

Media Release

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



Friday, 4 July 2025

DRIVING ECONOMIC GROWTH IN THE NORTH EAST AND GIPPSLAND

The Allan Labor Government is creating more local jobs and economic opportunities across North East Victoria and Gippsland.

Minister for Agriculture Ros Spence is investing more than \$2 million towards several projects as part of Round 2 of the Community Development Fund – to create jobs and help former forestry communities thrive long term.

Upper Murray Inc will receive a \$500,000 grant towards its Local Development Strategy, targeting high-impact opportunities to attract investment to the region and deliver a leadership development program for locals.

Upper Murray Inc will receive a further \$250,000 grant for an agricultural pilot project to collect and share data and knowledge that will help farmers build resilient farming systems and retain and create employment.

Murrindindi Shire Council will receive a \$130,000 grant to go towards its Murrindindi Farm Forestry project. The project will analyse the current state of farm forestry in Murrindindi and identify future opportunities, establish a pilot Farm Forestry Interpretive Centre, and develop a small-scale timber processing pilot project.

Nowa Nowa Community Development Group will receive \$573,600 to implement their Local Development Strategy, undertake a Primary Industry Value Chain Assessment, and do an audit assessment and concept plan for local tracks and trails that could be used for adventure tourism.

The *Future of Heyfield* project has received \$251,406 to establish a Heyfield Adventure Hub pilot. The Heyfield Traders and Tourism Association will use the funds to promote tourism in the area, deliver a 12-month calendar of events, support visitors and engage local businesses and residents.

Yarram and District Progress Association received \$155,171 to deliver the *Yarram Strzelecki Koala Conservation Centre and Hospital Feasibility Study*, including detailed analysis on plan to establish a Koala Conservation Centre, Hospital, Education, Research and Eco-Tourism facilities.

The *Swifts Creek Future* project has received \$100,000 to develop a structure plan for the area, which will provide a framework for future land development in Swifts Creek to increase housing supply.

Applications are now open for Round 3 of the program which will make a further \$5 million in funding available to eligible organisations in and around the townships of Noojee, Alexandra, Taggerty, Buxton, Marysville, Yarra Ranges, Heyfield, Yarram, Nowa Nowa, Swifts Creek, Orbost, Koondrook, Benalla and Corryong.

For more information or apply for Round 3 visit, deeca.vic.gov.au/forestry.

Quote attributable to Minister for Agriculture Ros Spence

“We’re helping more businesses and workers transition to new and existing industries like agriculture and tourism, proving employment and boosting the local economy.”

Quote attributable to Member for Eastern Victoria Tom McIntosh

“Transitioning communities continue to work day-in day-out to provide a better future for their towns. These grants are supporting countless volunteer hours and input from the community over a long period, and are another positive step forward in agriculture and tourism.”

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