

Guy Barnett MP

Minister for Trade
Minister for Primary Industries and Water
Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction
Minister for Resources
Minister for Veterans' Affairs
Liberal Member for Lyons



Tasmanian Government **Media Release**

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Guy Barnett, Minister for Primary Industries and Water

Tasmania hosts national industrial hemp conference

The Tasmanian Government continues to invest in innovative industries to support growth, help farming communities diversify and create more jobs.

Hemp is an emerging industry and Tasmania is delighted to host the third Australian Industrial Hemp Conference in Launceston this week from March 22-25.

The biennial conference is an opportunity for growers, researchers, processors and buyers to get together to discuss key issues, hot topics and the latest research findings to grow, process and market industrial hemp.

Several hundred delegates are set to attend over the course of the four-day conference, which will include a field trip to nearby industrial hemp sites, as well as presentations on the AgriFutures hemp variety trials which are being co-funded by the Tasmanian Government.

Tasmanian conditions are ideal for growing industrial hemp - we have the right climate, access to irrigation and a reputation for crop security. With a farm gate value of around \$5 million in 2019-20, Tasmania is one of Australia's largest producers of industrial hemp, supplying over 30 per cent of Australia's total industrial hemp crop since 2019.

Since 2018, the Tasmanian Government has committed over \$320,000 to support the Tasmanian Hemp Association with communications, product development, education and marketing to grow the industry, and increase its productivity and resilience.

In July 2021, we committed \$150,000 to partner with AgriFutures Australia for Tasmania to participate in a three-year national industrial hemp trial to identify varieties best suited to Australian conditions. Attendees of the conference will have an opportunity to view a presentation on the trials, which are run by the Tasmanian Hemp Association in conjunction with AgriFutures.

This month, the Tasmanian Hemp Association also received \$100,000 under the Government's Strategic Industry Partnership Project focussing on educating consumers about the health benefits of hemp as food.

In addition, the Government is reviewing the *Industrial Hemp Act 2015* to make sure the regulation continues to support industry needs. We worked closely with industry to establish the Act and we will do the same through this review.

The Tasmanian Government is committed to supporting all of our farmers and farming communities and the various goods they produce, and we hope the conference is a great success.