

Media Release

Ms Mary-Anne Thomas MP
Minister for Regional Development
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HIGH-TECH SAFETY FOR VICTORIAN MUSHROOM FARM

The Andrews Labor Government is putting the safety of workers first, with new support for automated technology at a state-of-the-art mushroom farm at the Parwan Employment Precinct.

Minister for Regional Development Mary-Anne Thomas today visited Parwan Valley Mushrooms near Bacchus Marsh to announce funding through the Labor Government's *Agriculture Resilience and Recovery Program* to support the company to upgrade its packing processes.

The upgrades will include automating box movement and pallet stations, as well as increasing the size of the pre-packaging area to create a safer working environment for staff.

Parwan Valley Mushrooms was launched in 2010 as part of a joint venture between Mecrus Group and Perfection Fresh Group. The company sells around a third of its produce to Coles supermarkets and employs 104 workers. It processes up to 50 metric tonnes of mushrooms each week – 4 per cent of the Australian market.

Parwan Valley Mushrooms is based within the 2880-hectare Parwan Employment Precinct, a site that is expected to create up to 1,500 full-time jobs over six years as it is transformed into an export-oriented hub for agriculture and agribusinesses.

Critically, the Parwan Employment Precinct received \$2.7 million from the Labor Government's *Building Works* package for a city gate gas connection. This investment in enabling infrastructure will help attract new businesses to the region.

The *Agriculture Resilience and Recovery Program* supports farm and food processing businesses to create long-term solutions to recover from the impacts of the pandemic. It forms part of the *Working for Victoria* package which has supported the state's agriculture and food industries.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Regional Development Mary-Anne Thomas

"It's great to see how businesses are adapting to a new way of working – in this case, keeping staff safe with automated packing technology."

"This grant will enable this key Australian mushroom supplier to boost its business, supporting jobs in the region."

Quote attributable to Member for Buninyong Michaela Settle

"This is one of many ways we are supporting local businesses in the Parwan Employment Precinct and creating a major hub for agribusiness."

Quote attributable to Member for Melton Steve McGhie

"We are supporting upgrades to Parwan Valley Mushrooms to keep workers safe and prevent the spread of coronavirus in a crucial agribusiness."