

# Media Release

**The Hon Jaclyn Symes MLC**

Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council

Minister for Regional Development

Minister for Agriculture

Minister for Resources



Thursday, 23 April 2020

## BACKING AGRICULTURE BUSINESSES DURING CORONAVIRUS

The Victorian Government is working closely with the state's agricultural sector to ensure its crucial supply chains can continue unbroken during the coronavirus pandemic.

Minister for Agriculture Jaclyn Symes has established the Victorian Agriculture Industry Reference Group, bringing together Agriculture Victoria and industry representatives.

This has been done to share information from the Government, ensure farmers and producers have the most up to date health and business advice, as well being able to directly respond to feedback and concerns.

The group of representatives from 25 peak industry bodies are working with the Government to address the issues facing the sector.

This includes providing information about commuting and accommodating seasonal workers, along with answering frequently asked questions about how businesses can manage staff safety and the health of their workforce, and directives for people with responsibilities for animals.

Industry are aware that to slow the spread of coronavirus, it is vital that the entire agriculture supply chain adopts enhanced cleaning regimes, hygiene practices and physical distancing measures.

Many businesses have shown leadership and are stepping up to ensure agriculture businesses have continuity plans, know how to introduce strict cleaning regimes in the workplace and have processes in place to ensure work can continue should an employee have to self-isolate.

Any businesses seeking advice are urged to visit the Business Victoria website and hotline (13 22 15), with support staff trained to address specific concerns of the agriculture industry.

The frequently asked questions and the latest guidance on commuting and accommodating seasonal and contract workers during the coronavirus can be found at [agriculture.vic.gov.au](https://agriculture.vic.gov.au).

For the latest general information and advice on coronavirus, visit [dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus](https://dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus).

### Quotes attributable to Minister for Agriculture Jaclyn Symes

*"I'm extremely grateful to everyone working so hard across the agriculture supply chain to ensure we have the food and goods we all need."*

*"Through the feedback they've brought to the group, our agricultural businesses have shown yet again how resilient they can be in the face of hardship, and some invaluable insight into the reality of the pandemic on regional Victoria."*

### Quote attributable to Dairy Australia managing director David Nation

*"This work has brought together all of the Victorian agricultural industries to ensure each industry is connected to the latest developments, can share common issues and provide a direct line of feedback to government."*

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