

Land & Biodiversity – White Paper

Comments

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General Comments

I welcome the comment by the Minister in the Foreword and reference to a green and productive state and to the importance of landcare .

There is expectation that this white paper will provide a valuable guide for future action and investment.

This opportunity will be strengthened :

- if there is strong industry / community & Government ownership
- it is visionary & facilitates change.
- It is underpinned by good science .

We should be very mindful that ' tomorrow is not business as usual' and if we do have to factor in climate change then there will be an added challenge to make the right decisions . A cautious or ' insurance' policy approach is advised.

On the negative side I have a room full of strategies many unread , some out of date & many continue to re- invent .

However we should note the value & impact of the Kefford – 2020 vision on Victorian landscape paper - & the opportunity to stimulate & re- generate an investment path for Victoria with this white paper.

Victoria leads Australia in agricultural productivity and we must continue to increase production . To do this sustainably will be the challenge and if achieved, more investment will be attracted to Victoria .

The landscape will be a mix of diverse investment & integrated NRM management :

- including very intensive production- large feedlot dairies ,intensive horticulture , GM crops
- low production land with a focus on environmental outcomes & lifestyle
- providing ecoservices
- competition with expanding urbanism & affluent lifestyles

Land management policy will need to accommodate

- conflicts of production activities
- with social & environmental ideals
- & diminishing natural resources.

Multi-use outcomes of public & private land will be inevitable and identification of quality biodiversity & priority outcomes in a landscape approach, a key policy shift.

A net gain policy will become an unachievable dream.

In landcare a balance of production and management of resources is an important player using market action through people ownership. The model has evolved as a successful model nationally because it is built on some very important and yet basic principles – (the Victorian Salinity Program also used the principles of partnership & community ownership with minimum institutional arrangements)

The rest of the world is becoming very aware of the landcare model & Victoria should not lose sight of this opportunity

The regional model must play an important role in delivery of actions

The regional model must reflect :

- community ownership – industry & NRM bodies working together
- stronger agency & institutional partnership
- the best available NRM data & information
- minimum regulation
- streamlined delivery will less complexity
- regional flexibility
- under pinned by State & National principles

Additional Matters

- The evaluation of the Victorian Biodiversity Strategy (VBS) will be useful reading for & probably stimulate a very new approach to BD management.
- A bio-security approach to the protection of assets will shape future pest management embracing national guidelines .
- soil health & fertility will sustain increasing production .” remember there is no marginal land only marginal land managers “

Questions

1. BD values - quality natural BD will become more threatened in the landscape. Changing BD in a modified landscape will be part of the adaptation .
2. CC impacts – need to be understood for land management & production – note East Gippsland will have increased rainfall & a predicted 9.5% increase in river flows by 2030. There are opportunities
3. Threats - changing pest regimes , social changes - more pressures on productive land . Increase in corporate & off shore ownership of land
4. roles of community & stakeholders – key players – ownership at local & regional of issues a key principle

5. Government role – provide knowledge & information. Must be very accessible – need a lot of change in delivery processes – the community face all too often a world of acronyms, complex institutions & paper & regulatory barriers
6. current institutional – the regional & catchment framework using the people & community is the way forward. .Keogh got it right