A better future for Rural WA Leadership and Economic Development in Rural Western Australia

Department of Agriculture and Food, Western Australia

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A Message from the Minister

The “Better Future for Rural WA” Conference was designed to build more vibrant rural communities through regional and economic initiatives, stimulate innovative approaches to value adding and to encourage investment in local leadership.

I believe the Conference planted the seed for delegates to achieve some or part of these goals.

The Conference was a great success for all those who attended in providing a valuable forum to establish new networks. The high quality of speakers and information presented has created the stimulus for delegates to “take that next step.”

I commend everyone who was involved in the Conference and for taking part in the plans to develop “A Better Future for Rural WA.”
Foreword

A Better Future for Rural WA was a conference focusing on leadership and economic development in rural WA. The conference included
- Development of leaders in rural industries and communities.
- Building more vibrant rural communities through community and economic development initiatives.
- Generating innovative approaches to value adding and marketing our agricultural produce.
- Exploring how rural WA can further build on the economic strengths of agriculture.

The conference was designed to help people deal with the issues facing rural communities by showcasing new and innovative projects and practices in rural development from within Australia and overseas and showing how others have made a difference in their rural communities.

It identified pro-active strategies for your own communities, providing you with practical tools to implement your plans through a range of practical, informative and interactive workshops.

Creating a setting for networking and sharing experiences and knowledge with people from rural communities across Australia is an important task of any workshop or conference and this conference certainly provided an opportunity for people to meet and exchange views and experiences on rural communities.

These proceedings are a summary of the formal presentations that were given at the conference. The many other, informal discussions and presentations have, sadly, not been captured here.

Acknowledgments

The conference organisers would like to thank the staff at Agriculture WA, the Minister’s Office, the Department of Commerce and Trade, IDEAS, the Town of York, the Rural Adjustment Finance Corporation, and the tireless work of the Study Tour Group from the Central Agriculture Region.

A BETTER FUTURE FOR RURAL WA......conference proceedings 1998
Official Welcome

Welcome, welcome, welcome, my friends. I don’t know who you all are but I classify you as my friends. I welcome you in our language, the language of the Balladong tribe. It is good to see you here.

Welcome to you, my friends to the Balladong people in the Balladong country. This is the home of my family, the Kicketts. We can trace through the records back to 1790. Welcome to all conference delegates, to Gordon Marwick and to the conference organisers. This is an important conference, we all strive for the betterment of this fine country in which we live. Thankyou.

Everett Kickett
Nyoongar Elder
Balladong People

Thankyou, Everett. I have a great respect for your people and all that your tribe has done in this community for many, many years.

Welcome delegates, where ever you come from; local areas, eastern states or around the state. We are looking forward to three days of views on how we can enhance our economic development. We are all facing tough times and I’m sure what we hear over the next few days will be advantageous to all of us.

York is the oldest inland settlement in WA. The majority of the old buildings you see around the town are pre-1900s and many have been fully restored by their owners. I hope that you had some time to wander through the town while you were here. York has a population of over 3000 people and a growth rate of between 5-8%, which has been consistent for the last decade and a half and we expect it to continue. York has been officially acknowledged by the Heritage Commission and National Trust of Australia, with over 90 listed sites. We have recorded up to 100,000 visitors to York and this is increasing. The York Shire Council has a budget of $4 million and like any small council, is finding it increasingly hard to meet the demands of our residents.

Welcome also to the international speakers; we’re very pleased that you have chosen York. Please lend us some of the knowledge and experience you have developed over the years so that we can gain and help rural WA.

Thankyou and enjoy your stay.

Gordon Marwick
York Shire President
There are three key initiatives that form “A Better Future for Rural WA”, a part of the Minister’s and Agriculture Western Australia’s commitment to sustainable rural development. The initiatives are:

Doing More With Agriculture,
Community Builders and
The WA Rural Leadership Program.

These initiatives reflect the growing recognition that to sustain a dynamic export trade focused on the agricultural sector, the state requires vibrant rural communities, strong industry and community leadership and a diverse economic base in the regions.

The *Doing More With Agriculture Project* (DMWA), through a variety of activities and assistance programs, encourages farmers (and the industry sectors in which they are involved) to be more pro-active and enterprising, particularly in networking, value adding and diversification. The DMWA project operates regionally and provides support through the following activities:

- **Study tours** – for leaders in industry wanting to make first hand assessments of innovative ideas and best practice methods around Australia and overseas. Study tours are being conducted on themes as varied as value adding, successful examples of branding of regional produce and small town development.
- **Awards** – the project sponsors the Agricultural Innovation Awards which recognise and support the best in the agricultural industry.
- **Seminars** – the world’s best practices are discussed with farmers and industry groups by guest speakers from around the globe, particularly other farmers who have succeeded in establishing local agri-businesses.
- **Community Opportunity Workshops (COWs)** – convened to enable rural communities to assess their potential and develop workable plans for achieving goals.

The *Community Builders Initiative* is a six month program that seeks to encourage and empower local residents to become more involved in building their community and its economy. It enables people to learn about community economic development and offers them support in their efforts to develop their communities and regions. The program’s activities are designed to create communication networks and opportunities for communities to explore their needs and skills.

The enduring philosophy of the Community Builders Initiative is that it supports and guides people to find their own answers and their own ideas. This ensures that the learning and confidence gained by the participants will be used for their community and is long lasting. Like the old proverb “If you give a man a fish he will eat for a day. If you teach a man to fish, he will eat for a lifetime”.

The *WA Rural Leadership Program* provides training in leadership in the agriculture and fisheries sectors. It has piloted two major courses – The Foundations for Leadership and the Future Leadership Courses. The program provides professional leadership development and experiences for rural people; energises new and existing rural leaders with the skills, knowledge and vision to expand their rural industry; supports economic and community development; and establishes a network of rural leaders who can share creative ideas and promote opportunities, linkages and ‘best practice’.

Since it was launched in mid-1996, the leadership program has run 10 Foundation for Leadership courses and a Future Leaders course. Many more Foundations for Leadership courses specifically designed for individual towns and industries are planned for the future and another two Future Leaders courses have been announced for 1998-99.
Awards for Excellence in Rural WA

The conference featured a special dinner for the inaugural “Awards for Excellence in Rural WA”. These awards, introduced by Monty House, Minister for Primary Industry; Fisheries, have been designed to recognise rural communities and people involved in rural enterprises who have made an outstanding contribution to improving their community or industry.

A video of the awards including footage of all the finalists and the winners is available from The Office of Monty House, Minister for Primary Industry: Fisheries, 21, 220 St Georges Tce., Perth, WA, 6000.

The Awards Winners

The Most Enterprising Rural Community Award (sponsored by the Royal Agricultural Society) – Wellstead Community for their commitment to improving the viability and livability of their community through planning and innovative projects.

The Rural Leadership Award (sponsored by the WA Rural Leadership Program) – Northam District High School for their action on dealing with racism and other youth issues at the school.

The Agriculture Innovation Award (sponsored by the Doing More With Agriculture Project) - Windmill Flour, Corrigin for their commitment to value adding and processing using local wheat and the integration with the farm enterprise.

Award Winners – 1 to r
Monty House, Minister for Primary Industries; Fisheries, Wellstead Community, Brendon Grylls, Northam Senior High School
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**Working Towards a Better Future for Rural WA**

Representatives from the Central Agriculture Region Study Tour Group;
Leigh Hardingham, Kevin Binning, John Hassell, Bill Porter,
Tracey Starke, Fiona Steddy, Lindsay McNeil

**Leigh Hardingham**

Why is it that over two hundred people sit in this town hall today? Are we here because we have to be or is it because we share a passion? A passion for our future. We do have a future. Good or bad, rich or poor, happy or sad - each person, each town and each community has a future spreading before them. We can let our future take it's course or we can make it a better future. A better future for RURAL WA.

The members of the 1997 USA study tour were selected because we wanted to ensure our small rural towns had a future. What we learned was that not only could we influence that future, but that with careful planning we could make it better than we ever dreamed possible. We came to the conclusion that the things we do today will impact not only on tomorrow but on all the tomorrows after that.

As we look back over the hard work and pioneering insights of our fathers and grandfathers, we see a pattern emerging. A pattern that was repeated time and time again. A pattern that if followed, means that we too can become pioneers in our grandchildren's eyes. Our towns are at the crossroads. To go one way will lead economic strengths in agriculture. To go another way will bring economic strength in capital works. To stand still will mean failure to get out of the way of oncoming traffic and that brings sure death.

The only way to really survive is to go forward. Forward to an unknown destination; a place yet to be discovered, but a place promising riches we are yet to fully appreciate. The way ahead brings the unknown world closer and closer to home. It embodies new technology and that is fearful to some of us. It brings new personalities and people of different cultural backgrounds together to work and play. It brings change and expectations of self-help and self-diagnosis.

Are we ready to move? Have we the confidence? Do we have the road map? Do we have the first aid box?

By the end of this conference we believe we will be equipped with the necessary vehicles, tool kits, guides and passengers to make the journey. Some will get lost on the way, but if we stick together, hopefully others will notice them and turn back to help.

Our eventual destination is yet to be set. Maybe it hasn’t even been built yet but by the time we arrive I’m sure we will recognize it. We might even have to redesign it and start again.

But boy, the trip will have been worthwhile!

**Kevin Binning**

The group’s second recommendation was that “we promote and encourage the concept of value adding with primary producers and promote entrepreneurship”

This may seem to be an obvious statement but we saw some very good examples of how a community’s strategic plan could be linked to specific enterprises. We also saw how towns were promoted when they were prepared to invite in businesses that found the operational costs in urban areas prohibitive and were prepared to relocate into rural areas.
An outstanding example of this was Aurora, Nebraska, which, in the 1960’s formed the Aurora Development Corp, a private non-profit group. From this has come a thriving and cohesive community whose Chamber of Commerce has effectively used the town’s resources, both in planning and using the technical knowledge within the community. This was highlighted by the broad industry base they had managed to attract. Examples are a housing construction business, started from a need to house workers for a pet food company using the by-products of corn; a patient lifting and bathing company; a reasonably large telemarketing centre which was a large employer of people on a full and part time basis. In 1995, after careful research, the Aurora Development, established an ethanol plant. By using the financial expertise of its local bank, Aurora brought in a partner to form a joint venture. This meant extra funding was available, allowing the capacity of the ethanol plant to reach 25 million gallons. This was 2 and a half times the size of the plant originally planned by the Corporation. The ethanol plant now use two thirds of the local corn produced in the area.

The town of Freeman, South Dakota, was a small community that had embarked on strategic enterprise development. With technical assistance from the South Dakota University, it has put in place a plan to bring businesses to the town. They have employed an enterprise co-ordinator and formed a group called “the enterprise facilitation help project”. The interesting point with this group was that having embarked on a 10 year plan they had canvassed 2,000 potential businesses through a letter drop.

The Food Strategy Center at the University of Nebraska also captured our attention; the Center provides a marketing and development program for industries processing value added food for human consumption. The Center can be contracted to undertake product development, be it testing for bacteria, shelf life of a produce, or food protein. This is just a small sample of what was available. Small producers could have small quantities of product checked, for a nominal amount. Workshops were also run for people looking at value adding. Extensive advice was also available on product marketing, be it labelling or market information.

The success of this program was measured by the increase in the number of companies producing food. In 1983 there were 260 companies producing food, but by 1997 there were 400 companies.

The strength of regional partnerships and links should not be overlooked, particularly with tourism. An example of this is the Route 66 Project which is an old, long road system that has been bypassed by highways. But through a government project called ICETEA (which provides funding for heritage trails and roads), towns are redeveloping the road to a theme of the late 50s to early 60s. This in turn draws people off the highways into the country areas and takes the tourist dollar into the rural communities.

John Hassell
Since I was a kid the town of Pingelly has lost:
two of three machinery dealerships, one out of three car dealerships, one out of two butchers, two out of two bakers, one fuel depot, one delicatessen, one plumber, one electrician, three Telecom people, three Australia Post people, two out of three stock agents, two drapery stores, a commercial newspaper, and there are probably more. Before I was a twinkle in my parents eyes, Pingelly had its own sale yards, a cool drink factory, a washing machine factory and a silo factory and there are probably more.

I think our town has reached desperation point. Who here is from a town like this?

When we were in America we visited a town call Aurora, Nebraska. There were a few members of this community who had seen themselves going down this same path if they did not do something about it. One man in particular fought to save his town from becoming a ghost town. With vision, forward planning, plus a lot of hard work as well as believing in himself, he has been instrumental in that town having a manufacturing sector, assisted by chamber of commerce. Their town has employment opportunities for their children and the town now has a population of over four thousand.
I don’t believe that a town has to reach desperation point in order to achieve these goals, in fact I think it is probably better that it doesn’t.

We have two programs in WA that can help a community achieve its aims. These aims don’t have to be grandiose. They can be from wanting their town to be a corridor town on the way to a major centre, or to having the best medical services and old age care in the country, which is what we saw in Silver City, New Mexico. There is one thing for sure; to stay the same while everyone else is going forward, is in effect to go backwards.

The programs that are available are STEP, which is not the first move that you make when you get out of bed but Small Town Economic Planning which is an initiative of the Department of Commerce and Trade and COWs, which is definitely not what you call your wife when she bugs you but Community Opportunity Workshop’s. COWs are an initiative of the Minister of Primary Industries: Fisheries, Monty House, and are run by Agriculture Western Australia.

The Pingelly Shire applied for STEP funding through the Dept. of Commerce and Trade. It is usually a one year project and from then it is meant to be a self motivating group. The first meeting decided that a good aim would be to have a population of 5000 by the year 2020. An absolutely realistic goal. So they have their vision. An audit is the next step - to see what the town has going for it. We have water in limited quantities, a good climate for horticulture, fairly close proximity to Perth and we are on one of the routes to Wave Rock to name a few of the benefits. So we have tourism potential, horticulture potential and aquaculture potential.

Three groups were formed; one to market Pingelly, one to promote tourism, and one to investigate value adding to agricultural produce.

Our town has got as far as developing a work plan. Our group is for developing the horticultural potential, specifically viticulture. By using a local vigneron with local expertise we worked out that in order to get 1000 people into the district on a long term basis, we need to plant 200 ha of grapes. So far the district has about 6 ha as a try out and when they succeed I’m sure there will be a good follow on. Of course it will take a lot of encouragement but as sure as eggs is eggs, success breeds success. Our group has plans for doing something similar with olives and aquaculture. Therefore by targeting one area at a time we are well on the way to achieving our realistic target for the year 2020.

I feel it is great that our town has gone as far as it has, and I believe it can work. We need to implement the plan fully and monitor it and make changes if necessary, but we are on our way. You too can achieve this.

Tracey Slarke

**How to generate and regenerate community investment**

“Destiny is not a matter of chance, it is a matter of choice; it is not a thing to be waited for, it is a thing to be achieved.”

William Jennings Bryan

American Poet

- Private enterprise can, and must, take control of their community’s destiny.
- In a time when State and Federal funding is being cut, and local government authorities are having more responsibilities placed upon them, communities need to look to themselves - their long term survival depends upon it. They need to plug the leaky bucket and invest in their future by investing in their town.
- A non-profit progress association will address social and cultural issues and attract funding. A for-profit development corporation will facilitate economic development and direction within a community. In times of crisis or economic hardship, it is the farmers and businesses who are approached and asked to dig deep.
A development corporation will mean of this deep digging in the future, and less reliance on funding.

- While in Nebraska, we visited the Aurora Development Corporation. Their belief is that as individuals, community work pays them indirectly due to the community’s growth. Their mission is to improve economic conditions by encouraging investment in agriculture, manufacturing, business, housing and community facilities, thus fostering increased employment opportunities.

