

Media Release

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



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GROWING THE GRAINS INDUSTRY IN BALLARAT

The Andrews Labor Government is supporting family-owned agriculture manufacturing business Harwood Grains to create jobs and expand its oat dehulling facility in Ballarat.

Minister for Regional Development Mary-Anne Thomas today visited Harwood Grain's Ballarat headquarters to announce funding through the *Regional Jobs Fund*, which is enabling the company to consolidate its facility into one site and invest in new production line equipment.

Father-son duo Paul and Bill Harwood founded the company more than 25 years ago in Ballarat, taking advantage of low grain and oat prices to dehull the locally grown produce into groats to gain a better price.

To take raw oats from the paddock to the plate the outer shell of an oat needs to be removed and processed into a whole kernel of grain known as a groat. These groats can be turned into everything from livestock feed to porridge, baked goods and even milk.

Harwood Grains now specialises in high quality stockfeed, supplying wholesale and retail customers across Victoria, South Australia and New South Wales. The company supports Victorian oat producers and is aiming to tap into the growing international export market for groats.

Support from the *Regional Jobs Fund* is enabling the company to complete the fit out at its milling facility with new silos, machinery, conveyors, scales, elevators and electrical work. The new oat dehulling production line will enable the company to produce six times their current production capability.

The project will create 10 new full-time jobs and once complete will enable the company's 25 workers to operate together onsite in its Gregory Street Headquarters milling facility.

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

The *Regional Jobs and Infrastructure Fund* is part of the Government's more than \$36 billion investment in rural and regional Victoria since 2015. For more information go to rdv.vic.gov.au/rjif.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Regional Development Mary-Anne Thomas

"We're proud to back family business Harwood Grains as it expands its operations and supports Victoria's thriving grain industry."

"This project will go a long way in supporting local industry, creating new jobs and boosting the Ballarat economy."

Quotes attributable to Member for Wendouree Juliana Addison

"By backing Harwood Grains, we're also supporting food producers to create more local jobs."

"This project will continue to put Ballarat on the map for its high-quality agriculture manufacturing industry."