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# **The Goulburn Valley Environment Group Inc.**

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## **Water for Victoria- Discussion Paper**

### **Goulburn Valley Environment Group Submission**

The Goulburn Valley Environment Group (GVEG) welcomes the opportunity to provide the following comments on the Discussion Paper.

#### **1. Climate Change**

GVEG strongly support increasing the water sector's focus on mitigation and ensuring that the water sector plays an important role in climate change mitigation with long-term emissions reductions. All water utilities should be directed to prepare detailed energy reduction strategies that will reduce carbon emissions by 50% by 2030 and zero by 2050.

#### **2. Waterway and Catchment management**

Victoria must ensure that it achieves water recovery targets and facilitates constraints management strategies to achieve maximum environmental outcome for Victorian rivers.

#### **3 Water for agriculture**

Irrigation modernisation has significantly improved water use efficiency and on-farm productivity where implemented. Further contraction of the irrigation footprint has to be undertaken to achieve a sustainable irrigation industry while greater consideration has to be given to realising the potential of the new dryland.

GVEG believes the water trading would benefit by creating a single National Water Market and encourages the development of other water "products" such as leasing.

#### **4 Resilient and liveable cities and towns**

GVEG supports the engagement and empowering the community to better understand the competing uses for water and achieve sustainable water management outcomes.

#### **5 Recognising and managing for Aboriginal values**

GVEG supports the establishment of an Aboriginal Water Program to identify Aboriginal values and uses of water.

#### **6 Recognising recreational values**

GVEG supports water and waterway planning that considers opportunities for shared benefits for recreational water users while not impacting on existing users or the environment.

## 7 Water entitlement and planning frameworks

GVEG believes that the 15 year review due to commence in 2019 would be the ideal opportunity to review the Sustainable Diversion Limits (SDLs) and the methodology behind them.

It is noted that the Victorian SDLs are not based on a determination of an environmentally sustainable level of take nor have they ever been reviewed to take the impacts of climate change into account.

GVEG supports a review of water used for domestic and stock in the State and considers that this review should include the impacts of catchment dams and encourage use of reticulated on-farm watering systems.

Any separation of land from water in unregulated and groundwater systems requires careful consideration given some experiences in our irrigation regions. This separation inevitably leads to increased use of the resource which in many regions is not understood, particular connectivity with springs and wetlands.

## 8 Realising the potential of the grid and markets

GVEG supports improvements to the Victorian Water Register. Any refinement and development of market trading rules supporting water movement must carefully consider impacts on both existing users and the ongoing condition of rivers and streams.

## 9 Jobs, economy and innovation

Innovation and research are critical to the reduction of water use over time by using water more efficiently.

Any review of the governance arrangements of the VEWH must ensure the maintenance of the VEWH's independence.

Regards



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Goulburn Valley Environment Group

*Protecting the environment for generations to come*