

# Media Release

**The Hon Ros Spence MP**  
Minister for Agriculture  
Minister for Community Sport  
Minister for Carers and Volunteers



Thursday, 12 October 2023

## PLANTING THE SEEDS FOR THE FUTURE OF ORBOST

The Allan Labor Government is backing local jobs and investment in Orbost's growth sector of agriculture through the native timber transition.

Minister for Agriculture Ros Spence announced a \$115,000 Community Development Fund grant for a National Seeds Institute feasibility study in Orbost, to leverage the district's long history and proven expertise in seed testing, breeding and storage.

The new funding will enable the Orbost Chamber of Commerce to develop an investment case and business plan in collaboration with local community members, seeds businesses, nurseries and RMIT University.

The National Seeds Institute proposal is a community-led initiative informed by more than 150 interviews with local businesses and residents.

The Government's Forestry Transition Program is supporting impacted workers and businesses into alternative employment in growth areas in their local communities – including construction, manufacturing, and energy.

The Seed Institute project is one of five innovation areas identified in the region's Local Development Strategy – a roadmap for the future of Orbost, which is supported by a further \$500,000 investment from the Labor Government.

The Community Development Fund and Local Development Strategy Grants are providing medium to long term support and funding for 11 priority native timber communities to identify new markets and create jobs.

For more information on how to get local support, please visit [vic.gov.au/forestry](http://vic.gov.au/forestry) or contact the Forestry Transition Hotline on 1800 318 182.

To register for the Victorian Forestry Worker Support Program, visit [forestworks.com.au](http://forestworks.com.au).

### Quotes attributable to Minister for Agriculture Ros Spence

*"Victorian seed growers have to send their seeds to testing facilities interstate and overseas. A Seeds Institute is an exciting proposal to harness Orbost's home-grown expertise to support local farmers and local jobs."*

*"We are backing local communities and timber businesses through dedicated support to identify and harness the economic opportunities that are right there in front of them."*

### Quote attributable to Member for Eastern Victoria Tom McIntosh

*"This investment in the future of Orbost will help develop the local economy and create jobs in growing industries including agriculture."*

**Media contact:** Alex Woods 0422 572 228 | [alex.woods@minstaff.vic.gov.au](mailto:alex.woods@minstaff.vic.gov.au)