

Media Release

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



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BUILDING BOOM FOR AGRICULTURE WORKER ACCOMMODATION

The Victorian Government is investing in more accommodation for farm workers, with new facilities being built across the state.

Minister for Agriculture Mary-Anne Thomas visited Boort Lakes Holiday Park in the state's north to meet owner Wendy James and unveil new facilities for seasonal workers, which will boost accommodation for the region's workforce for the upcoming harvest and for years to come.

Boort Lakes Holiday Park received \$500,000 to build 16 new cabins and six ensuites for existing caravan sites, providing accommodation for up to 77 workers to support the region's agriculture industry.

The development is part of the Government's *Seasonal Workforce Accommodation Program (SWAP)*, which is providing financial support for 13 regional projects to deliver COVIDSafe accommodation, transport and support services for up to 2,000 seasonal horticultural workers.

Nearby, Boundary Bend Olives received \$62,000 to build 12 new caravan sites with toilet and shower facilities for its temporary on-farm caravan park, which workers benefitted from during this year's olive harvest.

In the broader region, Mildura City Backpackers received \$45,000 to create COVIDSafe kitchen facilities, doubling its worker accommodation. Nyah Village Caravan Park received a \$109,000 grant to build five units for up to 12 workers. Building on both projects is complete and workers have started using the new facilities.

These projects are part of the Victorian Government's \$84 million package to support the Victorian agriculture industry as it continues to address seasonal workforce challenges, which has already increased accommodation facilities at 80 businesses in farming regions across the state.

The Victorian Government is investing in a range of programs to boost accommodation in rural and regional areas and tackle barriers to regional workforce attraction, including projects in the \$2.7 billion *Building Works* package.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Agriculture Mary-Anne Thomas

"It's fantastic to see the progress Wendy has made in growing accommodation options for Boort and the wider region – supporting agriculture businesses in her community to access the workforce they need."

"We know how important it is for farmers to have suitable accommodation options for their workers – locally and on-farm – to make it easier for them to recruit workers for the harvest season."

"Access to accommodation is a common barrier that prevents people taking a job in agriculture. These investments in locally-led solutions will have a positive flow on effect for the entire community."

Quote attributable to Member for Northern Victoria Mark Gepp

"The positive, progressive nature of this sort of development attracts further investment and brings confidence to the town and the surrounding communities."

Quote attributable to Boort Lakes Holiday Park Owner Wendy James

"As soon as these new cabins were built, we had agriculture workers ready to book in and they have enjoyed staying close to their workplaces."

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