

Media Release

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



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MORE SEASONAL ACCOMMODATION FOR NORTH-WEST WORKERS

Victorian farmers in the north-west will benefit from a boost to the region's accommodation for seasonal workers with the latest projects in the Andrews Labor Government's \$6 million *Seasonal Workforce Accommodation Program* (SWAP).

Minister for Agriculture Mary-Anne Thomas visited Boort Lakes Holiday Park which will receive \$500,000 to build new COVIDSafe amenities to support this season's harvest workers.

The grant will be used to build ensuites on cabins and powered sites and new cabins with ensuites, providing new accommodation for up to 77 additional seasonal workers.

The Boort Lakes Holiday Park is a popular accommodation park year-round for workers at nearby farms, including Boundary Bend Olives and Boort Olives, fruit and vegetable farms, cropping, sheep and poultry businesses.

Further north, Nyah Village Caravan Park will receive \$109,000 to provide COVIDSafe accommodation for up to 15 additional seasonal workers.

The park, situated on the Murray River, provides accommodation for workers who arrive each season to work on the surrounding farms producing fruit and vegetables, nuts, grapes and more.

Today's announcements are the latest projects to receive support from SWAP, which is providing financial help for regional organisations and communities to deliver COVIDSafe accommodation, transport and support services for seasonal horticultural workers.

SWAP is just one part of the Labor Government's extensive support for industry and farm employers as they adapt to meet the challenges brought about by the coronavirus pandemic.

This support includes more than \$30 million for farm businesses and communities to provide a COVIDSafe environment, and the new Seasonal Harvest Sign-on Bonus which offers workers almost \$2,500 for eight weeks' work, to encourage local workers and those new to agriculture to try their hand at seasonal work.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Agriculture Mary-Anne Thomas

"Suitable accommodation can be a barrier to workers travelling to the regions and joining the seasonal harvest – these projects help to remove that barrier."

"These projects are great examples of ideas driven by locals who have the knowledge to meet the needs of local farmers and employers."

Quote attributable to Member for Northern Victoria Mark Gepp

"This funding will help farm businesses provide the accommodation, transport and support services that contribute to a safe workplace."