

ELECTION 2018

DELIVERING FOR AGRICULTURE GROWING COMMUNITIES



Victorian
Farmers
Federation

Victoria produces **high quality food and fibre**. Our food is produced with **high standards of safety** and with the **lowest taxpayer support in the world** – meaning Australian consumers pay no hidden costs for their food, unlike consumers in most developed countries.

Australia has an **advanced traceability** system in place for the identification of national livestock and according to the Australian Government agriculture has **reduced greenhouse emissions** over the last two decades. In addition, Victorian farmers **value and care for their workers** and operate under some of the **strictest environmental** and **highest animal welfare controls** in the world. Victorian agriculture supports **rural and regional economies**, and as it is overwhelmingly made up of family businesses, it supports **farming families**.

About the Victorian Farmers Federation

The Victorian Farmers Federation (VFF) represents a farming community which creates a profitable, sustainable and socially responsibly agriculture sector connecting with customers.

We have a proud history representing Victoria's farm businesses - primarily family farms that produce the eggs, grain, fruit and vegetables, meat, and milk that help to feed Victoria's six million people, every day.

In 2019 we will celebrate 40 years of service to the sector. Four decades that have demonstrated the resilience and commitment of our members riding through Nature's lows of droughts, bushfires and floods, and the buoyant years when local conditions and global markets align to provide great opportunities.

We strive to create an environment for our members, our farmers, which enables profitable, safe, sustainable production to ensure an enduring social licence in a community that respects and values our sector.

Victorian farmers need ...

Modern infrastructure; healthy and safe workplaces; science-based, practical regulation; and a confident future.

Candidates on notice

The Victorian Farmers Federation is seeking to partner with the incoming State Government to deliver a contemporary funding and policy platform to ensure Victorian agriculture, and our rural and regional communities, remain at the forefront of Australian and international production.

Modern infrastructure

A farm business is like any other. It requires modern infrastructure including energy to operate, roads to receive inputs and deliver farm produce to customers, and reliable telecommunications to liaise with a breadth of people – suppliers, buyers, customers, family and community.

Victorian farmers need...

- A **long-term energy plan** for the State with buy-in from all sectors which recognises the importance of agriculture and better manages demand and supply.
- **Fit-for-purpose roads** (after years of underinvestment) to ensure:
 - The delivery of inputs and farm produce to markets locally and abroad.
 - Local councils have the funds required to build and maintain roads.
- **Reliable telecommunications** including high speed internet and dependable telephone access.
- **Quality rail and accessible ports** to deliver produce to customers.

Healthy and safe workplaces

Worksafe Victoria states that “The farm is one of our most dangerous workplaces”. We value the health and lives of our members and farming families and recognise that many farmers work alone, for long hours, and are often undertaking repetitive actions. We also have an ageing farming population. Support for safety awareness initiatives will ensure the safety of our farmers (across generations), farm workers, farming families and our rural communities.

Victorian farmers need...

- A **campaign and extension program to create greater safety awareness** and encourage farmers to adapt their working habits to reduce their risk of injury, particularly as they get older.
- **Dedicated police officers** to tackle the crime and drug issues in agriculture regions.
- **Trained medical staff** and services in rural and regional areas to deliver critical care needs, including a focus on the importance of vaccination and mental health.
- Continued **investment in biosecurity**, which underpins Victorian agriculture’s global reputation, to protect the state against pest and disease threats.

Science-based, practical regulation

Regulation is important to protect the safety of our communities and citizens. That said, good regulation should be easily understood and accessible, risk-based and proportionate, avoid unnecessary prescriptive requirements, be transparent and consistent, and be fair by not imposing regulatory burden on business that is not justified.

Victorian farmers need...

- Responsible animal care through an **animal welfare plan that is science-based, practical, sustainable** and recognises that farm production animals do not fit into a ‘one size fits all’ approach.
- **Planning laws that are fair, sensible** and developed by people with agriculture production knowledge.
- Investment in land care projects that support productive agriculture land.

A confident future

All businesses need certainty. Business owners need to be confident that the investments they make allow for long-term operations and success. Such an environment is supported by stable government that focuses on core activities and provides a strong framework, and an industry that is well promoted and has a strong social licence.

Victorian farmers need...

- **Training opportunities and industry promotion** to market Victorian produce, foster interest in agriculture as a career of choice, and ensure current and new entrants are well skilled.
- **Emergency preparedness** to ensure impacts on our rural and regional communities is minimised.
- **Local governments focussed on core duties** that deliver for agriculture, including transparent reporting.
- A **fair and equitable rates system**, between city and rural communities, that does not see farmers rated out of existence.

