

The Secretary  
Economy and Infrastructure Committee  
Parliament House, Spring Street  
EAST MELBOURNE VIC 3002  
Via: [roadtollinquiry@parliament.vic.gov.au](mailto:roadtollinquiry@parliament.vic.gov.au)

31/01/2020

Dear Secretary,

**Re: Inquiry into the Increase in Victoria's Road Toll**

On behalf on the Victorian Farmers Federation (VFF), I would like to thank you for the opportunity to participate in the Inquiry into the Increase in Victoria's Road Toll.

Regional Victorians continue to be disproportionately represented amongst the Victorian road toll. Whilst only 24% of the Victorian population lives outside the metropolitan area, in 2019, rural road deaths represented more than 50% of all Victorian road fatalities and increased 37% in the last year.

Recognising the need for urgent action, the VFF therefore strongly supports efforts to address this critical issue, and makes the following recommendations for future government responses:

**1) The State Government significantly increase funding for both arterial and local road maintenance.**

The VFF strongly urges the State government to significantly increase funding for both arterial and local road maintenance to address the deteriorating state of Victoria's regional roads network.

As noted in the Victorian Auditor General's Office in 2017, "the increasing proportion of the state road network in very poor condition presents a growing risk to public safety and increases road user costs".

Local roads have similarly deteriorated with many regional shires struggling to maintain their vast road networks.

Safer roads can reduce the most common crash types and the severity of injuries if there is an accident, but road managers are resorting to localised speed reductions as a 'band-aid' solution for poor pavements as a result of limited funding.

It is therefore critical the State Government provides increased funding for both arterial and local roads to reduce the road toll.



**THE TIME  
TO THRIVE  
IS NOW**

## **2) Future road safety strategies do not adopt blanket speed reductions**

The VFF strongly opposes the implementation of blanket speed reductions in regional roads.

Speed reductions fail to address the complex interaction of risk factors on our road. Furthermore, such a policy would have a detrimental impact on the rural communities who rely on the road networks, adding significant additional time and cost for rural drivers.

## **2) Increased education is provided to general road users' on driving in regional and rural areas.**

The VFF strongly supports increased education to improve general road users' understanding of driving safely in regional Victoria especially around agricultural machinery and livestock.

Driving in regional Victoria can present many unfamiliar conditions for metropolitan drivers. For example, although posing little safety risk, the size and slower speed of agricultural machinery can often be confusing for members of the general public unfamiliar with regional roads or agricultural equipment.

In response to this issue, the VFF, in conjunction with the National Farmers Federation and other state farming organisations developed the 'Common Roads, Common Sense' campaign which we would urge State government to promote.

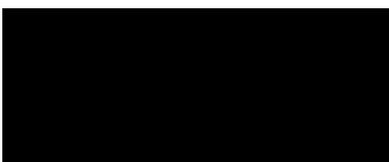
Similarly, VFF would also encourage VicRoads to incorporate information on safely sharing the road with agricultural machinery and livestock within the written component of drivers licences tests.

## **3) The development of a detailed nationally consistent classification and data system for regional road crashes.**

The VFF strongly supports the development of a detailed harmonised classification for regional road crashes. Detailed accurate data on crashes is critical to understanding the causes of crashes and assist with the development effective countermeasures. Currently much of the data captures is vague, and does not provide an accurate assessment of the causes of accidents.

Please do not hesitate to contact me on 03 9207 5503 if you would like to discuss this matter further.

Yours sincerely,



David Jochinke,  
**President, Victorian Farmers Federation**