

# Media Release

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



Friday, 14 May 2021

## SUPPORTING THE TRAINING OF VICTORIA'S FUTURE FARMERS

More Victorians will be able to pursue an exciting career in agriculture through the \$50 million *Agriculture College Modernisation Program*, backed by the Andrews Labor Government.

Minister for Agriculture Mary-Anne Thomas today visited Marcus Oldham College in Waurin Ponds – the first of three agricultural colleges to benefit from the funding boost.

Marcus Oldham College, Longerenong College in the Wimmera and the University of Melbourne's Dookie campus in the Goulburn Valley will share \$20 million of program funding over the next four years to improve accommodation and teaching facilities.

Marcus Oldham College will receive \$2.5 million to build 30 new student bedrooms on campus which will increase onsite capacity to more than 100 beds. This will ensure that all full-time students can be accommodated on site. The project will commence in mid-2021 and is expected to be complete by the end of 2022.

Marcus Oldham is a non-profit college offering higher education qualifications in agriculture, agribusiness, and equine management at a Diploma through to Masters level.

The *Agricultural College Modernisation Program*, delivered over four years, is part of the Labor Government's ongoing support for the agriculture sector and investment in future farmers and agriculture professionals, giving them skills they need to thrive in an exciting and evolving agriculture sector.

An additional \$30 million is being used to create the *Future Agriculture Skills Capacity Fund* to support TAFEs and other agriculture education and training providers to boost students' skills and carve a pathway in the industry.

The guidelines for the *Future Agriculture Skills Capacity Fund* are being developed in consultation with industry and will be launched in the second half of 2021.

The Labor Government is backing a stronger, more innovative and sustainable agriculture industry with a 10-year strategy to drive Victoria's recovery from the coronavirus pandemic and bolster the economy.

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

*"Our investment in agriculture colleges and other education providers will ensure the next generation of agriculture workers has the programs and facilities they need to be future ready."*

*"This project aligns with our Agriculture Strategy, ensuring we can modernise the industry and support students to get the skills and training they need to boost agriculture jobs."*

### Quote attributable to Member for South Barwon Darren Cheeseman

*"The Agriculture College Modernisation Program not only supports agriculture jobs but the construction and management of the accommodation project will create crucial local jobs."*