

# Supporting local industry



**HELPING TASMANIAN INDUSTRIES:** Primary Industries Minister Guy Barnett. Picture: file

## OUR TASMANIAN INDUSTRIES

BY MINISTER GUY BARNETT

TASMANIA'S primary industries sector is world-class and the Tasmanian Government is continuing to support everyone working in it to grow and prosper as we continue to recover from COVID-19.

Our nation-leading irrigation schemes are enabling farmers to diversify, value add and expand their existing farming operations, which is why the State and Commonwealth Governments are jointly investing \$185 million to deliver, with landholders, irrigation infrastructure to support rural and regional Tasmania.

Following the good response to water sales from landholders in the Don district confirming the strong community support for the scheme, Tasmanian Irrigation is set to progress to the construction phase in 2021.

When complete, the estimated \$28.5 million Don Irrigation scheme will provide 4,750 megalitres of high-surety, fit-for-purpose

summer irrigation water to farmers in the Forthside, Forth, Lillico, Don, Barrington, West Kentish and Melrose areas.

This is a great result for farmers on the North-West and a strong endorsement of our plan to grow the farm gate value of agriculture to \$10 billion by 2050.

Our world-class forestry industry will also be vital as we fight our way back from COVID-19, in particular through our plans to build Tasmania back to the strongest economy in the nation with new buildings and houses.

We have also supported our agricultural sector through COVID-19 through our \$1.9 million Agricultural Workforce Resilience Package, over two years, to assist them through the pandemic.

This included our strong support to ensure that Tasmanians are prioritised for seasonal worker jobs through the Tassie Harvest Jobs - Take your Pick Campaign.

Pleasingly, Tasmanians responded in droves with around 30,000 hits on the Harvest Jobs website since it

went live.

Our mining and minerals sector has also been vitally important through the COVID-19 pandemic.

The sector continued to operate through this very difficult time, supporting thousands of jobs in the North West and continuing to contribute strongly to our economy when it was needed most.

We are also charging ahead with our plans to become the Battery of the Nation and make Tasmania a global renewable energy powerhouse.

The North West especially is set to benefit from a pipeline of renewable energy investment estimated at \$7.1 billion, and thousands of jobs.

And, our dairy sector continues to go from strength to strength, with milk production in 2019-20 setting a new annual record of 950 million litres - breaking the previous record from 2017-18.

The Government is supporting the sector with \$900,000 over four years through the 'Grow more, Milk more and Make more'

initiative to work with dairy farmers on productivity, farm business and value-adding strategies.

Twelve farmers will also benefit from \$20,000 each for each dairy farmer will allow them to undertake a professionally conducted energy audit to identify and then purchase infrastructure upgrades to improve energy efficiency and reduce their costs.

Initiatives such as these acknowledge how important our dairy industry is for our economy, especially regional communities that rely on the job opportunities generated by the dairy sector.

There is no stronger supporter of Tasmania's agricultural sector than the Tasmanian Government and we will continue to back the sector and grow these important industries.

■ Guy Barnett is Tasmania's minister for primary industries. For further information visit [dpipwe.tas.gov.au](http://dpipwe.tas.gov.au).