



Victorian Farmers Federation

United Dairyfarmers of Victoria

District Council 2 and 3 Regional Update



Over the past two weeks, your dairy and water leaders from DC 2 and 3 have been involved in the following activities:

Federal Water Plan:

The VFF was surprised and disappointed by the National Party's decision to support the plan.

The VFF forwarded Malcolm Turnbull six pages of concerns and his response has not provided much comfort. The VFF does not support a full referral of State Government powers as this will result in State Government's not being able to pass any water legislation. Minister Turnbull assures us that water security will be maintained but he hasn't explained how. The VFF has requested that the same funding formula be used as the Living Murray Agreement and that Victoria should receive 43%. Richard Anderson remains in regular contact with Minister Turnbull and the VFF has again written to Minister Turnbull requesting clarification on over 20 outstanding issues. We await his response.

Water Principles:

We noted in our previous column that we have developed 3 key principles regarding our irrigation system. These include improved service, cheaper water and a more competitive region.

Farmers expect that an improved service will result in water on demand, improved service height when water is delivered, increased volumes of water onto farm and that G-MW establish a performance indicator based on improving the agricultural output of the region. Also, reconfiguration must be applied equitably so as not to disadvantage or shift costs onto farmers.

We will update you on our other principles in future columns.

Meeting with Minister Thwaites:

Richard Anderson and Simon Ramsay met with Minister Thwaites regarding supply levels in channels. The VFF argued that G-MW cannot drop supply levels which disadvantages farmers and decreases their on-farm water efficiency.

Minister Thwaites acknowledged our concerns and instructed DSE to work with the VFF and G-MW to resolve the issue.

Meeting with National Farmers Federation:

Richard Anderson and Doug Chant attended the NFF Technical Working Group to discuss the Federal Water Plan. Richard and Doug then later attended the NFF Water Taskforce to develop policy positions based on the information gathered at the working group meeting.

Meeting with David Downie – DSE General Manager, Water:

Richard Anderson and Geoff Akers met with David Downie to discuss outstanding concerns with the Federal Water Plan.

Meeting with Foodbowl Group:

Geoff Akers and Ian Cobbledick attended this meeting. The VFF continues to monitor this issue as the group develops a feasibility study to upgrade irrigation infrastructure across the region.

Murray Dairy Drought Recovery Strategy:

Murray Dairy launched its "Growing the Murray Dairy Region" drought recovery strategy last week. A full report can be found at www.murraydairy.com.au.

EC Support for Non-Australian Residents:

DC 2 and 3 have arranged for Commonwealth Department staff to discuss EC support issues for Non-Australian Residents. Meeting will be held May 9th, 11am – 2pm at the Numurkah Football Club.

We will continue to keep you informed of our lobbying activities with regular inserts in Country News. If you want further information please contact your branch or district council representatives.