

Media Release



Victorian
Farmers
Federation

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Government fails to plan for bushfire impact on farmers

The Victorian Farmers Federation (VFF) is concerned the Victorian Government is failing to plan for bushfires on the state's agricultural industries ahead of an [expected dangerous fire season](#).

VFF President Emma Germano said the government's recently released draft bushfire management strategy had failed to take into account the devastation that fires can have on food and fibre production.

"The VFF is deeply disappointed with the draft Bushfire Management Strategy by the Victorian Government. The strategy, which is meant to address the critical issue of bushfire management in our state, has failed to acknowledge the far-reaching destruction of bushfires on our food and fibre production."

"Bushfires are not just a natural disaster; they are an economic catastrophe for our community. The government's draft strategy has largely overlooked the agricultural sector's unique vulnerabilities and challenges. In fact, agriculture is barely mentioned in the document."

"The impact of bushfire lingers long after the flames are extinguished. Devastated farmland can push food prices higher and the mental health burden on farmers cannot be overstated. In this time of increased cost of living and huge mental health burdens on people, we need to do better."

"Failure to understand the consequences of bushfires on farm businesses means fire agencies are less equipped to help protect farmers and their livelihoods, which results in prolonged and costly recovery in the aftermath of a fire."

"After a couple of relatively benign fire seasons we know the next big one is around the corner. The [CFA is already warning of an early start to the bushfire season](#), so it's critical that government is doing everything it can to prepare."

In its submission to the draft strategy, the VFF called on the government to create a dedicated chapter to cover impacts on agriculture with criteria on:

- Data tools, systems and knowledge of the impacts fires have on agriculture and other primary industries and different commodities within agriculture;
- Integrating research and knowledge of intensity of fires on different agricultural production systems into models;
- Improving monitoring, evaluation and reporting of risk reduction and fire management activities on agricultural production.

"The VFF calls upon the Victorian Government to urgently revise the draft Bushfire Management Strategy to include a comprehensive section that acknowledges the specific challenges faced by the agriculture industry."

"Only by acknowledging these challenges can government properly plan for and respond to bushfires and their enormous impact on primary production," Ms Germano said.

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