



The Place To Be

Media release

From the Parliamentary Secretary for State and Regional Development

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NEW STATE-OF-THE-ART TIMBER PLANT OPENED IN COLAC

A brand new, state-of-the-art timber treatment plant at Associated Kiln Driers (AKD) in Colac was officially opened today by the Parliamentary Secretary for State and Regional Development, Joe Helper.

The \$2.4 million expansion was assisted by a \$30,000 Bracks Government grant through the Victorian Government's *Community Regional Industry Skills Program (CRISP)* to help AKD train and recruit the new staff.

"AKD's expansion has created 10 new jobs for the company which already employs 185 staff and is a major employer in Colac," Mr Helper said.

"The new timber treatment plant will strengthen the industry in Colac and the new jobs will help to counter the impact of ceasing native forest timber harvesting in the Otways.

"The new treatment plant involves an innovative move away from using the more traditional copper chrome arsenate (CCA) to a relatively new technique of light oil solvent preservation (LOSP).

"The CRISP grant is contributing to the employment and training of new staff in the manufacturing process, chemical usage, timber treatment, assembly and equipment operation.

"AKD is to be congratulated for taking this innovative boost to timber preservation capacity in provincial Victoria."

Mr Helper said the CRISP initiative brought together local employees, labour market providers and education providers to address local skills shortages.

"It's about finding practical and effective ways to secure the long term future of local industries," he said.

"The Bracks Government recognises that finding appropriately trained people to work in provincial Victoria can sometimes prove difficult.

"This is a significant project that will create new employment opportunities, boost the local economy and increase the pool of skilled employees in the region."

Mr Helper said the Government had recently announced an extra \$5.5 million for the CRISP initiative under *Moving Forward*, the Government's \$502 million plan to make provincial Victoria the best place to live, work and invest.

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