

Media Release



12 October 2021

Industry groups want urgent vaccine mandate clarification

Leading agriculture advocacy groups including the Victorian Farmers Federation (VFF), AUSVEG VIC, Fruit Growers Victoria, Food & Fibre Gippsland, GrainGrowers, Citrus Australia and Melons Australia are calling on the Victorian Government to urgently clarify the confusion around unfair dismissal, privacy rights and employer and employee obligations ahead of the looming mandatory vaccine deadline.

Whilst recent briefings between industry representatives and Agriculture Victoria have been constructive, there remains crucial missing information on the vaccine mandate.

VFF President Emma Germano said the VFF is clear on its support of measures to ensure the safety and wellbeing of our community, however an alarming sense of confusion within the agriculture industry ahead of the mandatory vaccine deadline is creating huge angst in the community.

“Industry representatives from across Victorian agriculture are calling for clarity, and we need it now.”

“We’re only days away from the vaccine mandate coming into force and many of our basic questions seem to have been placed in the too hard basket.”

“Industry groups have been talking to farmers non-stop since the announcement was made and all of us just want to be able to pass on accurate information and support our growers in a timely manner.”

Questions raised by agricultural industry representatives:

- Will employers be left in the lurch about whether their workers can work?
- Are employers going to be at risk under industrial relations laws?
- How do we avoid breaches of worker’s privacy and who can request this personal information of vaccination status?

“We are also seeking urgent clarity on the types of exorbitant penalties and exactly who can issue them.”

“It’s well known the agriculture industry is currently facing severe labour shortages. Are we staring down the barrel of further reducing our already dwindling workforce?”

“In parts of Victoria harvest is here and this is the busiest time of the year. Our farmers’ job is to help put food on the table and the less workers we have to do this, the harder this becomes.”

“The Victorian Government must publicly release further information and they need to do it immediately” said Ms Germano.

Supported by:

- Paul Gazzola, President, AUSVEG VIC
- Leanne Johansson, Business Development Manager, Fruit Growers Victoria
- Nicola Pero, CEO, Food & Fibre Gippsland

Farrer House 24-28 Collins Street Melbourne 3000

Ph. 1300 882 833 | Fax. 03 9207 5500 | E-mail. vff@vff.org.au | www.vff.org.au

- Brett Hosking, Chair, GrainGrowers
- Nathan Hancock, CEO, Citrus Australia
- Johnathon Davey, Executive Officer, Melons Australia

ENDS

Media Contacts:

Ryan Moloney, VFF, 0400 874 589