- The Aurora Development Corporation works within the areas of
  - existing business and industry
  - community development
  - acquisition of sites
  - and housing
- They maintain an active and close working relationship with all government and private entities involved in economic development, which is advantageous to businesses requiring services or potential services.
- The corporation owns and sells industrial and business sites, which are made available to businesses at a reasonable cost. They also build houses aimed at different socio-economic sectors of the community.
- It has small business loans available to assist businesses and acts as the voice of the business community by supporting specific interests at all levels of government.
- It ensures good performances by industry and business in their community.
- Their philosophy is: “It is desirable and acceptable to be profitable and it is profitable to share.”

So how do you do it?

- Whether you set up as an unlisted public company, a Unit trust, or a Corporate Company, agreement by the organisation is of critical importance - the structure has to reflect the purpose of the organisation.
- It is vital to look long term, to have a vision and to act quickly while the idea is positive.
- Within your community consultation, accept that the different facets of your community will never be equal - concentrate on what is good for the majority of the community and work out how everyone can benefit. Lobby the visionaries and those with a financial and future stake in your town.

In the words of Nelson Mandela:
“Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness, that most frightens us”.

Fiona Steddy
The Role of Women in Agriculture
I was impressed in the United States how women are involved in agriculture. This is both within the business of primary production and the role that women play in the development of rural communities.

Women in America are taking a leading role in rural town revival and development. I believe this is happening for two main reasons - 1. Financial necessity 2. The emotional reasons.

By financial necessity I mean things like the fact men are often too busy to become involved in community development because of the simple fact that “agriculture is tough” and they do not have the time or the resources because they are trying to survive and make a living. Women do recognise that someone has to be responsible and I saw women becoming involved to fill this void.

By emotional reasons I mean women become involved in community development because they want things to remain, at worst, the same. They do not want to lose the services and facilities that their community presently has, and at best they want to build communities that have more to offer, both for themselves and their children. Women can easily identify with the problem of facing the education for their children, lack of health facilities, lack of services and unemployment.
The benefits of getting women involved in community development are huge. This is both for the individual women concerned and the community. Strong communities support, encourage and develop local leaders. Our kids benefit and see their communities in a positive light if their parents are active participants in their communities. Community involvement gives a sense of belonging and can be a vital support network for women.

In Australia I see women in agricultural communities as an undeveloped resource. They have so much to offer and yet barriers are often put in their way. We must encourage women to become involved. Give our women encouragement, training and confidence and they will make a difference.

It is often the women, through marriage or work, who come into agricultural communities and have to make the transition to country living. This is a hard transition and one that can cause great self doubt whilst trying to fit in. Have you heard the term “You aren’t a local until you have lived here for 10 years???” I bet you have. This is really sad and an obstacle that we must overcome if we wish our communities to grow and prosper.

We must change our thinking and encourage people into our communities. If we do, our communities will grow and prosper. If we don’t they will die.

So how do we do it?

1. We must have a desire to revitalise our communities. We must get the whole community involved as a community. We must have plans and goals. If you aim for nothing - you will hit it with amazing accuracy.

2. Encourage people into your community. Why not give new residents a welcome reception and invite them to become involved. Community Builders is a great program which allows town folks to see where the town has come from, where it is going and how it is going to get there and invites them to be part of the development. It gives a licence for those ‘non locals’ to have input.

3. We must recognise that every person has something to contribute - as a community we must have the plans in place to channel those resources

So this is a challenge for every one of you sitting here today! We must encourage programs that empower individuals to become involved, we must change our thinking and we must, as women, lead by example.

Leigh Hardingham

Concluding Remarks

Many of the places we visited in America showed incredible foresight and planning. When we delved further we were amazed at the sheer amount of physical work and planning that went on before the first brick was even laid.

In almost every case it started with one person and their dream and passion for an idea.

Whether it was The Crazy Horse Memorial (where an American Indian and his horse were being carved into a 563 foot mountain) or the Black American Cowboy Museum in Denver or indeed Disneyland, each was testament to the dream and passion of one person and their belief in their ideas.

The lesson we learned was not to underestimate the power of one person and their determination to make their dreams a reality. Without dreams we have no new ideas, no vision and no future.

How do we as communities harness those ideas and help them work? How do we encourage our people to share without fear of criticism and how do we empower them to go forward and with our help put them to work in our towns?
People need to belong. They need to belong to families, groups and communities. In many cases, with the breakdown of a family people are looking to communities for the security that their family once supplied. The continuity of presence, the feeling of acceptance no matter what, the encouragement to have a go. The will to succeed.

Are we meeting that need? Are we empowering our people to care for our town’s families. If we are to see new businesses starting and being supported by locals, we need to see groups forming to ensure that services in town are improved or at least maintained. We need to see civic pride in our town’s appearance and attendance at town meetings.

If we care for our town’s people, they will care for our town. Why do we involve ourselves in community work? Is it a selfish pastime to improve things for ourselves? Maybe not. Maybe we realize that the things we do today will affect the way our children can do things tomorrow.

We are only caretakers of our communities. When our community forefathers retired we became accountable to the next generation. We owe it to them to leave it better than we found it. To do no more than maintenance will see our towns left behind as others embrace change and new technology and race ahead. To do nothing will see our towns fall into disrepair and eventually crumble away to dust. For our kids sake, we must strive forward.

We need to become an “every member community”. Every person, whether single parent or senior citizen, farmer or retired businessman, has a great deal to give to their town. That gift must be accepted and valued. The offering may be spare time, wonderful skills, financial resources or the ability to foster community support.

Whatever they bring, let their gift be accepted. Let it be used by the community for the good of future generations.

As rural towns we are not islands, we are connected via highways and back roads. We are not in competition with each other. If one of us stumbles and falls, each will suffer the pain. If one of us grow and succeed, we as a region grow and succeed. We need to support each other in our endeavours and share common successes. The WA Rural community is a family and families work together for the good of every member.

Over the next two days we will learn how to set targets, plan strategies and start work. WE will learn how to encourage our communities into action.
There is a slight problem in saying this though because as a young person I am in a bit of a minority in my town. Few people of my age live there. I don’t think I’ll ever want to leave because it is a really great place to live. “Strange name, beaut place” is its motto. We’re situated about 200 kms north-east from Perth. We have a population of around 450 in the town and around 900 in the Shire. It's a pretty good place I think.

I went to school at Wyalkatchem District High School, right through to year 12 rather than going to boarding school (which is fairly unusual). Since leaving school I have stayed on in “Wylie”, as it is more commonly known, working locally and continuing my studies externally at a university level.

During my 13 years living in Wyalkatchem I have always considered myself as a fairly important person within the community. I tried to get involved in a few things, taking after my Mum as a doer rather than a sit back and watch person. Since leaving school several years ago I’ve been involved in the local community more. I became a part of the hockey club as secretary and player and in the local Rural Youth club as secretary/treasurer. An activity here, a function there. I helped my Mum in anything she was involved in, like CWA. I also helped my Dad with his activities with Lions if they needed a hand. I never really got involved in too much even though I was just itching to. So, if I so desperately wanted to do more in my community, you’re probably wondering why I didn’t just get in there and do it.

It’s not as easy as it sounds. As a young person in my community I found it quite difficult to get further involved. I didn’t have very many exciting ideas and any ideas I did have, I didn’t know how to get them happening. I was apprehensive to take them to the groups that might be able to do something with them because I thought that they would just brush off anything that I said, that I was just young and silly and didn’t know anything. I didn’t feel I had the respect of the community members who were in a position to help act on anything I might suggest, so I devalued my own importance within the local community. From another perspective, I couldn’t see what I could possibly offer any of the groups in town which were generally run by older people. I’m just young and these other older people had been doing it for years and knew exactly what they were doing. This was the way I thought.

My participation in the Doing More With Agriculture US Study Tour last year changed my way of thinking in such a way that I have amazed myself in what I have achieved since returning.

It turns out that I had seriously underestimated the importance of involving of young people in rural communities. Given the opportunity, young people can do some pretty amazing things and can offer rural communities some really important stuff. Enthusiasm, fresh new ideas and the most important thing of all - a FUTURE. Without the involvement of the young people now, a rural community may as well just pack up and move out of its town today because it will not have a future tomorrow.

There is a slight problem in saying this though because as a young person I am in a bit of a minority in my town. Few people of my age live there. It is something that is common throughout every rural community. It is quite difficult getting a job locally once you’ve left school, particularly for a girl, especially if you’re like me and not cut out for work in a shearing shed. Most of my friends from primary school were sent away to boarding school once we reached high school, particularly upper secondary. Most of the ones who were sent away have never come back, certainly none of the girls and only those boys who have come home to work on the family farm have returned. Most of my friends can’t really understand how I can stay in Wylie.
So having more young people in our rural communities would be a good start wouldn’t it? If they are there then they might get involved, but how are we going to keep them in our towns to get them involved?

While on the US study tour we visited Dr Ed Nelson from Chadron, Nebraska. Dr Ed, as he is affectionately known, runs Leadership Seminars designed to strengthen rural communities. He also runs a project known as “community/school revitalisation”. The purpose of this project is to provide the opportunity for teachers, school administrators, economic developers, community leaders and youth to plan together as change makers for enhancing the future of rural communities and their schools. The project recognises that the viability of small rural communities and the quality of their schools are extremely interdependent. The activities undertaken in this project have been very exciting. Some activities are being primarily entrepreneurial ventures, some are primarily community building and some that combine community development with commercial implications.

A favourite activity that Dr Ed loved to tell us about was “Balloons Express”. This was a company involving 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th graders from a primary school in Nebraska to sell helium balloons. The students would take orders over the phone or attend to the customers that came to the school. They would fill the balloons from the helium tank and count back the change to their customers upon receipt of payment. Even though some of the balloons pop or float away because their string wasn’t tight enough the students were gaining valuable experience and knowledge in dealing with customers. Not only that though. To begin their company they got a loan which has now been repaid in full. The company’s profits are increasing and as a result “Balloons Express” is taking off and putting its proceeds back into the school with the purchase of new playground equipment. So children as young as 3rd and 4th grade are already involved in their own community.

In Cody, Nebraska, “a town too tough to die” the local school children refurbished the theatre in town. Before work began, the theatre was old and dilapidated, dull and dreary and not the nicest place to try and put on a play. The school children worked at attaining the funds to do the theatre up. The change was amazing. The theatre seats are all done up, the stage looked magnificent and the whole place just looked fantastic. It was proof of what school children could achieve when working with the community for the benefit of all.

Other activities that have been a part of the “community/school revitalisation” project include the development of newsletters, the operation of a youth centre, the construction of a house, involvement on community committees and community beautification projects.

All of the activities associated with the project provide enormous benefits to everyone involved, particularly the young people. It gives them a huge amount of experience in many different things such as running an entrepreneurial enterprise, dealing with customers, working with others, handling money matters and practical things like constructing a house. Other benefits are that everyone involved gains encouragement for putting future local projects into place, excitement about what can be achieved in the future and also the experience of participating as leaders.

The biggest thing of all though, I think, is that being involved in their own communities, young people feel as if it is really their own community. By getting them involved they feel like they are a really part of the community, that they have done something to help build that community to what it is, that it is their community. The project gives them ownership of their community. When it came time for the young people who had been involved in Dr Ed’s project to leave school and possibly move to other larger communities, they not only had practical work experience, they also didn’t feel the same need to leave that I know some of my friends did upon leaving Wylie. That’s because these young people have a community which they know they are a major part of and they don’t want to leave it. Or, in the cases where it was recognised they needed to go elsewhere for further education, they wanted to come back on completion of their study.
So by involving young people in rural communities from an early age in a project such as Dr Ed Nelson’s, means they may not want to leave. If they don’t leave then they have got the makings of great leaders in their communities who know they can achieve great things.

So if you can keep young people in rural communities after they have left school it’s pretty exciting isn’t it? But then how do we get others involved who may have come to the town after leaving school or are still thinking about leaving the community? The answer is to INVOLVE them. There are many ways that this can be achieved. Are you doing anything in your rural communities to involve young people??

I’m proud to say that in Wyalkatchem we have done something to get the ball rolling towards some major youth involvement happening in our community. Several weeks ago we held a youth workshop targeting the 17-30 of age. The Shire asked me to co-ordinate the workshop because at 21 I fit right into the target age group. There is no point getting an older person (aged say 52) to run such an event and through my experiences and knowledge that I attained from the US study tour, the Shire chose me.

We held the workshop on a Sunday to try not to clash with anything else since there is always so much going on. We brought in a facilitator, Simon, who has had loads of previous experience running things like our youth workshop. Simon asked some vital questions of our workshop participants.

- what did they expect from the rural community of Wyalkatchem,
- what did they think the community expected of them,
- what did they want in the town,
- what was good about the community and what they thought was bad about the community.

By the end of the day, Simon had really brought out the great ideas the participants had.

As a direct result of this successful workshop we now have a group formally known as the Wyalkatchem Youth Council. This group will look at all issues relating to young people in our town, we will be able to make recommendations to the Shire Council and in turn they will be able to direct anything to our council that they would like a youth perspective on. The young people of Wyalkatchem now have a voice, a very loud one, and we can now get really involved in our community.

Some things that are already being looked at include a community gym, a drama club, an Oktoberfest in conjunction with the annual Vintage Fair, and also looking at ways to encourage others in our age group to stay in our great town. So the Youth Council has given the young people in our town the opportunity to go ahead and do what I was always afraid to. It turns out the older people will listen to us, we do have some great ideas, they can work and by all of the community working together we can achieve and will achieve some terrific things in the future.

As I said, the US study tour changed my thoughts completely about getting involved in my community. I’m not afraid to do anything now. I have spoken with several Shire Councils and have offered to help them in any way I can in trying to get youth involvement happening in their towns. I have spoken with various other community groups, I have coordinated the youth workshop, I am now on the School Council as a community member, I am a part of the Youth Council, I’m still a part of the hockey club and I am as actively involved in as many things in my community as possible and encouraging my peers to do the same. I also have a goal of being a councillor on the Shire Council next year. I will be 22 and the youngest councillor ever at Wyalkatchem if I am successful.

So in conclusion, I would just like to say the power of the involvement of young people in rural communities should never ever be underestimated.
Generating Community Change

Vicky Buck  
Mayor, City of Christchurch  
New Zealand

Background
Vicky has spent eight years as the Mayor of the New Zealand City of Christchurch, and is acknowledged as the prime inspiration behind the incredible economic revitalisation of the city and its surrounding regions. Vicky has provided the leadership vision and drive for creating of a wide range of practical economic and employment initiatives that are being adopted in many other New Zealand and Australian towns and regions. They include positive attitude campaigns, economic development structures, business growth strategies, youth employment programs, tourism initiatives and community participation schemes.

These notes were taken from a recorded transcript – no written presentation was submitted

There are no right answers or any prescriptions about what to do. So what you have to do is give yourself permission to make mistakes, allow those around you and yourself to think, create, and innovate. If there’s any message to leave behind – be passionate about your town, don’t accept that there is nothing special about your town – there is something special about your town. Don’t be scared about failure. Take risks. Have an enthusiasm for change.

You have to start without any view of where you are going. You need to leap into the dark and get going. If you’re taking a leap into the dark – you get a glow in the dark award, (people who catch these awards have been given special permission by the people of NZ to do things – Vicki starts throwing toys into the audience). This is a kookaburra, I understand they are cheeky bird, so who ever gets this has permission to be as cheeky as they like, questioning the establishment, questioning why it is done that way. Next, a platypus, a mistake of nature. Who ever receives this has permission to make a mistake and enjoy making a mistake. Then a kiwi. The design of this bird is poor, that’s what we use as a our image in NZ, so you too can make a huge mistake. This is a dolphin, very playful. This allows you to play at council meetings or anywhere that is regarded as a serious place. These are yellow glasses. When you look at the world through yellow glasses everything looks better, so if you are having a negative day try these. This is Mr. Bean’s teddy bear. Mr. Bean is passionate about only one thing- his teddy. This is the award that allows you to be passionate, absolutely passionate, about anything. Now that you have your awards you must live up to them in next 6 months.

