



Timber Supply Chain Resilience Package

Highly Impacted Manufacturers Stream

For manufacturers that use
native Victorian hardwood

Guidelines

MAY 2024

Highly Impacted Manufacturers Stream

Background

On 23 May 2023 the Victorian Government announced that native timber harvesting in Victorian state forests will end on 1 January 2024.

Hardwood product manufacturers will no longer be able to obtain timber inputs from Victorian state forests.

The Timber Supply Chain Resilience Package provides affected manufacturers with access to grants, professional advice and planning services to support business transition and to plan for the future.

Support will be provided to eligible businesses that currently process native hardwood sourced from Victorian state forests to manufacture products such as flooring, stairs, furniture, doors, windows, architectural features and pallets.

This program is administered by the Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions.

Highly Impacted Manufacturers Stream – Summary

The Highly Impacted Manufacturers Stream provides vouchers valued at up to \$25,000 to access advice and services, which will assist businesses to plan for the future.

The voucher is available to eligible manufacturing businesses that will be highly affected by the end of native timber harvesting (see eligibility at section 1).

A service provider will be appointed by the Department to deliver voucher services to eligible businesses.

STAGE 1 – Preliminary Business Diagnostic and Future Opportunities Assessment

The service provider will complete a Preliminary Business Diagnostic for affected businesses, including a financial health check and an assessment of future opportunities.

STAGE 2 – Business Transition Plan

The affected business will be offered a full Business Transition Plan to be undertaken by the service provider, where required.

The nature of services involved in a Business Transition Plan can include specialist financial and accounting advice, legal considerations, general business planning, marketing planning and business sale or closure advice.

Access to further support

Businesses that have completed a Business Transition Plan may be offered the opportunity to apply for a grant of up to \$120,000 (excluding GST) to implement the steps outlined in their plan. Application information about this grants program will be made available to eligible businesses.

Key Program Dates

The program will open for applications on Monday 3 July 2023 and close on 31 December 2024 at 11:59 pm (AEDT), or earlier at the Department's discretion. Complete applications will be assessed in the order that they are received.

1. Who is eligible for a voucher?

1.1. The business¹ must:

- a) be a legally structured business with an active Australian Business Number (ABN) and have held that ABN on and from 1 July 2021²
- b) be an employing business located in Victoria that is registered with WorkSafe Victoria³
- c) be a business in the manufacturing industry classified under one of the following Australia and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classifications (ANZSIC) codes as of 23 May 2023, unless otherwise agreed by the Department⁴:
 - 1413 Timber Resawing and Dressing
 - 1492 Wooden Structural Fitting and Component Manufacturing
 - 1499 Other Wood Product Manufacturing n.e.c.
 - 2511 Wooden Furniture and Upholstered Seat Manufacturing

If your ANZSIC classification is out of date, incorrect or you are unsure how to access this information, assistance can be provided by contacting the Business Victoria Hotline on **13 22 15** or email industrytransition@ecodev.vic.gov.au

- d) be highly affected by the end of native timber harvesting in Victoria, with:
 - at least 40% of the business's material inputs (measured by cost), used in the manufacturing process, derived from native hardwood sourced from Victorian state forests, or
 - at least 40% of the business's revenue derived from sales of products made with native Victorian hardwood.

These figures must be for one completed financial year: either 2021-22 or 2022-2023.

1.2. The following are not eligible to apply:

- a) Commonwealth, state and local government agencies or bodies
- b) Publicly funded research institutions
- c) Industry associations
- d) Businesses that may use Victorian native hardwood timber but are not manufacturers, such as those engaged in retail trade, product design services, wholesale trade, construction (including installation and carpentry) or logistics
- e) Businesses that produce wood chips, firewood, sawdust and/or mulch
- f) Businesses eligible for support under the forestry transition support package being administered by the Victorian Department of Energy Environment and Climate Action (DEECA), or
- g) Businesses accessing support via the Impacted Businesses Stream of the Timber Supply Chain Resilience Package.

