

# Media Release

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



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## GRANTS TO PROTECT VICTORIAN APPLES AND PEARS

Victorian apple and pear growers can now apply for grants of up to \$150,000 for netting to protect their fruit from hail and sun damage, providing a major boost to crop yield.

The \$4 million *Horticultural Netting Program*, which is being delivered by the Andrews Labor Government on behalf of the Commonwealth Government, will provide funding for apple and pear growers to purchase and install new netting over established orchards.

The program will enable growers to apply for up to 50 per cent of eligible costs to commercially install or purchase new horticulture netting, which will deliver significant benefits to growers and the industry.

Victoria produces close to 50 per cent of Australia's apples and 90 per cent of pears, making a significant contribution to the industry's national production value of more than \$710 million.

Besides protecting produce from environmental damage such as hail and sunburn, horticultural netting helps to keep out some pest animals and can reduce orchard water use by up to 20 per cent. An increase in fruit quality, coupled with reduced adverse weather and animal damage means more dollars in fruit growers' pockets.

Victorian apple and pear growers can apply for *Horticultural Netting Program* grants until 4 June 2021.

For more information, including the application guidelines, visit [agriculture.vic.gov.au/support-and-resources](https://agriculture.vic.gov.au/support-and-resources).

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

*"Victorian apple and pear growers produce half of Australia's apples and 90 per cent of the country's pears. These grants will support them to increase orchard efficiency and resilience against adverse weather events."*

*"Victorian growers have a strong reputation for producing high-quality produce. We are pleased to be delivering a program that will enable our growers to produce even more fresh food for Australians and international markets."*