

# Media Release



6 September 2020

## VFF warns on meat processing restrictions

The Victorian Farmers Federation (VFF) is calling for the Victorian Government to change the industry restart roadmap for the meat processing industry and allow regional Victoria to open up where safe to do so.

VFF President David Jochinke said that while changes, including a return to school for regional students would be well received by the farming community, the organisation held concerns about the Government's hard-nosed approach to the meat processing sector.

"Our message on abattoirs hasn't changed and we are in lockstep with the meat processing sector on this: we need to return to at least 80 percent processing capacity as soon as possible," Mr Jochinke said.

"The current proposal for all metropolitan and regional meat processing facilities to remain highly restricted until at least 23 November is simply not workable.

"If we don't get to 80 percent soon there will be lambs that cannot get processed, limited capacity to process grass fed beef and continued uncertainty in the pork and poultry industries that are already operating on a knife edge.

"The risk to animal welfare is just unpalatable. Add to that the potential impact on markets and the current proposal will be disastrous for industry and the food supply chain."

In addition, the VFF is pleased the Victorian Government continues to recognise regional Victoria is ahead of metropolitan Melbourne in the fight against COVID-19 and would like to see regional differences recognised in the pathway out of restrictions for regional Victoria.

"Where there are no COVID-19 cases in regional Victoria we think a common sense, risk based approach to the relaxation of restrictions is appropriate," Mr Jochinke said.

"Regional Victorian's who can safely return to COVID normal should be able to do so as soon as possible."

"The farming community is committed to doing its bit to stop the spread by adhering to the industry restart roadmap for agriculture."

**ENDS**

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