

# Media Release

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



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## FUTURE FARMERS: BACKING SCHOOLS TO DELIVER AGRICULTURE SKILLS

The Andrews Labor Government is backing secondary schools across the state to support more students with ambitions to embark on a career in agriculture.

Minister for Agriculture Mary-Anne Thomas announced today the Labor Government is supporting educators to deliver new programs for students through the \$5.5 million *Secondary Schools Agriculture Fund*.

The program is part of the Government's \$30 million *Future Agriculture Skills Capacity Fund*, delivered by Agriculture Victoria in partnership with the Department of Education and Training, to support TAFEs and other education and training providers to develop students' skills and carve pathways into agriculture.

The *Secondary Schools Agriculture Fund* will help Victoria meet the demands of its growing farm, food and fibre sector, which needs more workers with digital, IT, business and marketing skills, plus food and fibre entrepreneurs who can take products to international markets.

Some \$4.5 million will go towards investing in programs and resources that will boost pathways into agricultural careers, meeting the needs of communities and Victoria's agricultural industries.

Funding will be available for a range of agriculture education activities that could include designing programs, engagement with local industry, purchasing equipment and other identified school needs.

The *Secondary Schools Agriculture Fund* will also allocate \$1 million in funding for tech schools to invest in state-of-the-art resources and new technology to deliver online and outreach agricultural technology programs that meet the needs of industry as farming practices evolve.

The *Future Agriculture Skills Capacity Fund* is part of the Government's \$50 million *Agricultural College Modernisation Program* supporting more Victorians to pursue exciting careers in agriculture.

The Fund also supports the Government's broader reforms to vocational education, to help every Victorian student to get the skills they need for the job they want, no matter their future goals.

*The Future of Agriculture Training in Victoria Review* was also launched in June to examine how the TAFE system can continue to meet the changing needs of Victoria's growing agricultural industry.

Expressions of interest for the *Secondary Schools Agriculture Fund* will open for tech schools in late 2021 and secondary schools by mid-2022.

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

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

*"Our students are the future of agriculture, and this funding will support them and contribute to the ongoing growth and modernisation of Victoria's farming sector."*

*"By forging stronger links we will attract tomorrow's leaders and better prepare them for the rewards and challenges of working in this dynamic industry."*

### Quote attributable to Minister for Education James Merlino

*"Skilled workers are in demand in agriculture and programs like this will ensure our future workforce has real-world opportunities to make the most of existing and emerging agriculture and horticulture career pathways."*

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