



## District Council 2 and 3 Regional Update



### Meeting with Water Minister:

Richard Anderson, Geoff Akers and other members of the VFF Water Council met with Minister Holding to discuss a number of water issues. Items discussed included the Federal Water Plan. The Victorian Government remains firm that it will not change its position and refer all its power to the Commonwealth and noted other states now seemed less enthusiastic about a full referral of powers.

The Council discussed the Foodbowl Modernisation Project and the need for pre-existing projects to be linked with the Foodbowl project. They noted the importance of Government clearly articulating where the \$100million farmers are contributing is actually coming from and discussed the structure of G-MW and the new entity.

The Government's position on dams was discussed and the possibility of new dams in Gippsland and Big Buffalo. While the Minister said he would discuss the idea, there was no indication that Government would change their policy on new dams.

Groundwater was also discussed and the need to make announcements regarding increases in groundwater allocations as soon as possible.

### Federal Labor Water Policies:

With a new Federal ALP Government we thought it was important to outline the policies relating to water that the ALP have advocated. Some key reforms include:

- Develop a national water plan that includes rural and urban water;
- Greater urban water recycling;
- Spend up to \$400m from the National Plan for Water Security (NPWS) to improve water efficiencies in the Menindee Lakes.
- Bring the Murray Darling Basin Authority and the Murray Darling Basin Commission together in a single body;
- Bring forward \$400million in funding under the NPWS to buy water from willing sellers;
- Reduce barriers to interstate water trade;
- Bring forward \$400million in the NPWS to modernize irrigation infrastructure in the Murray Darling Basin;
- Urgently return 500GL to the Murray River and 1500GL over the next decade.

The return of 1500GL to the Murray River will obviously impact on agricultural industries and this reform will need direct consultation with farmers to highlight its impacts.

For a full copy of the ALP's water proposal visit [www.udvnorth.org.au](http://www.udvnorth.org.au)

### Groundwater Issues:

Richard Anderson as the VFF representative on G-MW's Groundwater Regional Council discussed a number of groundwater issues at their meeting last week. Items covered included the deferment of unbundling groundwater until 2009, a request for further information from G-MW on how they structure groundwater fees and an exploration of whether carryover of groundwater should be considered.

### Farm Feed Walks:

A number of DC members were involved in the feed farm walks. The week long farm visits were a great opportunity for farmers to learn how others are managing their feed requirements during the drought. Congratulations to the Regional Extension Committee, DPI and factory field staff as well as Murray Dairy and Dairy Australia for all their work.