

# Media Release

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



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## BUSINESS SUPPORT TO DRIVE AGRICULTURE INDUSTRY RECOVERY

The Victorian Government is fast-tracking the road to recovery for agriculture and food supply chain businesses in rural and regional Victoria.

Minister for Agriculture Mary-Anne Thomas today announced a new \$5.2 million *Agriculture Resilience and Recovery Program* while visiting Mt William Advanced Tree Nursery in Lancefield. The nursery received \$35,000 last year as part of the Government's *Agriculture Workforce Plan - Business Adaptation* program.

The grant enabled the nursery to build a portable lunchroom and expand the existing lunchroom to provide suitable space for workers. Prior to this, staff were forced to split shifts, restrict work days, rotate lunch breaks and work across multiple sites.

The new program provides grants of between \$10,000 and \$300,000 to support on-farm infrastructure, business upgrades and new facilities to enable businesses to adapt their operations to COVIDSafe settings.

The program provides three types of business support:

- *Business Resilience and Recovery* – to support businesses to adapt their operations to maintain production and manage risks.
- *Place-based Worker Support* – to support the development of COVIDSafe worker accommodation.
- *Training and Education* – to provide support for farm and food processing workers to access information and services and ensure businesses are providing COVIDSafe work practices.

The grants will provide support for businesses as they prepare for upcoming peak seasons including spring shearing, grains harvest and meat processing, and horticulture's peak picking and packing season.

The *Agriculture Resilience and Recovery Program* is part of the Government's comprehensive \$84 million support package to assist industry to address workforce challenges brought about by the coronavirus pandemic.

More than \$30 million has been provided through the *Agriculture Workforce Plan*, which has awarded more than 380 grants to assist businesses to create COVIDSafe workplaces, provide worker induction and training, and create additional accommodation and transport facilities.

Businesses have been supported to build COVIDSafe lunchrooms, kitchens, washrooms and other worker amenities, make modifications to processing, packaging and manufacturing lines, create automated entry points, build partitions for workspaces and install temperature checking facilities.

For more information visit [agriculture.vic.gov.au](https://agriculture.vic.gov.au).

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

*"This support will help more agriculture and food supply chain businesses manage the challenges created by the pandemic and fast-track their recovery."*

*"We're supporting industry to create long-term solutions to workforce challenges – this new program will help local businesses to adapt and thrive into the future."*

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