

# Media Release

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## Investing in the future of regional Victoria

Over \$5 million dollars is being invested into the Victorian timber industry by local businesses which will boost regional economic growth and provide job security in rural areas.

The majority of the investment has come from three VicForests' regional customers, however, there has also been significant support via a range of Local, State and Federal Government grants aimed at supporting regional communities.

Robert Green, VicForests' Chief Executive Officer said that these investments will help provide economic stability in regional areas that rely heavily on the timber industry.

"The majority of the residents in many rural communities where timber mills operate are in some way connected to the local timber industry.

"By investing in the future of the company, our customers are also investing in the future of their town and all its residents," Mr Green said.

Mr Green said that the continued growth in demand for timber in Victoria has resulted in an increase of timber imports from other countries that may not meet the same strict sustainability requirement as VicForests.

"With the demand for locally sourced, sustainable timber on the rise it is vital that we continue to invest in the timber industry.

"Australia currently imports more than \$5 billion in wood and wood products every year. Investing in new equipment improves efficiency and better utilises the timber resources we have available.

"VicForests' operations are certified to the Australian Forestry Standard demonstrating the sustainability of our forestry practices. We harvest, regrow and sell high grade timber to be used in products such as quality hardwood furniture and flooring," Mr Green said.

Radial Timber Australia is investing \$4 million into building a new radial sawmill and dry mill upgrade in Yarram. The Yarram site is the only commercial radial sawmill in the world and operates by cutting logs into wedges in order to utilise more of the timber.

Ryan and McNulty in Benalla and Talbot Timbers in Talbot, near Maryborough, are also investing in upgrades in technology and increasing their capacity to improve productivity and energy efficiency.

Tim Johnston, CEO of the Victorian Association of Forest Industries, said it is great to see continued investment by business in the industry. "The work these companies are undertaking now is vital in ensuring we continue to use this natural renewable resource to its full potential for the benefit of Victoria."

Talbot's new operations will save at least 50 per cent in diesel usage and double productivity.



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“More and more sawmills and timber production companies are looking to greener and more environmentally friendly ways of operating,” Mr Green said

“The more environmentally conscious we are now, the more our industry can continue to be sustainable well into the future.

“Forestry in Victoria is all about sustainability. Our timber resource is renewable. By being good stewards of it we can look after the environment and continue to produce the high quality timber that consumers are looking for,” he said.