



**ELECTION 2018**

# **DELIVERING FOR AGRICULTURE GROWING COMMUNITIES**



## Media Release

16 November 2018

### Farmers welcome PM's announcement to expand the Pacific Labour Scheme

The Victorian Farmers Federation has welcomed the Prime Minister's announcement to progressively roll out the Pacific Labour Scheme across all Pacific Island Countries. The current cap of 2,000 places under the scheme will be lifted which will help address the significant workforce issues facing the state's farmers.

VFF Horticulture President Emma Germano said expanding the Pacific Labour Scheme would help by providing additional much-needed workers, and complement the currently uncapped Seasonal Worker Programme which is utilised widely in the horticulture sector. However, neither initiative as currently formatted suits all growers.

"Farmers around the country have proposed a solution to the workforce problems many farmers are facing, and that is the dedicated agricultural visa. Despite the welcome announced changes to the current visa arrangements, the Ag Visa remains as our core ask to deliver a solution to labour challenges," said Ms Germano.

Ms Germano highlighted that the VFF values the commitment from the Prime Minister in addressing labour challenges, however there is still a long road ahead to achieving the desired result.

**ENDS**

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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.