

# Jobs and forest industries

The native forests of the West region support a range of important industries, including forestry and wood products, tourism, minerals and water production as well as grazing, beekeeping, firewood, and speciality crafts.

## Wood and wood products

The forestry and wood based industries using wood from the West RFA region generate direct outputs worth about \$53.1 million, with flow on effects worth around \$99.3 million to State output in 1997-98. Sawmilling turns over approximately \$29.9 million each year and the region accounts for around 12.6 per cent of the State's sawlog production. The gross value of pulpwood is estimated at \$23.2 million, with 15.4 per cent of Victoria's total residual log production.

The region has 22 hardwood sawmills involved in a range of sawn timber processing activities, including a high proportion of further processed products such as kiln dried and appearance grade products for both domestic and export market. Three pulpwood processors have allocations of residual material from the region, as well as taking residues from sawmills.

## Jobs

The industry is estimated to provide 1,272 direct and indirect jobs in sawmilling (713), residual log processing (198) and commercial forest management and logging and haulage (361).

Native hardwood from the region also contributes to a range of manufacturing activities, such as furniture manufacturing, joinery and craft wood industries. Taking these activities into account, the wood based industries accounted for 3,718 direct jobs in 1996, or 1.3 per cent of total regional employment. (These figures do not take account of jobs linked to hardwood resources from the West region but not located in the region, such as the Kimberly-Clark pulp mill at Millicent, South Australia.)

## Household expenditure

The Social Assessment for the RFA found that timber processing industries in the region generate \$6.2 million in annual household expenditure. The mills around Daylesford generate the most annual household expenditure (\$1.4 million), with mills at Colac and Beaufort each generating \$800,000. Overall, employees drawing a percentage of their resource from the West region generated \$7.7 million in annual household expenditure.

Contracting businesses in the region generate \$2.3 million in annual household expenditure, mostly within the Otway area (\$1.5 million). Contractors within the Midlands area were found to generate \$400,000 in annual household expenditure by their employees.

## **Tourism**

The West region's forests, coasts, rivers, lakes and ranges provide a wealth of tourist attractions. Tourism and recreation contributed \$4.2 billion to Victoria's gross state product in 1995-96. Cultural, recreational, personal and other services in the region employed over 21,148 people or 7.6 per cent of the region's total employment, excluding their contribution to the retail and wholesale industries.

Areas of public land such as the Grampians and Port Campbell National Park are some of the most popular natural attractions in Victoria.

State forest and parks and reserves complement each other as visitor destinations. In 1994-95, there were 723,000 visitors to the region's State forest and 3,675,700 visitors to national parks. The net value of tourism and recreation to State forests is estimated to be between \$4.3 million and \$13 million with parks contributing an estimated \$66.2 million. Based on aggregated figures, tourism and recreation on the region's public land is estimated to contribute between \$496 million and \$517.7 million per year to the regional economy.

Visitors are estimated to spend more than \$458 million each year along the Great Ocean Road while Ballarat's gold mining history attracts over 1.3 million visitors each year. Each year, visitors to Sovereign Hill, Victoria's premier theme park, spend \$12.7 million while another 155,000 visitors are attracted to Hepburn Spa Resort near Daylesford. Tourism in the Macedon-Daylesford region directly employs 1,335 people and contributes \$47.4 million to the region's economy.

## **Other forest industries**

The region's forests also provide minor forest produce such as posts and poles, other hewn timber, firewood, wood chop blocks and specialty timbers. Other uses include grazing, apiculture, mineral exploration and mining. Royalties received from these products amounted to \$245,588 in 1997-98.

### **Minerals**

The region is an important source of brown coal, gold and various construction materials, estimated to be worth about \$200 million in 1998. Important industrial minerals and construction materials quarries in the region supply Melbourne, Ballarat-Bendigo, Portland-Warrnambool and other regional centres.

### **Apiary**

Apiarists use the region's forests to produce honey, beeswax, pollen and royal jelly. Pollination of food and seed crops is another important benefit of apiculture. Important eucalypt species for the region's 108 annual and 434 temporary bee sites are Yellow Box Yellow Gum, River Red Gum, Messmate, Brown Stringybark, Manna Gum, Red Box and Red Stringybark

### **Grazing**

Over 1,000 licences are issued for grazing on public land in the West region. In 1997-98 grazing returned \$175 700 in royalties.

