

# CCHQ 2022

**STRONG ECONOMY. STRONGER FUTURE.**

12 May 2022

Ms Emma Germano  
President  
Victorian Farmers Federation  
Email: [ceverist@vff.org.au](mailto:ceverist@vff.org.au)

Dear Ms Germano

Thank you for the opportunity to provide the views of the Coalition on important issues facing your members. A response to your questions is attached.

The last two years have been tough for our country.

Despite the setbacks, Australia's economic recovery is leading the world.

Unemployment is at 4%, the equal lowest in 48 years. And the recent Budget included the biggest turnaround in our finances in over 70 years.

There's much more to be done. To build a stronger future, our plan will:

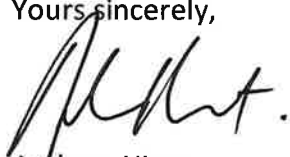
1. Deliver more jobs and working towards unemployment below 4%.
2. Deliver tax relief for workers and small businesses.
3. Invest in roads, rail, water infrastructure and renewable energy technology.
4. Make record investments in health and other essential services.
5. Invest in stronger defence, security and borders.

This election provides a clear choice, with real consequences for Australia.

The alternative at this election is Anthony Albanese and Labor. Labor would weaken our economy and put Australia's recovery at risk. Now is not the time to change course.

Thank you for communicating our response to your members.

Yours sincerely,



Andrew Hirst  
**Federal Director**

## **MORRISON GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO VICTORIA FARMERS FEDERATION**

### **1. What local infrastructure priorities will you support to help benefit farming business/communities in the electorate you are running for?**

The Coalition Government is supporting jobs now and into the future by delivering on its \$120 billion 10-year infrastructure investment pipeline.

The Coalition Government will provide \$3.4 billion from 2021-22 to fund priority road and rail projects in Victoria to support economic recovery and jobs, increasing the Coalition's total commitment to transport infrastructure in Victoria to \$35.5 billion since 2013-14.

Under the Coalition Government's infrastructure investment pipeline, the transportation of agricultural products will be supported with significant investments in freight terminals.

For example, the Government will build on Western Victorian projects including the \$499 million committed to complete the Western Highway duplication between Ballarat and Stawell, the \$208 million committed to upgrade the Warrnambool rail line and upgrades to the Princes Highway.

### **2. How will you (or your party) address the agriculture labour crisis and support farmers in getting the workers they need on-farm?**

The Coalition Government recognises the importance of ensuring that the agriculture sector has access to the workforce it needs to achieve \$100 billion in farm gate value by 2030. Human capital is one of seven themes in *Delivering Ag2030* plan under which we have demonstrated a track record in investing in measures to support Australians and visa holders work in agriculture.

The Coalition Government is delivering the Australian Agriculture Visa (Ag Visa), the biggest structural reform to the agricultural workforce in our nation's history with Vietnam signed on to be the first participating country. Our government is committed to a visa that is demand-driven, is open to skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled workers and provides a pathway for permanent residency.

Our Government will also continue to support the industry attract Australians to work in the sector. Since the 2020–21 Budget, the Coalition Government has invested around \$60 million in agricultural workforce measures. These include measures such as AgCAREERSTART which is piloting a gap year program and AgUP which is focussed on supporting industry solutions to upskill workers' and employers' management practices.

### **3. How will you (or your party) work to safeguard Australia's farm sector from future supply chain disruptions?**

The Coalition Government announced the establishment of the Office of Supply Chain Resilience within the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet in 2021. The office will engage with the agriculture sector and other stakeholders to ensure that our Government is able to identify and manage supply and trade disruptions into the future.

The \$2.5 billion Modern Manufacturing Strategy is helping our manufacturers in six priority areas including food and beverages. The additional \$500 million committed for manufacturing

through the \$2 billion Regional Accelerator Program (RAP) will also provide opportunities for manufacturing in our regions.

Our Government has also committed a further \$200 million to the Supply Chain Resilience Initiative (SCRI) through the RAP. Already through this initiative we have made significant investments including \$14.15 million invested in 12 fertiliser projects and \$11.6 million for nine agricultural chemical projects.

#### **4. How will you (or your party) support farmers to access the telecommunications services needed to grow their businesses?**

The Coalition Government has invested \$1.3 billion in regional telecommunications to assist regional communities and address the recommendations of the 2021 Regional Telecommunications Review.

Building on existing investments, the Coalition is committing a further \$811.8 million under the Connecting Regional Australia initiative, enabling strategic investment in digital infrastructure and skills. It builds on the Coalition Government's successful Mobile Black Spot and Regional Connectivity programs

Our Mobile Black Spot program alone has delivered more than 1,300 mobile base stations and more than 410,000 square kilometres of new mobile coverage. Labor didn't fix a single blackspot or deliver a single mobile base stations when they were last in government.

The Government's Regional Connectivity Program the Government has delivered more than 220 telecommunication infrastructure projects to deliver local place-based solutions improved mobile and data coverage, fixed wireless and satellite broadband upgrades to locations across the country.

Our \$480 million upgrade of NBN Fixed Wireless and Satellite networks will ensure even better broadband services for up to one million Australians in regional, remote and peri-urban Australia.

Businesses in 127 Business Fibre Zones across regional Australia are eligible to access speeds up to 1 gigabit per second. This will significantly uplift the digital capability of small and medium sized businesses.

The Coalition Government has established the Regional Tech Hub in partnership with the National Farmers' Federation to help regional Australians get connected, stay connected, and make the most of new technologies. An additional \$5 million has been invested to extend the Hub.

The Coalition will invest \$30 million for a National Centre for Digital Agriculture and put digital officers in the eight regional Innovation Hubs to work with farmers to assist the uptake of digital technology.

#### **5. How will you (or your party) arm farmers with the information and tools needed to respond to a changing climate and to participate in carbon markets?**

The Coalition Government will act in a practical, responsible way to deliver net zero emissions by 2050. The Government has an economy-wide plan, *Australia's Long Term Emissions Reduction Plan* to deliver net zero emissions by 2050.

The Plan and the Technology Investment Roadmap has five principles that will ensure Australia's shift to a net zero economy will not put industries, regions or jobs at risk and ensure reliable and affordable energy. The principles are: technology not taxes; expand choices not mandates; drive down the cost of a range of new technologies; keep energy prices down with affordable and reliable power; and, be accountable for progress.

Our Government is investing over \$2.2 billion in carbon farming projects through the Emissions Reduction Fund and \$91.6 million through the Agriculture Biodiversity Stewardship Package to pilot a Carbon + Biodiversity methodology, so farmers are rewarded financially for both biodiversity outcomes and carbon abatement.

The Coalition Government is investing \$20.4 million as announced in the 2022-23 Budget to empower Australian farmers to participate in the Emissions Reduction Fund through soil carbon projects. This new funding will support an outreach program, working through existing agricultural service providers and co-operative groups, to address information barriers.

Mainstreaming activities that increase soil carbon will undoubtedly be good for Australian agriculture. Our goal is to increase the number of soil carbon projects from the current 262 to 5,000, covering 500,000 hectares, by 2025.

The Government will allow the proceeds from the sale of Australian Carbon Credit Units (ACCUs) and biodiversity certificates generated from on-farm activities to be treated as primary production income for the purposes of the Farm Management Deposits (FMD) scheme and tax averaging from 1 July 2022.

These changes will encourage more primary producers in regional and remote areas to undertake additional carbon abatement and biodiversity stewardship activities.