

Media Release

Steve Dimopoulos MP

Minister for Environment

Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events

Minister for Outdoor Recreation



Friday, 1 December 2023

MORE WORK FOR OUR HARVEST WORKFORCE

The Allan Labor Government is investing in Victoria's forest contractor workforce – creating more regional jobs and further strengthening the state's bushfire management.

Minister for Environment Steve Dimopoulos today announced the Labor Government will offer VicForests harvest contractors with secure five-year Forest and Fire Management Services Agreements, starting from 1 July 2024.

Harvest contractors opting to take up the five-year contracts will carry out critical Forest Fire Management Victoria (FFMVic) bushfire risk reduction works – better protecting Victoria's regional communities and natural landscapes from fire.

Harvest and Haulage contractors will also be able to undertake forest and fire management works through three seasonal work packages until 30 June 2024 – ensuring our contractors have work until the Agreements have been finalised.

The Summer 2023/24 and Autumn 2024 packages are set to follow this year's Spring package, which will focus on strategic fuel breaks and storm debris removal.

A Harvest and Haulage Support Package has also been released to support contractors to take up a new contract or exit the industry. The package includes compensation for equipment, loss of income and will reimburse businesses in full for worker statutory redundancy payments.

The new contracts and support packages bring the Labor Government's total support for the forestry transition to more than \$1.2 billion.

To learn more about the Forest and Fire Management Services Agreements and the Harvest and Haulage Support Package, visit deeca.vic.gov.au/forestry/support or contact the Forestry Transition Hotline on 1800 318 182.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Environment Steve Dimopoulos

"We have listened to the timber industry – and this support provides certainty of work for harvest contractors, their families, communities and local businesses for the next five years."

"Our new contracts for forest contractors will help to reduce Victoria bushfire risk and ensure our communities and landscapes are better protected."

Quote attributable to Minister for Agriculture Ros Spence

"The Forest and Fire Management Services Agreements and the Harvest and Haulage Support Package provide contractors with a clear pathway into new work or out of the industry."