

Our Ref:
SG: HB

28 July 2021

To whom it may concern,

LATROBE CITY COUNCIL SUBMISSION - 2021 PROPOSED VARIATION OF THE CODE OF PRACTICE FOR TIMBER PRODUCTION

Latrobe City Council welcomes the release of the draft amendments to the *Code of Practice for Timber Production 2014* by the Victorian Government, along with its incorporated document the *Management Standards and Procedures for timber harvesting operations in Victoria's State forests (MSPs)*.

Latrobe City Council believes that there is an urgent need to have this Code fully and comprehensively in place to provide certainty for the forestry industry, its supply chains and timber communities in Latrobe City and beyond.

Council is disappointed that the Victorian Government has delayed the comprehensive review of the Code until 2023. This delay is expected to continue to impact on the timber supply, and the viability of several Gippsland timber businesses with flow on effects to timber workers, contractors and ultimately consumers.

Latrobe City Council has had a long interest in the Latrobe City's timber industry and its contribution to the local economy. Council's commitment is driven by the desire to secure jobs and to leverage further investment in the timber industry.

The total output of 100 jobs in this sector is estimated at about \$100 million, over 200 jobs and over \$26 million in terms of value-add to the broader Latrobe economy.

Our region is home to Australia's largest pulp and paper mill (Australian Paper's Maryvale Mill) and Australian Sustainable Hardwoods (ASH) hardwood sawmill at Heyfield (Shire of Wellington) as the major processors. In addition, at least ten smaller hardwood sawmills operate throughout the region; these businesses provide much needed employment for local community members.

While a draft Code has been released for consultation, Council believes that the proposed changes do not go far enough, fast enough. In the meantime, the supply of Victorian native timber will continue to be impacted through the sawmills and timber manufacturers, as well as their workers and contractors.

Council is further concerned that if the Code is not rectified, timber workers, contractors and their crews are likely to be stood down and wood supply to sawmills may diminish further or cease completely.

Council supports close engagement with the Victorian timber industry in relation to their recommendations for any amendments to the Code that help secure the future of this sustainable industry.

Latrobe City Council is asking the Victorian Government to make balanced changes to the Code that will ensure sustainable outcomes for both the environment and the economy. These changes must protect wood supply and provide real job security for timber workers, contractors, their crews, those working in our timber supply chains, and ultimately our timber communities.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Gibson', with a stylized flourish at the end.

CR SHARON GIBSON
Mayor