

Media Release



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Farmers welcome 'essential services' but question how they'll grow

The Victorian Farmers Federation (VFF) has welcomed today's Victorian Budget 2019-20, noting some positive commitments but a number of glaring funding gaps for agriculture.

"We are pleased to see significant resourcing for essential areas such as biosecurity and fit-for-purpose roads, which benefit all Victorians," said Mr David Jochinke, VFF President.

"We also welcome the Government's focus on farm safety with a campaign to promote on-farm safety, farmer health checks, and two additional farm safety officers at the VFF to help us drive a culture of zero accidents and deaths on farm.

"The VFF congratulates the Government on its \$7.2 million in support for agriculture careers, including training for shearers. Cutting regional payroll tax to 25 per cent of the metropolitan rate by 2022-23 is also great news for growing regional businesses.

"While there are some significant promises, the Government has missed an opportunity to fund dedicated agriculture liaison officers in Victoria Police to help fight farm crime.

"We could not find any mention of the rural and regional energy network, or desperately needed rates relief while we wait for the rates review to unfold.

"Many of our farmers across the State are still experiencing drought and it was frustrating not to see a greater focus on support and adaptation," he said. "While the project is funded, it is disappointing that there is no clear commitment on a completion date for the Murray Basin Rail Project".

"Premier Andrews noted that this Budget delivers 'wealth, momentum and opportunity'. We would like to see this apply to all communities and industries across Victoria.

"If we are to continue as the 'strongest performing economy in the country', agriculture needs to be front and centre as one of our greatest economic assets. We cannot afford to ignore the contribution agriculture makes and the conditions required to help it grow," said Mr Jochinke.

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Media Contacts:

David Jochinke, VFF President, 0427 834 524

Heather Smillie, VFF Stakeholder, Media & Communications Officer, 0400 874 589

About the VFF

The Victorian Farmers Federation (VFF) is dedicated to representing the interests of farmers and making a positive difference to their businesses and communities. We strive to create an environment for our members, our farmers, that enables profitable, safe, sustainable production to ensure an enduring social licence in a community that respects and values the sector.

Farrer House 24-28 Collins Street Melbourne 3000

Ph. 1300 882 833 | Fax. 03 9207 5500 | E-mail. vff@vff.org.au | www.vff.org.au