

Agricultural Competitiveness Green Paper Submission

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Name of Organisation/Individual

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What are the top policies from the Green Paper that the Government should focus on in the White Paper and why?

my concern is the proposal to build more dams -see question 2 comment

What policies from the Green Paper don't you support and why?

Regarding Chapter 9 Water and Natural Resource Management - I do not support more on stream dams being built. Dams have had a destructive effect on many freshwater fisheries. In any case there are so many large and small dams everywhere in Victoria, what would be the point of having more - for example, the only river left in the northern half of Victoria without a dam on its main stem is the Ovens River, and even then 2 of its tributaries (the King and Buffalo rivers) already have large damsand the water releases from these rivers are used further downstream including for irrigation in the Murray system. Table 4 in this chapter mentions the Mitchell River (in Gippsland) as a possible dam site - the Mitchell is one of the only large systems left in southern Victoria without an onstream dam and for posterity these undammed rivers need to remain undammed - water is already extracted from the Mitchell system (on the Lindenow flats) for irrigation and also for town use. If more water is critical to obtain, then modest volumes should be extracted/pumped and stored in off stream storages, not from an onstream dam. Large dams have usually been sited in deeper valleys often in hill/mountain country - these huge valleys have been submerged and drowned/lost forever. Our descendents need to be able to see rivers and their valleys as they have always been, not degraded or lost. Regarding northern Australia (where I worked on plantations and fished when I was young), there is an opportunity here to conserve relatively freeflowing large rivers - again, if some water extraction is essential, then modest volumes should be used/stored including in offstream storages. Australia needs to live within its means when it comes to water consumption (especially for irrigation) and not submerge the last valleys left.

Regarding Chapter 8 Drought. More dams don't drought proof places - during the recent 10 year drought in Victoria from about 2000 to 2010, even though Victoria has large and small dams on rivers/streams just about everywhere , the dams and weirs went dry or almost empty throughout the state. I am 60 years of age and remember the 1967/68 and 1982/83 droughts - though intense, these droughts were shorter than the long 2000 -10 drought. Global warming must be addressed, so rainfall is not further reducedand the use of our water should be modest and efficient.

General Comment

see ques 2