Local government should never be boring. Local government is about reaching the aspirations of the whole community, about allowing creative thought, about allowing people to make mistakes, take risks and getting it wrong as much as getting it right. It has to be fun. Fun is what charges us up as individuals. Councils aren’t just about roads, rates and rubbish. They are about every aspect of our lives.

Help businesses grow and stay. We have a program called Business Grow which goes out and asks businesses what we can do to help them; then we can clear those road blocks. It also gives important information about the community and the sorts of information and new programs they may need. It can help businesses grow but it also can help those businesses that are failing, so even if they exit they don’t take a whole lot of other businesses with them. One thing I think we underestimate is making the businesses feel nurtured and that their council is really responsive to their needs.
Doing More With Agriculture - An introduction

Mandy Curnow
Doing More With Agriculture Project
Agriculture WA

Being manager of the Doing More with Agriculture Project I am in the enviable position of working with farmers in an area of great change – both challenges and opportunities exist.

Agriculture in Australian is at the crossroads. We can continue to be producers, albeit very efficient ones, or we can take that bold step into the world of processing, marketing and creating partnerships. The urgent thing is that if we don’t take on this new world others will and those others are likely to be agribusiness giants like Conagra and Cargills. And we will continue to be price takers in a shakier industry.

Being involved in the Value Adding chain isn’t just an advantage to farmers. Agricultural processing, marketing and partnership with customers impacts on all the community. Our ability to survive as a community relies greatly on the success of agriculture and allied industries. In general, wealth in rural Australia is generated by:

- the number of dollars coming into the community from agriculture
- the length of time the money circulates in the community.

This project has arisen from the need to be part of the change in agriculture. It started in 1996 as a rural community development project with two prongs – “building communities and being innovative in agriculture”. It is now specifically concentrating on innovation in agriculture and its contribution to the rural community surrounding it.

The Key Elements of ‘Doing More With Agriculture’

- Enhancing the contribution of agriculture to rural economies
- Encouraging enterprising attitudes and actions
  networking
  marketing
  processing
  diversification
- Increasing recognition of the contribution that agriculture makes to the state, regional and local economies

The project is being run on a region by region basis with each region being resourced for 2 years from central funding. So far the project has run in the South Coast and the Central Agricultural regions, with the Northern and South West Agricultural regions, the rangelands and Kimberly regions yet to start.

We have been working in a number of areas and concentrating on several elements that will provide support for people wanting to explore the opportunities.
Elements of the project:

- Touring roadshows and seminars
- Overseas and inter-state study tours
- Support of local initiatives in value adding
- Awards showcasing best practice and innovation
- Conferences presenting new agricultural developments

Lessons learned!

Roadshows and seminars
- Hundreds of good ideas out there – Don’t dream it do it!
- Working as a group of producers gives you the clout and the capital
- The first steps in any business are the most important
- Find your market and talk to the consumer

Overseas and inter-state study tours
- Processing co-operatives, owned by farmers can provide a way of harnessing resources for local development
- We need to reconstruct links between the farmer and the producer
- Diversification of farming enterprises is a key factor in maintaining sustainability
- Academic institutions and rural communities can build upon each other

Awards showcasing best practice and innovation
The very first of these was held last night and will serve to provide mentors and leaders in innovation for our community to aspire to and to capture the story of what can be done.

Co-operatives have particularly captured the imagination of the study tour participants. We saw some great examples using bison, pasta, soybeans, and ethanol. In the USA there are well over a hundred successful co-operatives of a processing nature that are owned and run by farmers. We were taken with the opportunity that exists for our own communities and for this reason we have brought Rodney Christianson here.

Rodney’s story is about soybeans. But really the story, whether it’s large or small scale, soybeans or something else, it is about rural people making it happen. Welcome Rodney!
New Generation Co-ops – a USA Perspective

Rodney Christianson  
CEO, South Dakota Soybean Processors  
South Dakota, USA

Background  
Rodney G Christianson is the Chief Executive Officer of the South Dakota Soybean Processors, Inc, one of the most exciting examples of the new value adding processing co-operatives emerging in rural USA. This co-operative was the dream of nine local farmers who, over a two year period addressed 6,000 farmers at 200 community meetings, resulting in 2,100 farmers committing $21 million towards a $32.5 million processing plant. Today it processes 20% of the state’s soybeans and provides over 50 jobs in a small town of 1400 people. Rodney is the dynamic manager of the operation and has been responsible for directing its continuous growth and encouraging other co-operative ventures.

The South Dakota Soybean Co-op story  
The South Dakota Soybean Processors (SDSP) is a value adding co-op of 2,100 farmer members. By October 1996 SDSP completed the 13 month construction phase of $32.5 million soybean processing facility and ended its first operational year with a recorded profit and over $100m in sales. Products produced are high quality soybean meal and crude soybean oil.

All companies, whether agricultural or otherwise, get to the point of efficiency and cost minimising. They then must look at diversification and/or value adding to keep competitive and part of the market place. The next logical step is vertical integration. This was the step that local farmers saw as important.

Co-ops have had a long history in USA and worldwide. However, most have changed somewhat over the last decade with the ‘new generation’ model providing a better deal to farmers wanting to value add/process their product. The SDSP is set up to do 100% of its business with members, unlike traditional co-ops. It does this in two ways:

1. Members grow/source all beans used, or
2. They contract the co-op to source for them.

There are three ways the co-op can then use its profit and all need careful consideration:

1. Value added payment,
2. Investment/growth, and
3. Debt reduction.

SDSP is a value adding cooperative of agricultural producers with emphasis on adding value to soybeans. Our goal is to be financially strong and make a maximum value added payment to our members while maintaining growth and stock value. SDSP will maintain a competitive position in the market place by providing quality products to our customers by using highly efficient and cost effective processes.

SDSP will ensure success through teams of dedicated and competent directors and associates. We will seek to meet the needs of our members in a friendly and professional manner, and to listen to suggestions from members, associates, and customers.

How the Co-op started
Six farmers got together over a beer and started looking at options for getting more return on their crops. The farmers then went out and sold the concept/plan to investors in several states. There were many meetings, over 200, to sell the concept and raise the initial capital. They raised enough money per farmer to develop the plant and attract further investment.

Now in 1998 we have a Value Adding Cooperative of Agricultural Producers with members investment in their future in excess of $US21,025,937

**Founding Membership:**
- 2,087 agricultural producers
- 9,419,500 equity units
- with an average sales price of $2.19 per equity unit

The decision to place the plant in Volga, a small town near an interstate and railhead, has had a huge impact on that community. It provides jobs and services for the town but could easily have been placed near a larger centre where the added benefits of value adding to the farmers' product would have been lost.

It took vision, determination and a professional approach to make it happen, but it did happen and there are many other examples of where farmers have taken the lead in value adding.

**Achieving the Dream ...April - August, 1997**
- average daily crush: 50,752 bushels (bu). (1.2 million bu. above expectations!)
- revenues exceeded budget by 60% during July and August
- unit costs were 18% lower than expectations
- net results: profit of $1,486,000 from April through to August 1997

**SDSP Falling Short ...October ’96 - March, ’97**
- crush was 3 million bushels short of expectations
- net revenues achieved budget per bushel, but short of market potential
- operational expenses largely fixed (higher costs per bushel)
- oil storage program suffered setback
- net results: loss of $229,000 during October-March period

**Achieving the Dream ...Development Phase**
- total investment of $34.4 million (just 1% over original budget)
- 13 month construction project
- members’ net worth stood at $19.2 million ($1.2 million HIGHER than projected!)
- debt to equity ratio: 63% (75% of financing projection)

**Achieving the Dream ...11 month Operational Summary**

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<th>Achieved</th>
<th>Business Plan</th>
<th>97 Budget</th>
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<tr>
<td>Volume (000’s)</td>
<td>13,454</td>
<td>14,000</td>
<td>15,200</td>
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<td>Sales (000’s)</td>
<td>$ 105,608</td>
<td>$ 84,786</td>
<td>$ 117,390</td>
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<td>Profit (000’s)</td>
<td>$ 1,257</td>
<td>$ 1,739</td>
<td>$ 970</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beginning Net Worth</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
<td>8.9%</td>
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**SDSP’s Phases of ‘96’97**
- **Development Phase:**
closed as of September, 1996
- **Start-up through “Shake Out” Phase:**
  October, ‘96-March ’97
- **Performance Phase:**
  April-August, 1997

SDSP Return to Membership
- Growth: 2.3 Bushell earning per original equity units
- Market Value: $13.4 million increase in SDSP market value
- Value Added: Our goal is to be financially strong and make a maximum value added payment to our members while maintaining growth and stock value.

Membership Return
Stock Activity

<table>
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<tr>
<th>(000’s)</th>
<th>’95/’96</th>
<th>’96/’97</th>
<th>**YTD’98</th>
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<tr>
<td>Equity Units (EU)</td>
<td>9,419*</td>
<td>9,419</td>
<td>14,129</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sales Volume</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>154</td>
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<tr>
<td>EU Average Sales</td>
<td>2.52</td>
<td>3.22</td>
<td>2.42</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>**</td>
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* Includes August ‘95
** February ’98 Posted Sales
Snapshot – The Windmill Flour Story

Brendon Grylls
Windmill Flour
Corrigin, WA

The Grylls family moved to Corrigin from Victoria in 1950. They purchased a farm in the Corrigin district which has remained in the family ever since.

Brendon is one of two sons who are both interested in the family farm. After going away to boarding school, Brendon completed one year of law at university before returning to the family farm. Currently, Brendon’s father and uncle run the farm which is an 8,000 acre holding. It soon became apparent to Brendon that he would always be the worker on the farm as long as his father and uncle were around.

The impetus to begin a flour mill came after a radio story in which it was reported in successive stories that wheat prices had fallen by $20/tonne and yet people were starving in Somalia from a lack of wheat to eat. There seemed to be an anomaly here in that Australian farmers were getting minimal prices for wheat whilst there was a shortage of wheat worldwide.

A flour mill was advertised in Tasmania so Brendon and his father went over to Tasmania to look at it. It was a Dutch windmill brought over and set up but never used. It was an old mill but a good price so the Grylls’ bought it. They took several photos to show how it was meant to be assembled then dismantled it and brought it back to Western Australia in a ship container.

The Grylls’ then bought a small factory in Corrigin for approximately $40,000. The factory was necessary as they required three phase power which was not available on the farm. Buying the factory also created an off-farm investment. The mill was cleaned and put back together, which took approximately six months, in between farming operations.

It was then time to start making flour. The hardest bit was the marketing. In the early days of 1993/94, Brendon was taking ten bags of flour a week up to Perth in the back of his ute to a bakery. The baker was turning the flour into bread which Brendon was then bringing back to Corrigin. This was a good scheme to start with as the baker was able to give Brendon invaluable feedback as to the suitability of each batch of flour for bread making.

Since those days, the business has been building in both output and credibility. Sales have grown to the point that a new, small scale flour mill was brought in from Denmark last year. The business has grown from 10 bags of flour per week in the back of a ute to two, weekly loads backfilling a local carrier truck to Perth. These are a couple of advantages of having a country based business. Firstly, the cost of the factory in Corrigin was significantly less than would be expected in Perth, and secondly, being able to backfill a truck twice a week has kept the transport costs down.

At present, 1,000 tonnes of grain are going through the mill each year which converts into flour sales of $500,000 annually. Currently, the flour mill is supplying both domestic and international markets. They are also supplying a Japanese supermarket chain. Brendon has also developed a niche market by supplying bread mix for bread making machines. The bread mix was made in response to requests from Brendon’s mother, who was concerned that she couldn’t get a good quality product. Brendon was one of the first to make a bread mix so he was able to get a good hearing from companies such as Coles and Woolworths. He was also able to get an exclusive market with Target, who wanted to sell a bread making mix with their bread makers. One hundred and twenty Target stores Australia wide now sell Windmill Flour.
The motivating factor behind developing Windmill Flour was to make enough money to keep the family on the farm. Current prices put wheat at around $170/t which converts to $520/t for flour and $1250/t for bread mix. It is a positive way of keeping the family together and is also an off-farm investment so that it is part of the farm but not a burden. Brendon now draws his income solely from the flour mill.

The ideas for Windmill Flour do not finish there. There is a likelihood that ultimately they will move into biscuits, possibly for the world aid market and hence value add the flour. There is also the idea of expanding into a bakery as there is currently no bakery between Merredin and Narrogin.

Before commencing the Windmill Flour venture, Brendon attempted to research the market well. He talked to lots of bakers but it is hard to do research when you don’t have a product. Most potential customers would say come back and see us when you have a product.

Along the way, Brendon has learned many lessons and all his experience has been on-the-job training. By starting small you make small mistakes. Some of his main lessons are listed below:

- Never risk your core asset (in this case the farm) by trying to get too big too quickly or by investing in something that you can’t really afford. In Brendon’s case the whole venture has cost no more than a new header.
- Staff management. Brendon started out believing that the cheaper the staff he employed, the better it would be because it would keep costs down. He now has two full time staff who work with him not for him. He now believes that it is really important to instill your passion into staff so that you are not having to check on them all the time. If staff understand that the importance of their job is the reputation of the company, they are more likely to work diligently. One big mistake could ruin the company. There has to be give and take on both sides, eg if the business does well, reward the staff.
- Don’t spend money that you don’t have. The Grylls family have done everything possible themselves so that they are not employing outside staff or paying someone else to carry out a service. An example of this is an auger which they assembled themselves for $1 000 rather than buying it from a manufacturer for $2 000. In the early days, Brendon also used to borrow the fork lift from the tyre company down the road rather than spending money he didn’t really have on his own machine.

The success of Windmill Flour has been an integral part of keeping the Grylls family together with Brendon now being able to see a future for his children in Corrigin. The 8 000 acre farm is able to support 18 people.

The flour mill relates closely back to the family farm. Six thousand acres is cropped each year with 3000 t of wheat going to CBH and 1000 t going to the mill. Chaff is collected from the header for cattle. The mill has a 75% extraction rate so each year 250 t of mill mix is mixed in with the cattle rations. The Grylls’ family also support the farm with contract work such as harvesting, earthworks and concrete works.

Since beginning Windmill Flour, Brendon has been careful not to get any of the “big boys” off-side. In the early days when Windmill Flour was bringing bread back to Corrigin, the head of WA Country Bakers went and saw Brendon and told him that if he kept bringing bread to Corrigin, WA Country Bakers would send them broke. Since then, Windmill Flour has been having an effect on the big boys but they are also trying to steer around them.

Windmill Flour buys second hand cheese boxes from New Zealand for boxing their flour. They turn the boxes inside out and screen print the Windmill Flour logo on the boxes themselves. This reduces the cost per box to 20c as against $2 for new boxes. This allows extra money to spend on the calico bags which Windmill Flour is begged in for shelf presence.
Rural Community Economic Development - an introduction

Peter Kenyon
IDEAS
York, WA

Clues To Effective Small Town Economic Development

“...All the historic evidence indicates that significant community development only takes place when local community people are committed to investing themselves and their resources in the effort. That’s why you can’t develop communities from the top down, or from the outside in...”

(John McKnight, John Kretzmann, Mapping Community Capacity)

1. Foster a positive mindset.

2. Build community capacity
   - focus on healthy community behaviour
   - invest in local leadership development
   - foster diverse, but inclusive, citizen participation

3. Using strategic planning, develop an agenda that is a comprehensive strategic and based on community economic development.

