



The Hon. Tony Burke MP

MEDIA RELEASE

Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

New Tasmanian science lab opened to help irrigators and farmers

Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Tony Burke today opened a new state-of-the-art laboratory in north-west Tasmania to help farmers and irrigators maximise productivity.

The \$2 million AgVita Analytical lab in Latrobe is a purpose-built agricultural testing facility for analysing nutrients in plants, water and soil.

It will be staffed by a team of scientists and technicians.

The lab will help provide the most accurate information to producers, so they can make decisions about the best type of farming for their land, as well as to resource management groups and water authorities.

Mr Burke welcomed any innovation which helps to increase agricultural productivity, particularly as the drought drags on in parts of Australia and the world faces a growing food shortage.

“This is the sort of cutting-edge laboratory which will help to attract the next generation of agricultural science graduates,” Mr Burke said.

“Already, 70% of the work at the facility is from mainland Australia, which proves these Tasmanian researchers are the best in the nation at this type of work.

“They produce high quality research in a 24-hour turnaround time.”

Member for Braddon Sid Sidebottom accompanied the Minister during the visit.

“I was very pleased the Minister was able to see first-hand the cutting-edge technology and services which have evolved from a small shed at AgVita and grown into the ability to analyse important elements contained in soils and plants, within 24 hours,” Mr Sidebottom said.

“This will prove invaluable, now and well into the future.”

Mr Burke also visited a Somerset nursery producing hardwood and softwood seedlings for Gunns sawlog and pulpwood plantations.

The nursery produces around 18 million seedlings a year.

Both initiatives prove Australia's primary industries are leading the world in innovation and show how productivity improvements can be made at the start of the supply chain, Mr Burke said.

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