

Media Release

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



Wednesday, 13 August 2025

ECONOMIC GROWTH IN GIPPSLAND AND LODDON MALLEE REGIONS

The Allan Labor Government is supporting job creation and business development in former native timber industry communities with grants funded through the second round of the Forestry Transition Fund grants program.

Minister for Agriculture Ros Spence today announced the fund will award more than \$69,000 to two business owners – a mechanical repair business in northern Victoria and a local meat supply company in Gippsland.

Set up to support eligible businesses and industry groups in or around the towns directly impacted by the end of commercial native timber harvesting in state forests, the program offers grants up to \$1 million to expand, diversify or start new businesses.

Chambers of commerce, peak bodies and business networks, local councils and incorporated not-for-profits that operate as businesses are also eligible to apply for the grants.

For Game On Meats in Gippsland, a grant of more than \$49,000 from the second round of grants will ensure the delivery of fresh produce directly to more customers, while also creating additional jobs in the district.

The business has been supplying premium venison and kangaroo meat directly to market for four years – offering a three-day turnaround to give his customers the freshest possible product.

One of the greatest challenges has been supplying Melbourne markets, with customers required to collect the produce from Traralgon – the grant enabling the business to purchase a new truck and hire two part-time staff to expand and make deliveries to Melbourne.

In northern Victoria, a \$20,000 grant will help local Gunbower business, Adam Chambers Mechanical, as it transitions away from forestry and towards agriculture.

Established as a family business in 2013, it specialises in mechanical repair and servicing work for the forestry industry, with the grant helping to purchase new equipment and increase staff hours as the business shifts operations towards on-site farm servicing – benefiting farmers who will save crucial time and money.

Expressions of interests for the latest round of grants closes on 29 August 2025. For more information visit deeca.vic.gov.au/forestry or call 1800 318 182.

Quote attributable to Minister for Agriculture Ros Spence

"We are proud to support local businesses to grow – these grants not only mean that these businesses can expand, but it will also open up other job opportunities to locals in these small former forestry towns."

Quote attributable to Member for Northern Victoria Jaclyn Symes

"This will support the growth of a great local business and ensure more jobs for the local community in the Loddon Mallee region."

Quote attributable to Member for Eastern Victoria Tom McIntosh

"Getting more Gippsland produce to market is good for local jobs and good for our local economy."

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Quotes attributable to Gordon Fehst, Game On Meats

“I’ve been travelling to WA to make ends meet. This grant means I can put all my effort into the business, into the community. It’s something I’m proud to do.”

“This community is important to me. I have been able to contribute to the local economy and to jobs in this area – supported by the Forestry Transition Fund. I can see a really bright future for us.”

Quotes attributable to Adam Chambers, owner AJ Chambers

“When things come up, sometimes you have to dig your heels in and give new things a go”

“The Forestry Transition Fund grant has given me confidence about shifting the business. I have had a lot of community support and everyone is on board.”