

Media Release

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



Wednesday, 16 April 2025

SUPPORTING TIMBER BUSINESSES TO EXPLORE NEW VENTURES

The Allan Labor Government is helping former timber businesses create new jobs in agriculture, generating employment and delivering a boost to the local economy.

Minister for Agriculture Ros Spence announced a \$595,312 investment into Turk's Agricultural Services in Buangor as part of Round 3 of the Victorian Timber Innovation Fund (VTIF) grants program.

Turk's Agricultural Services was a commercial firewood cutting service. They have used this funding to move to a new business model, that will focus on providing agricultural contracting and farming services directly to local landowners and primary producers.

The types of services the business will provide include preparing paddocks and pastures for growing seasons.

The project will see the retention of three existing full-time staff and the creation of three new full-time positions, with the focus on offering job opportunities for former native timber workers who have transferable skills.

The grant will support the construction of a storage shed and workshop and enable the business to invest in new equipment, including a tractor and double disc air seeder.

Turk's Agricultural Services have already purchased machinery to prepare paddocks for sowing, as well as a compressor for machinery maintenance.

To date, a total of \$16 million has been invested in 40 new projects through the VTIF grants program, supporting existing forestry businesses to move towards alternative fibre, investigate manufacturing opportunities or transition to other industry sectors.

Round 3 of the grants program is currently open. For more information, visit vic.gov.au/forestry or call 1800 318 182.

Quote attributable to Minister for Agriculture Ros Spence

"We've been supporting businesses like Turk's Agricultural Services to successfully transition from the native timber sector and keep and create jobs in their local communities."

Quote attributable to Member for Ripon Martha Haylett

"The team at Turk's Agricultural Services have supported our region for many years, and they do great work. I congratulate them on seeing a gap in the market and pivoting their business to service the needs of local landowners and primary producers."

Quote attributable to Turk's Agricultural Services owner Xavier 'Turk' van Dugteren

"We are thankful for the opportunity to diversify into agricultural contracting. We have already had great support from some local farmers and look forward to expanding the business over the next few years."

Media contact: Pam Kiriakidis 0472 725 548 | pam.kiriakidis@minstaff.vic.gov.au