

Media Release



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Near record Victorian grain harvest puts pressure on regional roads and rail

The Victorian Farmers Federation (VFF) says more funding is needed to ensure Victoria's crumbling regional road and rail freight infrastructure can cope with future increased freight as this season's bumper grain harvest highlights the network's shortfalls.

VFF Grains Group President Ashley Fraser said a recent ABARES report has forecast this season's harvest to be one of the largest the industry has seen.

"We're expecting the second largest grain harvest in Victoria's history."

"While this is a fantastic result for growers and our regional economy, it will no doubt put immense pressure on our already strained regional road and rail freight networks as it goes from paddock market."

"Regional roads continue to crumble and freight trains crawl to port at a huge cost to industry."

"Our freight rail network is critically under-maintained and urgently needed Murray Basin Rail Project is already two years overdue," Mr Fraser said.

Mr Fraser said investment in rail freight was essential to get trucks off roads and reduce Victoria's future road maintenance and upgrade bill.

"On certain sections of track, trains have been reduced to a maximum speed of 20km per hour. Time is money and many operators have made the decision to transport produce on our roads."

"This is forcing more trucks onto the roads, with the potential for 10,000 B-double trucks of grain using the roads each month."

"We are calling on the Government to do the planning now to ensure this year's budget invests big in regional Victorian freight infrastructure and plans for the future," Mr Fraser said.

Background:

- [ABARES report forecasts](#) Victorian grain production to reach 9.3MMT for the 2021-21 season.

ENDS

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