

Minister Gail Gago

Minister for Agriculture, Food and Fisheries
Minister for Forests
Minister for Regional Development
Minister for the Status of Women
Minister for State/Local Government Relations

Minister Grace Portolesi

Minister for Employment, Higher Education and Skills
Minister for Science and Information Economy

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Potato and wine industries train workers for the future

The State Government has awarded more than \$50,000 to the potato and wine industries for initiatives to make sure workers have skills to meet increasing production demands.

Potatoes SA has been awarded \$43,500 to plan for the future needs across the five key potato growing regions – Kangaroo Island, the Mallee, the Riverland/Murraylands, the Northern Adelaide Plains and the South East.

South Australia currently produces 80 per cent of the nation's fresh washed potatoes,

Over \$6,000 has also been awarded to Vinpac International, Australia's largest third party wine bottling service provider to further train their workforce.

Minister for Skills Grace Portolesi said the funding is going to industries, where investment in the skills of its workers will help stimulate economic growth and support the State's Premium Food and Wine from our Clean Environment strategic priority.

"We need to make sure our workers have the skills to work in growth areas," she said.

"These grants are a co-investment with industry and a great example of the Government working with employers to ensure they have a highly skilled and capable workforce.

"Two groups have been successful in winning funding in the latest round of grants to plan for the future staffing needs in their industries."

Minister for Agriculture Food and Fisheries Gail Gago said there is potential for our potato industry to grow, particularly in exports.

"Only two per cent of the fresh washed potatoes are currently for export," Ms Gago said.

"There are significant opportunities to grow export markets, especially to Asia, where demand is high and increasing.

"To capitalise on this the industry needs support to improve production methods, workforce skill needs and practices."

Funding of up to \$6,600 has also been awarded to Vinpac International, Australia's largest third party wine bottling service provider, located in the Barossa Valley and McLaren Vale.

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“The company bottles and packages around 8 million cases per annum and this is expected to increase to 11 million by 2016,” Ms Portolesi said.

“The funding will be used to up-skill its trainers and assessors to ensure its regional workforce and accreditations are ready to manage the production increase while maintaining national and international quality standards.”

Minister Gago said investing in South Australia’s wine industry would strengthen the sector’s contribution to the economy.

“Approximately one out of every two bottles of Australian wine is made in South Australia, and our wine is exported to more than 100 countries,” she said.

“The South Australian Government is pleased to be able to assist Vinpac in increasing the scale of their operations.”

The Government has invested strongly in skills and training, increased by a further \$27 million in the recent Budget.