

Media Release

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



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SUPPORT FOR EXPORT PUSH DELIVERS JOBS IN LATROBE VALLEY

The Victorian Government is backing new jobs in the Latrobe Valley with ongoing investment, including support for a growing dairy manufacturer in Gippsland to expand its export sales.

Minister for Regional Development Mary-Anne Thomas said the support for Village Dairy meant the business had the equipment it needed to supply increasing demand from Asian markets in the coming year.

The cheese and yoghurt manufacturer expanded its operations from Dandenong to Traralgon in 2019 after receiving initial support from the Government and produces a range of yoghurts including pot set, Indian Dahi, Ayran and Greek, as well as Mango lassi and cheeses such as paneer, feta and haloumi.

The company recently received a \$62,500 grant through the *Regional Recovery Fund* to upgrade its cool room and fill its biggest ever contract. Village Dairy has hired four new staff to run the equipment and deliver on the lucrative yoghurt packaging deal, taking its workforce to 18. It is looking to hire more staff next month.

The Victorian Government has provided a range of funding support for Village Dairy.

The Latrobe Valley Authority provided a stamp duty reimbursement through the *Economic Growth Zone Reimbursement Scheme* when the business purchased the former Brancourts site in Traralgon in 2019. As a result, 13 former Brancourts staff were hired by Village Dairy.

The dairy manufacturer has also benefitted from funding through the *Agriculture Workforce Plan* to semi-automate its cheese-packaging processes, allowing staff to work at a safe social distance from each other – maintaining jobs during the pandemic.

The Government continues to make significant investment in the Latrobe Valley to create new jobs and a thriving regional economy for workers, their families and the community.

Since 2016, the Government has invested almost \$750 million in projects in the Latrobe Valley, with more than 3,000 jobs added to the region's workforce. For more information go to rdv.vic.gov.au/news/latrobevalleyjobs.

Quote attributable to Minister for Regional Development Mary-Anne Thomas

"Village Dairy is a great regional success story and we are proud to support the company so it can diversify, grow and create more jobs for people in the Latrobe Valley."

Quote attributable to Member for Eastern Victoria Harriet Shing

"It's exciting to see the continued development of this Traralgon business and new jobs coming on board. We will continue to back businesses in the Valley that create jobs and boost the economy."

Quote attributable to Village Dairy business manager Gavin Hunter

"The Victorian Government's investment meant we had the resources we needed to fill our biggest ever contract – and with our plans to export to Asia and production at capacity already, we plan to have even more jobs at Village Dairy to support the Latrobe Valley."

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