

Media Release



6 February 2020

Inquiry into animal activism presents a mixed bag

The Victorian Farmers Federation (VFF) has mixed views on the 15 recommendations included in *the Inquiry into the impact of animal rights activism on Victorian agriculture* final report tabled by the Economy and Infrastructure Committee in the Legislative Council on Wednesday night.

VFF President David Jochinke said "The VFF welcomes the recognition that animal activists do have an impact on farmers, their businesses and homes. The VFF endorses committee's recommendation that penalties need to be put in place to provide adequate safeguards for farmers who run legitimate businesses."

"The VFF has been consistent calling for the introduction of \$1000 (or greater) on-the-spot-fine for any individual trespassing on a farm or agricultural enterprise. Further, individuals can be fined up to \$220,000 and corporations up to \$400,000."

Recommendation 1 in the report encourages the government to consider "the need to codify public interest exemptions," the VFF is of the opinion this is a step too far.

"We already have appropriate avenues in place to allow whistle-blowers to report suspicion of animal cruelty, we don't need to create a regulatory environment that could give rise to vigilante behaviour," Mr Jochinke said.

The recommendations that encourage improved public access to regulations, animal practices and guidelines are supported by the VFF.

"The VFF and its membership are already working with the Victorian State Government to provide transparency and education around changing trends in diet in conjunction with modern farming practices. Any new recommendations being imposed on industry need adequate consultation to ensure they are fit for purpose," said Mr Jochinke.

"Victorian primary producers already employ world's best practice. As an industry we always seek to improve farming practices above minimum standards, provide transparency and meet consumer demands."

"We thank the parliament and the committee for their work on this critical issue, and we will work closely with the government over the next 6 months to ensure appropriate penalties are put in place to protect Victorian farmers," Mr Jochinke concluded.

ENDS

Farrer House 24-28 Collins Street Melbourne 3000

Ph. 1300 882 833 | Fax. 03 9207 5500 | E-mail. vff@vff.org.au | www.vff.org.au

Media Contacts:

David Jochinke, VFF President, 0427 834 524

Grady Powell, VFF Stakeholder Policy and Advocacy Manager, 0456 960 243