



**A RICH HISTORY
PRICELESS CONTRIBUTIONS
OUR STRONG FUTURE**
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Heavy-handed approach does nothing to protect farmers

The Victorian Farmers Federation (VFF) is deeply concerned about the flawed Industrial Manslaughter legislation that has been introduced into Parliament today, which will have a disproportional and cruel impact on family farms and businesses.

“Family farms are unique businesses because farmers are often both the employers and the employees. The State Government must provide an exemption for farm business owners in the event of an immediate family member dying in the workplace, just as they have exempted other employees,” said Ms Emma Germano, VFF Vice-President.

“Every farm accident is tragic. It is usually a close loved one we lose. While mourning the loss of a family member, there is now a risk farmers will be further punished with a long, arduous and expensive legal process that may traumatize grieving families and result in 20 years imprisonment.

“It is also incredibly concerning that WorkSafe would be the investigating body in a suspected case of industrial manslaughter. WorkSafe does not have the experience, skills or resources to investigate such a serious criminal charge as manslaughter. Victoria Police is the only appropriate and properly equipped body to investigate such a serious offence.

“This legislation introduced today proposes a new criminal charge that is only one step short of murder, with penalties of 20 years imprisonment. It is very serious legislation, and it cannot be rapidly forced through the Parliament. The Members of Parliament and the public need sufficient time to consider and debate the legislation.

“A focus on farm safety and effective OHS practices are critical for every single farm business. The VFF’s prolonged farm safety advocacy demonstrates our commitment to protecting the agricultural workforce. We have campaigned hard for mandatory operator protection for tractors and quadbikes, rebate schemes to improve on-farm equipment, and on-farm safety officers who provide free farm safety advice for all primary producers.

“The heavy handed legislation introduced by the State Government will not improve farm safety; it will only punish grieving families. We must have an exemption for immediate family members and instead invest in improving farm safety practices and education,” said Ms Germano.

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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.