

Media Release

Ms Danielle Green MP

Parliamentary Secretary for Sport

Parliamentary Secretary for Regional Victoria



Wednesday, 16 March 2022

SWEET TREAT: MORE JOBS ON THE PLATE IN DONALD

The Andrews Labor Government is backing a local biscuit manufacturing business in western Victoria, with works underway to build a new site, which will create more jobs and delicious treats.

Parliamentary Secretary for Regional Victoria Danielle Green today visited Donald to view progress at Kooka's Country Cookies' new facility, which has been supported by funding from the Labor Government's *Regional Jobs Fund*.

Earthworks and a concrete slab have been poured, with the construction and fit out of the new facility on track to be complete by the end of the year. Up to 11 new full-time jobs will be created when the facility is opened with roles in machine maintenance, quality control, processing, and administration.

From its humble beginnings making home-style country cookies, the company has been based in Donald for nearly 30 years. Kooka's is now an iconic Victorian business that sells its products to supermarkets and motels across Australia.

Kooka's relocation to a larger site in Donald will enable the business to grow significantly to meet growing demand. The company is currently producing 9,837 kilograms of biscuits per week and the expansion will almost triple that quantity to around 29,500 kilograms of biscuits per week.

A new gluten-free area will be established which will enable gluten-free cookies to be added into the production line and sold in independent and specialty stores.

The new facility will also feature solar power and a maintenance shed to drive down energy and repair costs. Once the new site is complete the company will employ up to 35 people.

The *Regional Jobs Fund* is part of the Government's flagship \$156 million *Regional Jobs and Infrastructure Fund*, which helps businesses create more jobs in regional Victoria, supports community projects and helps councils to build the infrastructure locals need.

The Fund is key to the Labor Government's almost \$30 billion investment across regional and rural Victoria since 2015. More information about the *Regional Jobs and Infrastructure Fund* is available at rdv.vic.gov.au/rjif.

Quotes attributable to Parliamentary Secretary for Regional Victoria Danielle Green

"This is a sweet story of success for regional Victoria. We're supporting Kooka's Country Cookies to continue to grow their business and invest in their hometown of Donald."

"Regional Victoria has many benefits for companies looking to grow and that's why we are investing in our regions."

Quote attributable to Minister for Regional Development Mary-Anne Thomas

"I'm pleased to see this long standing and successful business create more jobs for this region. It will enable the business to share their delicious cookies with more Victorians and across the country."

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