

Media Statement

WEDNESDAY, 27 FEBRUARY 2008

Auditor-General's Report: Agricultural Research Investment, Monitoring and Review

A report by the **Auditor-General, Des Pearson** on the results of a performance audit of agricultural research investment was tabled in the Victorian Parliament today.

The report, *Agricultural Research Investment, Monitoring and Review*, examined how DPI decides what research to fund, monitors and reports on the research and its outcomes, and manages the intellectual property and commercialisation of its research.

Agriculture is vital to Victoria's economy and regional communities. In 2006, it contributed \$7.2 billion to the State's economy and accounted for approximately 20 per cent of regional employment. Innovative, agile and strategic programs of agricultural research are critical to retaining national and global competitiveness, and to meeting the major challenges of drought and climate change.

The report found that DPI's new approach to research funding allocation, following the expert review conducted by Professor Göran Roos of Intellectual Capital Services Ltd., provides a sound basis for future decision making. However, the report highlighted that for the new approach to succeed, DPI will need to address a number of gaps.

Mr Pearson said that DPI needs to increase flexibility in funds allocation so that the research profile can respond more rapidly to changed priorities and be more able to exploit new, high-potential areas of research. Mr Pearson also said that to complement this new approach and to ensure the future viability and continued relevance of state funded agricultural research, the Department should develop a long-term plan for research capability.

Mr Pearson said that, while there were elements of good practice in the Department's performance measurement and evaluation framework, further development was needed so that the Department was better able to assess the effectiveness of its research investment and for the community to be assured that that funds were flowing to areas of greatest potential benefit.

With respect to the management of intellectual property, Mr Pearson said DPI should convey more fully the social and economic benefits of its investment in agriculture research, including non-commercialised as well as commercialised research.

Direct link to report: http://www.audit.vic.gov.au/reportsreports_par/agp134cv.html

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