

Media Release

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



Friday, 1 December 2023

NEW COMMUNITY FORESTRY SUPPORT OFFERED TO WORKERS

The Allan Labor Government is giving community foresters and their workers access to more transition support, with the Community Forestry Support Package now open to help workers transition out of native timber harvesting.

Minister for Agriculture Ros Spence today announced the support package, which gives Forest Produce Licensees and firewood operators Timber Sales Agreements compensation for undersupply since November 2022.

The package will also compensate operators for plant and equipment no longer required and reimburse businesses in full for worker redundancy payments.

Community forestry workers, including seed collectors and chip-truck drivers, can also access Worker Support Payments, including redundancy top-ups and a \$3,000 one-off hardship payment, via the Victorian Forestry Worker Support Program.

Businesses can choose whether they want to exit straight away or nominate a date up to 30 June 2024 and continue working until then.

Any businesses that are not eligible for the Community Forestry Support Package, but are heavily dependent on the native timber industry, will be able to access plant and equipment compensation and reimbursement in full for worker redundancies through the Forestry Business Support Package due to open by the end of the year.

Over the next six months, the Labor Government will also update Forest Produce Licenses which will include the consideration of licenses for limited and very small-scale felling for niche industries such as instrument making.

Accessing the Community Forestry Support Package now does not prevent businesses from undertaking any future community forestry activities.

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

To register for the Victorian Forestry Worker Support Program call 1800 177 001 or visit forestworks.com.au.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Agriculture Ros Spence

“The Community Forestry Support Package provides community foresters with clear options and pathways to make decisions about their future and transition out of the native timber industry.”

“We will continue to support community foresters so that they make the right decisions for their businesses and their workers.”

Quote attributable to Minister for Environment Steve Dimopoulos

“Since the Victorian Forestry Plan was first announced in 2019, we have made sure small amounts of supply is available for niche products such as instrument-making.”

Media contact: Alex Woods 0422 572 228 | alex.woods@minstaff.vic.gov.au