

Media Release

The Hon James Merlino MP
Deputy Premier
Minister for Education
Minister for Mental Health



Tuesday, 31 May 2022

STRONGER AGRICULTURE EDUCATION FOR VICTORIAN STUDENTS

The Andrews Labor Government is investing in Victoria's agriculture workforce of the future, with an extra investment in agriculture education in secondary schools supporting more students to embark on a career in the primary industries.

Minister for Education James Merlino and Minister for Agriculture Mary-Anne Thomas today announced applications are now open for the Labor Government's \$5.5 million Secondary Schools Agriculture Fund which will support schools, industry groups and community organisations to inspire students into local agricultural careers.

The Fund will support Victorian schools and the sector to raise awareness of the opportunities available in agriculture, uplift agriculture teaching capability and offer more opportunities within schools for students to develop the skills they need to transition into modern careers in agriculture.

Funding will be available for a range of agriculture education activities like designing programs, engaging with local industry, purchasing equipment and other needs schools have in order to deliver quality agriculture studies.

This boost will help meet the growing demands of the local agriculture sector – seeking innovative young workers with digital, business and marketing skills, as well as food and fibre entrepreneurs who can take products to international markets.

The SSAF is part of the Labor Government's \$50 million commitment over four years to the Agricultural College Modernisation Program, helping more Victorians pursue exciting careers in agriculture.

This program also supports the Government's \$277.5 million investment in the biggest reform to the senior secondary system since the inception of the VCE – a transformation that will set young Victorians up for brighter futures in vocational education and training, no matter what their dreams and goals are.

Applications for the Secondary Schools Agriculture Fund: Schools and Place-based stream are now open, and will close on 24 June. For more information, visit vic.gov.au/secondary-schools-agriculture-fund.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Education James Merlino

"The future of Victoria's nation-leading agriculture sector is bright – and we're proud to be supporting more Victorian students to get involved in the modern, growing industry while they're still at school."

"This program is all about making sure our students have real-world opportunities to make the most of existing and emerging agriculture and horticulture career pathways."

Quote attributable to Minister for Agriculture Mary-Anne Thomas

"We want to attract the best and brightest young innovators who are keen to get into our agriculture sector – developing the food and fibre industry's leaders of tomorrow and setting them up for exciting careers."