

Media Release

The Hon Daniel Andrews MP
Premier



Friday, 20 July, 2018

PUTTING FARMERS' HEALTH ON THE AGENDA

Our state's hardworking farmers – the backbone of rural communities across Victoria – will be able to keep relying on vital care from the National Centre for Farmer Health, under a re-elected Andrews Labor Government.

Providing an extra \$4 million over four years, Labor will make sure this lifesaving Centre can continue to offer dedicated healthcare services to farmers, their families and their communities.

Based in Hamilton, the Centre is a national leader in health, wellbeing and safety, providing health assessments – including cholesterol, blood pressure and eyesight testing – to our most isolated communities.

We know that farmers are less likely to visit their GP, and as a result are more likely to face complications with injury and illness. Farmers also continue to suffer from depression and anxiety at higher rates, with suicide a heartbreaking and all too common occurrence in many rural communities.

By providing on-the-ground and immediate support in partnership with the health sector and organisations like the Victorian Farmers Federation (VFF), the Centre and its staff play an integral role in making sure our farmers are looking after themselves.

Funding from a re-elected Labor Government will allow the Centre to continue this work, including its research, occupational health and safety, and training for health and agricultural professionals.

Originally established in 2008, the National Centre for Farmer Health was on the verge of closure after their funding was cut by the previous Liberal National Government, despite community outrage and pressure from the VFF.

Because of the Coalition's cuts, the Centre was forced to reduce its staff by 75 per cent, leaving just three full time positions and many of the Centre's services in limbo.

In contrast, this Labor Government restored the Centre's funding, investing \$4 million over four years in its very first Budget.

A re-elected Labor Government will make sure the Centre continues its all-important work, supporting farmers, their families and their communities.

Quotes attributable to Premier Daniel Andrews

"Sometimes our farmers look after everything but themselves. This Centre makes the health of those hardworking men and women its number one priority."

"With this extra funding, we'll make sure the Centre continues to support Victorians in the most rural and remote communities. Because that's what Labor does."

Quotes attributable to Minister for Agriculture Jaala Pulford

"From grassroots outreach to the most technical research, the National Centre for Farmer Health changes and saves lives."

"It's hard to imagine a more important service – and yet somehow the Liberal Nationals saw fit to cut the Centre's funding. Under a re-elected Labor Government, we'll give it the ongoing funding it needs to support rural communities."

Media contact: Chris Piper 0458 715 135 | chris.piper@minstaff.vic.gov.au