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Minister for Agriculture  
Minister for Regional Development  
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**AGRICULTURE PORTFOLIO**

Public Accounts and Estimates Committee

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## Strong, innovative and sustainable



**\$15.9 billion**

gross value of agriculture production in 2018-19



**81,000 jobs**

in agricultural production



**11.5 M ha**

of productively used land, spanning **50%** of Victoria's land area



**28%**

of total national food and fibre exports in 2019-20

# We are investing \$115 million in building a strong, innovative and sustainable agricultural sector

## Agriculture Strategy - \$65 million

- We're investing in a new strategy and direction for Victorian agriculture to drive economic growth and recovery, with commitments across five themes. The investment includes:
  - \$15 million to access leading AgTech, innovative farming methods and new skills
  - \$20 million for the **Food to Market** and **Pathways to Export** programs
  - \$30 million to extend the **Agriculture Energy Investment Plan**, which helps farmers reduce their energy costs and be more productive.

## Agricultural College Modernisation Program - \$50 million

- We're supporting the next generation farmers by providing:
  - \$20 million for upgrades to student accommodation and teaching facilities
  - \$30 million for the **Future Agriculture Skills Capacity Fund** to support TAFEs and other agriculture education and training providers to develop students' skills.

### Our Themes



**RECOVER**



**GROW**



**MODERNISE**



**PROTECT**



**PROMOTE**

## State of the Sector

***2020 has provided significant challenges, with serious impacts from bushfires, drought the coronavirus pandemic and an avian influenza outbreak***

### Key challenges

- We supported Victorians to recover from the 2019-20 bushfires in North East Victoria and East Gippsland, leading efforts to deliver animal welfare relief, agricultural loss and damage assessment and recovery services to primary producers
- We continued to roll-out our drought packages, helping ease the burden of drought and dry conditions on farmers.
- We worked with industry and the community to provide first-rate biosecurity and emergency response for Australia's largest avian influenza outbreak
- We provided key support to farmers and producers to minimise disruption throughout the coronavirus pandemic



# We responded with key investments to make sure agriculture and food businesses maintained operations throughout the pandemic

## Agriculture Workforce Plan

- **\$50 million** to create jobs and support agri-businesses to meet their needs during the pandemic:
  - business adaptation grants to help businesses meet costs of being COVIDSafe
  - job creation and skills grants to offset new worker costs
  - a commerce and marketplace transition package to help Victorian farmers and producers transition to online markets.

## Seasonal worker package

- Increased support to address seasonal workforce shortages due to COVID-19, including:
  - directing **\$10 million** from the Agriculture Workforce Plan to extend business adaptation grants
  - **\$6 million** to provide solutions to accommodation supply and transport issues
  - new regional seasonal workforce and CALD coordinators, and a major promotional campaign.

