



19 August 2020

Guy Barnett, Minister for Primary Industries and Water

## Mobilising Tasmanians to help with seasonal worker demand

The Tasmanian Liberal Government is working in partnership with our agricultural businesses and the industry to attract and retain an effective seasonal workforce, with a particular focus on keeping our planting, production and harvesting seasons on track in light of COVID-19.

Our new \$1.9 million Agricultural Workforce Resilience Package over 2 years will assist with mobilising Tasmanians to help with the upcoming planting, production and harvest seasons.

This Package includes:

- “Feed our State” local agricultural jobs campaign linked to the national harvest trail and to encourage Tasmanians who are struggling to find employment to consider a new career option.
- A 2-year boost to the Strategic Industry Partnership Program to co-invest with the industry peak bodies and organisations to support industry resilience, promotion and targeted skills, training and workforce development.
- A Strategic Industry Partnership Program industry sponsored boost to regional transport.
- An extension to the Farmpoint hotline and AgriGrowth liaison officers to provide a critical single point of contact for primary producers.
- A boost to Safe Farming Tasmania to ensure new agricultural employees are workforce ready and to provide COVID safe workplaces.

Many agricultural enterprises in Tasmania, such as horticulture and viticulture, have a seasonal peak demand for harvest workers for picking and processing from spring through to summer.

COVID-19 will create labour challenges for the coming harvest seasons and we need to position our agricultural businesses so that they can adapt and respond to these labour force disruptions.

By mobilising Tasmanians into the agricultural workforce through this EOI process we can help maintain industry productivity across key sectors like fruit, horticulture, wine, dairy and wool.

Now is the best time for Tasmanians to produce local, harvest local and buy local.

This Agricultural Workforce Resilience Package also addresses several recommendations from the PESRAC Report to support industry to attract and retain local workers to help meet immediate labour needs for the coming harvest season.

A roundtable is also being established to oversee implementation of a range of actions to support the needs of our seasonal workforce following a comprehensive survey by DPIPWE in consultation with industry.

Agriculture is an extremely important sector of the state's economy with a farm gate value of \$1.64 billion (2018-19) increasing to a processed food value of \$4.86 billion for land-based agriculture.

The Tasmanian Government has a target to grow the value of state's agricultural production to \$10 billion by 2050 and pillar industries like agriculture will be vital as our economy responds and rebuilds in future months.