

# Media Release

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



Saturday, 26 March 2022

## AGRIBIO EXPANSION BOOSTS INNOVATION AND AG TECH

The Andrews Labor Government is backing a multi-million dollar expansion of Agribio, Australia's premier bioscience facility in Bundoora, with a new incubation hub for innovative startups as well as boosting biosecurity research.

Minister for Agriculture Mary-Anne Thomas today announced the Labor Government is providing \$7.5 million funding towards the project that will support a new fit out including a start-of-the-art laboratory and office facilities for up to 90 staff and startup businesses.

Spanning more than 1600 square metres, the space is based at the Victorian Government and La Trobe University joint AgriBio Centre for AgriBioscience – with the new funding allowing the site to operate at full capacity.

Up to four startups will be given access to fast-track research and innovation outcomes from Agriculture Victoria to industry.

In a major development for Victoria's agtech industry, the first startup to be established will be Smartsense AgTech — a digital sensing agtech business that will focus on rapidly improving technologies used across a range of key agricultural sectors including dairy, horticulture and grains.

Dedicated laboratories within the new area will also significantly boost the state's biosecurity research and emergency response capabilities — allowing up to 60 researchers at Agriculture Victoria to respond to biosecurity emergencies relating to pests and diseases.

Two education laboratories have also been designed in the expansion and will be used for student learning – hosting workshops through Agriculture Victoria's free Get into AgSTEM program for schools.

Each laboratory will be able to fit 32 students and up to four demonstrators involved in every workshop – providing students with valuable hands on experience with the latest real-life technology used by researchers at Agriculture Victoria.

Located at the La Trobe University Bundoora campus, the AgriBio Centre for AgriBioscience has been in operation since 2012 and accommodates almost 450 staff and students.

The new expansion aligns with the Labor Government's 10-year Agriculture Strategy to recover, grow, modernise, protect and promote agriculture in Victoria.

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

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

*"This is massive for our researchers at Agribio – providing them a modern facility to fast-track innovation and research capabilities, while supporting local jobs."*

*"We are excited to announce that Smartsense AgTech will be the first startup based in the dedicated incubation hub here — helping to rapidly improve the use of digital sensing technology across the agriculture industry."*