

Sunday, 3 April 2022

VICTORIAN LOW AND NON-ALCOHOLIC EXPORTS ON THE RISE

More and more global consumers are choosing the Victorian made non-alcoholic drink option on restaurant and bar menus, according to new data unveiled in an export report today.

Minister for Agriculture Mary-Anne Thomas today released the *2020-21 Victorian Food and Fibre Export Performance Report* which showcases the resilience of Victorian exports such as beverages which have grown steadily over recent years to be valued at \$101 million.

In 2020-21 the value of non-alcoholic beverage exports increased by 17 per cent to \$67 million from the previous year, with exports in this category almost doubling in value over the last four years.

Meanwhile, wine exports to the United Kingdom increased by 30 per cent to become Victoria's most valuable export market for wine demonstrating the emerging appeal of Victorian produce to this market.

The Andrews Labor Government is supporting local drinks producers to expand into new markets at home and abroad through a range of programs including the \$15 million *Food to Market* and \$10.2 million *Small-Scale and Craft* programs.

As part of this, the Labor Government is supporting a \$1.5 million *Drink Victorian* program, aimed at getting more locally produced drinks onto lists and shelves at 100 Victorian hospitality venues and retailers.

The program features 18 Low and No Alcohol producers including Banks Botanicals in the Yarra Valley which specialise in botanicals sourced from the Australian bush; The Fermentary in Daylesford, suppliers of traditionally made water kefir; and Melbourne based Brunswick Aces, producers of non-alcoholic wine, beer, and gin.

The program was developed to help drinks producers recover from the global pandemic, bushfires, export challenges and strong international and interstate competition in the domestic market.

Despite the challenges faced by the state's agri-producers more broadly during 2020-21, Victoria maintained its position as Australia's leading export state, contributing 27 per cent of national food and fibre exports.

A key focus of the Government's 10-year Agriculture Strategy is supporting industry to grow through increased exports, investment and new products. Trade and investment efforts were further boosted last year by the appointment of in-market agriculture export specialists in Southeast Asia, the Middle East and China.

For more information on the 2020-21 Victorian Food and Fibre Export Performance Report visit agriculture.vic.gov.au

Quotes attributable to Minister for Agriculture Mary-Anne Thomas

"It's clear from this report that non-alcoholic beverages are on the rise. It's great to see we are supporting our non-alcoholic producers through our Drink Victorian program, putting more Victorian options on our drink lists."

"Victoria is Australia's agriculture powerhouse. We are working to support the state's food, fibre and drink producers to grow their sales globally to meet Victoria's food and fibre export target of \$20 billion by 2030, which in turn create more jobs."

Quotes attributable to Minister for Trade Martin Pakula

"Victorian exporters continue to deliver, despite facing significant challenges over recent years."

"We're backing Victorian exporters of non-alcoholic drinks to make their mark internationally in the same way as our world-class wines, beers and spirits."

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