4. Recognise the importance of local business vitality.

5. Forge partnerships with neighbouring communities for collaboration and peer learning.

6. Become a smart consumer of outside resources.

7. Evolve a learning and searching community.

8. Maintain enthusiasm, passion, hope, involvement, belief and expectation

‘Destiny is not a matter of chance. It is a matter of choice. It is not a thing to be waited for, it is thing to be achieved’.

(William Jennings Bryan)
Developing your community - The Nebraska Story

Maxine Moul
Nebraska Dept. of Economic Development
Nebraska, USA

Background
Former Lieutenant Governor of the State of Nebraska, Maxine has, for the last 3 years, headed the Nebraska Department of Economic Development. She has provided leadership and motivation for the creation and implementation of a wide range of both ‘top down’ and ‘bottom up’ initiatives that have enabled Nebraska to become a leading US state in economic and employment creation. Many of the development options inspired by Maxine have their roots in her early experiences as a resident of a small rural town and editor of a country newspaper.

Nebraska is located in the middle of the US, in the heart of the Great Plains and is the breadbasket of the nation. There are 1.6 million people scattered over 77 square miles, 180 miles north to south, 450 miles east to west.

Agriculture is the state’s largest business, revolving around grains (corn, wheat, soybeans, milo) and livestock (beef, pork, poultry). Nebraska leads the US in beef processing. The state is one of the most rural in the US, with approximately half the population living in the two eastern metropolitan cities of Omaha and Lincoln.

Of the 535 incorporated communities, 10% are urban and 90% are rural (with 2,500 or fewer residents). Eighty eight of our communities have 100 or fewer residents. Perhaps, then, it is not surprising that we are a state of small businesses. Most (90%) of the firms reporting wage and salary employees have 10 or fewer employees. Entrepreneurs, employing only themselves and their families number in the hundreds of thousands; 57,000 farms, 130,000 sole proprietorships and 158,000 home-based businesses.

Because of Nebraska’s reliance on agriculture, it was particularly vulnerable in the 1980s to the downturn in agriculture and high interest rates. Farms failed at a high rate. This endangered small town banks and many small town businesses closed after the loss of farming families. The economic crisis for Nebraska is most dramatically illustrated by the out-migration of people from all but the largest communities. From 1980-1990, 83 of the 93 counties lost people, with nearly half (45) losing more than 10% of their population Some of the most remote, agriculturally dependent counties were clearly haemorrhaging, losing as much as one quarter of their population.

The state as a whole didn’t lose people, but only gained half a percent in 10 years (about 8000 people or 800 per year). It was clear, as the state moved into the 1990s that new steps had to be taken to find ways to turn rural communities around so they could grow again, or at least stabilise. With the new political leadership of Governor Ben Nelson, economic and community development efforts had a new rural and small business focus. Governor Nelson pledged to form a new state-wide Rural Development Commission (RDC), to devise new strategies and new solutions for rural communities. As his Lt Governor, and because of my rural and small business background, I was asked by the Governor to head this effort in January 1991.

Just one week after taking office, the Governor created the RDC by executive order, and named its first 13 members with the Lt Governor as chair. Those 13 members were all from rural communities, with diverse backgrounds and interests.
Those commissioners and their successors planted the seeds to incubate a whole series of development initiatives. The initiatives have focused on developing public/private partnerships, communities working together in new ways on a regional basis, training programs and resources for local volunteers, and an increased emphasis on supporting and encouraging small business development. In addition to the RDC, the two most critical new organisations are the Nebraska Development Network and the Nebraska Community Foundation.

The Network was also created by Governor Nelson’s executive order, just a year after the RDC. It reaches out across the state, to both professionally paid economic development staff and volunteers who give incredible amounts of time to work on economic development projects in the communities and regions.

While the RDC has remained a small group of advisors, advocates and architects of rural development policy, the Network has become a large group of “doers”, who develop and implement programs, with nearly 500 organisations and over 800 individuals participating.

The Nebraska Community Foundation, again created by Governor Nelson, in 1993, has become the fund raising vehicle for rural development, generating nearly $17 million from 1994 to today. The Foundation is the subject of a separate workshop at this conference, so I won’t go into details about it here.

Because the Network has provided the umbrella for so many new rural economic development programs, I will focus the rest of my time on its efforts. Its missions is to assist people, communities and businesses to succeed in a global economy.

The Network’s goals and outcomes include:

1. Each community and region is responsible for shaping its economic future.
2. Public resources are focused on effective actions that help communities and businesses grow and prosper.
3. Public-private partnerships are encouraged, allowing limited resources to be leveraged through private investment.

Major network components that have evolved during its 5 years of life include:

1. Regional groups
2. Working groups
3. The Nebraska Development Academy
4. Community Builders
5. Nebraska On-line
6. Network board with membership representing organisation sectors, regions and at large
7. Network office, based with the RDC staff in the Nebraska Department of Economic Development.

The seven regions that have evolved have been self-defined by the communities, and these communities often cross regional lines, depending on the project. The regional groups are made up of economic and community development service providers, who co-ordinate service delivery to communities and make services available to communities trying various development activities.

Working groups are made up of network members and partners who focus on specific development challenges and evolve solutions. The areas include development finance, human resources, leadership, international trade, agriculture and food processing, technology transfer, start-up and existing business support and community development.
Initiatives and specific programs that have evolved from the Networks Working groups include the Home-based Business Association, Nebraska On-line, the Micro Enterprise Partnership Fund, the Nebraska Community Foundation, and the Nebraska Partnership for Economic Development Act.

Nebraska On-line was started nearly five years ago to provide an Internet-based information resource available throughout the state. When it was first established, few businesses and individuals in rural Nebraska had access to the Internet so computer access was made available through all public libraries.

The Partnership for Economic Development Act was passed by the Legislature in 1995 making $250,000 a year available in grants of up to $25,000. The major requirements are that the grants be for programs serving more than one community and have at least 25% local match (in dollars). They have relied on the innovation of communities and have generated more than 100% match. The diverse projects have included loan funds to small businesses, youth entrepreneurship, agricultural marketing, tourism information, technology and dairy farm recruitment.

During the first year, communities applied for grants totalling $1.2 million. As a result, the Legislature doubled the appropriation to $500,000 yearly in the 1997-98 and 1998-1999 budget years.

The educational arm of the Network is the Nebraska Development Academy, which includes Community Builders and the Nebraska Rural Development Institute. Community Builders now has nearly seven years of experience, with nine programs in existence and others in formation.

Each of these efforts has been aimed at demonstrating the impact on rural communities when their people invest in themselves and in their businesses. One illustration of the results is the community reinvestment that has taken place in our ‘Main Street Towns’. There are 11 of them in a program that started in 1995. With the first $350,000 in private foundation funding, the total program value grew to the first $350,000 in private foundation funding, the total value of the program grew to $1.4 million. Nearly half of that was reinvestment by businesses in their main street buildings. Those ‘Main Street’ communities are beginning to revitalise and find new life. They range in size from populations of 1,200 to 25,000. Alliance (population 13,000) now has 100% occupancy of its downtown buildings.

Results of this comprehensive approach to rural development can also be illustrated by the growth in manufacturing employment. Nebraska has bucked the trend in declining manufacturing jobs in the US and the somewhat stagnant growth in the surrounding midwest states. The largest growth in Nebraska manufacturing jobs began in 1993 and continues today.

But most impressive is the growth of manufacturing employment in rural Nebraska. A major part of that has been in food processing; building on our agricultural base and adding value to our grain and livestock commodities.

Nebraska’s unemployment rate has dropped dramatically (although it never reached the nations average of 8-9%, even during the ag crisis of the 1980’s). Rural Nebraskans move to where jobs are, rather than go on the unemployment rolls. Today, the State’s unemployment is consistently between 1.5-2%, the lowest in the nation and less than half the US rate. We are essentially at full employment with more women in the workforce, as a percentage, than nearly every other state.

In addition, per capita income is increasing in Nebraska versus the rest of the US. We are closing the gap between our rural state and the US average, driven by the larger metropolitan population. In 1991, Nebraska’s per capita income was 92.2% of the national average, but in 1996 it was 95.1%. And in 1996, the total personal income increased 8.3%, versus the national growth of 5.4%.
The increased number of jobs in the state, up nearly 13% from 1990 to 1996, has resulted in a reversal of the dramatic depopulation of our rural counties that was seen during the 1990s.

The 1997 census figures, released just a couple of weeks ago by the US Census Bureau, show that over 40 of our counties are now gaining in population, and just three continue to have greater than 10% loss. One of those is Rock County, part of the Outback Initiative in northern central Nebraska. With the energy in those communities, I expect we’ll soon see a reversal there as well.

People are moving to Nebraska, and a large percentage of them are former Nebraskans who left during the 1980s. A new residents’ survey by one of the Network partners (the Center for Rural Community Revitalisation and Development at the University of Nebraska) shows that 41% of the ‘new’ Nebraskans are former Nebraskans. It is the largest and most diverse in-migration in over 25 years, and for the first time, it is not based on an agricultural boom.

The new Nebraskans are extremely satisfied (90%) with their decision to move to the state.

Perhaps the most important result of Nebraska’s rural revitalization, is the opportunity our new residents are giving us to enrich Nebraska culturally, socially and economically.
A very human fault is our tendency to ignore the potential of what is in our own backyards.; this is certainly the case with our indigenous trees.

At a community opportunity workshop in February 1997, the Wellstead region community brainstormed options for turning a potentially negative future into a positive one. Areas of short to medium concern were prioritised; sub-committees of the Wellstead Progress Association formed to look for possible solutions and report back to the Progress Association.

The Wellstead New Industries Group aims to identify industries and services which might be viable possibilities for the Wellstead region, including the value adding of hardwood in dry land areas. There is an apparent lack of research into high value local hardwood timbers in the lower rainfall areas of the state. Highly productive sheep and beef pasture land in the higher (7500mm) rainfall area is increasingly being bought or leased for boundary to boundary planting of Blue Gums or Pines. Such monocultures are having and will continue to have serious ramifications on our rural communities.

To address these concerns of the Wellstead New Industries Group, in association with Julia Levinson for Timber 2002, Albany, and Bev and Marden Hundley, Green Scene, Esperance, have joined in trials to integrate species of indigenous trees into farm plans. This allows farmers to invest in high value niche marketing of various species suited to dry land areas. Species planted to date include River Red Gum, Sugar Gum, Brown Mallett, Yellow Gum, Red Iron Bark, York Gum, Flat Topped Yate, Golden Wreath Wattle, Black Wattle and Willow Wattle. Possible options of niche marketing these species include fine furniture and craft making, building construction, fencing, tannin, charcoal, activated carbon, firewood and honey.

The Jerramungup Agroforestry group was formed in 1997 as a networking group for the Jerramungup-Wellstead Farmers. Currently, trees are being planted in the Wellstead region for commercial and environmental reasons. The number of trees planted each year varies, as do the species and reasons for planting.

Demonstration Days.
At the “Wellstead Harvest Festival” and “Adventures in Timber” days various people from the timber industry showcased all aspects of agroforestry and its potential for the region. Planting, care, value adding and possible niche marketing of a cross section of local timbers, and wood turning of milled product waste into a salable item were demonstrated.

Mobile Lewis and Lucas mills have been used on donated local timbers. Samples are being dried and tested by Timber 2002 in Albany, whilst the balance has been stacked to dry on a Wellstead farm. Drying procedures, including moisture testing and timber behavior, have been discussed. Some Albany TAFE students of fine woodcraft are considering joint venture development with farmers. Future commercial resources could provide timber for niche markets such as fine furniture making.

Farmers from different regions are considering an agroforestry group along the south coast of Western Australia. Timber 2002 is promoting and in some cases financing timber courses such as saw milling and processing. A very practical hands on Master Tree Growers Course will be available later this year.
For whatever reason, farmers are planting more trees now than ever before in Australia. The main supplies of timber for the global market will come from well managed farm crops. We need to increase the high value hardwood supply for furniture production, building construction, etc. from our valuable indigenous resources for both Australian and overseas markets. Australia must turn its attention to selling value added products, as well as unprocessed resources. The timber needs of Australia and developing countries of the Pacific Rim and India provide the challenge to investigate farm based timber enterprises. Commercial wood production is an opportunity for developing a sustainable farmer owned processing industry.

My personal dream is to see vertical integration within our region: a local timber, farmer owned industry. From seed to marketing, to finished high value product, it will keep our hard earned economic resources within the region, and provide agricultural diversification and precious employment opportunities for local people.
The Hyden Progress Association is a central pivot for local community opinion:
- it liaises with the Shire of Kondinin,
- holds futures planning workshops,
- successfully accessed a Small Town Economic Planning grant,
- instigated the formation of Hyden Business Development Pty,
- and is the parent body for Hyden Tidy Towns, Hyden Young Singles Housing, Hyden Swimming Pool, Hyden-Karlgarin Landcare, Waveline Newspaper, Hyden Community Builders, Hyden Medical Centre and many more active local voluntary committees.

Hyden Resource & Telecentre is hub for:
- district communication and access to government information,
- cultural events,
- grant applications and
- co-ordination and publicity for many events.

Hyden Tidy Towns Committee enjoys the support of most local businesses, sporting clubs and community groups. The whole community knows that a bright, smart and welcoming town image is integral to local social and economic development. In addition, locally owned tourism and hospitality businesses support local community initiatives, including the employment of a town gardener.

Other local businesses are encouraged by the Hyden Progress Association Business Awards and motivational evenings.

The Hyden Lions Club works closely with all of the above to meet local needs, including regular roadside litter pick-ups, the building of the Retirement Village and lots of fun events.

**Hyden is a town with ENERGY and a POSITIVE ATTITUDE! - WE DON'T QUIT!**

The key attributes are;
VISION, PASSION, COOPERATION, COMMUNICATION, DETERMINATION, INNOVATION, APPRECIATION AND CELEBRATION!

Yes! Every time another community “do it yourself” project is achieved, we celebrate - it is important to recognise hard work and perseverance with praise, thanks and celebration.
Snapshot - Avon Arc - The Adventure Begins

Paul Tomlinson,
Managing Director, Avon Arc Co-operative Ltd
Northam WA

What I want to talk about is you - your future, your desires, your rural communities - and just what you are prepared to do to make your own rural community stronger. I know that's what you want. It is why you're here - to share, to learn, to take enriched ideas home with you. You are here because you have passion, you have commitment. I have passion and commitment too.

You may have it because you are really smart. You understand that if your region succeeds, then so do you. You understand the power of community unity. Power in the political system and power through a unified approach. If you have not yet seen the light and think that you are here simply for yourself - that will change.

I want to share with you my personal aspects of a recent experience that has changed my life - and given me a career to die for.

What this region now has is a mechanism owned by the community for the community. Our mission statement is to build the region's agricultural profile and economic base through a targeted promotion of tourism.

I mentioned the political system. Government finds it easy to assist communities that are prepared to help themselves. A visionary and effective local member of Parliament is critical to this process. That local member also needs the support and co-operation of his or her ministerial colleagues. The Avon Arc project came about because of the vision of our local 'pollie', Max Trendorden, and the goodwill and forward thinking of the Minister for Primary Industries, Monty House.

Some years ago, Max came back from the United States with first hand experience of what a rural hinterland community had done to foster its profile and build its economic base. Through its Chamber of Commerce, the rural community surrounding Sacramento published seasonal information guides targeted at the metropolitan catchment. The similarity to this region was obvious to Max. The Sacramento catchment, of over 1 million people 60 to 90 minutes away duplicated that of Perth to the Avon Arc region.

