



MEDIA RELEASE

**MONTAGUE WELCOMED
NARRE WARREN NORTH FACILITY
WITH BREAKING GROUND CEREMONY**

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In a bid to build more efficient infrastructure and increase production capacity, Montague, one of Australia’s leading fresh produce companies, today broke ground on the new packaging and export distribution centre in Narre Warren North. The new world class facility will facilitate the introduction of a range of products onto the Australian domestic market and the growth of exports into key Asian markets.

The \$54 million project will feature Australia’s first optical sorting equipment supplied by Compac and horticulture’s first fully automated high bay storage facility. The 18,000 square metre facility will have the capacity to process in excess of 34 million kilograms of fresh fruit product annually. The project is the result of a comprehensive five-year planning process by Montague during which it consulted with manufacturers and service providers throughout the world. The project was made possible with assistance from the Victorian Government’s Food Source Victoria program.

In addition to increasing the fresh produce processing capacity of Montague the project will also feature a community engagement centre as part of the project. This centre will feature a café, retail store, bike rental facilities and pick your own orchard. The centre will significantly enhance the visitor experience for local and international visitors to Lysterfield Park as well as serving as a destination for international visitors seeking to see first-hand how Australian horticultural product is grown.

This morning’s soil turning ceremony, held in the scenic Montague orchard in Narre Warren North, was hosted by Montague Executive Director Scott Montague and The Honourable Luke Donnellan - Minister of Child Protection, Disability, Ageing and Carers and State Member for Narre Warren North. Also, in attendance were local Councillors from the Yarra Ranges Council and representatives from the City of Casey, Apple and Pear Australia Ltd., Parks Victoria and Yarra Ranges Tourism.

Mr Montague said - **“We are thrilled to have the opportunity to introduce a facility which will be a catalyst in securing jobs in the future. As a proud 100% family owned business, Montague has supported regional fruit growers along the supply chain for decades, and with this new build we will be able to extend their reach into export markets around the world. In addition, we’ll continue to see our local community thrive with the creation of fifty new permanent jobs and the provision exceptional apples and stone fruit.”**





The Honourable Luke Donnellan said - **“As we break ground for this new state-of-the-art facility, we are eager to see the positive effects it will have on our community, in terms of local and national visitors to the Yarra Ranges and the City of Casey. Montague is renowned as a leader in the fresh fruit industry, and we are proud that it calls Narre Warren North home.”**

Commenting on the impact to the local community and employment opportunities, Federal Member of La Trobe, The Honourable Jason Wood said - **“We are pleased to see the Montague Narre Warren North facility come to fruition. This project will bring with it fifty new permanent local jobs in the local Narre Warren North region, as well as deliver substantial economic benefits to growers right across regional Victoria, New South Wales and Tasmania.”**

Construction is anticipated to be completed by late 2020.

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