesses, workers and communities.

This includes more than \$85 million in funding for local strategies, community development, and business transition and innovation.

We are also investing \$120 million in a new plantation estate in Gippsland to support the sustainable future of forestry.

More information on Victorian Forestry Plan business and community support is available at vic.gov.au/forestry.

Quote attributable to Minister for Agriculture Gayle Tierney

"We know that timber supply is a current challenge – that's why we will continue to invest and ensure workers and businesses are supported during this time."