

Media Release

The Hon Gayle Tierney MP

Deputy Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council

Minister for Training and Skills

Minister for Higher Education

Minister for Agriculture



Tuesday, 8 August 2023

UPGRADES TO MODERNISE VICTORIA'S GRAIN GROWERS

The Andrews Labor Government is set to fast-track cereal, oilseed and pulse crop improvements by transforming the Australian Grains Genebank (AGG) into a more accessible database by 2027, thanks to a \$15 million investment.

Minister for Agriculture Gayle Tierney today announced a \$30 million co-investment between the Labor Government and the Grains Research and Development Corporation (GRDC), which will give researchers more access to a wider range of genes to boost productivity and profitability in grain crops.

Located at Agriculture Victoria's Horsham SmartFarm, the AGG is the national centre for grain crop genetic resources in Australia.

Traditionally it has been challenging for researchers to identify desirable genes within national and international genebanks. The new investment will make the plant genetic resources conserved within the AGG more accessible and valuable to the Australian grains industry.

This investment will better connect the AGG to international genebanks and link plant genetic resources to research and breeding knowledge – allowing better crop varieties in grower's paddocks sooner.

Research supported by the AGG will see high-yielding, adaptable and profitable grain crop varieties developed faster, ensuring Australia's \$40 billion grains industry is more climate change resilient and continues to thrive.

The announcement coincides with the completion of a \$1.8 million seed multiplication facility that uses cutting-edge technology to enable rapid production and distribution of seed for plant genetic resources stored in the AGG.

The AGG transformation is part of the Labor Government's Agriculture Strategy, which is working towards enhancing the commercialisation of research - ensuring our agriculture sector is stronger, more innovative and sustainable.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Agriculture Gayle Tierney

"The digital transformation of the Australian Grains Genebank will fast track research and production of more resilient and profitable crop varieties – benefiting Victorian and Australian grain growers.

"Making sure that industry can easily get the seeds they need for plant genetic resources will be essential to tackle future challenges related to climate and food security."

Quotes attributable to GRDC Chair John Woods

"This new \$15 million GRDC investment will connect the AGG with plant genetic resources around the world, allowing faster identification and location of genetic material, which will contribute to the faster development of new grain varieties in Australia.

"New and improved genetics are key to developing crop varieties that will cope with increased climatic challenges and deliver consistent, profitable yields for Australian grain growers."

Quotes attributable to Jacinta Ermacora Member for Western Victoria

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“As we experience warmer temperatures and different weather patterns, the Australian Grains Genebank will play an integral role to ensure our crops remain consistent and strong.”