Incidentally, the Avon Arc umbrella circles Perth from Brookton in the south, north through Beverley, York, Northam, Toodyay, Goomalling, Victoria Plains, then west through Chittering, Gingin and to the coast at Lancelin. It spreads east and west to embrace Mandaring, Dowerin, Quairading, Cunderdin and Tammin.

Max saw proof that Sacramento's residents kept their publications to plan leisure activities in the hinterland. These included stays of one to several nights taking in experiences like fruit picking, visiting farms, camping and bush walking. The profile of the region was enhanced and its economic base grew as the multiplier effect of the introduced dollars filtered through the rural community.

Monty grasped this vision. Through the agencies of Doing More with Agriculture and the New Industries Group he dangled the carrot of seed funding to any rural community in Western Australia that could come up with a working proposal. While all this was going on, Max had been talking to me and others about his Sacramento experience. Discussions started some years ago and began to hot up during the last two years.

To be honest, I could not get excited about his vision for this region. But he persisted. The process gained momentum to the point of him almost beating me about the head to get me off my rear and help him work through it. Even then, I still could not get excited, but resolved to put my mind to it.
I kept tripping over my perception of the two words and their definitions: agriculture and tourism. How could the two co-exist? After all, didn’t agriculture mean the man on the land and the importance of his produce to the nation’s economy? And wasn’t tourism about hotel accommodation, B & Bs and visits to the Pinnacles or Wave Rock? Rubbish! - How wrong could I be?

It was then (when I locked myself away from the world to work on Max’s idea) that the process became clear. I came to realise what the “it” was. Then the “how” evolved and when I progressed to the financial feasibility of it, I became completely hooked.

Agriculture is far more than the man on the land. It is the whole infrastructure of a rural community. It is the local council, the accountant, newsagent, insurance agent, produce store, service station, deli, supermarket, real estate agent and all those other business and community groups making up the community. To be vibrant, the rural community needs each component to flourish. Each is a vital link in the chain. Each relies on the other’s success.

We took the Sacramento model and rehashed it. The mechanism needed a vehicle. It needed to be run as a business. It would never work if that business was owned by a small handful of locals that were in business for their own gain. It needed a mechanism that gave broad-based community proprietorship to the initiative.

A co-operative has now been formed and it’s incorporation should be completed within days. Already we have membership intentions from more than 50 potential shareholders. These include private people, businesses, farmers and local authorities. In fact - and this is the really rewarding part - as we move around spreading the word through the community, we have not yet received a single negative comment or knock back. This is adrenaline pumping stuff. Our timing is spot on. The region is ready for this and its people are going for it. The co-op has a board of directors representing the entire Avon Arc region.

The “how” is simple. We will publish four editions each year promoting the region (all seasonally timed), and distribute them to Perth homes. The message will be about landcare issues, what the region is doing about its salt problem, agricultural issues and methods. It will illustrate a wide range of pleasure activities, detailing just what a multiplicity of joys exist within 90 minutes of their homes. What they can do, what they can see and where they can go. Unashamedly, tourism will be seen to be the big winner.

But it is far more than that. Tourism is only the top of the pyramid. Introduced dollars will trickle through to all sectors of the community. Therefore the community is the great winner. Let me give you a simple example.

Needing to know the extent and scope of the existing product in the region, we are compiling a thorough audit. This addresses attractions, accommodation, tour and charter operators, hire services, town information, tourist centres and organisations and the hospitality services.

Another section is special events. An early analysis of a handful of entries in the ‘attractions and special events’ categories shows that last year, 101,674 people visited just 29 attractions. All of these 29 attractions were normal, average draw cards - nothing unusual or super special. Yet, if we take an average expenditure of $30 per person per day, a massive $3,050,220 was injected into the local economy. All new dollars - and through just 29 normal attractions.

Employment will also benefit. I can see this having a real impact on job availability, particularly for our youth, as the message spreads and we begin to see the result of more visitors. What a wonderful way of stemming the exodus of our kids to the metropolitan area.
Thirty years ago, 85% of city people knew someone in the bush they could visit and stay with. Today I believe that figure has crashed to about 5%. Can you imagine the impact of this program? And yes, our publication’s masthead is ‘Imagine’.

Out of all this process, a proposal was submitted and Monty House accepted it. We are under way. In short we are about re-introducing this region to our city cousins.

The region’s farmers will be encouraged to lift their economic base through revenue opportunities such as accommodation and viewing experiences such as shearing, etc.

Most advertising revenue in the publications will come from the Perth market. There will be opportunities for local operators to advertise. We will be able to give them a better marketing mechanism than they now have. Their message will be focused, targeted and cohesive - and I believe we can do this at a reduced cost to their annual promotional budgets. Additional revenue will come from shareholders, the members of the cooperative, through both capital involvement and annual subscriptions which have been set at very affordable levels.

Now to the financial side. Unlike the Sacramento model, we believed our region could not financially sustain our viability, so our initiative needed to be funded externally. Apart from the initial government seed funding, the various levels of funding will come from major corporate sponsorship. Already, indications are that our budget from this sector will be passed.

With the message also comes responsibility. The region’s attractions must live up to their claims. Service must be of a high standard, and to that end we will introduce a series of standard controls and an educational component to assist agricultural tourism operators.

The publications will have a two-fold purpose. Firstly, they will encourage Perth people to come out, see and experience for themselves. The second is that Perth people will get the agricultural message, in an unsterilised format, even if they don’t venture out to see for themselves.
Rural Leadership In WA - A Personal Perspective

Vicki Brown
Future Leaders Course Participant
Shire Councillor and community leader
Tambellup

Just what is this leadership thing that every one wants us all to think about???? Are you a leader? Am I a leader?

Had you asked me 2 years ago if I was a community leader I’d have said no. So what’s changed? More than I can tell you about in fifteen minutes! But after much thought I guess, in essence, it’s the way I look at what I do and why.

I’ve been a committee junkie for a long time; basketball, softball and netball clubs. Agricultural Society, play group, preschool, P & C, Brownies, Telecentre, specific task groups both in my community and on a regional level, eventually ending up in junkie heaven on the local Shire Council. But still with no real perception of being a leader.

To me it was just a case of bogging in to get the jobs done. And I don’t believe that I’m Robinson Crusoe. Rural WA has been built on that concept of bog in and get the jobs done and, all be it a bit hit and miss, its worked in the past, but will it in the future?? History is a great place to start but we’ll all be history if we let it limit our potential and our potential is only limited by our imagination, our vision, our dedication and our determination.

Even though the jobs got done, did we or have we got a grasp of the big picture? An older resident of Tambellup recently told me that the ‘community’ as she knew it had changed. Life’s so busy now, people are more mobile, time is money, and as we all strive to make a living and make the money go further time has become a precious commodity, leaving little time for all those community activities. Once time was something most people could give” - so is she right?

In my community, it’s getting harder to entice people to become involved in community organisations and activities that follow a traditional committee structure. So does that mean we junkies work harder or should we work smarter? Who here has attended a meeting that went on for hours over matters that should have been wrapped up quickly? Why is that? Maybe it’s the lack of an effective chair or people not being familiar with meeting process, losing or not having a collective vision, no identified group goals.

When you make a cake or plant your crop you follow a recipe or certain guidelines. When making business decisions you investigate all the pros and cons and make a decision based on that analysis. Yet when you put people in a committee situation, logic often flies out the window. That’s if you can get them there in the first place. People seem terrified about sitting on a committee. Many see it as a possible 20 year sentence without necessarily having committed a crime.

Peter Kenyon has a favourite saying that I like very much: ‘Here is Edward bear coming downstairs now, bump,bump,bump, on the back of his head, behind Christopher Robin. It is as far as he knows the only way of coming downstairs, but sometimes he feels that there really is another way if only he could stop the bumping for a moment and think of it’. This is our opportunity for the banging to stop. To realise that there is a better way to inspire, organise and approach the tasks needed to keep our communities moving forward.
At last year’s conference in Esperance, the minister for Primary Industries: Fisheries, Monty House said, programs like Doing More With Agriculture, Community Builders, the Leadership courses, and conferences like this would enable the rural community to become informed and empowered to take control of their own destiny.

No one cares more about the future of our communities than those of us that actually live in them. Effective local leadership will go a long way to ensuring that future. So, in my case I try not to blunder my way through the JOBS. I have a vision and I try to encourage and inspire others to join me on my journey and to sweeten criticism with alternatives no matter who we are targeting. And for once my definition actually matches that of a dictionary: ‘Leadership’ - the position, function, or guidance of a leader, a leader - someone who assists others to achieve.

Leaders come in all shapes, sizes, genders and ages. We all have something to contribute in the quest for a better future for rural WA. Our greatest resource in rural WA is us!

Now I couldn’t tell you with a clear conscience that all of Tambellup is ready to follow me in my vision “to ensure Tambellup survives for my children to return to, should they want to”. Gosh, I haven’t even reached local status yet! I’ve only been there permanently for 14 years so in some quarters I’m still just a radical young blow in, and when I took a position on the Shire Council some members of the community nearly departed to the next world in absolute horror. Sometimes change or a shock is good for the system and may be helpful in attempting to alter the mind set - of some very, very set minds.

We must be sure to acknowledge the efforts of those that came before us. But we can still being daring enough to say that for rural WA to reverse the trends of decline, we need to step out there, take a few risks, accept that residents under 50 (many of them women) are able to contribute to the leadership of our organisations, our councils, our industry bodies and even our state.

Leadership and its impact on rural WA is really a matter of our expectations. My expectations are high. I chose to live in rural WA. I like the safe, friendly, close-knit lifestyle it affords my family. I don’t expect metropolitan style services, but I do want a realistic level of service from both governments and the private sector and we all know that the best way to get what you want is to get it yourself.

When I hear an economist say that small towns are not economically viable I want to throw up or display violent tendencies! The Premier of WA said at a cabinet meeting in Katanning that 26% of this state’s population creates 86% of its wealth. Well guess where most of those 26% reside? Yep, out here in the bush in those small, undesirable towns and their regional centres. But even though we know that, it won’t ensure our future. So what will? Someone once said that the surest future to predict is the one you create. So my message this afternoon is that if you believe it can happen then it can happen.

I don’t delude myself in thinking it’s easy, but nothing worthwhile ever is. It’s not a popular move trying to instigate change. I often hear “Well just who does she think she is?” Well I know who I am and I know what drives me. I freely admit I’m no expert in anything, I have no letters after my name, most of my experience has been gained through the university of life and my opinions are based on those experiences (some good, some not so good, some terrific), I’m your average rural dweller, no more special than the next person. So why am I up here talking to you? Well something happened that alerted me to the opportunities and possibilities for a town like Tambellup and changed my perception on leadership. The spark was being nominated to be a participant in the 1996 USA study tour and (with the support of my family and friends) was able to become involved with Doing More With Agriculture. It was an awesome experience and it broadened my horizons no end. Then I was lucky enough to be on the Foundations for Leadership course in Albany. The benefits of such a course are being able to improve skills you already have and develop new ones, with high quality practitioners in many different fields.
After seeing the Community Builders concept in operation in the States, I couldn’t resist the urge to sit in on the meetings for the 6 months it ran here in the Great Southern (a junky has to feed her habit). This is a great program to encourage the ‘bottom up’ approach to community development, to expose more people to real examples of the potential of our towns, not only the ‘what’ but also the ‘how’, bringing neighbors closer together and widening our networks.

I’m not a Monty House or David Beurle groupie but I would like to acknowledge their commitment to rural WA and thank them for the opportunity to be involved with one of the greatest challenges I’ve had the pleasure to undertake. From September to March I was one of the 19 participants of the inaugural Future Leaders Course. We were stretched, pushed, pulled, bruised, scratched, terrified, enlightened, encouraged, criticised (in a caring and positive way of course) praised, supported, and challenged. We were given the opportunity to talk to both titled leaders and those perceived by their peers as leaders in many industries, groups, and government departments, and to review our ourselves in the process. Doors were opened (some via a little ministerial oil) to give us a quick look into many different areas of agriculture, fisheries, the government and community. We met many people who were generous with their time, giving us an insight into their business, sharing not only their successes but also their failures so that we could learn from their mistakes. We also made what will be long lasting friendships and had fun along the way - a vital factor in all our undertakings.

The experience and skills gained by those that have already completed this course, and those that will in the future, along with all the other programs recently implemented will be put to use in all aspects of our lives. They will without doubt have a positive impact on our communities, industries, and rural WA in general.

Another Kenyon favourite says “if you want to plan for 1 year, grow wheat. If you want to plan for 10 years, grow trees. If you want to plan for 50 years, grow leaders”. If this is true then the investment of time, effort and money in training the leaders, and educating our communities of today and tomorrow, is an investment we should all make. So when the opportunities that I’ve been lucky enough to tap into come your way, make sure you or someone in your community takes advantage of them.

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I’d like to finish up by telling you that Tambellup is now booming. Weil not quite yet, but it is undergoing an increase in optimism. We have a Telecentre that is continually growing and expanding and becoming a vital part of our way of life; we are well into the planning stage for the establishment of the WA Agri-business Development Centre; we are reviving community spirit and pride in our town; the shire has become pro-active in community and economic development; we have lots of ideas that we are slowly nurturing and implementing and we are giving it our best shot.

I’ll leave you with this thought, “As you explore all the possibilities for a better future for rural WA and seek solutions for your town’s survival and its leadership issues, never dismiss that what you see each morning in your bathroom mirror is the most vital resource in the process. But so is that which is seen in the mirror in the house next door”.

A BETTER FUTURE FOR RURAL WA....conference proceedings 1998
Snapshot - The Dowerin Community

Deanne Jones
Dowerin GWN Field Days Committee
Dowerin, WA

On behalf of the Dowerin District High School and committee of the Dowerin GWN Field Days I am pleased to offer a brief overview of one of the many exciting initiatives that have taken place in our community recently.

As many of you would be aware, fluctuating numbers in country schools can be a budgeting and staffing nightmare for the Principals involved. This is indeed the case in Dowerin where the enrolments in the high school have dipped significantly. Although this is only a temporary trend, when combined with a reduction in primary school numbers it has resulted in problems at the beginning of the 1998 year.

The only option left open to the Principal was to reduce staff numbers by one teacher, which of course meant that the number of subjects (mainly in the high school would also be cut). Even with significant budget reallocation there seemed to be no way that the students at Dowerin could be offered the same subject choices they have enjoyed in the past.

At this point the Principal elected to look outside the school system for options to maintain subject areas. The link between the school and the Dowerin GWN Field Days was already strong, with students interacting throughout the year. Mr Smith approached the Field Days committee with a formal sponsorship proposal that offered the committee a number of financial and time frame options.

Mr Smith had targeted three areas that he considered to be important to the school, the community and field days. He suggested that with financial assistance the subject options of Land Care, Horticulture and Farm Skills could continue and be further developed to reflect current educational thinking as well as community ideals. The committee agreed to the proposal although there certainly was some concern that the reduction in school funds should be a government issue. Fluctuating numbers in many smaller schools would create the same problem and they may not have the opportunity to access funds to get them through the low patches.

The direct injection of $10,000 per year over a three year period to the school budget from the Field Days (and we must remember that the Field Days really represents the Dowerin community) has and will have ongoing benefits.

Firstly, a local teacher has been employed and is teaching the children using her local knowledge and linking that to the bigger picture, especially in the area of landcare. Several new school staff will be travelling to the Alcoa Landcare Centre in Tammin to learn first hand of the benefits and issues. Both of these programs are closely linked to the horticulture stream in which children have the opportunity to learn all stages of plant production and cultivation. The school has also targeted the education of the wider community by producing an Educational Trials student/teacher resource package using the sponsorship provided by the Field Days. This package has allowed schools from outside the immediate area to share the experiences of the field days.

