

The Hon. Ros Spence MP

Minister for Agriculture



Public Accounts and Estimates Committee
2025-26 Budget Estimates Hearing
11 June 2025



Energy,
Environment
and Climate Action

We acknowledge and respect Victorian Traditional Owners as the original custodians of Victoria's land and waters, their unique ability to care for Country and deep spiritual connection to it.

We honour Elders past and present whose knowledge and wisdom has ensured the continuation of culture and traditional practices.

DEECA is committed to genuinely partnering with Victorian Traditional Owners and Victoria's Aboriginal community to progress their aspirations.



The Victorian Government is providing \$67.2 million in funding towards drought programs and initiatives, focused on:

- Statewide \$5,000 On-Farm Drought Infrastructure Grant program - increased to \$10,000 for the south-west
- And statewide support services:
 - ‘Look Over the Farm Gate’ farmer mental health and wellbeing program
 - Expansion of technical and decision-making support services
 - Additional investment in partnerships with the Rural Financial Counselling Service and the National Centre for Farmer Health



Victoria's agriculture sector continue to lead the nation in food and fibre exports – it remains the backbone of our regional communities.



\$21.8 billion

gross production at the farm gate in 2022-23



150,750 jobs

in agricultural production and food manufacturing



21,300

agricultural business



11 million ha

of productive land used



27%

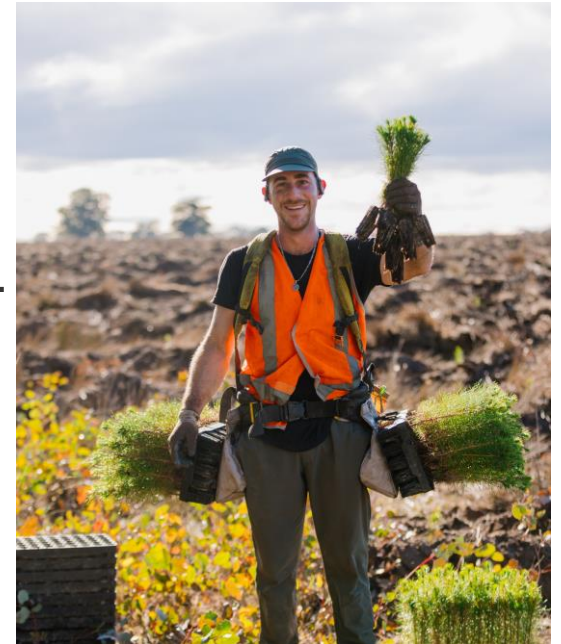
of total national food and fibre exports in 2023-24

Food and Fibre Exports: In 2023-24 achieved a record \$20.1 billion in food and fibre exports, surpassing government's target of \$20 billion by 2030 – 6 years ahead of schedule.

Biosecurity: Protected industry from significant biosecurity risks including avian influenza and tomato brown rugose fruit virus, supported national transition to management approach for Varroa mite and strengthened emergency animal disease preparedness across Government.

Plantations: 1.1 million seedlings planted under the Gippsland Plantations Investment Program to help secure vital timber resources for the state's future construction needs and meet Victoria's nation-leading emissions reduction targets.

Research and innovation: Research to support the transition of the agriculture sector to net-zero by leading 3 key projects focussed on methane emissions reduction as part of the \$87 million CRC for Zero Net Emissions in Agriculture.

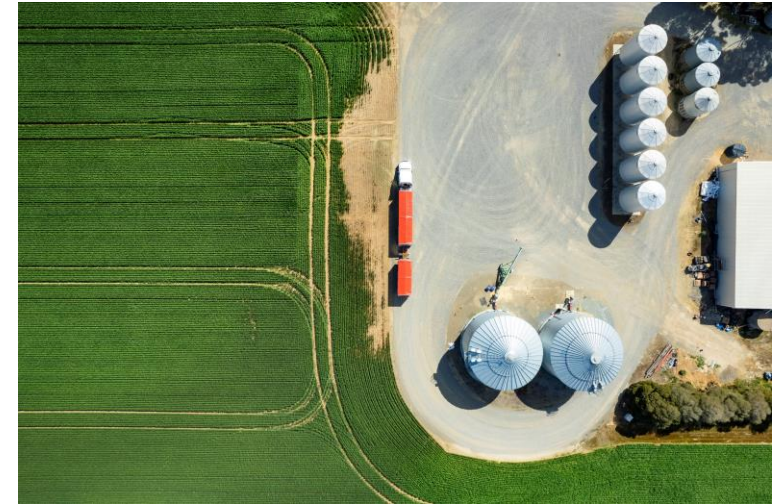


Safeguarding the future of Victoria's agricultural sector and supporting animal welfare

- \$36.7 million to safeguard Victoria's agriculture from biosecurity threats by ensuring we have the capability and equipment needed to respond to current and future biosecurity emergencies. Funding will also support RSPCA Victoria to deliver critical regulatory services on behalf of the State and support non-profit animal organisations working to care and protect animals

Managing the Impacts of Livestock Predation – Fox Bounty

- \$2.1 million to extend the Fox Bounty program until 30 June 2026 to help manage the impacts of livestock predation.



Delivering Agriculture Sector Emissions Reductions

- \$6.1 million to continue research in partnership with industry for high priority emissions reduction mechanisms in Victoria's high value dairy sector, as well as assist in the commercialisation of emerging technologies to support future emission reductions.



Bolstering the growth of agriculture

- \$1.6 million to deliver essential farm safety, health and wellbeing services, and to continue to lift diversity in agricultural leadership. Funding is also provided to develop standalone industrial hemp legislation to address regulatory barriers and support the growth of the emerging Victorian industrial hemp sector.



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



29%

Victoria's total share of national plantation log harvest volume in 2022-23 (26% softwood, 35% hardwood)



\$1.5 billion

Victorian Government funding for forestry



381,300 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 supporting the agriculture and forestry sector to:

- **Continue to grow** having surpassed the \$20 billion in exports by 2030 target in 2023-24
- **Adapt** to new challenges and **seize** opportunities
- **Protect** against rising biosecurity threats and **Modernise** to maintain the sector's competitive advantage
- **Recover** from natural disasters
- **Deliver a managed transition** for native timber workers, businesses and communities
- **Grow** Victoria's plantation timber estate

