

The Director—Energy Assessment  
Planning and Assessments  
Department of Planning and Environment  
Application number: SSI-36656827  
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From: James Allard Beale, 1006 Snowy Mountains Highway, Gilmore NSW 2720. Also PO Box 465  
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Dear Director

In general I support the EIS either above ground or underground, provided the infrastructure is on Crown land using the shortest route from infeed points to major users in the Sydney region thus saving productive rural land from alienation for decades into the future. Compensation to landholders needs questioning. The reason given in discussion with HumeLink staff for the proposed route in the EIS is that the NSW Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (EPA) preclude the access required through Kosciuszko National Park (KNP).

HumeLink has acted as the straw that broke the camel's back in that the State and Nations' economies have the previous load of failing governance systems which now for the sake of HumeLink need to be changed with more benefits than just for HumeLink as is presented below.

Land management is the issue with two methods available for comparison. NSW Forestry Commission from 1908 to 1980s land management used First Australian principles of removing surplus vegetation by leasing the areas to local graziers and cool burning. By contrast Government policy for Crown land, decades before the 1997 Act, has been, "remove nothing, and leave it for chance". When applied to national parks; roadsides, reserves etc for Local Government, there is no obligation for management to private land standards, with adverse consequences for private land.

In criticising the EPA, the objective is to provide a better system for all national parks and true benefits for the State, including delivery of power by HumeLink. (See attached "Governments don't have required business nous")

History of Kosciuszko Park by the late Dr Jervis Hayes is also enclosed to show the peculiarities of that area.

Financing the necessary expenditure on parks into the future requires changes away from the existing funding from Treasury to a new base using the assets of Local Government and its existing tax collecting ability. This is not a new concept and highlighted in the Productivity Commissions' (PC) study "Assessing Local Government Revenue Raising Capacity" (See P100 attached) that a new method of rating was necessary.

The OECD did make a recommendation for Australia May 2013 but was misunderstood, that would have resulted in the UKs' system of Local Government providing for more than roads and rubbish.

If applied here such a change would provide for environment and Local Government equity between rural and coastal urban populations. In doing so, a semblance of democracy can be restored (See letter P4 Tumut 7 Adelong Times enclosed).

It is appreciated that an extra cost to householders is politically undesirable, but as demonstrated in the letter from NSW Farmers' Association the cost at that time of relieving rural land tax would have been \$66.40 per dwelling if spread equally across the State. Using the UK system wealthier locations would pay more and not so affluent, less.

To help understand the present situation brought about by two failing governance systems which originate firstly from the Poor Laws of 1601, based on wealth being created from the possession of land, but in Australia frequency of natural disasters, particularly drought, interrupts wealth creation and the land becomes a liability because not only is it not producing but is rated regardless. This situation is in conflict with Competition Policy and commercial practice.

The second governance system failure is in the structure of Local Government being divided into single autonomic councils or shires, but in fact being reliant on each other so that in reality the 152 original shires in NSW act as one. That being the case the cost of all shires provides the State wide services for all rate payers with producing and consuming shires equally sharing the cost.

To hasten access for HumeLink to the Kosciusko area a legally binding structure from the NSW Government is required to allow for the time consuming alterations for a new EPA. Also while reconstruction of Local Government linked with Planning is formulated, the desirable subdivision for the Kosciusko area into three smaller parks catering for rail and highway for development can be planned. (See enclosure "Governments don't etc)

J. A. Beale  
Gilmore



13 Sept 2023

Encl: "Governments don't have required business nous"

History of Kosciusko National Park

P100 Productivity Commission

P 4 Tumut & Adelong Times

Option 9 NSW Farmers' Association. Note postal address.

## Option 9: Local Government Revenue. Chapter 9 "Are Councils Sustainable"

Adopt holistic approach for all 152 councils for total funding requirements.  
Change rating base: total funding requirements divided by total dwellings in the State.

Make rural land for rural use only and unrateable.

