



Councils Voice Concern over Closure of Bega Factory in Strathmerton

Tuesday, 13 May 2025

The Murray River Group of Councils today voiced serious concern and disappointment following the announcement of the impending closure of the Bega cheese factory in Strathmerton — a major regional employer and long-standing contributor to the northern Victorian economy.

The closure is expected to result in the loss of up to 300 jobs, dealing a significant blow to the local workforce and communities across northern Victoria.

Chair of the Murray River Group of Councils, Cr. Dan Straub, said the announcement is not only devastating for Strathmerton but also highlights the broader economic pressures facing dairy manufacturers in the region.

"This is a heartbreaking announcement for 300 workers, their families, and the wider community," said Cr. Straub. "It's also a clear signal that our food manufacturing industry on which our region relies, is under increasing strain — from rising input costs to workforce challenges and from uncertainty driven by the Murray-Darling Basin Plan."

The Group has pointed to the cumulative impact of Commonwealth water recovery programs in Victoria's irrigation districts, which has created uncertainty and undermined confidence.

"While the closure of this facility is the result of multiple complex factors, the uncertainty created by water buybacks is undoubtedly affecting business and investor confidence across the region," Cr. Straub said.

"Agricultural producers and food manufacturers need long-term policy stability to plan and invest, and right now, that confidence is being undermined."

"Our region produces world-class food and fibre, and we have the capacity to support strong, sustainable manufacturing industries. What we need now is coordinated support, clear policy direction, and meaningful investment to help restore confidence and secure that future," Cr. Straub added.

The Murray River Group of Councils is calling for urgent support from both the Victorian and Federal Governments to assist affected workers and help bolster confidence for the food manufacturing industry.

"We need all levels of government to act — not only to support the 300 people who will lose their jobs, but also to address the structural issues threatening the future of agriculture and food manufacturing in this region."

The Group will be supporting member Council Moira Shire as it works to ensure that there is a coordinated and collaborative approach with Bega to support affected workers and seeks co-ordinated assistance from the State and Commonwealth to attract new investment to generate economic opportunities, create jobs and secure the long-term future of our towns and regional communities.

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