

# Media Release

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



Saturday, 20 March 2021

## SEASONAL WORKFORCE SUPPORT TOUCHES DOWN IN TASMANIA

The first plane load of Pacific Islander workers destined for Victorian farms arrived in Tasmania last night, as part of the Andrews Labor Government's efforts bolstering the state's agriculture workforce.

The workers, secured through a landmark partnership between the Victorian and Tasmanian governments, will now complete 14-days' quarantine in Tasmania's Pacific worker quarantine system, before travelling to work in Victoria.

More than 100 people make up the first cohort of workers to arrive in Australia, with more scheduled to arrive soon as part of a rolling flight schedule that will provide up to 1,500 workers for Victorian agriculture businesses under the Pacific Mobility Schemes.

Workers from Pacific nations have become an integral part of the Victorian agriculture workforce over the past decade and they provide valuable skills and experience to farms and businesses.

Given the challenges Victorian agriculture businesses are facing this year, the Labor Government is supporting the industry by covering the majority of costs for worker quarantine, with employers contributing \$2,000 per worker.

The Government also continues to support industry and businesses to attract and retain local workers with various incentive programs.

The Seasonal Harvest Sign-on Bonus, which provides those new to agriculture with almost \$2,500 to try their hand at a harvest job, is generating interest among job seekers, with initial sign-on bonus payments approved for the first group of eligible workers this week.

Further assistance is being delivered through the \$1 million Seasonal Workforce Industry Support Program, helping industry groups provide dedicated support to farm businesses as they continue to meet the challenges of this year and the seasons ahead.

These programs are part of the Labor Government's comprehensive \$76 million program to support farmers as they tackle the workforce challenge this season, including more than \$32 million in financial assistance to more than 360 farm businesses across the state.

This program is focussed on three elements – attracting a local workforce, supporting agriculture business and communities, and securing an international workforce. This is work that will help build a strong, innovative and sustainable agriculture industry through this season and in those to come.

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

*"The arrival of these workers has been made possible through a strong collaboration between Victoria and Tasmania and is a great example of what can be achieved when states work together."*

*"Bringing these workers into Victoria under the Pacific Mobility Schemes will ease some pressure for farmers – but it's not a silver bullet. We need to keep working to encourage locals into these jobs – something that the Federal Government should play an active role in."*