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Native forestry is worth \$150m

The Victorian Association of Forest Industries (VAFI) has welcomed the release of a new study commissioned by the Department of Primary Industries (DPI) into the economic importance of East Gippsland native forestry.

VAFI public affairs manager, Shaun Ratcliff said the study by Coakes Consulting, 'Victoria's Forestry Communities: Adapting to Change in the Forestry Industries', showed that the native forestry in East Gippsland generated \$150 million of economic activity and directly supported the livelihoods of 2000 people in the region.

"This report confirms that the forest and wood products industries are major drivers of economic growth, particularly in rural and regional areas," Mr Ratcliff said.

According to the study, native forest and wood products businesses with links to the East Gippsland Forest Management Area create over \$150 million of economic activity each year.

This included local business expenditures in East Gippsland of:

- * \$22.16 million in Bairnsdale.
- * \$21.08 million in Orbost.
- * \$14.33 million in Cann River.
- * \$7.79 million in Heyfield.

It was also found these businesses supported around 2022 people (778 industry workers, plus their families) within East Gippsland. This only includes those directly employed in the industry and not those indirectly supported by it, such as employees of non-forestry firms that rely on it for trade.