1 A business must be a legal entity. Trustees may apply on behalf of a trust and partners on behalf of partnerships, see Section 6. Sole Traders and Partnerships are eligible to apply if they are employing staff and registered with WorkSafe Victoria.

2 A business registered earlier than 1 July 2021 and maintaining that registration is considered as having an ABN "on and from" the relevant date. If the business ABN was activated after 1 July 2021, please contact the Business Victoria Hotline **13 22 15** or email industrytransition@ecodev.vic.gov.au.

3 Businesses operating within Victoria and registered with WorkSafe Victoria must be able to provide their WorkCover Employer Number and WorkCover Certificate of Currency at the point of Application.

4 An ANZSIC code describes your main business activity and is part of the ABN business details held on the Australian Business Register (ABR).

2. Vouchers

- 2.1. Business support services of up to \$25,000 in value may be available to businesses from a set catalogue of services provided by the Program's service provider and dependent on the requirements of each business.
- 2.2. An eligible business can only receive one voucher.
- 2.3. The Department will pay the service provider directly for the services undertaken with an eligible business.
- 2.4. Complete applications for Vouchers will be assessed for eligibility in order of receipt until the Program close date or until the available funds are exhausted.
- 2.5. The Department has engaged a specialist service provider to support applicants through a structured business needs analysis process:
 - **Stage 1 – Preliminary Business Diagnostic and Future Opportunities Assessment** – provides a financial health check and an assessment of the affected business's potential to transition away from their reliance on native Victorian hardwood as a manufacturing input. A project scope to deliver a full Business Transition Plan (Stage 2) will be developed.
 - **Stage 2 – Business Transition Plan** – development of a full transition plan including some or all of the following elements (non-exhaustive): specialist financial and accounting planning (including taxation), legal considerations, general business planning, marketing planning and/or business sale or closure advice.
- 2.6. If a Stage 2 scope cannot be agreed between the service provider and the business, the Department may determine that Stage 2 services should not proceed.

3. Grant funding after voucher support

- 3.1. Businesses that have completed a Business Transition Plan may be invited to apply for a grant of up to \$120,000 (excluding GST) to implement the steps outlined in their plan. Program guidelines will be made available to eligible businesses.
- 3.2. Applications up to the \$120,000 (excluding GST) grant program are by invitation only and only business that have completed the Business Transition Plan, unless otherwise agreed by the Department.

4. How the voucher works

Step 1 – Businesses submit an application via the Business Victoria website at business.vic.gov.au along with required evidence of eligibility.

Step 2 – The Department will endeavour to notify Applicants of the outcome of their complete application within four weeks of submission.

Step 3 – If the Applicant is found eligible for a voucher, the service provider will contact the business within five days of notification to commence the Preliminary Business Diagnostic (Stage 1). The Diagnostic Report will be provided to the business and to the Department.

Step 4 – The Diagnostic will inform the business if there is value or benefit in developing a full Business Transition Plan. The service provider will scope the additional services to undertake this work. The business is not obliged to continue to the Business Transition Plan stage.

Step 5 – Upon agreement of a scope of work between the service provider and the business, the service provider will develop the Business Transition Plan.

Step 6 – The finalised Business Transition Plan will be provided to the business and the Department.

Step 7 – Businesses that have completed a Business Transition Plan may be offered the opportunity to apply for a grant of up to \$120,000 (excluding GST) to implement the steps outlined in their plan. Application Information about this grants program will be made available to eligible businesses.

5. Who can apply?

- 5.1. The person submitting the application must be an authorised representative of the business (such as an owner or director) who can execute contracts and legally bind the business **or** be a person given authorisation by an authorised representative to apply.
- 5.2. The person submitting the application for the business must attest that they have the authority to make the application on behalf of the business, and to legally bind it to perform the obligations if the application is successful.
- 5.3. An incorporated trustee can apply on behalf of a trust and a Partner can apply on behalf of a partnership provided that the trustee or partnership would otherwise be eligible and be able to meet the obligations under the signed agreement.
- 5.4. If requested by the Department, details of one of the following current proof of identity documents must be provided to confirm the identity of the person applying:
 - a Driver's License or Learner Permit from any Australian state or territory
 - an Australian passport or New Zealand passport
 - a Medicare Card, or
 - a foreign passport for those issued with an Australian Visa.
- 5.5. If proof of identity is unable to be confirmed, the applicant will receive a follow-up email with instructions on how to provide their proof of identity details.

