



Rural and Regional Committee  
INQUIRY INTO FARM SECTOR CAPACITY  
 Media Alert: 1 June 2012

## AGRICULTURE: A GREAT CAREER CHOICE

A State Parliamentary Inquiry into the Capacity of the Farming Sector to Attract and Retain Young Farmers has found that agriculture in Victoria is well placed to offer rewarding careers to young people.

The Report from the Victorian Parliament’s Rural and Regional Committee found that for every agricultural science graduate there are currently eight or nine jobs available, as well as vacancies for workers across the sector.

Paul Weller MP, Member for Rodney and Chairman of the Committee, said that this is despite the fact that the nature of modern farming makes it particularly attractive to young people.

“The successful farmers the Committee heard from – most of them young farmers – are all defined by their impressive scientific knowledge and reliance on modern technology. The increasingly rapid evolution of modern farming is opening up many new and exciting opportunities for young people.

“The rewards are there if you’re keen and you work hard. We have seen this first hand countless times during our Inquiry when talking to young farmers,” Mr Weller added.

The Committee found that both family-owned properties and corporate farms can provide satisfying long-term careers for young people, including great salary packages and the chance to be responsible for large budgets and sophisticated machinery.

Mr Weller added: “The Committee heard many ideas about the best way to attract young people back to agriculture. First and foremost is to do away with the negative image of farming that young rural people often have.

“It is up to all Victorians to dispel this inaccurate negative image. Young rural Victorians will only return to the farming sector when we tell them about its bright future. The Committee firmly believes this is possible, with industry, government and communities working together, and has made several recommendations in our Report to achieve this.”

Paul Weller will be available to talk in detail about his Committee’s new Report at a specially convened **media conference**, when the report is tabled in the Victorian Parliament on Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> June at 11 am.

Two key contributors to the Inquiry will also be present for interviews and to take media questions:

- Mikaela Baker, a Year 12 student at Mansfield Secondary College
- Alister Knight, a 4<sup>th</sup> year agscience Melbourne University student and farmer from Bagshot, near Bendigo.



“I have always loved the idea of farming. There is a whole process in breeding which is really interesting and I would like to go to university and study agricultural science or whole farm planning, because there are so many different aspects of farms.” Mikaela Baker



“The first big step is to get that conversation about succession planning started, otherwise it is the big elephant in the room. There are a lot of benefits in that changeover and exchanging of knowledge between the older generation and the new generation coming through.” Alister Knight

**Media conference, Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> June at 11 am, at Parliament House (LCCR).**

Copies of the new report, including recommendations, will be available for media representatives.

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