

# Media Release

**The Hon Ros Spence MP**  
Minister for Agriculture  
Minister for Community Sport  
Minister for Carers and Volunteers



Friday, 21 February 2025

## EXPANDED FACILITY PUTTING THE HEAT ON CROP RESEARCH

A world first facility researching the impact of extreme hot and cold weather on crops is expanding thanks to support from the Labor Government.

Minister for Agriculture Ros Spence today announced the completion of the \$1.18 million Free Air Temperature Extreme (FATE) facility expansion at the Horsham SmartFarm, doubling the size to cover about 2.5 hectares.

The FATE facility measures the impact of heat waves, drought and frost on cereal, pulse and oilseed crops, testing conditions on them at various stages to understand the impact on grain quality.

The upgraded facility is jointly funded with \$386,000 from the Labor Government and \$800,000 from Grains Research and Development Corporation (GRDC).

This expansion will enable more crop rotations and experiments, accelerating the development of new heat tolerant crop varieties for farmers. The equipment can be used for future research on other crops, including different grazing pasture species.

This year the facility researched eight different wheat and lentil varieties with various growth rates under the heaters against a control group under normal weather conditions to test the resilience of crops.

This crucial research will inform plant breeders which crop varieties can stay productive during extreme weather conditions, as the frequency and severity of these events increase in a changing climate.

The FATE facility is funded by the Labor Government as part of Agriculture Victoria's 10-year Agriculture Strategy and the Safer Smarter Farms Program, which highlights risk management and adaptation to climate change.

GRDC's investment towards the FATE facility was part of a \$20 million infrastructure program to build Australia's long-term grains research capacity and support the enduring profitability of the nation's grain growers.

To learn more about the FATE facility, visit [agriculture.vic.gov.au](http://agriculture.vic.gov.au).

### Quote attributable to Minister for Agriculture Ros Spence

*"We're fast-tracking the development of new crop varieties that are heatwave and drought resistant, to support the growth and sustainability of Victoria's \$4.1 billion grains industry."*

### Quote attributable to Minister for Climate Action Lily D'Ambrosio

*"We are working alongside industry to deliver practical, hands-on climate action research to ensure our agriculture sector can adapt to the challenges of our changing climate."*

### Quotes attributable to Member for Western Victoria Jacinta Ermacora

*"The research at this world class facility will help our farmers to learn and prepare for future heat waves and drought impacts on crops, using new technologies to adapt to climate change."*

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