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Victoria backs dairy export push across Asia with $250,000 market access programme

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The $500,000 joint initiative will target Greater China, Japan and Southeast Asia as Victoria seeks to deepen trade relationships and expand dairy exports

Victoria is stepping up its push to expand dairy exports across Asia, with the state government partnering with Dairy Australia on a $500,000 market development initiative aimed at strengthening trade relationships and opening new opportunities across Greater China, Japan and Southeast Asia.

Victoria's Minister for Agriculture Michaela Settle announced $250,000 in government funding for the Growing Demand for Victorian Dairy Exports Program, with Dairy Australia matching the contribution. The funding, provided through Global Victoria, will support initiatives designed to deepen commercial connections, improve market intelligence and identify new opportunities for Victorian dairy businesses.

The programme will back the Dairy Australia Scholarships Program, including its Victoria-based visit programme and ongoing engagement with alumni, alongside international seminars showcasing Australian dairy production, manufacturing and food safety capabilities. It will also support trade policy and market access activities as the industry seeks to strengthen its position in some of Asia's most important dairy markets.

The strategy builds on a relationship programme that has operated for more than 25 years. The Dairy Australia Scholarship Program brings participants from China, Japan and Southeast Asia to Australia to gain first-hand exposure to dairy farming, processing and food safety systems. More than 950 alumni now occupy influential positions across Asian markets, creating a network that can provide insight into consumer preferences, market trends and emerging commercial opportunities.

The push comes with considerable export exposure already concentrated in the dairy sector. The state accounts for around 74 per cent of Australia's dairy exports by value, with dairy exports valued at $2.79 billion in 2024-25. Expanding market access therefore has implications not only for individual exporters but also for farmers, processors and regional economies

across the state.

The partnership forms part of the Victorian Government's $10 million Food and Fibre Exports Program Regional Package, which is aimed at strengthening the state's international trade performance and supporting growth across regional industries. "This partnership will help our producers and exporters expand into key international markets, unlocking new trade opportunities, growing exports and supporting jobs and economic growth across regional Victoria," said Minister for Trade, Tourism and Investment Natalie Suleyman.

Agriculture Minister Michaela Settle said the initiative would help Victorian dairy farmers build stronger connections with international customers, reinforcing the role of market relationships in supporting long-term export growth. Dairy Australia CEO Dr Matthew Shaffer said the organisation's longstanding partnership with the Victorian Government had helped the state's dairy industry take advantage of commercial opportunities globally while building demand and value for Australian dairy products.