



### Careers in agriculture are ripe for the picking

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Careers within the Victorian agriculture sector are ripe for the picking, a report by the Victorian Parliament's Education and Training Committee has found.

The Committee's Chair, Mr David Southwick MP, said the report, *Inquiry into agricultural education and training in Victoria*, demonstrates that agriculture needs to be re-positioned as career of choice for Victorian students.

"There is something for everyone in agriculture, whether your interests lie in business, technology, engineering or the environment," said Mr Southwick. "However, many of us in the community do not fully appreciate what agriculture has to offer and this is leading many young people to overlook the sector when it comes to choosing a career."

The Victorian agriculture sector is experiencing skills shortages across a number of occupations and industries, and the Committee heard that the number of students graduating from agricultural education and training courses is not meeting the agriculture sector's demand.

"In Victoria, we have an agriculture sector that is punching above its weight in terms of its performance and the sector has some exciting challenges ahead as it strives to meet the world's demand for food and fibre," said Mr Southwick. "This all points to the need to attract more young people into agriculture and place a priority on agricultural education and training in this state."

The report recommends the establishment of a Victorian agricultural education and training council to improve collaboration between industry, government and the education and training sector. Mr Southwick noted, "Greater collaboration will help ensure that stakeholders can put in place effective strategies to increase demand for agricultural education and training and ensure that available education and training programs meet the needs of students and industry."

The report also calls on the agriculture sector to lead the development of a national promotional campaign to lift the image of agriculture in the community and increase student aspiration for agricultural careers.

"Agriculture is Victoria's mining sector and needs to be promoted to our youth accordingly," said Mr Southwick.

Other key recommendations in the report seek to:

- provide greater support for schools and teachers to deliver agricultural education and training in schools

- reduce the barriers to participation in post-school agricultural education and training
- support and revitalise Victoria's agricultural colleges
- enhance the marketing and design of agricultural higher education courses.

"By strengthening our agricultural education and training system and attracting a new generation of young people into agriculture, we are sowing the seed for the continued prosperity of agriculture in Victoria," said Mr Southwick.

The report is available on the Committee's website at [www.parliament.vic.gov.au/etc](http://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/etc).

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