A most exciting aspect of the Dowerin District High School is the Farm Skills area. This programme has been going for some years now with the students using a portion of the Field Days site to plant crops and learn the various farming techniques associated with successful cropping. Farm Skills students also learn the basics of mechanics, welding and general farm maintenance in a fully equipped work area. The community link is once again obvious with local farmers assisting students as well as fertilizing and spraying all being done free of charge.
One of the main reasons why the Field Days committee was keen to support the sponsorship concept was the subject areas that had been nominated by the Principal. Whilst not considered to be mainstream subjects, the topics of horticulture and landcare are issues that are relevant to every citizen in this country. Additionally, children who may not have a direct link to farming have the opportunity to experience and learn about agriculture through the Farm Skills option.

While many schools accept and form fund raising groups for the provision of additional equipment and resources, this sponsorship directly allows for additional staff. It also allows for the Dowerin community to provide a teacher from their own resources in a remarkable show of initiative and commitment.

The Dowerin District High School is a very important component of our district and it is the strong belief that the Field Days were set up initially for the benefit of the whole community. This sponsorship is one illustration of how the efforts of so many over the whole year (and not just three days) can have a positive flow-on effect to all that live in our wonderful town.
I am the Executive Director of Oklahoma Community Institute. It’s been in existence for 2 1/2 years and was created to focus efforts on community development. Communities all over the state held focus groups to determine what services we would provide. In other words, what did the communities feel that they needed to help them, not just to survive but to thrive?

OK has two large cities with populations of 466,510 and 376,370. There are 642 municipalities. The community where I live has a population of 26,000, which is large to me since I grew up in a community of 4000.

The other primary industries, wheat, cotton and cattle are still major contributors to the economy but are not as strong as they once were.

The principal minerals in OK are petroleum, natural gas and coal. For many years, the oil industry and agriculture were the economic engines that drove our state. My husband’s family has been in the oil business for 3 generations and now that our son is becoming involved, really 4 generations. Jeff’s grandfather was what they referred to as a “wildcatter”. They were the early drillers for oil. Vast wealth could be created overnight but you could lose much of it just as quickly. The grandfather was the risk taker. When Jeff’s father took over the company, he was much more conservative and the company became more stable. Now, more of the company’s income is in natural gas and other investments.

The other primary industries, wheat, cotton and cattle are still major contributors to the economy but are not as strong as they once were.

OK has two large cities with populations of 466,510 and 376,370. There are 642 municipalities. The community where I live has a population of 26,000, which is large to me since I grew up in a community of 4000.

I am the Executive Director of Oklahoma Community Institute. It’s been in existence for 2 1/2 years and was created to focus efforts on community development. Communities all over the state held focus groups to determine what services we would provide. In other words, what did the communities feel that they needed to help them, not just to survive but to thrive?
The communities all said essentially the same thing. There were three things they wanted:

1. Ideas - what are other communities doing successfully address certain problems;
2. Leadership Development because they all realised that they must have people at all levels of the community who will take responsibility for decisions; and
3. Professional assistance with long-range planning because they realised that if you don’t plan where you want to go, you may not end up where you want to be.

Therefore, we do those three things. To share ideas with the communities, we do research based on these stories:

   Tupelo, Mississippi  
   Lawndale, Illinois  
   Detroit, Michigan  
   Tillery, North Carolina

We provide leadership presentations and training. I talk a lot about the old style of leadership. Our communities used to function well with a small number of people, with our community leaders, usually white males, making all the decisions. We refer to them as the ‘five cigars’ because they often got together and made community decisions while they enjoyed a cigar. But people are no longer satisfied with just a few people making all of the decisions that affect our everyday life. Additionally, problems have become so complex that it takes all of us working together to address the problems. Successful community leaders are now team builders, they build coalitions, they encourage more people to be involved in the work of the community. Successful community leaders now listen more than they talk, they value ideas and opinions of other citizens, they care about getting things accomplished but they don’t care who gets the credit. I go back to my earlier statement. Successful community leaders build teams.

We work with communities who want to plan their own future and help them to design a plan for achieving the future they want. We have actually developed a curriculum that provides every step for creating the vision (in other words, this is what we want our community to be) and developing the road map for getting there. I think that the strength of our process is that it is inclusive. We help the community select the group of planners, making sure that the planners are so diverse that everyone in the community is truly represented. In other words, we recommend including representatives from business, medicine, senior citizens, youth, single parents, educators, farmers, ranchers. I tell communities that anyone who lives there should be able to look at the list of planners and know that they are being represented.

Additionally, community leaders design a plan for giving and receiving information from anyone in the community. Some communities have sent out a questionnaire with the electricity bills so that everyone has the opportunity to voice their opinions. The questionnaires are often quite simple. What do you think is good about the community of York? and What do you think could be better? We encourage the communities to always ask “what can be better?” instead of “what’s wrong?” That’s too negative.

After each community selects the planners, we begin by helping them identify the values. What is of value to the people of this community? It’s been very interesting to me as I have worked with communities. They often identify education, taking care of the young and taking care of the elderly as values they hold. Then as they begin to talk about the things that need to be better, they often begin to notice that what they say they value is not necessarily what they do in the community. In other words, too often what we say is important to us (what we value) is not in alignment with our actions. We help communities find that alignment.

We help the communities create a vision and then design the action plan for reaching their vision. They quickly realise that their vision needs to be based on the values.
We help communities analyse their problems or challenges. There are problems that are technical and there are problems that are adaptive. Technical problems are those where the solution is obvious and easy. In medical terms, a technical problem might be a broken arm. You go to the doctor, he or she sets the arm and puts it in a cast. In a community, a technical problem might be a broken water line. You know how to fix it and you do so.

An adaptive problem is more challenging. In medical terms, an adaptive problem might be that I have a heart condition. I have some clogged arteries. I may have surgery to open the arteries but I also have to change my lifestyle. I have to change the way I eat and exercise and deal with stress.

In communities, an adaptive challenge might be how to take care of the mentally ill (who may be homeless) when we don’t even know how to identify or find them. It’s complicated because we don’t have all of the information, but it’s a situation we can’t ignore because our values include taking care of those people who are helpless and unable to care for themselves. It requires that we, as a community, no longer ignore situations. It’s easier to divert our attention to something we can address but yet if we ignore something that needs our attention, we’re in conflict with our values.

Another example of an adaptive challenge is the case of a local industry that pollutes the river. People want clean water but they also want jobs. It’s a complicated issue but one that ultimately healthy communities can face by coming together and working together as a community to find a resolution. That’s adaptive because people will have to adapt behaviours, attitudes, goals.

To conclude, citizens who wish to provide the best leadership in their communities must know what their values are, must be pro-active, must be willing to take a risk, must be willing to share power, must be willing to give everyone an opportunity to help, must be tenacious. In other words, we must all remember that dramatic community change won’t happen overnight. It takes time and work. It takes everyone working together. We must all be willing to work after we’ve identified what must be changed or improved.

I want to leave you with one thought. Anyone in a community can be a leader: An elderly woman in my neighbourhood organized a “neighbourhood watch” program following a series of burglaries; a friend of mine started a drug and alcohol prevention agency after going through years of problems with one of her sons; an individual in our church started a program to feed the homeless; some youth in our high school started a recycling project; a lawyer in our community started a tutoring and mentoring project at the high school. I could go on and on. My point is this; if we see a cause and can do something, organize people, to resolve the problem. We are then exercising leadership. We are being community builders. I am aware of the program in Nebraska called Community Builders and it is a term that should apply to everyone. Tupelo, Mississippi has that community-wide attitude. It would serve us all well to think that way.

Leadership is earned. Leadership is to be valued. Leadership is to be shared.
"LESSONS FROM GEESE"
by Milton Olson

FACT 1: As each bird flaps its wings, it creates ‘uplift’ for the bird following. By flying in a “V” formation, the whole flock adds 71 percent greater flying range than if each bird flew alone.

LESSON 1: People who share a common direction and sense of community can get where they are going quicker and easier because they are travelling on the thrust of another.

FACT 2: Whenever a goose falls out of formation, it suddenly feels the drag and resistance of trying to fly alone and quickly gets back into formation to take advantage of the “lifting over” of the bird immediately in front.

LESSON 2: If we have as much sense as a goose, we will stay in formation with those who are headed where we want to go (and be willing to accept their help as we help others.)

FACT 3: When the lead goose gets tired, it rotates back into the formation and another goose flies to the point position.

LESSON 3: It pays to take turns doing the hard tasks and sharing leadership with people; as with geese, we are interdependent on each other.

FACT 4: These geese in formation honk from behind to encourage those up front to keep up their speed.

LESSON 4: We need to make sure our honking from behind is encouraging and not something else.

FACT 5: When a goose gets sick or wounded or shot down, two geese drop out of formation and follow it down to help and protect it. They stay with it until it is able to fly again or dies. They then launch out on their own, with another formation, or to catch up with the flock.

LESSON 5: If we have as much sense as geese, we too will stand by each other in difficult times as well as when we are strong.
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Some presenters have not submitted summaries of their workshop. The editors apologies for people wanting information on these topics.
**Townscape and its Role in Rural Communities—**

*Juliet Albany*

*Townscape, Ministry of Planning*

Prior to being Townscape Officer I was an urban designer and planner with the City of Perth for nearly eight years. I have been involved in many interesting projects within the city including co-ordinating the King Street enhancement design, being project leader for the Victoria Park (stage 1) upgrade and more recently the Forrest Place and Hay Street Mall projects. I am also a former geography teacher, a weaver and once lived with my young family in an exploration camp in outback Kimberley for three and a half years.

1. **An Introduction**

The Ministry for Planning’s Townscape Program has assisted over 100 towns throughout WA during the past 10 years. The Townscape Program is concerned with the revitalization of a town through a planned and designed response to the town’s total existing infrastructure. The Programme is led by the community, including the shire, and assisted by Ministry staff and consultants. The program encompasses the social, economic, and physical characteristics of the community and its needs, all of which contribute to improve the image and identity of the Town.

The Townscape program assists with clarifying the community’s own vision of the way(s) it wants the town to develop. This vision is placed firmly within a staged implementation program that is both practical and achievable. In addition, the town benefits from an increased community awareness of planning and environmental enhancement. The program seeks to co-operate with other government agencies to the greater benefit of individual towns.

Townscape can assist with the design of the physical environment. Practical designs, particularly for public spaces and design guidelines for private development, if required, can be provided to best meet the needs of the community.

Through a Townscape programme the community can guide the Review of their own Town Planning Scheme and future developments. Where no scheme exists as yet the Townscape programme can assist the community and the Ministry to arrive at a scheme tailored to fit the community’s own needs and vision.

2. **The need to recognise what ‘Rural Living’ means before we can seek to improve or revitalise it.**

What is critical to this sense of rural?
How is rural different from urban and suburban? Should it be different?
What is rural-urban?
Does it involve rediscovering a sense of being an individual vital community, located in a particular geographical place and with a strong vision of the future?
How do we express this clearly in the landscape?
Should there be a relationship with the environment, particularly the climate and the land expressed in the town? How?

3. **Two major fates facing rural towns today:**

   A. Suffocation by suburbia
   B. Death by neglect/indifference
      (some towns even have a strange mix of the two)
1. Some Townscape Elements - links between all cells are implied at any angle

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5. Regional character - its importance and role.
The strength of co-operation.
What is the role of a region?
How can being part of a region help a town?
The danger of formula thinking - the importance of regions and local places.

6. Local character/flavour of your town, how to find our what it is, how to strengthen it. Consider streets, street patterns/layout, trees, patterns of planting, buildings - styles, colours, decorations and materials, fences etc.

7. The role of guidelines and why we need them.
Is a Narrogin house appropriate in Bremer Bay? Do all places have to look the same? Is an Albany house going to be a comfortable house in the Pilbara? Can we learn from the past? Heritage is more than old buildings. What does sustainable mean in terms of buildings, homes and gardens?

8. The critical importance of maintenance - only do what you can successfully maintain.

9. A sense of place.
What is it? Character + experience
Consider Rottnest.
Standardisation - is it always necessary?
Are our lives being planned to fit into someone else's filing cabinet? What experience are we leaving our children?
Role in tourism of the future.
Harnessing Resources for Economic Development through Farmer Co-operatives

Rodney Christianson
South Dakota Soybean Processors

- There are 47,000 co-operatives in the United States today.
- Co-operatives in the U.S. generate more than $100 billion in economic activity each year and serve over 100 million Americans - 40% of the population.
- America’s top 100 co-operatives employ more than 750,000 Americans, according to a recently released index compiled by the National Cooperative bank, Washington, D.C. The list includes both agriculture and non-agriculture co-operatives.
- In 1994, co-operatives celebrated 150 years of progress.
- The primary purpose of a co-operative is to serve the needs of its members.

Farmer-owned Co-operatives

| Ocean Spray | Welch's |
| Blue Diamond | Sunkist |
| Tree Top | Dairygold |
| Land O'Lakes | Tillamook |
| Sue Bee Honey | Sun-Maid |
| Blue Boy Vegetables | Sunsweet |
| Great Lakes Vegetables | Norbest |
| Mid-America Dairymen | Crystal Sugar |

Other Co-operatives

| Credit Unions |
| Rural Telephone Co-operatives |
| Rural Electric Co-operatives |
| Housing Co-operatives |
| Day Care Co-operatives |
| Food Store Co-operatives |
| Health Care Co-operatives |
| Artisan Co-operatives |
| Mutual Insurance Companies |

Fortune 500 Co-operatives

**Industrial 500:**
- Farmland Industries, Inc.
- Agway, Inc.
- Land O'Lakes, Inc.
- CENEX
- Gold Kist Inc.
- Ag Processing Inc.
- Ocean Spray Cranberries, Inc.
- CF Industries, Inc.
- Tri Valley Growers
- Prairie Farms Dairy
- Riceland Foods, Inc.
- Sun-Diamond Growers, Inc.

**Service 500:**
- Harvest States Co-operative
- Associated Milk Producers
- Countymark Co-operative

Did you know?
- The Associated Press is a worldwide news cooperative.
- C-Span, FTD, Best Western, Group Health are all familiar names with a common link - they are all co-ops!
- ACE Hardware and True Value Hardware are co-operatives.
- Associated Grocers is in the top 25 Co-operatives in the U.S.
**Establishing Partnerships with the Aboriginal Community**

David Collard  
Ministry of Sport and Recreation

**Historical Background**

Throughout the history of white settlement in Australia, there have been a number of pieces of legislation that have impacted quite significantly upon Aboriginal people. In order to better understand the density of Aboriginal people in Australia since 1788, it is appropriate to identify some of the legislation and to consider the impact it has had on Aboriginal people.

**1778 - 1901**

Prior to the arrival of the British in Australia, Aboriginal people had self determination and self management throughout their traditional decision making processes and management structures. This was largely destroyed or disrupted following the “invasion” and the declaration of *Terra Nullius*.

"Over thousands of years, Aboriginal people have evolved immensely competent processes which perpetuate their system of control over their white destinies. The only experience not allowed for was the intrusion of white people which caused the destruction of their traditional processes of law and order and self determination, by subjugating them and substituting them and substituting an alien form of rules." *(Wallace, in Tonkinson and Howard, p90)*.

Colonial governments invited little or no Aboriginal participation. Aboriginal people’s rights to self determination were not recognised and the government controlled many aspects of Aboriginal people’s lives, including employment, the right to drink, marriage and the ‘welfare’ of their children.

**1901**

The Commonwealth of Australia was founded. The constitution specifically excluded the Commonwealth making laws in support of Aboriginal people, and Aboriginal people were not counted in the census. Both these provisions were not repealed until the 1967 referendum.