### Pros

- Users pay for fair share of services State wide.
- Rate pegging obsolete
- \$500 million shortfall covered
- Rates based on property's intrinsic values of size and position would be more equitable than rates based on land values.
- It would be perceived as a fairer system as ratepayers would be better able to relate the value of their property to the rates they are levied.
- The tax on capital now being paid by farmers eliminated

### Cons

- Effort explaining the change and need for it would diminish over time
- The community level of misunderstanding and general expectations of local government in its present form will make any change difficult.

### Preamble

Over the life of LG there have been many changes in technology, commerce, and expectations of service. The relatively simple approach to life in the late 19th century to the complicated and much more integrated and interdependent society in the 21st has not changed the views held by most that local government is just local government, pure and simple in its own little box, to some a branch of State Government!.

The fact that there are forces like vertical fiscal imbalance (VFI), horizontal fiscal imbalance (HFI) and the other niceties explained in chapter five influencing our little box does not gel with the fact that the 152 boxes of local government go to making up a body providing the relatively smooth running of NSW for the benefit of all citizens of the State and Nation..

The boxes need no alteration, being well equipped with administrators knowledgeable of local issues and defined boundaries.

Reason enough to ask for Constitutional recognition and a share of revenue to maintain services. Chapter five puts this as not likely but with the Federal Government forecasting health funds tied to provision of services to rural communities, perhaps in the interests of competition, productivity and the efficient servicing of the one third of population outside major cities, the Federal Government may be persuaded to act.

### Problems and Explanations

The underlying theme of "Are Councils Sustainable" is funding, services and payment there of. Acknowledgement of residents being asset rich and income poor (p 18) is equally applicable to a large proportion of farms.

(p26) under 1-13 Recommendations mention is made "greater application of

user pays". Also it is acknowledged that "the most vulnerable councils --- transfer of their regional roads to state responsibility may be their only chance of survival".

Such grants and transfers ultimately come from taxpayer revenue and are therefore a cosmetic solution that hides the real cost of Local Government.

"Greater application of user pays", or in reality users are not paying, because the term is used too simplistically. (p 205) In relation to payment of services "maintaining local roads takes up a large proportion of country councils' resources".

The fact is that while there are farms being accessed, the producers of inputs to those farms have the benefit of being able to deliver goods manufactured in towns and cities. The produce coming away from the farms gives them revenue to pay rates but it also provides jobs and steady reliable prices for the community at large.

By the same token National Parks and Forestry as pointed out (p 205) do not pay rates (Forestry make some contribution to roads servicing them). In the case of National Parks they are created to please city dwellers but the infra structure to access them, provide the support facilities for their employees and visitors, is supplied by the local council, who are not paid.

Forestry does provide local employment but the product flowing throughout the Nation has been subsidised by the local community with most coming from farmers rates. If \$400 per rural residence and \$1471 is the average for farms, clearly farms are over taxed. This is confirmed by statistics where in 1999 at Tumut 40% of rates were paid by farmers making up 19% of population.

Rural Local Government can not under the existing methods recover what the users in the wider community demand, expect, and can not pay for because there is no means of doing so. This is acknowledged bottom page 205.

Page 206 "On the other hand, the claim sometimes made that local rates create horizontal inequities between areas should be dismissed". This is a completely erroneous statement for the rural situation. A dairy at Tumut pays \$15,000 more than an equal enterprise in Wagga Wagga. Grazing land in Tumut Shire is twice as expensive per hectare as Gundagai and four times for Bland Shire. The product is the same from the three shires offered on the same market.

Page 105 discusses grants and FAGs and efficiencies with equity issues which can not be lightly put aside but there is a familiar sound of a cracked record only instead of inefficient farms getting drought relief it is inefficient rural councils being subsidised.

Before too much criticism or judgements is made, a thorough history of events inside and outside the shire is more likely to reveal good thrifty management trying to cope with forces beyond its control over a long period of time.

