

Media Release



Tuesday 15 October 2019

Final rating review public forums held in Melbourne

Farmers are being encouraged to attend the last public hearings for the Local Government Rating System Review being held in Melbourne next week to make their voices heard on Victoria's rating strategy.

On Tuesday 22 October the second last hearing will be held at the 1330 Conference Centre in Knox at 6.30pm, while the last public hearing for the Review will be held at the Hotel Windsor in Melbourne on Wednesday 23 October at 6.30pm.

"It is clear to rural ratepayers that Victoria's rating system is broken. Farmers want to contribute to their communities, but they cannot continue to be burdened with such an unfair portion of local government rates," said Mr David Jochinke, VFF President.

"I strongly encourage all farm ratepayers in the district to attend the public forum and share their story about how unfair rates are impacting their businesses and livelihoods.

"There is a lot of work that needs to be done to create a sustainable funding framework for rural councils that addresses the broken rating system and the clear inequities between urban and rural councils.

"Last year, Victorian farmers were shocked to receive sharply increased rates bills, some even experiencing an increase of up to 52%. No other business could be expected to survive under such significant cost increases over such a short time period.

"The rates bill is hitting many farmers especially hard this year as they try to make ends meet after a number of very challenging seasons.

"Many farmers simply cannot afford to pay their exorbitant rates bills. So, in the interest of fairness and equity, we are asking the Government to place a freeze on rural rates while an equitable rating system is designed and implemented.

"Farmers are critical to the Victorian economy and the social fabric of our rural communities. As a State, we cannot afford to rate them out of existence.

"Please take the time to attend your nearest Rating System Review public forum and have your voice heard loudly and clearly," said Mr David Jochinke.

More information about the Local Government Rating System Review and the full list of public hearings can be found on the Government's [Engage Victoria website](#).

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About the VFF

The Victorian Farmers Federation (VFF) is dedicated to representing the interests of farmers and making a positive difference to their businesses and communities. We strive to create an environment for our members, our farmers, that enables profitable, safe, sustainable production to ensure an enduring social licence in a community that respects and values the sector.