

Media Release

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



Wednesday, 4 June 2025

SUPPORTING YARRA RANGES FUTURE ECONOMIC GROWTH

The Allan Labor Government is investing in the future of the Yarra Ranges, helping its communities create new industries that will deliver jobs and economic growth through the Community Development Fund.

Minister for Agriculture Ros Spence today announced a \$500,000 Community Development Fund grant to help the Yarra Ranges Shire Council progress its Upper Yarra Local Development Strategy Project, which will help assist the development of the Warburton, Yarra Junction and Powelltown communities.

Innovation Working Groups (IWG) have been established to explore fresh opportunities in tourism, small-scale farming, micro abattoirs, renewable energy and improvements in buildings and transport – helping the Yarra Ranges thrive and build a more sustainable future.

In addition, the Council will use the funding to upskill community members so they can implement those opportunities.

The Energy Resilience and Renewable Energy IWG was successful in helping the Powelltown Sporting Group receive a grant from the Government's 100 Neighbourhood Batteries program.

A battery system will be installed at the sporting pavilion, ensuring up to 72 hours of back-up power during outages and emergencies, and supporting the viability of sporting clubs and local health initiatives.

Investments through the Forestry Transition Program has resulted in 85 per cent of local native timber workers remaining in employment – either in their existing jobs or finding new work. For more information visit deeca.vic.gov.au/forestry.

Quote attributable to Minister for Agriculture Ros Spence

"We understand the value of these grants and the meaningful impact they have on our communities, which is why we're investing in the Yarra Ranges to help the Council plan for a better and more sustainable future."

Quote attributable to Member for Northern Victoria Jaclyn Symes

"These grants will support local initiatives such as community transport services, making it easier for residents to move and be connected to their communities."

Quotes attributable to Yarra Ranges Shire Council Mayor, Cr Jim Childs

"I'm absolutely thrilled that we've been able to receive additional funding from State Government to support communities in the Upper Yarra. I'd like to thank them for their ongoing support, and our community led Innovation Working Groups for their fantastic work so far."

"We're investigating local projects such as community transport options to help visitors and residents get around, repurposing abandoned buildings, and ensuring the Powelltown community has backup power in emergencies."