The use of dwellings in the report does put the financial situation in perspective. The fact that there are statistics available for different locations relevant to dwellings and socio economic situations would suggest that it is not a big step to making dwellings the raw material for change.

The fact that this is proven and working in the UK is encouragement to investigate for NSW, if not Australia.

Put on a dwelling base the \$500 million required in extra rates per year equates to \$215 per year extra or two cases of wine.

The ability to pay is reflected in location and size of the dwelling, also the quality giving scope for a fair assessment. Capital value to play secondary role as an indicator of vertical and horizontal equity. The UK has eight levels.

A further refinement using curtilage with free standing dwellings is an option.

In the case of farmers there has been a protracted period of social injustice in that farms are the same as Local Government, not able to recover costs, shire rates being a prime example. Made worse in recent times by change in land use due to tax breaks favouring investors or cashed up "life style and views" seekers making it harder than ever for farmers to have the ability to pay after the rates take the inevitable rise.

This situation does not occur in the UK where rural land is for forestry & agriculture only and can not be subdivided easily. Result is that if the price paid is over valued the traditional neighbouring farm is not penalised with a rate rise. Caveat emptor.

Farmers do wish to pay their share and with dwellings on farms counted in the census, they would do so. The number of dwellings on farms in NSW is not available from ABS but as at 30th June 2004 there were 40,827 farms in NSW.

The cost of giving farmers social justice would be:

\$179,000,000 rates from all farms, less say \$605 State average resident for  
40,800 farms (ABS 30-06-2004)

\$ 24,684,000

leaves \$154,316,000 to be shared by 2,323,879 dwellings = \$66.40 or half a dozen bottles of wine

It is quite possible that there are more dwellings on farms than there are farms to provide for farm employees. Argument can be made for such cases to be exempt from more than one charge as the farm is substituting for Local Government.

## Conclusion

There are advantages to the whole community in making rural land free of rates:

- Farms have the chance to build reserves to combat drought and trade fluctuations
- The anomalies created by different rates in different shires removed.
- Rates from farming not used to prop up other industries
- Comparative analysis for cost structure enhanced.
- Farmers would be on a level playing field with UK farmers
- Unequal competition between farmers and investors on a better footing.
- Environmental benefits keeping food production close to city markets.

For Local Government the use of dwellings as a basis for rate revenue, not necessarily the direct value of the dwelling, makes it possible for all citizens to pay for the services they require State wide. This in no way alters the necessity to fund local government from Federal Government revenues on a sustained and guaranteed formula.

The problem of Cost Shifting has to be resolved

Having a total state budget covering rate revenue requirements should eliminate the need for rate pegging.

All citizens are treated equally with regard to ability to pay with the added ability of not paying if unable to do so.

The need for creation of Governmental regions left for the future.

It is assumed that industry and commerce would be treated similarly on an area and location basis to cover their present contribution.

With cost shifting and guaranteed Federal funding replacing grants (with their stigma implications) more funds should be available annually to redress the annual renewals gap.



# Landholders dig in over HumeLink

BILL Kingwill, Chair of the HumeLink Action Group said while disappointed, the community will continue to fight Transgrid's overhead powerlines in the wake of findings handed down by a NSW Parliamentary Inquiry committee last week.

HumeLink is a new 500kV transmission line which will connect Wagga Wagga, Bannaby and Maragle and is one of the state's largest energy infrastructure projects, with about 360 kilometres of proposed new transmission lines, and new or upgraded infrastructure at three locations.

NSW Premier Chris Minns said on Thursday that the HumeLink project will go ahead with overland powerlines despite community opposition.

A report by the Legislative Council Standing Committee on State Development examined the feasibility of taking transmission lines underground after fierce opposition from landholders.

"As far as the decision for the transmission lines to go overhead and not underground because of the cost, that inquiry has been branded as a sham. Everything that has evolved in the last couple of days from it, it just looks more and more like a setup," Mr Kingwill said.

