

Media Release



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Labor's truck tax a blatant cash-grab

The Victorian Farmers Federation (VFF) says Labor's new tax on truck movements at the Port of Melbourne is a blatant cash-grab and is urging the government to re-direct its focus to rail and high-capacity freight to lower its goal to cut emissions.

VFF President Emma Germano said the misguided approach by the government risks costing farmers millions and Victoria's mantle as Australia's largest food and fibre exporter by value.

"If this government was serious about lowering truck emissions, they would have invested wisely in efficient rail access to the Port of Melbourne years ago."

"The fact is now the Port of Melbourne is Australia's busiest container port and most of that comes and goes by trucks. This truck tax is a blanket cash-grab from the government aimed at clawing back their record debt."

"Victoria is Australia's largest food and fibre exporter by value and moves such as this risk hitting farmers' bottom line and in turn reversing our contribution to the local economy."

"There is no justification for a tax on agricultural exports, especially when the funds will be eventually transferred to consolidated revenue. It means farmers will be forced to pay through the nose to prop-up eye-watering spending on infrastructure projects in Melbourne, many of which are massively over-budget," Ms Germano said.

Ms Germano also questioned the constitutional power of the Victorian Government to levy the new tax.

"Under the Constitution, only the Commonwealth can levy customs and excise charges. There is a strong argument that the proposed tax could be classified as either of these forms of tax."

"We have seen the High Court slap down the Victorian Government before when it attempted to bring in a charge on electric vehicles."

Ms Germano urged the government to develop an agricultural freight strategy to help get our produce moving more efficiently to drive productivity and to lower emissions.

"Rather than slapping trucks companies and farmers with a nonsense tax, the government must develop a fit-for-purpose agricultural freight strategy."

"We need a plan and an incentive to move freight onto rail and this can be achieved through greater investment in rail corridors, tracks capable of double-stacking, rail loops and shuttle trains to lower unit transport costs."

"Lowering emissions can also be achieved by providing incentives to shift to High Productivity Freight Vehicles by upgrading our roads and bridges to allow for their movement."

“That strategy must focus on smarter and targeted infrastructure investment, improved supply chain efficiency, better planning, coordination and regulation and better freight location and performance data,” Ms Germano said.

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