

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, 9 October 2020

SWEETER DAYS AHEAD FOR MILAWA BEEKEEPING BUSINESS

A third-generation family-owned beekeeping business in Victoria's North East will benefit from a new packaging line that will enable them to increase supply of raw honey and grow operations, thanks to the Victorian Government.

Minister for Agriculture Jaclyn Symes today announced the Government was proud to support Milawa-based Walkabout Apiaries with a Small-Scale and Craft Program grant of just over \$105,000, which will go towards an automated honey packaging plant.

The custom-built equipment is designed specifically to extract honey at cooler temperatures and will help the business to reach world-class export standards, as well as helping create up to three new positions on the factory floor.

The business has seen an increase in demand for raw honey as people look for naturally sourced products. With the packaging line able to operate without core beekeeping staff, Walkabout Apiaries are aiming to spend more time managing hives, ultimately increasing honey yield.

This will also help the business to better serve their pollination contracts to the horticultural sector, which has flow-on benefits for growers in the region. Currently their bees pollinate blueberries, apples, pears, pumpkins, onions and almonds.

Walkabout Apiaries has been operating their farm-gate shop in Milawa for nearly 40 years, a story that began with the founder, Rodney Whitehead, in 1972 and has grown into a multi-generational family business.

The business now distributes their products across Victoria and has a major role in helping to promote the Milawa Gourmet Region as one of Victoria's many outstanding culinary regions.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Agriculture Jaclyn Symes

"The Milawa region is renowned for its diverse range of premium produce that has fans all over Australia. We're proud to support small-scale and craft agribusinesses such as Walkabout Apiaries to grow their business."

"Regional Victoria will be crucial in leading our state's economic recovery – our fantastic small-scale and craft sector will be at the forefront of our revised tourism and hospitality sectors."

Quotes attributable to Manager and Business Partner of Walkabout Apiaries Greg Whitehead

"This grant will enable us to make an important investment that will grow our business – not just in terms of honey production, the time we're able to spend with the hives will ultimately help our growers to pollinate their crops."

"This year has certainly presented us with some challenges, but we're hopeful that with this new equipment purchase we can start to recoup some of the ground we lost this year and come back even stronger."

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