"The inquiry looked like it was there just to tick the boxes as Greens MP and infrastructure spokesperson Cate Faehrmann, who was on the committee, has said publicly.

"Wes Fang MLC and Emma Hurst MP were also in agreement. When you've got members of the committee saying that what they were apart of was a sham, it's got to ring alarm bells about where's the due process in this whole thing.

Mr Kingwill said he first heard news of the decision from the parliamentary inquiry on Thursday via the

national news and was distressed with the outcome.

"I'm disappointed in the whole process. There were over 300 submissions to the inquiry all for going underground and they just haven't listened to us.

"People are very, very upset. Everyone went there and gave all that evidence, but it was predetermined before we even started. That's what it turned out to be.

"I said to Andrew Lewis, Deputy Secretary of Energy, Climate Change and Sustainability, on the phone when the inquiry was first called that it was just going to be a case of 'yes minister'."

Despite the outcome, Mr Kingwill said he and members of the HumeLink Action and Alliance Groups will continue to fight the cause.

"The plan going forward is that we've still got our right, as we've said all along, under the electricity act as a landholder to deny them access and consent to enter," he said.

"We still have to give them access. We are going to fight them in the courts and every other manner that we can.

"Everyone's holding the line, they're not consenting to enter and we're going to fight them in the courts. We're going to hold them up for five to six years.

"As far as it costing too much to go underground, it is going to cost the government too much to go overhead because of our legal action and how long it is going to take to go through the courts to compulsorily acquire this land.

"What all affected landholders have always said is, if you want to go underground you can start tomorrow. It's clean, it's green, and it's unseen.

"We are still saying that, and we would help them, but we're not going to have overhead powerlines there."

Transgrid's Transmission Annual Planning Report



**'As far as it costing too much to go underground, it is going to cost the government too much to go overhead because of our legal action and how long it is going to take to go through the courts to compulsorily acquire this land'**

— Bill Kingwill, Adjungbilly landholder

(TAPR) 2023 released last week found additional capacity and network system security must be ready as early as possible to prepare for the expected retirement of large coal-fired power stations from the NSW power system.

Transgrid CEO Brett Redman said: "Transgrid shares the bold ambition of the NSW and Federal governments to deliver a clean, sustainable, and reliable energy future for millions of consumers.

"Executing our shared vision requires the urgent supply of new renewables and

innovative storage solutions to replace coal. Time is of the essence because the transition is coming in at high velocity.

"As coal is retired, the NSW network as it currently stands will soon no longer have sufficient reserve levels. If we do not have additional capacity in place, the grid may lack sufficient reserves or generation to meet demand. This will make it increasingly difficult to deliver reliable energy to consumers.

"To realise the vision for a clean energy future, we cannot slow the transmission

**Landholders say they will take every avenue available to fight HumeLink.**

build. If anything, we need to accelerate even more. This TAPR shows how we will continue to facilitate the transmission build required to deliver Australia's net zero targets and keep the lights on."

TAPR 2023 outlines Transgrid's role in accelerating Australia's renewable energy future by investing in the transmission backbone infrastructure over the next decade.

"Every dollar spent on transmission is projected to return more than twice this in benefits to customers. Transmission enables cheap, renewable electricity to flow to consumers," Mr Redman said.

One of Transgrid's acceleration initiatives is to roll the three projects that make up the southern end of the NSW transmission infrastructure—EnergyConnect, HumeLink and VNI West—into a single procurement program, with the hope of shaving up to

two years off delivery."

As well as facilitating the transmission build, Transgrid said it's harnessing a diverse range of non-network solutions, including emerging technologies such as innovative grid-forming batteries to keep the power system's heartbeat strong without thermal generation.

The report also highlights Transgrid's thinking beyond 2033 when the renewable power system may need to expand by up to three to five times to support economy-wide decarbonation.