Aboriginal people have, for over 200 years now, embarked on trying to fit into another society by making some form of contribution towards the development of this country. This way of thinking still remains a big part of the Aboriginal way of life although in some cases it has become an everyday fight for survival. My ancestors, Tommy ‘Noongale’ Kickett and Tommy Windich, led the Forrest brothers across the West opening up this State from 1869 to 1874. This contribution by Nyoongars showed that progress relied upon the Aboriginal people. Whether it was leading expeditions across the virgin bush, or clearing land for farming, or growing crops for food or grazing stock. Aboriginal people made a large contribution towards the development of Australia as a country.

**1905**

Western Australia’s Aborigines Act was passed, giving enormous power to the State’s Protector of Aborigines. This new Act restricted Aboriginal people from making contributions to the development of the State of Western Australia. Previously, Aboriginal people had been allowed to co-exist with the new settlers but now this Act placed enormous restrictions on the physical and cultural way of life for Aboriginal people, especially Nyoongars where the first contact was being made.

Not being able to genuinely develop land that was previously allocated to them saw the land, which is the substance of life, removed from them, piece by piece. This small Act had a big impact upon Aboriginal people competing within the public sector, such as farming and other industries like the fur trade.
The Act also influenced the role Aboriginal people could play in sport, and at times, limited the Aboriginal contribution at all levels in most sports.

1937
Western Australia’s Native Administration Act was passed.

Under this Act Aboriginal people saw their children being dispersed to all corners of the continent. Nyoongar children were sent to South Australia. Others were sent to places like Sister Kate’s in Queens Park, Perth, Western Australia. Previously, this is where the Native Affairs had a ‘ration station’ for the Nyoongars who had been systematically removed from Perth as we know it today. However, Aboriginal people again started to break through the darkness of oppression and young men like Graham ‘Polly’ Farmer, Ted ‘Square’ Kilmurray and Syd Jackson, and many others started to forge a career out of sport such as Australian Rules Football.

Others did not make it, but the determination of the few mentioned previously proved that under any form of government, Aboriginal people can succeed in sport where the ground is ‘level’.

1967
A successful referendum gave the Australian Government the power to make laws in relation to Aboriginal people, and to include Aboriginal people in the census.

After a lot of lobbying, Aboriginal people received support to overturn previous legislation, to be included in the census and also set the foundation for Aboriginal people being allowed to vote. This referendum paved the way for Aboriginal contributions towards development in all avenues and within various ventures.

1987
The Federal Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, the Hon. Jerry Hand, made his ‘Foundations For The Future’ speech, outlining the proposal to establish the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) - an organisational structure intended to bring policy advice, administrative and representative functions under Aboriginal control.

The Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody was set up in response to a concern that deaths of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in custody were too common and public explanations too evasive. The royal commission found that the most significant factor contributing to the over-representation of aboriginal people was their disadvantaged and unequal position in Australian society; socially, economically, and culturally. The Report documented the European impact upon Aboriginal people and their disposition and subordination within an often hostile society. It described the development of racist attitudes, both overt and hidden, and the way in which attitudes become institutionalised in the practices of legal, educational, welfare and Aboriginal assistance authorities.

1991
The Reconciliation Council was established to assist with developing processes and designing projects to address the Reconciliation process by the year 2001.

1994
Aboriginal people negotiated a ‘Social Justice Package’ with the Australian Government to address social and economic issues affecting the assimilation of Aboriginal people into mainstream society.

The Ministry of Sport and Recreation of Western Australia entered into an agreement to deliver the ‘Young Persons Sport and Recreation Program’ for Aboriginal people.
This historical snapshot of legislation reflects the harshness imposed upon Aboriginal people, until more recent years. Today the focus is upon self determination, land rights and reconciliation. It is part of the social justice agenda for more recent times that sport and recreation play a positive and significant role. Although contemporary sport and recreation are different from the traditional Aboriginal strategies, in both societies it is seen as a medium through which social change can be reinforced.

In this context, the remainder of this paper will reflect upon traditional activities and a more contemporary program through the Ministry of Sport and Recreation, in response to the overall impact of the legislation base reflected in the previous pages.

The Nyoongar people had their own traditional games which were played during ceremony times or just for fun by the children. The skills passed on to the Nyoongar youth soon showed which groups of Nyoongars had the best teachers, or lore men and women. Ceremony times saw the competitive nature of the Nyoongar people appear which eventually saw the different groups amongst the Nyoongar tribes compete for various ‘bounties’.

Status and respect were always high on the list for Nyoongar people and the social gatherings of the Nyoongar people at ceremonies allowed the competitions to take place. Sometimes the competitions would be over trade, marriage or just for fun. These outings would see young and old compete against each other. Family against family, group against group, striving to be the best at whatever the competition.

Afterwards, the social gathering and festivities would open up to include all participants and this social gathering would strengthen the Nyoongar community which would see music, dance and song culminate in a joyous celebration by holding a corroboree.

This closeness and sharing amongst the Nyoongar people enabled them to overcome the impact of various government legislations and laws being imposed on them. With the coming of the European settlers to Western Australia there has been a slow demise of Nyoongar culture and systems which were held for centuries; games which were played with monotonous regularity disappeared to be replaced by new games, new lifestyles, new opportunities and a new culture.

**Contemporary Sport and Recreation**

“Sport is a mirror of many things. It reflects political, social, economic and legal systems. It also reflects the Aboriginal experience, especially since 1850. While playing fields are not place where people expect to find, or want to see, racial discrimination, sport is an important indicator of Australian racism”.

Australian history has shown sport to be the earliest avenue to mainstream society for Aboriginal people. They used it to overcome all the various forms of oppression.

Aboriginal cricket teams were formed to play exhibition matches against each other or against visiting English teams. These were common events during these times, and many teams were formed, such as the ‘Invincibles’ at New Norcia Mission in 1879. This team used to walk to and from the Mission to Perth and Fremantle, some 120 km, to play each match and then return. My people the Bullardong people, come from this area, and my grandfather, Jack Blurton, was part of this team.

It should also be noted that in 1879 on the 1st June, Western Australia’s first inland settlement, York, held its first outdoor entertainment to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the colony of Western Australia. The York June Sports was held to mark this event and included professional running. One year after the famous Stawell gift, The York Sheffield was held. Professional foot races emerged out of the darkness for Aboriginal people as a new light as Nancy Cato wrote in Daniel Matthew’s biography:
Aboriginal people from all over Australia saw the opportunity being offered by these running events and lined up with the white fellas to run for cash. In 1929, Doug Nichols won the Warracknabeal Gift worth 100 guineas ($210) by running 120 yards in 12 seconds. The prince of black runners was Charlie Samuel, a stock rider from Jimbour Station, Dalby, Queensland. In 1894 the famous sporting newspaper, the “Referee”, said it would have liked to confer the title of Australian Champion to a White Man. “but a black Aboriginal has to be accorded the Laurel Crown….Samuels has, in a long course of consistent and brilliant running, established his claim, not only to be the Australian champion, but also to have been one of the best exponents of sprint running the world has ever seen”.

The forced removal of Aboriginal children was being enforced under the 1937 legislation. In Australia, the result of these policies and practices led to the ‘stolen generation’. Graham ‘Polly’ Farmer, Ted ‘Square’ Kilmurray, Billy Dempsey and Syd Jackson (four of Australia’s great Australian football players) had, as children, been forcibly removed from their mothers.

This history clearly illustrates the continuous involvement of Aboriginal people in sport in Australia. It also records their outstanding performance and this has continued into Australian sport today. Aboriginal people now represent Australia overseas, and participate in all levels of sport. In the social context of Australia today, sport provides an extremely positive opportunity for the reconciliation process and self determination.

In the past, not too many programs have been available to Aboriginal people to assist them in the identification and development stages of Aboriginal athletes. However, over the past decade new programs have been established and in 1996 the Indigenous Sports Program (ISP) was launched. Under this program, Aboriginal people can be identified and placed on all sorts of development to assist them ‘make it’ in mainstream sport.

Aboriginal people have maintained their desire to be part of the mainstream society and these new strategies and structures can only compliment existing resources and programs available within the community. The revival of the York June Sports in June 1997 has seen the principles of reconciliation emerge from within the community already in the death throes of apathy. The sight of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people working and playing together for the common cause of sport and the resurrection of a sporting classic, the York Gift, opens up new questions about what can be achieved if the whole community are united under the banner of ‘the brotherhood of man’.

“They had discovered that their prowess in sport, particularly in cricket and running, gave them a passport to the white man’s world even to his respect and friendship”.
Building Your Skills as a Community Entrepreneur

John Croft
Dept of Commerce and Trade

The Prognosis
It is now clear that the next few decades are going to witness social, economic, political, environmental and technological changes that are a couple of orders of magnitude greater than any yet seen in recorded human history. Our globalizing economy of over 5 billion people already uses energy at a rate equivalent to 40% of that fixed annually by photosynthesis from all the plants in all the lands and oceans of the planet. It is estimated that within thirty years there will be 8 to 10 billion people in the world which, thanks to television, will be all aspiring to middle-class western lifestyles! Already, we are losing forest at a rate equivalent to an area equal in size to Great Britain every year. (Vital Signs, 1996, published by the Worldwatch Institute, New York).

Worldwide, we seem to be losing 20,000 other species per annum, over 90% of which have never even been scientifically described (Norman Myers, 1989 Atlas of Planetary Management Pan Books, London). This is a greater biotic change than anything seen in the last 65 million years! Current trends indicate that half of Australia’s rural towns could disappear within the next 30 years (Australian Bureau of Agriculture and Resource Economics). Western Australia, for example, is losing productive farming land to rising levels of salinity at a rate of 40 football fields per hour (Premier Richard Court, announcing Western Australia’s bid to get access to the Telstra privatisation Environmental Fund).

Given these realities, what can we do to allow our communities to survive? As our regional and national economies integrate within the global financial system, local communities are confronted by continuous and accelerating change on all levels. Research shows that merely adjusting to the change is not enough. Communities that adopt a reactive response are caught “flat footed”, and finish by becoming victims of a future over which they have little control. Seen more optimistically, however, the figures above show that 50% of our communities are and will survive the hectic acceleration of change.

Dr Peter Eckersley, Senior Policy Analyst at the CSIRO, suggests that the crucial variable determining which communities survive seems to the presence of a “vision for the future”, anchored in reality, that has been created and is widely shared by the whole community. This inclusive vision for the future is vital. His research has shown communities that have created such a vision clearly out-perform those that are drifting, even when their vision of the future is totally wrong.

The Diagnosis
The weaknesses in the financial basis of many Western Australian small towns occur as a result of an overly simplistic understanding of the nature of “the community economy”. We tend to look at it as though it were two separate entities; a community: being a social sector of the interactions between a group of people having something in common, whether that be a locality, an interest or a common need; and an economy: being the system which produces the basic money, goods and services required to maintain and hopefully improve one’s quality of life.

Peter Senge, however, tells us that the word community comes from the Indo-European base mei, meaning ‘change’ or ‘exchange’. This joined with another root, kom, meaning ‘with’, to produce an Indo-European word kommein: shared by all. Economy comes from two Greek words, oikos, meaning ‘household’ and nomos, meaning ‘management. (Peter Senge et al (1994) ‘The Fifth Discipline Fieldbook’ Nicholas Brearley, London)

Senge believes the idea of change or exchange shared by all, is pretty close to the sense of community in organisations today. Community building is a core strategy for sharing among all its members the burdens and the benefits. Such a definition would seem to suggest that perhaps we should more accurately speak of
‘communities’ rather than a solitary ‘community’. It also the practice of economics at the heart of community economic development. Community economics is a very different subject than conventional market or corporate economics, as the latter, by its inherent nature, tends to deny the very existence of ‘community’ as an excluded ‘externality’ in market terms.

Market economics remains wedded to the principle of the ‘rational sovereign consumer’, a fictional individual who, owing no loyalty to anyone beyond their own personal self-interest or contracts legally established in the marketplace and with perfect knowledge of consequences, aims to maximise their benefits and minimise their costs. Loyalty to community is considered ‘irrational’ and where not totally absent, is considered a ‘market distortion’. This type of economics recognises that the only signals required for competitive success are market prices and present profitability, and builds in a ‘discount of the future’. It fails to realise that consumers are forever excluded from having any input on these current prices and profitability, because they are the unborn future generations who will have to pay the environmental and community costs ignored by conventional economics. It also fails to consider the non-monetary ecological, domestic or volunteer economies upon which all communities and all market economies depend.

Community economics does not permit the ‘externalisation’ of costs such as environmental pollution or community destruction. Instead it encourages people to recognise the essentially ecological nature of the community in which ‘everything is connected to everything else’, and that it is difficult to run a sustainable and successful local business in an unhealthy community economy. Community economics encourages all residents to recognise that they are shareholders and employees in a common community enterprise in which ‘people have to hang together or else they will hang separately’. These are lessons learned in Third World villages which haven’t had the luxury in Australia of ‘throwing another million government dollars’ at a problem and creating a welfare solution. The Australian approach did not work at all well in the ‘long economic boom’ from 1946 until 1987. It certainly will not work in the more parsimonious 1990s.

Community economics is also, and has to be, a lot more innovative and creative in its ability to create and generate capital for local projects. It also recognises the existence of ‘social capital’, the community goodwill that results from the investment in communication, and provides for a higher quality of life for all, independently from any changes in monetary income.

The Treatment
It is clear that the people who cope best with rapid change are those living in supportive and caring communities, people who have a collective ‘support network’ to supplement their access to needed resources. The communities that cope best with rapid change are those that have some clarity about where they have come from and an agreed consensual vision as to where they are going.

Professor Ron Schaffer has suggested that making successful adaptations was most successful in communities that had shown
1. A healthy frustration with the current local economic situation.
2. A willingness to experiment in developing innovative local solutions.
3. A support for those taking action to make things better.
4. A high level of ongoing community discussion and participation in the above.
5. A celebrated track record of successfully implemented achievements.

To bring this about, given the issues mentioned above, objectively what is required is an entrepreneur.
Developing Local Leadership

Nance Diamond
Oklahoma Community Initiative

1. Qualities of leaders
2. Understanding community leadership
3. Building community involvement through asset mapping
4. Suggested uses/opportunities for asset mapping

Leadership is about mobilizing the resources of a society, community or organization to make progress on the difficult issues it faces. It is about getting factions with competing definitions of the problem to start learning from each other.

HEALTHY, PROGRESSIVE COMMUNITIES

* HAVE IDENTIFIED THEIR SHARED VALUES
* KEEP A STEADY FOCUS ON THE COMMON GOOD;
* HAVE CREATED A SHARED VISION OF THE PREFERRED FUTURE;
* HAVE DEVELOPED A PLAN OF ACTION TOWARD THAT VISION

Asset-Based Community Development

The Approach

Historic evidence indicates that significant community development takes place only when local community people are committed to investing themselves and their resources in the effort. This observation explains why communities are never built from the top down, or from the outside in. (Clearly, however, valuable outside assistance can be provided to communities that are actively developing their own assets). The hard truth is that development must start from within the community and, in some of our communities and urban neighbourhoods, there is no other choice.

Creative neighbourhood leaders across the country have begun to recognize this hard truth, and have shifted their practices accordingly. They are discovering that wherever there are effective community development efforts, those efforts are based upon an understanding, or map, of the community’s assets, capacities and abilities. The key to neighbourhood regeneration then, is to locate all of the available local assets, to begin connecting them with one another in ways that multiply their power and effectiveness, and to begin harnessing those local institutions that are not yet available for local development purposes.

This process begins with the construction of a new map.

