

Media Release

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



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INVESTING IN RESEARCH TO GROW OUR AGRICULTURE SECTOR

A Victorian Government funding boost will back La Trobe University to develop cutting-edge food and agriculture research for the benefit of industry now and in the future.

Minister for Agriculture Mary-Anne Thomas was at La Trobe University's Bundoora campus today to announce \$10 million in funding for two projects to improve agriculture and food capabilities.

The Agriculture Production Platform project, which will receive \$3.5 million from the Government, will expand the University's research glasshouses and upgrade equipment with the installation of cutting-edge technology.

The expanded glasshouses will include new growth facilities and controlled environment pods, which will accelerate the development of new and improved plant varieties. It will create a unique facility that will enable Victorian scientists to develop medicinal agriculture innovations and have the best tools available for research.

A further \$6.5 million will go to the Applied Industry Agriculture Platforms, for the development of dedicated plant phenomics growth chambers with remote digital access for regional industry, researchers and students.

This infrastructure will use high-tech visual apparatus to detect and link plants' physical characteristics with genes, paving the way for plant breeders to more quickly select desirable genetic material to breed for new and improved plant varieties.

The projects, delivered through the *Victorian Higher Education State Investment Fund*, are expected to create 120 jobs through the delivery of projects, and new and expanded research, industry infrastructure and partnerships.

The Government is backing the adoption of new, effective and fit-for-purpose technology to grow and protect our agriculture industries as a key commitment of the \$115 million *Agriculture Strategy*.

Quote attributable to Minister for Agriculture Mary-Anne Thomas

"Victoria has some of the world's best scientists dedicated to helping solve challenges like climate change. We are equipping them with the facilities and apparatus they need to do their work effectively, ensuring solutions are delivered to our farmers sooner."

Quote attributable to Minister for Training, Skills and Higher Education Gayle Tierney

"This investment will go hand-in-hand with our recently announced review into agriculture training – to provide Victorian students with the best learning and job opportunities while supporting our booming agriculture sector."

Quote attributable to Member for Bundoora Colin Brooks

"Investing in cutting-edge technology not only allows Victoria to continue to grow a thriving and globally competitive agriculture industry but it helps create local jobs and shape future industry leaders."

Quote attributable to La Trobe University Vice-Chancellor Professor John Dewar

"The Government's investment in our agriculture research platforms will provide valuable opportunities for La Trobe's agri-food researchers to engage with industry through services and facilities currently unavailable to most companies looking to translate their research and ideas."

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