"This future thinking, which includes ideas for offshore wind and remote inland renewable energy zones, is important. The decisions we make now can keep our options open for future development—or narrow the field of possibilities. Transgrid is committed to positioning Australia as competitively as possible to succeed in a decarbonised global economy," he said.

## Rural communities pay the price for renewable future

### Letter to the Editor

THE last day of winter and the icy blast to hit rural NSW has been a statement from the NSW Government rejecting underground power lines on the basis of cost.

Then on the ABC TV 7.30 Report, claiming "Social License" for transmission towers: justification being, benefit to the majority of the state's population with the usual serve of renewable energy being the cheapest and environmentally the best.

Prior to the 1960s most sawmills used the waste from processing logs to provide the steam power to produce the timber with the only extra cost being wages for the boiler attendant—an example of true use of a renewable resource, all self contained.

A solar powered source, is hardly self contained, displacing food production that can be easily stored and transported, that contributes to keeping cost of living down and while the crop is green

converting carbon dioxide to water and oxygen. The best location for solar power would be on range land where agricultural activity is minimal and distance for delivery a problem.

Large scale solar farms do not compare with the Snowy 2.0 scheme situated in a rundown national park that needs dividing into three parks reflecting Australian conditions. Power lines under or overland need to be on Crown land as far as possible for Sydney delivery, but Melbourne delivery requires underground transmission.

With due respect to the Premier and his consultants re the cost of undergrounding power transmission:-

(1) The NSW Government to comply with the norms of a democracy should govern equally for the minority rural population as for the majority in coastal cities and towns.

(2) The social license has two

caveats not mentioned; that there is an obligation to pay for benefits or services received and compliance with Competition Policy.

Regardless of occupation held by a rural individual, he or she is affected by these two governance failures in higher cost of electricity, increased risk of bushfires and higher cost of insurance, while for agriculture and the timber/pulp industries, the disadvantages snowball.

That same failure of governance is evident in the building and development sector where instead of consolidating urban areas there is now a spread of houses causing a list of problems.

Rural communities have the right to appeal the Governments' decision on the grounds that the cost and maintenance is spread over a very long time and that Snowy 2.0 will not be complete for a projected five years. The Adelaide connection may not be required because of off shore

windmills and thermal generation using forest and crop waste.

From (1) above, the governance failure is in no provision for payment of services provided by the minority rural populations to the coastal majority but there is an acceptable method available recommended by the OECD which could be available by legislation being in place before Snowy 2.0 is functional.

Advantages for rural shires should be a reduction in shire rates generally and rural land not taxed, only the dwelling there on. Rural shires would have the same rates regardless of location. The 20% extra cost for power would be replaced and levied on the same basis as for the balance of the state.

National parks would have funding for security fencing, reduction of fuel for fires, removal of exotic plants and feral animals with benefits for rural and urban populations. Native forests need

similar treatment with logging in coups banned completely and returned to selective logging with control of understory and exotic plants. If brumbies are so important, a suitable area could be fenced off and managed. National parks would reflect truly First Australian culture and become a viable tourist attraction. There is benefits for all, rural and urban.

The big reduction in rates on rural land then provides the savings and ability to invest in drought preparedness and participation in using crop and forest waste for thermal power plants replacing fossil fuels.

From the above and previous letters there is sufficient evidence to petition the Premier to respect the status of rural communities and make the changes necessary to bring the state into the modern world.

Yours etc

Jim Beale  
Tumut

# Letters to the Editor

## Should conservation policy be dominated by elitist, city-based academics?

Sir, - One of the reasons the environmental issue is so complicated is that a lot of the Green platform is built on misinformation and some outright falsehoods.

The Kosciusko National Park came into being because in 1943 in the midst of drought and War, Professor J. McDonald Holmes of the Geography Department at Sydney University took the Premier Billy McKell on a horseback tour of the Snowy Mountains.

Holmes, a man of strong opinions and great personal charm, convinced McKell that the degradation of the land was due solely to live-stock grazing, by sheep in particular.

