



13 January 2014

**Submission to
The Task Force for the Australian Government's Agricultural Competitiveness White Paper**

The **Glenelg Hopkins Catchment Management Authority Board** has considered the Terms of Reference (ToR) for this White Paper and considers the ToR are deficient in relation to the important interactions and interdependencies between ecological sustainable natural resource management and sustainable productive agriculture.

The following points and comments are submitted in support of this view for your consideration:

1. The ToR do not seem to explicitly address the issues and challenges of considering and recognising the importance of the interactions (+ve and –ve) and interdependencies between sustainable productive agriculture and important land (soil), water and biodiversity natural resources;
2. If as stated, *“an important role for Government is to set stable, long term policies to improve productivity and growth”* (for the agriculture sector), then surely this White Paper process must be more holistic and recognise the essential and important interdependencies and interactions (+ve or –ve) with the nation's land (soil), water and biodiversity assets, many of which are non-renewable and at risk of irretrievable or very difficult and costly rehabilitation if adversely impacted by agriculture;
3. Maintaining and improving soil health and addressing and preventing man induced soil salinity, soil acidification and soil erosion (loss) is essential for long term sustainable productive agriculture;
4. The nation should use state of the art land capability information in planning for and maintaining sustainable agriculture, protecting high quality land (soils) to minimise losses from other non-agricultural land uses such as urban development and industrial development;
5. Land and natural resources stewardship and a duty of care to leave land and natural resources in an improved condition for future generations must be a fundamental principle and objective inextricably linked with long term sustainable productive agriculture;
6. The effects and challenges with climate variability / change must be considered if this White Paper process is serious about *“stable long term policies for sustainability of agriculture”*. Perhaps the following might be considered somewhat simplistic, but with climate variability / change contributing to increasing temperatures, changing and / or reducing rainfalls in some areas, increased frequency of extreme weather events such as storms, then the importance of tree shade and shelter, healthy waterways and sustainable water resources (surface and groundwater), soil and catchment health all become even more critical if agriculture is to be sustained and improved and grow in the long term.

Glenelg Hopkins



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Protecting our future - Naturally

Even if it is considered too late to amend or add to the ToR, we respectfully recommend that the Task Force recognise the points and comments above and take a more holistic view when considering information and submissions as part of preparing the eventual White Paper.

Yours sincerely
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