

## Minister Geoff Brock

Minister for Regional Development  
Minister for Local Government

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### \$1.85 million grant to help create jobs at Swan Reach

A \$1.85 million Regional Development and Innovation Fund (RDIF) grant will help establish a new almond cracking plant in Swan Reach, creating 15 new full-time jobs for the region.

Regional Development Minister Geoff Brock said the grant would help Costa Bros to relocate and significantly expand their operations.

“The new plant will create at least 15 jobs at Swan Reach and address a very real need for this type of operation in the State’s growing almond industry,” Mr Brock said.

“The introduction of a hulling and shelling plant in the Swan Reach area will also contribute to the region’s economic diversification.

“The goal of the RDIF is to fund projects that make long-term sustainable and strategic contributions to the region’s economic development through activities which leverage regional strengths,” Mr Brock said.

Costa Bros Operations Manager Tony Costa said there were multiple positive spin-offs from the Swan Reach development.

“Costa Bros will invest around \$6 million of our own funds to expand Stage One of the hulling and shelling operations, and we are also planning to significantly expand our Swan Reach almond orchard. We expect this will facilitate a further 20 long-term jobs over the next eight years with up to an additional 30 seasonal employees per year,” Mr Costa said.

“Currently, the only other almond cracking plant is in Renmark and it’s operating at full capacity. This expansion will allow us to increase our hulling and shelling capacity from 8,000 to 22,000 tonnes a year over the next three years.

“Almond growers from South Australia, New South Wales and Victoria will see direct benefits to their bottom line from this development. Expanding hulling and shelling capacity in Swan Reach will significantly reduce transport costs for some producers and increase processing options for the industry.

“We already have 10 growers in the Mid-Murray region who have said they will use the new plant. The increased capacity will also produce up to 16,500 tonnes of almond hull and shell, which can be used in the animal feed industry,” Mr Costa said.

The RDIF is an initiative under the \$265 million South Australian River Murray Sustainability Program (SARMS) designed to facilitate sustainable regional economic development and contribute to a healthy Murray-Darling Basin.