

# 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



Friday, 4 September 2020

## LETTING AGRICULTURE WORKERS GET ON WITH THE JOB

The Victorian Government has backed a prescriptive code for farmers and agricultural workers' movement between states and territories, giving certainty that border closures will not stand in the way of vital work keeping Australians fed and clothed.

Victorian Minister for Agriculture Jaclyn Symes welcomed the news from National Cabinet that New South Wales, South Australia, the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory would join Victoria in allowing the unimpeded movement of farmers and agriculture workers across borders.

The code aims to support consistency in border controls for agricultural workers across the states and territories who have agreed to it, including the definition of an agricultural worker and requirements around COVID safety plans, personal protective equipment, record keeping and testing.

The code aims to balance the needs of agricultural industries and the safety of the broader community, ensuring food and supply chain security, as well as protecting animal welfare and maintaining Australia's biosecurity preparedness.

The development of the Agriculture Workers' Code has been led by Minister Symes and NSW Agriculture Minister Adam Marshall and presented to the Commonwealth with input from fellow state and territory agriculture ministers.

The drafting of the code is in response to feedback from industry around the impact of border restrictions, with concern for the needs of those involved in seasonal work such as grain harvest, fruit picking and shearing.

The Victorian Government will await the final details of the code and will work with neighbouring states on implementation.

### Quotes attributable to Minister for Agriculture Jaclyn Symes

*"We support a strong code that provides certainty and consistency for the movement of agriculture workers across state borders."*

*"This code is critical to letting our agriculture workers continue to provide food security to our state, and the rest of the country."*

*"I know this has been stressful for many in the sector as they make their plans for upcoming harvests and livestock management. I thank those who got in touch with me explaining how these restrictions would impact them – we couldn't have achieved this result without your voices."*