

Media Release

The Hon Harriet Shing MP

Minister for Water

Minister for Regional Development

Minister for Equality



Friday, 15 September 2023

INVESTING IN VICTORIA'S GROWING FOOD AND FIBRE SECTOR

The Andrews Labor Government is backing more research, jobs and industry growth in Victoria's food and fibre sector, with an Australian-first consortium set to fast-track opportunities across regional Victoria.

Minister for Regional Development Harriet Shing today visited the Morwell Innovation Centre to announce the consortium led by the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO), made possible by a \$1 million investment from the Labor Government.

The consortium brings together industry, educational institutions and government to drive more innovation, production and collaboration across the sector.

Regional Development Victoria (RDV) will partner with CSIRO, Deakin, La Trobe, ACU, Monash, Swinburne, Melbourne, RMIT, FedUni, and Victoria universities for the project, along with Victoria's nine Regional Partnerships, the six Victorian-based Regional Development Australia Committees, and Food and Fibre Gippsland.

The food and fibre sector is a diverse industry and includes things grown or harvested including animals and fish, dairy, fruit and vegetables, wine, honey, smallgoods, flowers, wool, hemp and mohair. It also includes manufacturers and food processors using local ingredients, and the facilities and networks that support them.

In 2021-22, Victoria was the largest food and fibre exporter by value in Australia, generating more than \$17 billion and accounting for 26 per cent of national exports. This growing sector is backed by large and small companies across regional and rural Victoria that produce, sell or supply food and fibre products.

Gippsland's food and fibre sector contributes \$7 billion to the state's economy each year and supports more than 15,000 jobs across the sector.

By combining leading research institutions with business, industry, scientific and policy experts, the consortium will make it easier and more accessible for proposals and projects in the sector to secure investment and start their work in the region.

The consortium will support projects with market and investment strategies, supply chain reviews, infrastructure planning, and technical and export feasibility assessments and boost access to market, sustainability and environmental planning.

The project is part of the Government's record investment of more than \$41 billion across rural and regional Victoria since 2015.

For more information go to rdv.vic.gov.au

Quote attributable to Minister for Regional Development Harriet Shing

"This landmark partnership is about unlocking growth in food and fibre across the state's regions. It will drive economic recovery and development for regional and rural Victorians by creating jobs, supporting skills and attracting talent."

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