



Agriculture spend to drive Tasmania's economic fortunes

Guy Barnett

THE Tasmanian government is delivering unprecedented support for agriculture and our regional communities and farmers are reaping the benefits.

The Gutwein government has an ambitious target to grow the annual farm-gate value to \$10 billion by 2050 and we are well on track to achieving that, with agriculture now worth \$1.9 billion at the farm-gate, and our processed food value worth around \$4.86 billion.

ABS commodity figures showed that the total value of agriculture in Tasmania for 2019-20 was up by 14.7 per cent (\$240 million) compared to the national figure of just 0.4 per cent.

A great example is the Tasmanian dairy industry, which is celebrating a new annual record for milk production of 961 million litres of milk (2020-21) up by 1.2 per cent from the previous year, which was also the previous record.

The government has a plan for Accelerating Agriculture and we are delivering on that plan through our 2021-22 Tasmanian budget.

Water plays a big part. Water is liquid gold. Farmers and land owners know that water is one of Tasmania's natural advantages and we are delivering more than \$30 million into water resources and irrigation.

The government is also delivering an extensive suite of initiatives that will accelerate our agricultural sector and create more jobs and sustainable growth.

We have delivered our new \$3 million Agricultural Development Fund and applications are open.

This supports agricultural research, extension and development and is available to all Tasmanian agricultural sectors that contribute to our AgriVision 2050 target.

We have invested an extra \$2 million to expand the Strategic Industry Partnership Program, supporting key sectors such as beef, dairy, fruit and vegetables. Applications for this are also open.

We have also delivered our agreement with the University of Tasmania to establish a new Tasmanian Agricultural Precinct at Newnham making Tasmania the first jurisdiction in Australia to co-locate agricultural science, water management, industry de-

velopment and biosecurity functions into a single precinct.

This year's August state budget invests \$15 million towards state-of-the-art research facilities at this new Tasmanian Agricultural Precinct.

Other initiatives include \$2.6 million to fund a new three-year Rural Business Resilience Package, a new \$2 million Primary Producer Safety Rebate Scheme \$2 million to complete the \$7 million modernisation of our research farms at Elliott and Forthside.

The Tasmanian government is delivering on its commitments to support and boost agriculture which is an integral part of our plan to secure Tasmania's future.

■ Guy Barnett, Primary Industries and Water Minister.

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