Delivering for agriculture

| Modern infrastructure | Healthy and safe workplaces |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energy: \$155 million to develop a long-term energy plan including upgrades to support energy transmission capacity in regional areas and to upskill electrical contractors to provide advice and service farms. • Roads: \$6.2 billion over five years to fix the State's roads, including \$50 million per annum to assist local councils in maintenance. • Telecommunications: \$600 million to rid regional Victoria of blackspots and ensure farmers and their communities have high speed internet and reliable telephone access. • Rail and ports: \$24.5 million to upgrade the Maroona-Portland rail line and deliver the Port Rail Shuttle project to remove trucks from Melbourne Roads. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farm safety: \$10 million to build farm safety awareness through a 'stay actively farming longer' campaign, appoint VFF farm safety officers and implement a safety equipment grant scheme. • Crime: \$13.5 million to deliver dedicated agriculture liaison officers within the Victorian Police force and implement a drug action plan. • Healthcare: \$18.3 million to reduce travel times to and from critical health care, appoint additional medical workers in rural and regional hospitals, expand VFF's successful 'look over the farm gate' mental health program and increase the awareness and delivery of vaccinations to livestock workers. • Pests and disease: \$104 million to underpin the integration of government systems, ongoing biosecurity work in the Department, the appointment of an Animal Health and Biosecurity Intensive Farming Officer, and enforce egg stamping regulations to underpin traceability. |
| Science-based, practical regulation | A confident future |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Animal welfare: \$20 million to support the development of a sustainable and responsible animal welfare plan and ongoing RD&E. • Planning: \$4.4 million to revisit the fence line exemption policy; examine the costs of invasive pests to biodiversity, human health and agricultural production; implement the Smart Planning initiative for agriculture ensuring the appropriate regulatory tools are used; and support the development of government staff with agriculture knowledge. • Land care: \$807 million to return Landcare and transfer Catchment Management Authorities (CMAs) to the agriculture portfolio, continue the Chicken Care quality assurance program, fund non-riparian Landcare projects on biodiversity and soil and health outcomes, and support CMAs to work with private landholders on nil tenure Private Protected Area (PPA) management programs. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rates: a commitment to implement a fair and equitable rates system which allows regional communities to prosper. • New entrants: \$1.3 million to provide training for new entrants and upskill existing farmers in regulatory compliance and reporting, business skills, risk and financial management. • Promotion: \$16.6 million over four years to promote Victoria's safe and sustainable production and appoint a permanent food and fibre officer to develop educational materials linked to the curriculum. • Emergencies: \$1 million to better ensure emergency preparedness including improving property definitions. • Local Government: \$3 million to ensure local governments focus on statutory and core duties, and provide transparent financial and activity reporting, to demonstrate impact on agriculture and, in turn, deliver business and community confidence. |



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Victorian farmers have proven their resilience and continue to operate and grow in a dynamic global environment.

To continue this growth and to maximise opportunities, Victorian farmers and their rural and regional communities, need an equal operating platform.

We need a guaranteed energy supply, fit-for-purpose roads, reliable telecommunications, an animal care regime that is fair and workable, a rates system that sustains the prosperity of rural communities and support for a safe workplace.

Supporting farmers and their families, supports rural and regional Victoria.

our place in victoria

What we do



- Victoria's **20,775 farms** cover **10.6 million** hectares
- We are **24.2%** of Australian farmers
- **91%** family operated, with only **2%** foreign owned



- We employ **87,800** people mostly in regional areas
- **\$4739** of food consumed each year by every Australian
- As a net exporter we have long term food surity



- Our annual production is **\$13.16 billion**, **3.5%** of Victoria's economy
- **27.8%** of Victoria's exports are agricultural product valued at **\$11.9 billion**



How we do it



- Farmers invest **\$80 million** in R&D



Every R&D **\$1** converts to **\$12** in farmer generated impact



2.7% productivity growth through innovative efficiency gains



Farmers receive less than **1.5%** in government support



63% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions between 1996-2016



Water consumption reduced by **7%** from 2014-2015



Land conservation has increased to **18%** of total land mass.



Farmers spend **\$20,000** annually on feral animals and pest weeds



3.5 million beef cattle



140 million chickens



1.1 million dairy cows producing **6.186 billion** litres of milk



65,992 sows



13.1 million breeding ewes and a fleece clip of **66,100 tonnes**



6.5 million tonnes of grain



\$2.35 billion in horticultural production

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