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TOPIC: Strategic Plan 2025 funding support from Victorian Government

The Victorian Government today announced \$25,000 funding support for the VCMC to compile a Strategic Plan for the next 10 year timeframe to 2025. The President of the VCMC Alan Wilson today thanked the government for its support, and on-going dialogue.

The VCMC expects that the Plan will detail the infrastructure, planning, and investment required to make Victoria a cost competitive State for chicken meat production.

Mr Wilson said that chicken meat consumption in Australia continues to increase (43.5 kg per person), and is far above that of other meats.

ABARES¹ singles out the competitive pricing of chicken meat as the main factor, noting that over the five years to 2012-13, chicken was on average 21 per cent cheaper than pork, 22 per cent cheaper than beef, and 45 per cent cheaper than lamb.

"ABARES predicts that chicken meat will maintain its number one position as the most consumed meat in the country", Mr Wilson said, "and notes that the price differential reflects strong productivity growth achieved in the Australian chicken meat industry over successive decades".

Preliminary research work on the Strategic Plan indicates that production demand in Victoria could increase by 32% over the 10 years to 2025, requiring an additional 42 million chickens to be grown and processed.

Mr Wilson said that this would require an investment by the industry of around \$840m in new and expanded farms in Victoria, if the State were to play a role in the growth of the sector.

"The industry has already invested \$200+m over the past 5 years to expand production capacity; creating employment in construction, farming, processing, transport, and value added production," he said.

The State's population is forecast to increase by 1 million people over the next 10 years, and the Federal and Victorian Governments are also pursuing export potential into South East Asia.

The industry seeks a partnership approach with State and Local Governments, so that Victoria does not lose this investment, development, and employment to the other States. *"Currently Victoria is not a cost competitive location",* he said.

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¹ ABARES, March 2014, Agricultural commodities, March quarter 2014, pp. 101-104; available online at http://data.daff.gov.au/data/warehouse/agcomd9abcc004/agcomd9abcc004201403/AgCommodities2014.No1_Ver1.0.0.pdf