

# Media Release

**Ms Mary-Anne Thomas MP**  
Minister for Regional Development  
Minister for Agriculture



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## ELLINBANK THE CREAM OF THE CROP FOR SUSTAINABLE FARMING

A Gippsland research facility backed by the Andrews Labor Government is on track to become the world's first carbon-neutral dairy farm, setting a gold standard for Victoria's dairy sector.

Minister for Agriculture Mary-Anne Thomas was in Gippsland today to officially open the Ellinbank SmartFarm, which has been funded through the Labor Government's \$5 million *Smarter, Safer Farms* initiative.

The 231-hectare, 500-cow farm is Australia's leading dairy innovation facility, fast-tracking innovative technologies in a research environment and showing them in a way that is accessible to the dairy industry.

Research projects being conducted are focusing on a range of improvements including optimising homegrown feed to improve farm operating profit, better health and welfare of cows by reducing the negative impacts of extreme heat events, increased production performance of cows while reducing costs, and sustainably increasing annual milk production through a better understanding of herd nutrition and pasture management.

The SmartFarm is also becoming carbon-neutral by reducing methane emissions, improving fertiliser and manure management, and generating electricity through several options including solar, wind, hydro and bio-digestion.

The farm will also soon be home to the *Agriculture Energy Demonstration and Education* program which is being supported through the Agriculture Energy Investment Plan – a \$30 million Labor Government investment that helps farmers reduce their energy costs and be more energy efficient.

Technologies that will be trialled and demonstrated at the farm include roof-mounted solar panels and battery storage, wind turbines, pumped hydro, temperature management in the dairy and the use of waste for energy.

The Ellinbank SmartFarm is also backed through the Government's \$115 million Agriculture Strategy, which aims to position Victoria as a leader in low-emissions agriculture and increasing the adoption of new, effective and fit for purpose technology.

Agriculture Victoria is working to open the farm to visitors later this year so farmers can see the technology in action.

### Quotes attributable to Minister for Agriculture Mary-Anne Thomas

*"The Ellinbank SmartFarm is a perfect example of the innovative next-generation farming that our Agriculture Strategy is supporting – it's really exciting to see the work being done here to make Victorian farming stronger."*

*"An important part of the work being done here is making it accessible to industry, so that knowledge can immediately be put to use on-farm – this will mean instant effects on efficiency, productivity and costs."*