

Media Release



4 May 2023

Moorabool farm rates go through the roof

The Victorian Farmers Federation (VFF) has sounded the alarm on the Moorabool Shire Council's Draft Budget for 2023/24 which proposes an average farm rate increase of over 16 per cent.

VFF President Emma Germano said the proposed increase was another blow to farmers by the Council which has been unable to set a flexible rating strategy.

"Disappointingly Moorabool Shire Council has yet again decided to force a greater rate burden onto the shire's agricultural sector with a proposed 16.84 per cent increase to the average farm rate assessment."

"As this is a particularly busy time for farmers in the region with crops being sown, the VFF is concerned that many local farmers will be oblivious to Council's proposed rate hike. They therefore have little ability to be consulted."

"The increase represents significant rates shock for farmers and will hurt business growth and productivity which are ultimately needed to help create local jobs, and to help protect farm businesses into the future. It also represents one of the highest farm rate increases across all Victorian rural and regional councils for the year ahead."

"What's even more concerning is that residential ratepayers will see no change to the average rate assessment under Council's proposed budget. This is a manifestly unfair and inequitable position that Council is choosing to take."

In its submission to the Council's consultation process which closed on Wednesday 4 May, the VFF argued that the rate increase should be distributed more evenly across all classes of ratepayers.

"As the VFF has suggested to Council in previous consultations on its budget and rating strategies, a dynamic rating strategy must be adopted that sees the active use of differential rating powers to counteract the valuation asymmetries between different property classes."

"This system has been successfully employed by other Councils such as Ararat, Mansfield and Pyrenees."

Ms Germano said the VFF had proposed a solution to the Council to ensure a more fair and equitable sharing of the rate burden.

"The VFF has undertaken an analysis of Council's proposed budget and based on our findings we recommend changes that would see farmers, residents and business owners sharing an average 1.5 per cent rate increase. That falls well under the rate cap set at 3.5 per cent for this year."

"The farming community cannot be expected to continue to endure the most from continued rate increases that results in less funds available to farmers to invest in their businesses, to create

economic activity and to provide local jobs. The VFF implores Moorabool Shire Council to take action to mitigate the proposed rating increase.”

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