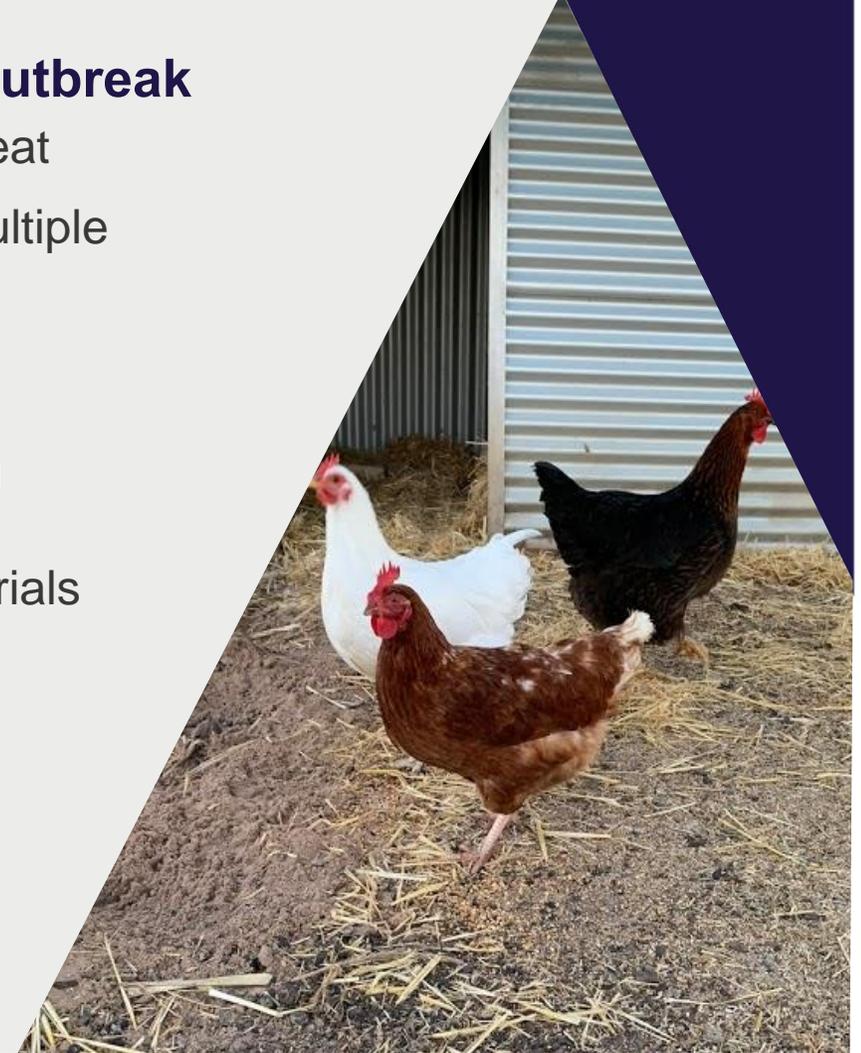
## Supporting continuity through the pandemic

- We worked closely with meatworks and food processing companies to ensure the continuity of the red meat, poultry and seafood sectors
- Worked with other states to minimise the impact of border closures for the agricultural sector.

# We showed how strong our capability is – delivering a first-rate biosecurity response

## Successfully containing Australia's largest avian influenza outbreak

- Agriculture Victoria led efforts to contain a serious biosecurity threat
  - 340 staff contributed to the response, over 200 undertook multiple deployments
  - 13,000 samples tested for Avian Influenza
  - 8,000 contacts for the surveillance activities
  - 450,000 birds destroyed and disposed, 14% of Victoria's egg producing flock.
- All infected sites have been depopulated and contaminated materials disposed of where applicable.
- Cleaning and disinfection operations have been completed on all infected properties.



## **The 2020/21 Budget invests in protecting farmers and rural communities from foxes and wild dogs**

### **Pest management in Victorian communities - \$12.72 million**

- We are continuing to support communities to reduce the social, economic and ecological damage caused by foxes and wild dogs.
- We are providing \$6 million over four years to DELWP for the continuation of Victoria's wild dog program.
- We are also extending the Victorian Fox and Wild Dog Bounty until 2024, with \$6.72 million in funding.

# We are positioning the forestry industry for future growth

## Delivering the Plan

- We released the Victorian Forestry Plan – a 30-year, \$120 million plan that will assist the timber industry as it manages its transition away from native forest harvesting
- We've launched the Forestry Business Transition Voucher and round one of the Timber Innovation Grant Program
- The \$110 million Gippsland Plantation Investment Project – a market-based process that will see new private investment in greenfield plantations.

## Establishing the Gippsland National Institute for Forest Products Innovation

- We provided \$2 million to support industry transferable research and innovation projects that will complement future grants under the Victorian Forestry Plan.