In fact the land was drought-stricken and infested with rabbits, and because of the war there was no labour to deal with the latter and the former did not break till June, 1945.

Since then it has become holy writ that live-stock grazing caused all the ills now present. Scant regard is given to the efforts of the one-time Snow Lease lessees to keep down weeds and rabbits and foxes. (The conservation hierarchy constantly ignores the role of strategic grazing of sheep in successful weed control).

Contrast the state of weeds and feral pests then with the hyper infestations today. Standard practice was to fire the overgrown areas as the lessees withdrew the flocks in the autumn, thereby controlling woody weeds.

The Wilderness lobby sees fit to ignore the fact that the first stockmen and their sheep and cattle were into the plains of the high country almost on the heels of the early explorers (in many cases they were one and the same).

The Murrays, Campbells and others had stock all through the mountains; the adventures of the drovers and shepherds are recorded in both public and private documents

were extensively prospected with strikes at Upper Adelong, Tumbumba, Kiandra and Goolbarragandra and copper at Lobb's Hole.

There was much activity, with people living and working all through what the Colong Foundation would have us believe is pristine wilderness.

There were houses, even villages, mines, sawmills, stockyards and dips, dams, water-races, roads, bridges, cemeteries and racecourses as well as shops, churches, schools and grog-shops to serve the population, with an extensive network of roads and tracks, and the evidence remains.

The fact that fire has shaped our whole landscape should be self-evident. Prior to European settlement, small fires happened all the

time, whether lit by Aborigines or lightning. The result was a dearth of woody weeds and ground litter, this enabled Hume and Hovell to take bullock drays through country that it would be hard to bark a dog through today.

All the early explorers and settlers spoke of grasslands and savannah with occasional large trees, would settlers have bothered with thick scrub country when their prime interest was grazing?

Today a lot of the original grassy woodlands and even savannah have been invaded by scrub and woody weeds, due to latter day fire control policy.

Australian flora and fauna evolved to withstand the affect of the constant burning. Certainly the catastrophic fires of 13-year cycles are something else, but would

be mitigated by regular enforced hazard reduction.

The suburbanite's dream of "bush to the back door" ignores fire, as does Metropolitan Councils' love affair with volatile flammable native plants, and low maintenance tanbark gardens, which in effect puts a wick on the property.

I am surprised the insurance industry has not tried to force residents adjoining National Parks to have an effective 50-100 metres cleared fire-break between them and the bush.

If you look at the vast area of these parks it seems reasonable to have at least perimeter fire-breaks. Insurance classification of property as 'high risk, fire-prone' will be a good start.

Finally we should ask: "Can we afford the gov-

ernment fostered policy of unrestrained, mismanaged National Parks, the annual distributors of bushfires; breeding and sheltering pest and feral animals, and growing and spreading noxious weeds, with budgets aimed more at expansion than maintenance?"

Are they intended to be solely for the enjoyment of a few athletic pedestrians? Does not the title 'National' imply that they are for all, including horse riders, bikers, four wheel drivers, subject to reasonable constraints?

Should conservation policy be dominated by elitist city-based academics such as the Colong Foundation, whose proud-est boast is that they so enjoy the ear of Government that they have never had one of their proposals knocked back? These power brokers care little for rural inhabitants whose heritage they would take away at the stroke of a pen.

Locals have to live all the time with the consequences of decisions which are often the result of trendy political correctness or election requirements.

The instigators however visit when it suits them, and seldom show in times of crisis, such as Bushfires and drought, and then usually dish out simplistic gratuitous 'advice'.

NPWS management constantly professes commitment to hazard-reduction burning and each year burn a lesser percentage of the total Parks acreage.

Will future court decisions claim damages against them for ineffectual fire management, along the lines of the Victorian Court decision for wild dog damage?

Should the NPWS be encouraged to seek income and control weeds and fire litter by strategic grazing of sheep? Studies have been encouraging in South Australia, and in New Zealand sheep graze Mt Cook to the snowline.



