

- 2026 ELECTION PRIORITY -

Forestry transition to support economic recovery

Supporting East Gippsland communities through industry transition.

Why continued support is needed

The end of commercial native forest timber harvesting in Victoria (2024) was a major structural change for several regional economies, particularly in East Gippsland.

Families in timber-dependent towns such as Orbost, Nowa Nowa, Swifts Creek and surrounding districts, have historically relied on forestry and the associated industries for direct and indirect employment.

Industry estimates and regional reporting indicate that many jobs have been lost, contributing to population decline, reduced business confidence, and fewer local opportunities.

Communities are raising concerns that transition funding is not being delivered transparently, equitably, or at sufficient speed to support the required economic recovery.

Our community is asking for

A review of the governance, transparency and delivery of existing transition programs.

- East Gippsland communities want to understand how the program is supporting their families and how funding translates into real local outcomes.
- Streamlined grant processes and faster approvals.
- Extension of transition program timeframes beyond June 2027.

Background

Following the cessation of commercial native forest timber harvesting in Victoria, the Victorian Government established transition support including the Forestry Transition Program.

The transition programs were earmarked to deliver support to towns directly impacted by the end of native forest timber harvesting including Orbost, Nowa Nowa and Swifts Creek and resulting benefits expected within 12–24 months through grants, training and investment incentives.



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Stakeholders in East Gippsland have publicly raised concerns that some funding streams have been slow to deliver local employment outcomes, are overly bureaucratic, or are directed toward programs that do not genuinely replace lost economic activity. Local stakeholders are seeking clearer information on how much funding is allocated, where it is going, and whether delivery settings and timelines are supporting on-the-ground economic recovery.

Support for the program delivery aligns with the Victorian Government's regional economic diversification objectives (including the Regional Jobs and Infrastructure Fund) as well as biodiversity protection and bushfire risk reduction priorities and complements Council's economic development and resilience strategies.

More information

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