

Media Release

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



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HELPING CREATE MORE JOBS FOR RURAL AND REGIONAL VICTORIA

The Andrews Labor Government is continuing to support regional businesses and communities to thrive, with new funding now ready to help companies grow jobs and attract investment.

Minister for Regional Development Mary-Anne Thomas today launched the new round of the Labor Government's *Regional Jobs Fund* with the release of updated guidelines, making more money available for businesses to help country towns become even better places to live, work and invest.

The *Regional Jobs Fund* is part of the Labor Government's flagship \$135 million *Regional Jobs and Infrastructure Fund* and is designed to support community projects and help councils to build the infrastructure locals and visitors need.

The new round was launched during the opening of a new hay processing facility at St Arnaud, constructed thanks to a *Regional Jobs Fund* grant under the previous round.

The facility is hay processing and export company Gilmac Pty Ltd's sixth Australian production site and its second in Victoria with a site in Goornong, north east of Bendigo. The funding gave the company confidence to grow its business in Victoria, allowing it to create 17 new full-time equivalent roles for St Arnaud.

Gilmac accounts for one quarter of Australia's hay and straw exports. The new facility at St Arnaud will enable the processing and exporting of hay grown within a 100km radius of the town, providing a boost to the local economy.

The new facility will also lead to reduced transport costs, while potentially creating new supply opportunities for other local farmers.

When running at full capacity, the facility will be able to process up to 80,000 tonnes of hay per year and generate exports sales into Asian markets.

The new round of the *Regional Jobs Fund* will be open throughout the year to companies looking to grow their operations.

The Fund is key to the Labor Government's \$8 billion investment across regional and rural Victoria unveiled in the *Victorian Budget 2020/21* to support communities to come back stronger than ever.

Information and guidelines for the *Regional Jobs and Infrastructure Fund* can be found at rdv.vic.gov.au

Quotes attributable to Minister for Regional Development Mary-Anne Thomas

"Facilities like what Gilmac have built at St Arnaud show what is possible when we support businesses to invest in local communities."

"This facility will make a real difference in St Arnaud, with more jobs for locals and a significant investment in the town. I look forward to seeing how this new round helps even more country towns across Victoria."

Quote attributable to Member for Western Victoria Jaala Pulford

"The grants from this program go a long way in encouraging local businesses to grow and new ones to set up shop in our country towns – making them even better places to live and work."

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