

The Hon. Ros Spence MP
Minister for Agriculture



AGRICULTURE PORTFOLIO

Public Accounts and Estimates Committee

17 May 2024



Energy,
Environment
and Climate Action

Victoria's agriculture sector continue to lead the nation in food and fibre exports, and remain as the backbone of our regional communities.



\$20.2 billion

gross value of agriculture production in 2021-22



154,000 jobs

in agricultural production and food manufacturing



21,300

agricultural business



11 million ha

of productive land used



24%

of total national food and fibre exports in 2022-23

Biosecurity: Protected industry from significant biosecurity risks including Varroa mite, delivered rapid uplift of emergency animal disease preparedness, and released a new Biosecurity Strategy.

Floods, bushfires and storms: Supported individual farmers and farming communities to respond and recover from floods, fires and storms, including through the provision of technical and decision-making support and services.

Legislative reform: Released the exposure draft of the Animal Care and Protection Bill for public comment and modernised agricultural regulatory frameworks, giving farmers new protective tools against biosecurity threats.

Climate action: Continued to deliver the Agriculture Sector Emission Reduction Pledge, maintaining world class research, supporting sector leadership through the Victorian Agriculture and Climate Change Council, building farmer literacy and supporting farmers to adopt innovation to reduce emissions footprint.



Protecting Victoria from Red Imported Fire Ants

- \$69.7 million to manage the risk of a red imported fire ant incursion through funding the State's contribution to the national plan for eradication.

Protecting Victoria from biosecurity threats

- \$15.8 million to continue to manage the increased risk of biosecurity threats such as foot-and-mouth and lumpy skin disease and red imported fire ant entering Victoria. This includes greater technical expertise and supports rapid response capability.

Future Drought Fund

- Contribute \$10.2 million to build preparedness and resilience to drought in Victoria's agricultural regions, in partnership with the Commonwealth Government



Rural Financial Counselling Service

- \$4.1 million contribution to support the Rural Financial Counselling Service (RFCS) in partnership with the Commonwealth Government. This will enable the RFCS to continue providing free financial counselling to eligible Victorian farmers and small businesses experiencing financial hardship.

Supporting pets and animal welfare

- \$13.3 million to continue the compliance and enforcement activities of Animal Welfare Victoria to support the ongoing delivery of domestic animal statutory obligations.
- Funding is also provided to implement new nationally agreed Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines for Poultry, including engagement to help the industry transition and comply with the new standards.



Food safety of Victoria's horticulture industry

- \$4.0 million to implement and monitor compliance with new national horticulture standards for Victorian growers of berries, leafy vegetables and melons.

Collaborative Vertebrate Pest Animal Management

- \$2.8 million to pilot a new interagency pest animal management program targeting foxes, feral pigs, goats and rabbits to reduce the negative impacts of pest animals on agricultural production, biosecurity and biodiversity, as well as continue the fox bounty.



The Victorian Government is providing record investment to support the native forestry transition and promote the state's nation-leading plantation sector.



26.2%

Victoria's share of national log harvest volume in 2021-22 (22.5% plantation, 3.7% native)



\$1.5 billion

Government funding for forestry



380,900 ha

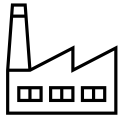
Size of Victoria's plantation sector, representing 22% of the national estate



\$120 million

The single largest investment in plantation establishment in Victoria's history

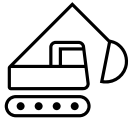
The Victorian Government is continuing to invest in forestry transition with \$156.8 million



Finalising contractual obligations to sawmills



Enhanced transition support for community foresters



Enhanced transition support for harvest and haulage businesses



Wind up of VicForests



The Victorian Government is supporting the agriculture and forestry sector to:

- **Deliver a managed transition** for native timber workers, businesses and communities.
- **Grow** Victoria's plantation timber estate.
- **Recover** from natural disasters.
- **Protect** against rising biosecurity threats.
- **Modernise** to maintain the sector's competitive advantage.
- **Adapt** to new challenges and opportunities.
- **Grow** to achieve target of \$20 billion in exports by 2030.

