

Victorian Climate Change Summit Discussion Paper  
Environmental Farmers Network Submission  
4/8/2008

The Environmental Farmers Network was formed in 2005 to give voice to a growing number of farmers dedicated to the environmental health of rural regions whose views were not being represented by traditional farmer organizations.

We consider the following issues are critical to both adapting to and acting to minimize global warming and climate change in rural Victoria.

**Emission Targets**

\*We consider any 2050 target lower than 90% of 1990 emissions would be unlikely to restrict temperature increases below 2 degrees.

\* Interim targets 2020 & 2035 should be set.

\* An emission trading scheme that clearly identifies the full cost impacts of continued reliance on fossil fuel and indicates to governments of the world our commitment to global obligations.

**Transport**

\*Rural Public transport infrastructure upgrades.

\* Increased rail services to Melbourne for country communities.

\* Rural Rail service Hubs to encourage travelers without a direct service.

\*Outer Melbourne service hubs to provide more flexibility for country travelers by taking advantage of the suburban network and reducing city traffic and parking problems.

**Regional Development.**

\* Development should into account the availability of natural resources (water & land) and infrastructure in regions.

\* Regulations allowing the peri-urban sprawl of Melbourne and majors urban country cities fail to take into account of long term effects on the environment, greenhouse gas emissions and the demand for future services and infrastructure.

\*Planning regulations and the “tree change’ movement requires urgent review to protect the remaining native vegetation and bio-diversity on private land in the State.

\* The continued growth in the numbers of Stock and Domestic dams reduce inflows to rivers and streams and seriously affect the States water storage capabilities.

### **Regional Institutions**

- \*The impact of climate change will vary between Victorian regions.
- \*Any institutional arrangements established to address mitigation and adaptation should be based on the regional model currently used for catchment management.
- \* Roles and responsibilities might change but it will be important to have regional ownership and build regional capacity

### **Water Resources and Bio-Diversity**

- \* Water quantity and quality should be protected by improved management of the public land frontages of our rivers and streams.
- \* Need for environmental flows that achieve a sustainable balance between river health and commercial use of the resource.

### **Sustainable Agricultural Systems**

- \*Research support for alternative farming systems less affected from the effects of climate change and increasing input costs.
- \*The measurement and enhancement of carbon retained in soils under differing management systems is in need of further research.
- \*Market based instruments should be established so that the production of ecosystem services on farming land is recognized

### **Energy Sources**

- \* Support for local renewable electricity production projects.
- \* Tariffs designed to reduce peak electricity loads on the system.
- \*Increased payment levels for the feed-back of privately generated electricity into the grid.

There are obvious links between actions required for climate change and other actions emanating from Sustainable water strategies, Bio-diversity White Paper process and other State reviews and strategies.

Risks of strategy development in isolation should be managed.

We strongly believe the outcomes of these important Government and the community actions should integrate into an overall strategy.

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