

# Media Release

**The Hon Jaala Pulford MLC**

Minister for Agriculture

Minister for Regional Development

Deputy Leader of the Government  
in the Legislative Council

Victorian  
Labor

**DELIVERING  
FOR ALL VICTORIANS**

Tuesday, 6 November 2018

## GROWING NORTHERN VICTORIA'S AGRICULTURE INDUSTRY

A re-elected Andrews Labor Government will help create more jobs for Northern Victoria's agriculture industry, better support farming families and further Victoria's reputation as Australia's leader in digital agriculture.

Shearing has been at the heart of many local towns for generations – and we want it to stay that way.

Victoria exported \$1.8 billion worth of wool in 2016/17, and we want to grow the industry further by creating new jobs and attracting more qualified shearers. That's why we will invest \$1.2 million to develop and promote a Certificate III in shearing qualification at a Victorian TAFE from 2020.

Labor also knows that getting a great education shouldn't mean moving from regional Victoria to the city. That's why we're investing \$6 million to upgrade student accommodation and facilities at Longerenong, Glenormiston and Dookie agricultural colleges, giving the next generation of farmers and rural workers the skills they need.

This investment is in stark contrast to the Liberals, who sheared over \$1 billion from our TAFEs, and closed 22 campuses and facilities across the state, costing hundreds of dedicated staff their jobs.

Labor will invest \$3 million to improve health and safety on our farms because safety isn't negotiable. Farms aren't just someone's home, they're busy and vibrant workplaces, so it's vital we keep our farming communities safe.

This funding will increase health checks for farmers, deliver a new campaign to raise greater workplace safety awareness, and help the Victorian Farmers Federation employ two additional Farm Safety Officers.

We'll provide \$500,000 to continue the Young Farmers Scholarships and an additional \$500,000 to further Victoria's reputation as Australia's leader in digital agriculture. This builds on the \$4 million in additional funding we have pledged to the National Centre for Farmer Health.

Labor will also undertake an inquiry into the council rating system to identify changes that will improve its fairness and equity – this is to ensure that the burden of rates falls fairly amongst all ratepayers.

We will also take the fight to Canberra to ensure Financial Assistance Grants to rural councils are never frozen again. The three-year freeze of these grants by the Abbott-Turnbull-Morrison Government has placed enormous pressure on councils' finances, costing regional councils around \$40 million per year.

### **Quote attributable to Minister for Agriculture Jaala Pulford**

*"For four years we've been supporting our hard-working farmers, by growing local jobs and delivering the tools they need to ensure we continue to lead the country – more funding for TAFE, farm safety and supporting young farmers is the next step."*

### **Quote attributable to Member for Northern Victoria Jaclyn Symes**

*"This is great news for farming families – growing the next generation of shearers, keeping our farms safe and our farmers healthy."*

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**Quote attributable to Member for Northern Victoria Mark Gepp**

*“Our agriculture industry is world-class and we want it to stay that way – this support will grow more local jobs and gives kids a choice to continue their study in their community.”*