

Media Release

Ms Danielle Green MP

Parliamentary Secretary for Sport

Parliamentary Secretary for Regional Victoria



Monday, 7 February 2022

JOBS BOOST FOR VICTORIA'S FOOD BOWL

Major progress is being made on the construction of an export-standard fruit packing factory in Mooroopna thanks to an Andrews Labor Government grant.

Parliamentary Secretary for Regional Victoria Danielle Green today toured the Geoffrey Thompson Holdings fruit packing and selling warehouse on the former SPC Ardmona site.

The project is being delivered thanks to a grant from the Labor Government's \$20 million *Food Source Victoria* program, which aims to boost exports, build industry capabilities and generate jobs in regional Victoria by encouraging food producers and supply chains to collaborate.

Works are well underway to repurpose and refit the site into a state-of-the-art fruit packing and grading factory, which includes installing new sorting, grading and packing equipment.

Fruit grown in the Goulburn Valley food bowl and processed at the factory will be sold locally and used for purees and juices. Stock will also be exported to international markets.

The site will use automation and advanced software to operate equipment and assist with sorting fruit for its highest value use. The project will also reduce sorting, grading and packing costs to make Victoria's exports more competitive in the global market.

The project – which is expected to be operational later this year – will create up to 44 new full-time jobs and lead to \$46 million worth of new Victorian fruit exports by its fifth year of operation.

Geoffrey Thompson is one of Australia's largest apple and pear growers. This redevelopment is expected to halve post-harvest costs for fresh and processed fruit in Australia and will directly benefit more than 50 growers in the Goulburn Valley region.

Quotes attributable to Parliamentary Secretary for Regional Victoria Danielle Green

"This project delivers big benefits to growers and local workers by slashing the cost of sorting, grading and packing fruit from the Goulburn Valley."

"We have the best product in Australia and that's why we're investing in the future of our agricultural sector."