## Supporting Timber Salvage operations - \$11.2 million

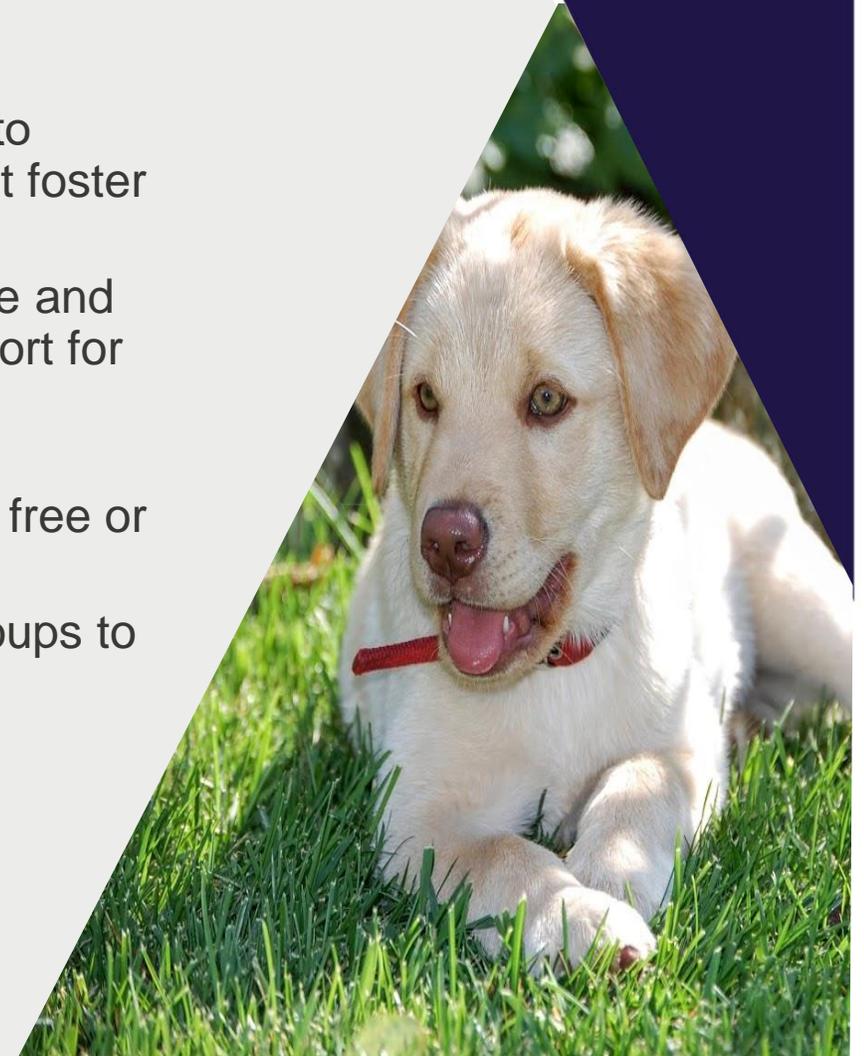
- We're extending timber salvage operations following the bushfires. The recovery of burnt timber will enable VicForests to meet supply targets and maintain supply to mills, as well as keeping plantation jobs in north east Victoria.



# We are helping Victorian pets and animals get the care and protection they need

## Supporting pets and animal welfare - \$19.1 million

- We're continuing efforts to deliver pet reforms, including working to better re-home pets and establish best practice models for the pet foster care and rescue sector.
- \$11 million is being provided to continue delivery of animal welfare and domestic animal enforcement services, including continuing support for the RSPCA Victoria Inspectorate.
- We're providing \$2.9 million to support horse and pony rescue, rehabilitation and rehoming, as well as organisations that provide free or heavily subsidised de-sexing of cats and dogs.
- A further \$5.2 million will support pounds, shelters and rescue groups to rehome more pets



# Continuing to support responsible and sustainable hunting

## Delivering another Sustainable Hunting Action Plan - \$5.3 million

- We're working with stakeholders to develop the second Sustainable Hunting Action Plan, building on the achievements in the first Plan to ensure game hunting continues to be safe, responsible and sustainable.
- Traditional Owner Hunting Strategy developed by the Federation of Traditional Owners will be central to the new plan