



## Media Release

15 February 2019

### Council rates top of the agenda for 40<sup>th</sup> Annual VFF Grains Conference

Minister for Local Government Adem Somyurek will open the 40<sup>th</sup> Annual VFF Grains Group Conference in Geelong on Monday 25 February with a discussion of the Victorian rating strategy.

“Victorian farmers were shocked to receive increased rates bills of up to 52% in 2018. No other business could be expected to survive under such significant cost increases over such a short time period. We need an equitable and sustainable rating system for all Victorians,” said Mr Ross Johns, VFF Grains Group President.

“The Victorian Government has committed to a full review of the rural rating system and we look forward to receiving the terms of reference and timeline for that review from Minister Somyurek at the Conference,” said Mr Johns.

The Conference will host discussions on other critical issues such as social licence, mental health, supply chain efficiency and chemical stewardship.

The Conference will also mark the end of Ross Johns’ two year term as Grains Group President.

“Thank you to all of the growers that worked with and supported the VFF Grains Group. I firmly believe in the VFF. More than ever we must have a voice that advocates for farmers.

“I wish incoming President Ash Fraser, Vice President Craig Henderson, and the new Grains Group Council all the best for the future. Our members can rest assured that they are in capable hands with the new leadership team,” said Mr Johns.

Ashley Fraser will be confirmed as President at the Conference. Ashley farms at Rutherglen in North East Victoria and is Managing Director of Baker Seeds Co, and has served as Vice President of the Grains Group for two years.

#### 40<sup>th</sup> Annual VFF Grains Conference

**When:** Monday 25 February, 9.00am – 5.00pm

**Where:** Novotel Geelong, 10-14 Eastern Beach, Geelong

**RSVP:** Media can RSVP by emailing [amactier@vff.org.au](mailto:amactier@vff.org.au) or (03) 9207 5538

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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.