Beale (sub. 9, p. 8) claims in relation to New South Wales:

... the doubtful usefulness of the inflexible UCV indicates a new base is necessary plus the fact that users are not paying is the ultimate cause of lack of funds, from which the other problems [such as financial sustainability] are a natural progression.

Similarly, the Local Government Association of New South Wales (LGANSW) and the Shires Association of New South Wales (SANSW) (sub. 52, p. 12) argue:

ICV would help alleviate the apparent distortion where, for example, very high value home units pay significantly less rates than free standing homes (of comparable or lesser value) in the same council area ... Outside a rate pegging environment, capital values could increase a council's rate revenue-raising capacity by increasing the valuation base. Within a rate pegging environment, there may be indirect advantages via greater flexibility to maximise rate revenue through special rate variations; for example, better targeting of capacity to pay.

#### *Assessment of prescribed valuation methods*

The low rates of annual revenue growth in recent years in New South Wales and Queensland (figure 6.1), *prima facie*, appears broadly consistent with the view that prescribed valuation methods constrain rates revenue. This proposition is consistent with strong rates of growth in Victoria and South Australia. This, however, does not explain the low rates of growth in Tasmania and the Northern Territory, which are both permitted to use several property valuation methods for rating. Moreover, these statistical comparisons are far from conclusive, for two reasons.

First, it is likely that other factors have more directly influenced the rates revenue growth experienced in these jurisdictions. The low growth in New South Wales is more likely to be driven by rate pegging (discussed later in this chapter) than the land valuation method *per se*. Similarly, Victoria's highest increase in annual rates revenue over the period is likely to reflect, at least in part, a catch-up in response to the rates reductions imposed during the 1990s when local government amalgamations took place. Also, for South Australia, local government has a relatively heavy historical reliance on rates, rather than fees and charges, compared with other jurisdictions (South Australian Government Officials, Adelaide, pers. comm., 7 May 2007).

Second, and more fundamentally, it is not obvious why local governments using a particular valuation method, say UCV, should be more constrained than those using another, say CV. Local governments can set a higher rate in the dollar on their lower UCV valuation base to raise the same total revenue from their ratepayers as they would if they used CV. In such circumstances, rates revenue growth would reflect aggregate budget requirements rather than choice of valuation methods.

# Governments don't have

# required business nous

T & A T 16-8-23

THE SHIRES containing Albany, Wagga Wagga, Junee, Gundagai and Tumut are vitally important to the Australian economy in a number of respects, which does not exclude other groups of rural shires contributing to the general wellbeing.

The area nominated has the potential to contribute more by expanding to new areas for export and plantation forestry, through to include Eden as a port and new area for plantation forestry on the eastern escarpment of the Dividing Range. Long term it is highly desirable to have rail connection, Eden to Mt Gambier.

Inhibiting the potential development of rural areas, is that there are subtle connections to environmental matters and positive contribution to reduction of carbon emissions while simultaneously obviating counter productivity: hence the following explanations.

Problems unique to Australia embrace, the physical size of the island continent, the cycle of droughts, floods, combustible vegetation, 80% of population living on the coast and reinforced by the National Farmers Federation (NFF) "Taxation Zones and the City-Country Divide"---A Discussion Paper" May 2001; this quote from the foreword, "In this discussion paper, NFF has reviewed the basis of the

city-country divide. It finds that there are significant and long-standing biases against country living". This is a subtle psychological cause for some of the systems failures of state and federal governments, born out by the attitude towards the neighbours of national parks who suffer the financial and extra work burden. The coastal majority so protective of parks suffer no inconvenience or financial loss.

Proof positive supplied 2006 by "Are Councils Sustainable?" Report that reveals agriculture and private forestry, with the smallest population, are over taxed and that tax is on working capital. No other Australian business has its working capital taxed.

