

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



Wednesday, 21 October 2020

PROMISING STEP FOR VICTORIAN INDUSTRIAL HEMP

The future of an industrial hemp industry in Victoria is looking bright, with the Industrial Hemp Taskforce handing down its interim report today strongly backing a trial site.

Minister for Agriculture Jaclyn Symes was at the proposed trial site at Mildura's SuniTAFE SMART Farm today to release the report.

The cross-party Industrial Hemp Taskforce included Member for Mildura Ali Cupper and Member for Northern Metropolitan Region Fiona Patten. It was established to examine the challenges and opportunities faced by the industrial hemp industry. In delivering their report, the Taskforce committed to further explore opportunities to develop the industry.

The Taskforce has spent the last 12-months engaging with industry stakeholders, participants and research organisations and with this report, has identified a range of opportunities and issues that the industry is facing.

Opportunities outlined in the report include making improvements in processing capability, closing knowledge and experience gaps in hemp cultivation, addressing regulatory barriers as well as more clear and accessible market information.

One significant achievement of the Taskforce over the last year has been facilitating the signing of a memorandum of understanding between Australian Primary Hemp (APH) and SuniTAFE in Mildura.

The partnership outlines a two-year industrial hemp research and development collaboration under SuniTAFE's SMART Farm project to assess its suitability of low-tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) hemp varieties.

Demand for hemp as food and oil products has grown rapidly in Australia since it was included under the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code in 2017, however the industrial hemp industry remains in its infancy.

If successful, the trial would send a strong positive signal for hemp production and cultivation in the Sunraysia region, which could lead to the establishment of a promising new local industry, creating more local jobs.

The findings of the Taskforce provide a valuable evidence base on the state of the industry and highlight areas of focus to support development of the industrial hemp industry.

To read the report and find out more information, visit [the Agriculture Victoria website](#).

Quotes attributable to Minister for Agriculture Jaclyn Symes

"Hemp is a promising emerging commodity that could have far-reaching benefits across Victoria, in particular for the Sunraysia region – that's why we want to support the industry to grow."

"Through the Taskforce, we've developed a thorough understanding of the industry and regulations surrounding industrial hemp – this information is vital for our next step forward in developing industrial hemp in Victoria."