

# 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



Tuesday, 18 August 2020

## IMPROVED BORDER CONDITIONS FOR AGRICULTURE WELCOMED

The Victorian Government has welcomed the New South Wales Government's permits for critical Victorian agriculture work to continue in NSW, achieved after ongoing collaboration between the two state governments.

Under the new Highly Specialised Critical Services (Agriculture) Permit introduced by the NSW Government from today, Victorian farmers and critical agriculture workers can enter NSW for work that is within 100km of the border, as long as they comply with conditions including self-isolating when not at work and have not travelled more than 100km into Victoria in the past 14 days.

The tighter restrictions introduced by NSW earlier this month posed significant animal welfare and food supply chain risks, and hampered efforts to support bushfire recovery in towns still feeling the impact of last summer's events.

Minister for Regional Development and Agriculture Jaclyn Symes is leading the Victorian Government's advocacy efforts for border communities and will continue to work with NSW to minimise the impact of remaining challenges imposed by the restrictions.

These challenges include supporting agricultural workers that need to travel further than 100km of the border to obtain an exemption to undertake work, and identifying cases where it would be appropriate for NSW agricultural experts to be able to travel into Victoria to perform important work and return home easily.

Beyond agriculture, there also remains the challenge of several thousand day-school students and staff from outside the border zone who will not be permitted to cross into NSW from 24 August.

For health care, only critical workers that reside and work within the newly-defined 'border region' can go to work without self-isolating upon return to NSW, if they only access Victoria for work. There are some exemptions for large providers, but this does not extend to community health centres or small operators.

The stricter conditions also mean Victorian residents can now only access healthcare if it is not available elsewhere in Victoria or if it cannot be accessed remotely.

There are also significant issues facing border communities at the South Australian border, with an impending ban on these Victorians entering SA for previously allowed reasons, including access to critical supplies, providing or receiving care and work or education.

The Victorian Government is working closely with the Cross-Border Commissioner Luke Wilson to ensure border communities and critical industries aren't unfairly impacted by the tighter restrictions from the SA Government.

### Quotes attributable to Minister for Agriculture and Regional Development Jaclyn Symes

*"It is vital for our food supply chains, for animal welfare, and for communities recovering from this summer's bushfires that workers in these critical industries can continue to do their job."*

*"Whilst many of the communities along the border are small, the issues they now face are huge; I urge the SA Government to listen to these communities' needs and ensure they're not unfairly impacted by these tighter restrictions."*

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