

# Media Release

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



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## DRINK VICTORIAN: NEW BACKING FOR LOCAL BREWERS, BARS

The Andrews Labor Government is getting behind Victoria's brewers, winemakers and distillers with a new program aimed at getting more locally produced drinks into bars and restaurants.

Minister for Agriculture and Regional Development Mary-Anne Thomas today announced \$1.5 million of funding for the *Drink Victorian* program at the official opening of the Australian Craft Beer Centre of Excellence in Ballarat.

The Victorian Drinks Alliance – a collaboration between Victorian beverage producers and Food and Drink Victoria – developed the program to build domestic demand for locally produced drinks, in response to the challenges faced during the pandemic.

Initially targeting 100 hospitality and retail venues across metropolitan Melbourne, the *Drink Victorian* pilot program will lead regional visits, host Melbourne-based 'super tastings', deliver training and offer marketing support to encourage venues to include more Victorian-produced drinks on their menus.

The program has been funded by the Labor Government through the recently launched Food to Market program and the Small Scale and Craft program, with additional support from Global Victoria.

The Food to Market grant program is one of the key initiatives being rolled out as part of the Government's transformative Agriculture Strategy, demonstrating a commitment to supporting small-scale and craft businesses.

The newly opened Australian Craft Beer Centre of Excellence builds on a rapidly growing interest in brewing beer. The Centre includes a craft brewery, a beer tasting and bar area, teaching space and a function area.

Working closely with Federation University in Ballarat, the Centre's "brew space" will provide an opportunity for small brewers to hone their craft and to also receive advice on how to develop their businesses.

The Centre, which has been supported by the Labor Government's *Regional Tourism and Infrastructure Fund*, will create more than 25 new jobs and cater for a broad range of visitors.

### Quote attributable to Minister for Agriculture and Regional Development Mary-Anne Thomas

*"The Drink Victorian program will give more Victorians access to the exceptional drinks we produce in our state. This is an exciting step for the industry and consumers, and will provide a major boost for regional jobs."*

### Quote attributable to Minister for Trade Martin Pakula

*"We're backing Victoria's brewers, winemakers and distillers to make their mark around the world, and it's equally important that we support these producers and their workers domestically as well."*

### Quote attributable to Member for Wendouree Juliana Addison

*"The Australian Craft Beer Centre of Excellence is set to become a major part of the revitalisation of Ballarat's CBD – we're proud to have backed its development and the local jobs it will support."*

### Quote attributable to Wine Victoria Chair and Victorian Drinks Alliance Co-Chair Angie Bradbury

*"This Australia-first collaboration has one clear goal – to encourage and enable our bars, restaurants, clubs and consumers to join us and Drink Victorian."*

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