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A FUTURE FOR FARMING IN THE BALLARAT REGION

Paul Weller MP, Member for Rodney, believes that now is the time to ensure the long-term viability of the farming sector in western Victoria.

“Our farming sector is now facing a crisis because of a shortage of workers,” Mr Weller said.

A new Inquiry by the cross-party Rural and Regional Committee, which Mr Weller Chairs, will investigate the capacity of the farming sector to attract and retain young people.

“We all depend on our farming sector in Victoria to supply us with the fresh produce we value and take for granted,” said Mr Weller. “Yet, the industry which produces so much quality food and fibre products for both global and local markets is itself in need of urgent attention.”

The Committee invites all interested members of the community to attend its Public Hearing in Ballarat at the Ballarat Council Chamber, Level 1, Town Hall, Sturt Street, Ballarat from 9.00am on Wednesday 24 August. “We are hoping to hear practical solutions and ideas about how we solve our workforce issues,” said Mr Weller.

“The Committee will hear from a range of practitioners and experts in the sector who can provide advice and information on the Inquiry Terms of Reference.”

Mr Weller said that farming communities and the agriculture, aquaculture and forestry industries in Victoria are a vibrant and essential part of our economy and culture, and we need to ensure that agriculture in Victoria thrives so that all Victorians can benefit.

The Committee will look into:

- attracting and retaining young people;
- career pathways for young people, recruitment strategies and opportunities;
- responding to an ageing workforce;
- models of farm business ownership;
- skills development, community capacity and farm family health; and
- the Victorian economy and government policy.

To view the public hearing timetable and the Terms of Reference visit www.parliament.vic.gov.au/rrc or phone the Secretariat on 03 8682 2884.

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