A water market, lax foreign investment and housing policy, has reduced opportunity for Australian value adding and makes us serfs in our own country. No wonder this country has shifted from abundant cheap food and high standard of living for all, to the present high cost of food and homelessness.

The major problem for Australia is to prevent mega bushfires into the future and at the same time utilise the fuel available as an additional renewable fuel. The reasons for such action are the preservation of the overall environment including Crown land man-

agement, preventing loss of human lives, housing and consequent economic decline.

Mega fires have been caused by human influence from the coastal majority; by misinformation, emotion desires of single interest groups and government misplaced policies that are in conflict with the laws of Nature.

Technological advancement has also affected the use of forest and roadside resources, but state government policy protects Treasury funds, not the environment. Making this situation worse has been the aftermath of the Kyoto conference resulting in false hopes and actions for growing more trees as an offset for fossil fuel.

To explain in part: trees the world over have adapted to the cycle of winter and summer to slow the growth cycle using it to gain in density, strength and carbon storage.

Northern hemisphere hardwoods lose leaves, Australian hardwoods rely on their canopy being browsed by insects and leaf eating mammals, all kept in check by a host of small birds. Fifteen years after the Canberra fire there was evidence of insect recovery in snow gums but inadequate control from the balancing bird population wiped out in the intensity of the fire. A stark reminder is the number of dead trees still stand-

ing and now a danger to park users.

The latest act from the conservation lobby is to close native forests; when in fact due to the misguided tree growing exercise, native forests need to revert to selective logging and spacing for optimal growth, all of which needs labour and finance.

Potentially the most damaging misinformation started in Australia was by two professors and a mathematician, self confessed animal liberationists making out that Australians are the worst polluters per capita. To justify their claim coal exports were excluded because other nations were using it. No credit for food exported, therefore counted in, cattle and sheep numbers were inflated by using historically high numbers, which are now greatly reduced. Their claim was not valid, but such a statement coming from professors was accepted without query.

The hypocrisy of the claim did not include the millions of feral animals in national parks and range lands. The basis for citing animals, cattle in particular, was that they emit methane with the reputation of being a greenhouse gas and therefore if less meat is consumed, fewer animals would be required. No mention of skyrocketing human population and the push to eat plant based

food that produces more, not less methane than a normal omnivore diet. METHANE FACTS.

Methane is an unstable gas made of one carbon and four hydrogen atoms that may last depending on quantity released, about twenty eight days, breaking down to water and carbon dioxide.

Two sources emit methane: fossil and atmospheric, based on plant residues.

Planet Earth has been emitting fossil methane from the dawn of time, but its effect controlled by the combination of green chlorophyll in plants, light and carbon dioxide being converted to plant fertiliser and importantly, oxygen.

Atmospheric methane is emitted irregularly for the most part. Sewage facilities can be fitted with means of capturing methane from the largest concentrations of human animals. Trees are known to emit methane depending on species but bacteria in their bark eliminating up to 40%.

Methane is a factor, blown out of proportion, but preserving plants capable of converting carbon dioxide to oxygen is the priority. This then connects to excessive tree planting that inhibits not only canopy growth, but also the potential of the forest itself to mature.

The Grattan Institute and

others have identified governance systems failures as a reason for poor performance of the nation's economy. From the above, systems failures is due to complete lack of business principles by successive governments. Examples are: consumers of a benefit do not pay because there is no system in place. Inputs are taxed, not the profits from the use of inputs and where the possibility of value adding to the economy could benefit the nation, is sold off to foreigners.

Free trade agreements where agricultural interests have no place for fifteen years are further confirmation of bias and abandonment of business principles by governments.

To conclude with such a simple explanation as lack of business principles can be verified from the reactions in the UK where not only farming was affected but also railways, canals, ship building on land spread over areas with differing rates. The enabling Bill June 1928 available from Hansard of The House of Commons; speeches by Mr Winston Churchill, Chancellor of the Exchequer and others, proved that their current system did not comply with basic business principles and required a new method.

Regards,

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Tumut