

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, 18 November 2020

SKILLS AND SUPPORT FOR THE NEXT GENERATION OF VICTORIAN FARMERS

The Andrews Labor Government is investing in the next generation of Victorian farmers, with a major budget boost to improve facilities and teaching at agricultural colleges and training providers across the state.

Minister for Agriculture Jaclyn Symes today announced the *Victorian Budget 2020/21* will provide \$50 million for the Agricultural College Modernisation Program – to help more Victorians to pursue exciting careers in agriculture.

Delivered over four years, the Program will help agriculture colleges and other training providers to upgrade the facilities they need to upskill future farmers and agriculture professionals.

Three agriculture colleges will share in \$20 million in funding for upgrades to student accommodation and teaching facilities.

The University of Melbourne's Dookie campus in the Goulburn Valley will receive funding over two years to build staff, student and conference accommodation for up to 130 people.

Longerenong College in the Wimmera region will use its funding over two years to build student accommodation for 33 people, a communal building for conferences and student gatherings, and other on-campus improvements.

Marcus Oldham College will construct 30 new student bedrooms at the Waurn Ponds campus near Geelong over two years with its funding.

The remaining \$30 million will create the *Future Agriculture Skills Capacity Fund* which will support TAFEs and other agriculture education and training providers to develop students' skills and carve a pathway into the industry.

The Agricultural College Modernisation program is part of the Labor Government's ongoing support for the sector and work to create a pipeline of skilled workers that can contribute to its growth as we recover from the impacts of the coronavirus pandemic.

The fund will help produce a workforce rich in digital, business, risk and marketing skills as well as entrepreneurs to take products to international markets.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Agriculture Jaclyn Symes

"It's critical we invest in our future agriculture leaders and give them the skills they need to thrive in our growing and exciting agriculture sector."

"Victoria's agriculture sector proudly supports thousands of country jobs. Investing in purpose-built education and training will ensure our next generation of farmers hit the ground running."

Quote attributable to Minister for Training, Skills and Higher Education Gayle Tierney

"We're proud to be investing in quality training, ensuring the agriculture sector has a healthy pipeline of workers being trained to a high standard and supporting the growth of this critical industry."