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STATE-OF-ART JUICER A BOOST FOR REGIONAL FRUIT GROWERS

A new \$1.4 million processing facility in Melbourne's west will create jobs and help support Victoria's fruit industry, Premier John Brumby said today.

Opening the facility in Derrimut with Regional and Rural Development Minister Jacinta Allan, Mr Brumby said the Donny Boy Fresh Food Company High Pressure Processing Facility sourced most of the fruit for its Preshafruit juices from the orchards of regional Victoria.

"This new processing facility is the first of its kind in Australia and has already created 20 direct full and part-time jobs, as well as supporting our local growers and orchards," Mr Brumby said

"Victoria is the second-largest manufacturer of Australia's fruit juice drinks, accounting for about 28 per cent of the nation's total fruit juice.

"Victoria's horticulture industry, including fruit-growing, has an annual turnover of \$1.92 billion, and exports are worth \$226 million.

"We are taking action to deliver vital infrastructure that supports regional industry and delivers jobs now.

"The Donny Boy facility is driving regional jobs and fostering industry growth right along the supply chain - from picking, sorting and grading fruit, to packing and transporting."

Regional and Rural Development Minister Jacinta Allan said the demand for Victorian fruit juice overseas was growing and having a positive impact on Victorian industry.

"Donny Boy has already begun exporting to Singapore and Hong Kong and is soon to export to the US, Japan and Canada, and the impact of this on Victorian pickers, growers, packers and transporters is significant," Ms Allan said.

"More than 24,000 bottles of apple juice have been exported to Singapore since December last year and domestically, 500,000 bottles of juice have been sold across Sydney and Melbourne."

Ms Allan said that the Donny Boy facility was a leading example of better business through innovation.

"Donny Boy's High Pressure Processing Facility pasteurises juices cold, using a revolutionary technique that enables the juice to retain twice the Vitamin C and antioxidants of regular juice.

"This facility produces juice made from 100 per cent fruit with no added flavours, providing extra support for regional growers, and producing a quality product with huge market potential."

Ms Allan said the fruit growing industry was vital to the Victorian economy and that's why the Brumby Government continued to support innovation in the industry through the *Food Industry for a Regionally Sustainable Tomorrow* (FIRST).

"This type of initiative builds capability within regional Victoria's food industry to support future competitiveness and sustainability in domestic and international markets," she said.

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