

## Media Alert

1 February 2019

### VFF Members to meet their Vice-President candidates at forums in Horsham and Sale

VFF Members will have two opportunities to meet their Vice-President candidates, Ms Emma Germano and Ms Gemma Monk, at forums in Horsham and Sale.

The forums will kick off with a brief introduction from each of the candidates, followed by a question and answer session.

Voting for the position of VFF Vice-President has begun and the results will be announced at the VFF Annual General Meeting on 26 February 2019.

#### VFF Vice President Candidate Forum - Horsham

**When:** Monday 4 February  
**Where:** Royal Hotel  
132 Firebrace Street, Horsham  
**RSVP:** Call Member Services on 1300 882 833

#### VFF Vice President Candidate Forum - Sale

**When:** Monday 11 February  
**Where:** Criterion Hotel  
90 MacAlister Street, Sale  
**RSVP:** Call Member Services on 1300 882 833

ENDS

#### Media Contacts:

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#### 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.

## VFF Vice-President Candidates

### Emma Germano



I am a third generation farmer from south Gippsland, currently producing vegetables under irrigation, fodder for dairy, and running prime lambs and beef cattle. We also have an on farm retail shop so that we can connect directly with our community.

Currently the President of the VFF Horticulture Group, VFF Industrial Association and VFF Board Member, I have been actively involved with the organisation for over four years. This has provided me with an excellent understanding of how the organisation operates and its current culture, as well as the opportunities for change. I have undertaken governance training and have the necessary knowledge and skills to be an effective director. I also bring well-practiced communication skills; established strong working relationships with state and federal government representatives; and a strong media profile that can be leveraged to ensure that VFF members have a voice when it matters.

During my tenure with the VFF to date, I have had opportunities to travel around the state to meet many of you, and understand the issues that matter most to you. I know how important it is for the VFF to show strong leadership on the things that will ensure the long-term sustainability of our industry – issues such as animal welfare, water policy, farm labour, road and rail. I have also travelled to many of our trading partners alongside government and industry officials and am acutely aware of the importance of access to markets for Australian producers. The opportunity to undertake a Nuffield Scholarship in 2014 has given me a deep understanding of the complex socio-political environment that we operate in across commodities.

The savvy foresight of the VFF's predecessors has built an organisation that is underpinned by sound financial security. We have an amazing opportunity to leverage these assets to embolden our advocacy and extend our influence. I would like to see the VFF utilise these assets to their fullest potential, to ensure we continue to thrive into the future.

I believe that the VFF needs to do more to genuinely engage with the broader community. The divide between producers and consumers continues to broaden, threatening our right to farm. It is time we invest in advocacy beyond rural media outlets and politicians. I believe that forging a strong connection with our urban customers is of utmost importance. Consumers are increasingly concerned about where their food comes from, and more importantly, how their food is raised.

This community is not just our market and the centre of everything we do, but are urban voters who hold real power in Spring Street and in Canberra. How much more effective could our lobbying be if the farmers' voice was united with that of our urban counterparts?

### Gemma Monk



I have farmed across several regions in Victoria. I grew up in Gippsland, assisting in my Grandfathers beef enterprise, spending many hours droving cattle on horseback. I also relief milked with my Aunt on weekends, which provided me with the base for my future career in the Dairy Industry.

Following the completion of my Advance Diploma of Natural Resource Management from Dookie College I worked on a pig farm and then a dairy farm in the Kerang area, prior to embarking on Share Farming near Shepparton, then near Warrnambool.

I strengthened my knowledge with a Diploma in Agriculture before purchasing my first farm near Rochester, and finally expanding to 700 cows on the current farm near Kyabram. The current farm has a large element of irrigated cropping. I also have animals on a run-off block in North East Victoria.

I have worked within industry as a service provider whilst also dairy farming. These roles have included as an agriculture teacher/trainer for GOTAFE and as a Young Dairy Development Coordinator for Murray Dairy.

I have represented my fellow Dairy Farmers on the UDV Policy Council for the past three years and will continue and extend this by representing all farmers in Victoria.

I will ensure that my fellow farmers have a strong voice and that their rights are up held. I will work towards minimising red tape that farmers have to currently navigate, so we can concentrate on what we do best, farming.

Another strong focus of mine will be education and the support of women in the Agricultural Industry. I know all too well how difficult it can be to juggle farming and family. I believe by strengthening farmers and their families we can strengthen our industry.

Unfortunately, we, as farmers, are increasingly under more and more pressure from processors, government, world markets and society in general. Pressure to produce a cleaner and greener product that conforms to high moral standards.

My goal is to ensure that influences we face and disrupt farming do not take away our right to farm or thrust upon us legislation that is restrictive and impractical. By standing together we can support each other to achieve sound outcomes for our industry.