

22 January 2024

Dr Wendy Craik AM  
RIC Act Review  
Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry  
Agriculture House  
CANBERRA ACT 2601



Dear Dr Craik,

**RE: Submission on the Review of the Operation of the Regional Investment Corporation Act 2018**

The Victorian Farmers Federation (VFF) appreciates the opportunity to provide this submission to the Review of the Operations of the Regional Investment Corporation Act 2018.

The VFF strongly supports the continuation of the Regional Investment Corporation's (RIC) activities after 30 June 2026. Concessional loans are a vital element of Australia's drought policy, and they will continue to play a key role in ensuring the long-term resilience of Australia's agricultural sector. Concessional loans encourage greater and earlier investment by farmers to help recover from drought and be better prepared for future droughts.

While the current products offered by the RIC are very valuable, the VFF supports the recommendation made by the National Farmers Federation to enable the RIC to have greater power to adjust eligibility criteria and ensure flexibility in setting terms and conditions. In particular, the VFF agrees that the current maximum loan amount of \$2 million is insufficient. Increasing the maximum loan possible to \$5 million would increase flexibility and enable larger projects to be funded.

The VFF also agrees with the NFF recommendation that the RIC explore longer-term loan options and loans with a combination of fixed and variable interest rates. The VFF considers that the more flexibility available in the products offered by the RIC, the better they can be tailor to the individual needs of each farmer.

Overall, the VFF considers that the RIC has served the interests of famers well. However, this review provides the opportunity to increase the flexibility of the products offered by the RIC ensuring that it continues to support the farming sector into the future.

The VFF thanks you for the opportunity to provide input to the Review of the Operation of the Regional Investment Corporation Act 2018. The policy contact for this matter is Glen Hepburn, Senior Advisor, Economic and Rural Affairs, via e-mail [REDACTED].

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Emma Germano". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

**Emma Germano**  
President  
Victorian Farmers Federation