6. How to apply

- 6.1. Applications must be submitted online via the Business Victoria website at business.vic.gov.au.
- 6.2. Businesses must provide the following:
 - Evidence of native hardwood timber supply from Victorian state forests as a material input, in the form of:
 - paid invoices, orders and/or receipts evidencing purchase of hardwood from Victorian state forests between 1 July 2021 and 23 May 2023, and
 - a Statutory Declaration from the director or authorised person stating that native hardwood from Victorian state forests represents at least 40% of material inputs for the business.
- 6.3. All questions in the application need to be completed and requested information and evidence provided to ensure timely assessment.
- 6.4. As part of the application process, the business must acknowledge and agree to be bound by the conditions of the Program in the application form and these guidelines.
- 6.5. Applicants will be notified of the outcome of the eligibility assessment and, if successful, will be contacted by the service provider within five days.

7. Assessment of eligibility

- 7.1. The applicant will be required to confirm and attest that the business meets the eligibility criteria at the time of application and agrees to be bound by the conditions of the Program.
- 7.2. Applications will be assessed using the information and evidence provided in the application form and through verification with other data sources as outlined in section 7.3 and 7.5.
- 7.3. As part of this process, any information provided by the business may be shared and subject to verification with other government agencies (State and Commonwealth) including (but not limited to) the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action, WorkSafe Victoria, the Australian Business Register and the Australian Department of Home Affairs, as well as the suppliers of native Victorian hardwood⁵.
- 7.4. Businesses must ensure that the information listed with the Australian Business Register (ABR) as part of their ABN registration is current and accurate at the time of application.
- 7.5. Business registration details filed with the Australian Securities and Investments Commission, Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission, Consumer Affairs Victoria and/or other applicable regulators may be checked.
- 7.6. Without limiting the Department's assessment, the following circumstances may be taken into consideration in any decision whether to award a voucher:
 - duplicate applications by a trustee and a trust
 - misleading amendments to information provided to public registers describing the business or any authorised officer of the business
 - any adverse findings by a government agency or local council regarding a business or its operation
 - a business is, or notice has been given that it will be, placed under external administration
 - there is a petition for bankruptcy or to wind up or deregister a company or business, and
 - a step is being taken to deregister the company or business (including cancellation or lapse in registration of any relevant permit).
- 7.7. Applications will be carefully considered and assessed against the eligibility criteria. The State may, in its absolute discretion, determine: (a) whether the type of business of an applicant is eligible for the grant; or (b) whether the use of Victorian hardwood is material to the business of the applicant. The State's decision about eligibility for a grant is final.
- 7.8. Applicants that update their ANZSIC code after 23 May 2023 will be required to provide evidence, to the Department's satisfaction, confirming the nature of their business operations before they can be deemed eligible.

⁵ The Department is not responsible for any delays caused by third party validation of business' eligibility. By making an application, the business consents to the assessment and verification process.

- 7.9. The Department may request further information or clarification to assist with assessment of the application. The Victorian Government reserves, in its absolute discretion, the right to refuse the application where eligibility criteria are not met, or where the applicant does not or cannot provide sufficient information in the required time frame to assess whether eligibility criteria have been met, or where a claim cannot be supported.
- 7.10. Only completed applications that are lodged with the Department will be assessed. Applications that are in draft or are incomplete and that have not been submitted will not be considered as received and will not be assessed.
- 7.11. The business must attest that all industrial relations obligations as an employer, in accordance with the National Employer Standards, are being met.
- 7.12. The business must also provide a release to the Department relating to the provision of services by the service provider acknowledging it is the service provider who will have responsibility for provision of the services to the business to the requisite standards and be liable to the business for conducting the Preliminary Business Diagnostic and Future Opportunities Assessment, the Business Transition Plan, or both.

