

School of growth ...

MELBOURNE University's school of land and environment is in deficit by \$1.6 million, and will have a third of its staff cut (*The Age*, 11/8). Here's a suggestion: Victoria's Premier can bail out this national leader in sustainable agricultural research and give the school \$1.6 million from the state budget each year.

This would be in keeping with the United Nations' report on world agriculture last year, which recommended the tools of sustainable agriculture - water, soil health and vegetation cover - as the way to combat climate change and world poverty.

It would show some commitment to sustainable agricultural research, a promise made by Bob Cameron as agriculture minister, but not kept. Under his leadership, the Victorian Government committed to annually co-funding La Trobe University's genetically engineered foods and flowers research centre, hosted a GE foods conference, and oversaw the trajectory of our Department of Primary Industries into GE foods research.

In this time of climate change, water crisis and bushfire threats, no one will protest at such money to protect the jobs of expert researchers in these fields. It will also show some commitment to our children's futures. Be daring and do it.

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