

Agricultural Competitiveness Green Paper Submission

Date submitted

23/11/2014

Name of Organisation/Individual

Peter Grocke

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

From a farmer perspective of practical impediments to investment, profitability and competitive ability the key aspects i believe revolve around;

1/ Land use- planning and best farm practice impediments for specific primary production systems adjoining land use changes critical to understand and facilitate co existence .

2/ Weed and crop hygiene relationship to herbicides and restrictions placed with non compatible new development .Sensitive crops such as Viticulture or Horticulture without bufferage on the developers side of the fence place huge problems for pre-existing especially broad acre farm land. These problems relate to compliance with Federal label compliance plus state over placed restrictions for essential chemical groups.

3/Legislative process's such as world heritage or protection measures that do not consider business costs & damage from tightening of building codes or normal farm investment -so even local competitive ability for farms are reduced at three levels due to complex interpretation of planning matters which may be over governed by over zealous individuals or groups .

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

One major aspect which has been identified is mining /farming interface and the issues relating to water and need to recognize long term damage to aquifers either local or major systems.

The need for protection of asset values for farmers and farm land as described on page 15 relate not only to mining but other planning and investment which are a combination of federal,state and local government strategies.

The statement "Finally and crucially, the value of the purchase should not be eroded by the actions of government or other third parties without due compensation."

The clear example that the systems have failed is the need for the SA VALUER GENERAL's office - policy release Nov. 2013 "valuation of farm land adjoining sensitive land uses directive."

This was the result from my opinion of a sustained over investment strategy of MIS into various primary industries such as grapes, timber etc which had little regard for pre existing farm land use and their needs!This was from my view point a combination of federal, state and local govt.cashing in on investment with little care for side damage to farm management systems -liability and on going profitability or sustainability for those adjoining these investments.

There must be a total understanding of weed and pest management /chemical rotation requirements as fundamental matters for farm systems without this there are no farms of any worth for future food production in any realistic sense.

So we have the APVMA and other state bodies regulating and reviewing chemicals but truly not fully understanding key elements which should be in their charter -'ECONOMIC COMPETITIVE IMPACTS' , which should sit along side to the environment,human health and international trade other base factors for equal consideration for any process. This competitive analysis should be not only on a regional but state ,nation and international basis.Cost benefit analysis should be heavily weighted to understand competitive outcomes in all aspects.

It has been disturbing that many issues which evolve from poor policy have no easy or sensible way for farmers to obtain fair and reasonable compensation without often complex court proceedings. Farmers commonly do not have time nor resources for court facilitation and if their property has been devalued from government process's this places great stress and strain on their mental and social well being as well.

There needs recognition for the issue that land devaluation creates a multitude of serious matters such as equity for banking systems so loans could be called and resale opportunities lessened or made difficult. Succession planning becomes also potentially interrupted and the next generation to take on that family business could be disillusioned to the point that this no longer is an option.

General Comment

Broad acre farmers in the Barossa Valley have for many years been fighting for better agricultural planning , adjoining land use and bufferage so their competitive ability to remain profitable,viable and be worthy of a succession system for our farms.This has been frustrating and at times to the point of resignation that there are broad acre farm business's that are totally disposable for what others would see as the greater good for investment strategies for a region.

The matter of the documents that could be provided to your committee are substantial to prove the SA Farmers Federation ,Livestock SA plus now GPSA (GRAIN PRODUCERS OF SA) plus groups such as the SA Crop Science Society have had issues in the system for over a decade . We have had petitions tabled in parliament and some have been before the select committee into SA SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE review last year.

I would invite the committee to travel to SA hear a verbal submission some could be in confidence as there are matters which would overlap from federal to state to local government.

Many of us farmers believe that especially state and local govt. planners commonly lack in basic agricultural knowledge and skills so have not been able to make good decisions or create good policy that fosters and preserves competitive ability.

For some councils to have potentially seriously restrictive regulations so the ability to even put up farm sheds (eg hay sheds)in logical locations to be denied or made very difficult -this basically destroys the farm business base for those entrapped in these locations and the competitive ability is lost if shedding costs 30% extra so is anti competitive.

I have appeared on ABC Land line and also on ABC SA 7.30 report to discuss some of these matters.