8. Outcome Notification

- 8.1. The Department will endeavour to notify Applicants of the outcome of their complete application within four weeks of submission.
- 8.2. There may be longer processing times and delays in notification of the outcome of the application if it:
 - does not meet the eligibility criteria
 - is incomplete
 - has incorrect information, such as ABN (Australian Business Number) or bank details (for successful business)
 - does not include current or accurate information registered with relevant regulators or partner agencies, such as the Australian Business Register, WorkSafe Victoria, Tax Practitioners Board, professional membership bodies, or
 - requires further information or evidence to verify or validate the application and claim for funding.
- 8.3. The Department may at any time remove a business from the application or assessment process, or terminate an agreement if, in the Department's opinion, association with the business may bring the Department, a Minister or the State of Victoria in disrepute.

9. Program Evaluation

- 9.1. Each voucher recipient agrees to take part in the program's evaluation by participating in evaluation surveys. The evaluation enables the effectiveness/impact of the program to be assessed.

10. Compliance and Audit

- 10.1. Voucher recipients may, at the request of the Victorian Government, be subject to audit by the Victorian Government or its representatives on the accuracy of their application including provision of evidence of eligibility, and the services provided, at the request of the Victorian Government, for a period of three years from receipt of the support.
- 10.2. The value of the Voucher paid on behalf of the applicant will be repayable on demand if any information in the application is found to be false or misleading (as determined by the Department in its discretion).
- 10.3. It is an offence under the *Oaths and Affirmations Act 2018* (Vic) for a person to make a statement in a statutory declaration that they know to be untrue.

11. Privacy Statement

- 11.1. Any personal information provided for the purposes of this program will be used by the Department for the purposes of assessing eligibility, program administration, program review, evaluation, and auditing. When applying for a voucher the applicant consents to sharing their information with the service provider/s for the purpose of delivering the voucher services and with each relevant State and Commonwealth Government department and agency for the purpose of assessing applications, as outlined above in Section 7.
- 11.2. If there is an intention to include personal information about a third party in the application, the applicant must ensure the third party is aware of and consents to the contents of this privacy statement.
- 11.3. Any personal information about the applicant or a third party will be collected, held, managed, used, disclosed or transferred in accordance with the provisions of the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014* (Vic) and other applicable laws. Enquiries about access to personal information, or for other concerns regarding the privacy of personal information, can be emailed to the Department's Privacy Unit at privacy@ecodev.vic.gov.au. The Department's privacy policy is also available by emailing the Department's Privacy Unit.

12. Other Information about this Program

- 12.1. Subject to the provision of notice, the Department reserves the right to amend these guidelines and application terms, conditions of the voucher at any time, and as it deems appropriate.
- 12.2. If an unsuccessful business considers that their application has been incorrectly assessed, they can lodge a complaint. More information can be found at business.vic.gov.au/contact-us/complaints.
- 12.3. If you have any queries about your application or require further information on the program, please visit business.vic.gov.au, contact the Business Victorian Hotline at **13 22 15**, or email industrytransition@ecodev.vic.gov.au.

Glossary

Term	Definition
Application	The application submitted by the business to the Department for funding under the program for the service activity.
Applicant or business	The legal entity specified in the application.
Department	The State of Victoria represented by the Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions.
Voucher	The agreement with the Recipient that the Department will pay the specialist service provider for the services undertaken (outlined in Section 2.5) on behalf of the Recipient.
Guidelines	This document.
Native Victorian hardwood	Hardwood that is derived from Victorian state forests.
person applying	An authorised representative of the business (such as an owner or director) who can execute contracts and legally bind the business or be a person given authorisation by an authorised representative to apply.
Program	The Timber Supply Chain Resilience Package – Highly Impacted Manufacturers Stream.
Recipient	The business as specified in the Application where the application has been accepted by the Department, by the issue of a formal notification of success.
Successful Email	An email sent by the Department notifying the Applicant that they will receive grant funding.
specialist service provider	A business services specialist/s chosen by the Department to deliver the Preliminary Business Diagnostic and Business Transition Plan to Recipients.