Community Asset Mapping

Institutions

Every community hosts some combination of formal public, private and not-for-profit institutions. Since these institutions represent significant concentrations of resources, local neighbourhoods have begun to capture them for community-building purposes. It is important to identify these local institutions in order to build or rebuild relationships that can be used to enhance community efforts.
A list of associations might include:

- Artistic organizations (musical, theatrical, writing)
- Business organizations (Chamber, Economic Development Council or Foundation, trade groups)
- Charitable groups and drives (Cancer Crusade, Red Cross)
- Church groups (prayer, stewardship, youth, acolytes)
- Civic events (art fair, July 4th, balloon festival)
- Collectors groups (stamps, antiques, car)
- Ethnic associations
- Health & fitness groups (jogging, running, biking, hiking)
- Interest clubs (book study, recycling, investments)
- Local media
- Men's groups
- Mutual support groups (AA, grief, various illnesses)
- Neighbourhood (crime watch, block clubs)
- Outdoor groups (garden clubs, conservation groups)
- Political organizations
- School groups (PTA, bank parents, sport supporters groups)
- Service clubs (Kiwanis, Amer. Assoc. of University Women, Amer. Assoc. of University Professors, League of Women Voters)
- Social cause (peace, children, diversity)
- Sporting Leagues (bowling, baseball, fishing, hunting)
- Study groups (literary clubs, bible study groups)
- Veteran groups
- Women's groups
- Youth groups (FFA, 4-H, scouts, YMCA, YWCA, volunteer)

For the sake of economic development strategies, locally controlled lending institutions (such as the community development credit unions and the community development loan fund) as well as other groups who provide capital for business development or expansion should be listed. These vehicles represent examples of creative local responses to the absence of vital capital and credit in communities where disinvestment has been the rule. Obviously, these should not be regarded as the only viable approaches to rebuilding locally controlled economy, but as useful tools with many significant lessons to teach.

Community Asset Mapping

Associations

An association is a group of citizens working together. A powerful community is a place where all kinds of different work is being done by local citizens. Therefore, they create many kinds of associations to do the work. These associations may be very formal groups with elected officers and memberships with dues. Other associations may be very informal groups with no officers or formal memberships.

A list of institutions would include:

- Parks
- Libraries
- Schools
- Colleges
- Hospitals
- Law enforcement
- Physical assets

Community Asset Mapping

Individuals
Asset mapping is thinking about communities and individuals in a new way. It is focusing on the gifts, the assets and the resources that we possess instead of focusing on the needs and deficiencies.

For a moment, think about how people in our communities become successful. They contribute their skills! Think about your own life......peoples’ individual talents and assets are recognized by others. All people have gifts, talents, skills, abilities and interests.

PEOPLE BECOME SUCCESSFUL CITIZENS THROUGH IDENTIFYING THEIR GIFTS AND TALENTS, AND THEN BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS TO CONTRIBUTE THEIR ASSETS AND TALENTS.

In building communities, we must give all citizens an opportunity to be a part of the community - of making it stronger, healthier, safer. The worst message a community can send to the elderly or the youth, the disabled, the poor is you have nothing to give. Successful communities are helping citizens to identify their gifts and then connecting them to organizations and/or projects that can utilize their gifts.

EXERCISE:
Answer these questions:

1. What is your passion? What do you care about the most?
2. What can you do well?
3. What can you teach?

Discuss how each individual might be matched with various projects or might combine their abilities with others to start a business.

APPLICATIONS:
1. Economic development projects
2. Use in neighbourhood or housing project
3. Volunteer organizations
4. Churches, schools
A common ownership is created, which leads to greater commitment from individual group members. The group follows a common program and is committed to achieving mutually decided outcomes. A higher degree of consensus occurs which in turn generates “team spirit”. Through canvassing a wide spectrum of views a more productive and more informed group decision making is possible.

This new management approach is not token “consultation”. It offers equality among participants by actively seeking and accepting contributions from all group members. When managed well it has the following advantages:

- A common ownership is created, which leads to greater commitment from individual group members.
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Participative strategic planning has been identified as an essential technique in building a shared understanding of goals and visions and acting as a catalyst to mobilising community resources. This paper discusses the benefits to local communities in conducting a participative strategic planning workshop compared to more traditional planning sessions. Detailed and practical advice is offered to facilitators on the process of organising and effectively running a workshop using this new management technique.

Participative Strategic Planning

Introduction
Planning is a “formulated or organised method by which a thing is to be done”, and it lies at the heart of community effectiveness in achieving goals. The “thing” may be as simple as organising a community meeting, or as complex as organising a community campaign.

It has been said that people do not plan to fail, they merely fail to plan. On the other hand, “planning” may consume so much time and resources that a community organisation collapses in a heap of exhaustion and their plan of action is left lying on someone’s shelf gathering dust. Effective community planning lies somewhere between these two extremes.

Participative Strategic Planning Versus Participative Strategic Planning
Derived from the Greek term strategy, strategic planning refers to “the management or movement of one’s resources to impose the time and place for action preferred by oneself”. Strategic planning is an effective time management and planning process but is not always appropriate for small business and community organisations, because it implies making and imposing decisions without consulting or considering others. In communities, such a process can be counterproductive as it wastes human potential, disempowers individuals (or groups) and reduces the flexibility and freedom to be innovative and creative.

Participative strategic planning, by contrast, builds on the strengths of strategic planning whilst avoiding the dangers of decisions being imposed on the community. It maximises organisational resources, fosters innovation and creativity within a changing environment and provides a forum for bringing together different groups with different ideas to work together.

Participative strategic planning can build a shared understanding of goals and vision and be a catalyst to mobilise community resources. Community projects are most likely to be successful when they involve the broadest range of community stakeholders and interests.

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A Participative Strategic Planning Session

A two-day participative strategic planning workshop is described below. A workshop may be shortened to a two hour or a half-day format if the group wishes to focus on one aspect in each session. Experiment, adapt and change the materials to suit your needs.

Stage One: Setting the scene

Using a facilitator
An effective process requires an active facilitator. A facilitator is a person who has experience or training in running work groups. A good facilitator enables the will of the group to be expressed without influencing what the group discusses.

Organising the workshop
The organisation of a participative strategic planning session is very much the same as the organisation for any group event. There are a number of tips, however, which will add to the effectiveness of the group.

Stage Two: Establishing participants’ desired outcomes

- the “Round Robin” approach

Step 1 - Building trust
It is time to negotiate with participants the purpose of the planning session so that it meets their needs and they are brought on stream as equal participants. They should be recognised as having power and responsibility equal to that of the sponsor and facilitator in determining the direction of proceedings. The facilitator uses the “Round Robin”, where everyone in turn presents a point of view for about 3-5 minutes each.

With large groups (30 and above), this session can be conducted using smaller groups (up to 12) to make discussion more effective and to save time. People’s opinions are noted by one person in the group and presented back to the whole meeting. Small group discussion will take at least 3-5 minutes per person in each group plus an extra 5-10 minutes per group in the plenary or report-back session.

Step 2 - Setting the ground rules
Using the “Round Robin”, ask one of the two questions below to help establish the guiding rules and principles with which the group wishes to operate.

Examples of the kind of principles you come up with may include rules of confidentiality, letting individuals have their say unimpeded, declaring any biases or conflicts of interest, and being non-judgemental and non-critical of others’ view point.

Stage Three: Establishing common values and a common focus

For people who have never met as a group before, finding the level of common understanding is important at this stage. Even when the participants already know each other quite well, illustrating differences in priorities or work style may be useful. In any case, establishing a non-threatening environment is important, because conflict at this early stage could affect how the group works together in the future.

By giving group participants a common focus, the limits of common values can be explored in a powerful way. Shifting the topic’s focus to the future also helps people explore differences of values in a non-threatening way.
Stage Four: Defining the problem or issue - conducting a force field analysis

Many people are familiar with the SWOT technique (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats). When most people discuss “threats”, however, they tend to cover the same ground covered by “weaknesses”. The same applies to discussions on “strengths” and “opportunities”.

The force field method is used by the group to assess the forces they may have to deal with, or those that require support or assistance before the goal can be achieved.

Stage Five: Identifying and organising group objectives and Priorities

Forming objectives

Within small groups discuss the following questions:

- Which individuals and groups are stakeholders, and who can take ‘ownership of the issue’? (these people are possible allies in your project)
- What are the major long and short term causes and effects of the issue? A concise one paragraph statement of how the group sees the problem could be valuable here.
- What would happen if nothing were done about the issue? Is the problem manageable and are the stakeholders prepared to “live with things as they are”?
- Is it appropriate for you or your group to get involved? If your community organisation does adopt an issue would it alienate others who feel they “own” the issue?

Once the small groups have discussed these issues, a consensus opinion will emerge around which objectives can now be built.

Objectives need to be

- limited: because the group must recognise the limitations of an organisation’s time and resources;
- achievable: because if objectives are not realistic and clearly attainable, people will become frustrated and abandon their commitment;
- future condition: because objectives are targets, they provide a future focus towards which people can aim their efforts and commitments; and
- action-oriented (ie use verbs): because they are intended to describe “do-able” tasks and activities if they are to be achieved.

Stage Six: Establishing a project mission statement - the overall project goals

In participatory strategic planning, a goal or a vision statement is that expression by which a community, organisation or a group wishes to become widely known to the general public. A vision statement is a sentence or a phrase that is memorable, used widely and in different ways - in a motto, on a letterhead, explained in an introductory brochure or pamphlet etc. It also can motivate and enthuse people to get involved in its fulfilment.

Stage Seven: Planning tasks and activities - creating a critical path method diagram

The next task for the workshop is to establish the tasks and activities required to achieve the objectives. It is important to consider the sequence of these tasks, establish a time-frame, and - where possible - create deadlines and milestones so that the group can see exactly:

- Where they are up to;
- How far they have come;
1. Taking people out of their everyday life environment, as a group, and therefore ensuring that they have the chance to be exposed to new and challenging experiences.

2. Allowing them to critically reflect on the circumstances of their lives, and collectively take decisions about the changes they would like to make.

3. Organising their return to their everyday lives and giving them ongoing support back in their environment, to help them maintain their new commitments.

Certain conditions have been strongly associated with helping communities successfully achieve change. These conditions are:

- What needs to be done next;
- How far they have yet to go.

A Critical Path Method (CPM) diagram is a powerful tool that meets all these criteria.

"In the early 1960's it was clear that the USA had a problem. The Soviet Union had successfully launched the first satellite and quickly followed up with the first manned orbital mission. The US space program, by comparison, was an enormous failure. Rockets were blowing up on the launching pad, parts were delivered late or were substandard. The coordination required a level of planning wholly different than anything previously attempted. It was in this environment that CPM was born. Eventually it was adopted as the major planning technique for all US space programs, and has proved highly successful in most cases when your objectives have been clearly established in getting you from 'here' to 'there'."

from Everyday Evaluation on the Run, by Yolland Wadsworth
People Projects, Victoria. 1988

Stage Eight: Establishing performance indicators

Organisations often fail to consider the following question:

How do we know when our plans are failing to achieve their objectives?

Performance indicators are essential and enable the organisation to get rapid and accurate information about the current state of affairs, before things start to go wrong.

Conclusion - where to from here?

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2. Allowing them to critically reflect on the circumstances of their lives, and collectively take decisions about the changes they would like to make.

3. Organising their return to their everyday lives and giving them ongoing support back in their environment, to help them maintain their new commitments.

Finally, should you run a workshop yourself using the participatory strategic planning approach, the Community Economic Development Branch would be very interested in hearing how it went. We too are learning more about how this process can be improved, and your experiences are a valuable resource, particularly if they can be shared with others.

If you would like any more information on the concepts, strategies and techniques discussed in this paper, please contact:

Community Economic Development Branch
Department of Commerce and Trade
8th Floor SGIO Atrium
170 St George's Terrace
Perth WA 6000

Ph. (09) 327 5924
Freecall 1800199 251
Involving Young People in Community Development

Sue Middleton/Rhonda Phillips/Felicity Brown

The workshop commenced with round robin introductions from all participants. Most people came from WA or interstate rural communities and had been involved in working with young people in a voluntary or paid position.

Objectives
The level of experience in the group relating to the topic was high so the facilitators set out to value this expertise so all group members could learn from each other. We wanted each participant to have an opportunity to share their experiences and ‘take away’ some insights about the issues they were facing in their communities regarding young people.

Process
We initially scoped the issues about young people participation in rural communities. Each of these issues was then raised by a facilitator for group discussion and sharing. People from different communities and different government agencies offered their insight and experience to each issue.

The facilitators role was to guide the discussion and keep it focussed as well as providing information when not in the facilitator role.

To close the workshop, each participant was asked to commit to doing something different or to take away some insight or information to their community.
Using Telecommunications to Increase Development

Peter Morris
Telesis Communications

Background
The social and economic changes we have seen over the past decade have been driven by a number of powerful forces, in particular:
- the adoption of information and communication technologies;
- the lowering of trade barriers and the liberalisation of markets around the world;
- globalisation, where industries and regions around the world become increasingly entwined; and
- the growing importance of the information component in the value of more and more goods and services.

The changes these forces have generated are continuing and have been particularly strongly felt in regional and rural areas. Industries are being radically altered which has, in turn, created significant social change including many long term unemployed people (see Figure 1 below).

Figure 1: Some Causes & Affects From The Global Information Economy

![Diagram showing causes and affects]

Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) are a critical part of these changes. For regional areas the improvements and greater availability of these technologies bring present both threats and opportunities. Market liberalisation, particularly in telecommunications, has also brought about a significant change for regional and rural Australia. In a privatised industry, telecommunication companies will inevitably be drawn to the stronger, more profitable markets, usually major cities. This sets in motion different forces, as illustrated in Figure 2 below. One of them results in an ever increasing level of competition - and so better and cheaper services - and the other results in a downward spiral of lagging service offerings and little or no price competition. Increasingly, regional and rural Australia is finding itself in this latter category (the right hand side of the diagram).
Why Telecommunication Is Important To Rural And Regional Areas

1. Telecommunications can broaden a rural economy, open regional and global markets and create economic opportunities.

   Much has been written about the opportunities that ICTs open up for teleworking (moving work electronically to the worker rather than the worker to the work) and some successful experiments have been developed. Even so, it is probably still the case that teleworking has been more often speculated about rather than implemented. There is no doubt that advanced telecommunications can open up markets and opportunities but this capacity works in both directions. Those regions and communities which do not understand the dynamics of this change and just assume the effects will be positive face a bleak future.

2. Telecommunications can make rural companies and organisations more competitive and more efficient.

   ICTs can deliver massive savings and efficiencies, particularly in overcoming many of the most costly and disadvantageous aspects of operating a rural or regional business. Tasks such as ordering, inventory control, marketing, account management etc. can all be significantly assisted with these technologies.

3. Telecommunications can help reduce the impact of seasonal and vanishing jobs

   A feature of the greater range of jobs, mentioned above, is that many of these tend to have no or little connection with the seasons and so are more consistent than many rural and regional jobs. They can also be in industry sectors which are stronger.

4. Telecommunications-based jobs are typically cleaner and safer for their workers, the community and the environment.
5. Telecommunications can leverage a region’s best features into competitive advantages with which to attract new businesses. Those regions which have significant physical and other attractions (see the AISEA approach below) have a great deal to gain from an employment environment in which work can be easily moved to any location the worker desires.

6. Telecommunications protect the future. A very real opportunity ICTs offer rural and regional Australia is in stemming, and possibly reversing, the trend for young people to move permanently to the cities. The capacity to deliver advanced education services online and to extend the range of job opportunities can greatly assist in this regard.

7. Investments in telecommunications have a significant “ripple” effect. See Figure 2 above.

8. Telecommunications can (significantly) improve the quality of rural life. Delivery of educational and health services plus broadening the number and range of job opportunities offers the possibility of greatly improving the quality of life in rural and regional areas. As enthusiasm for city living amongst many people declines there is a growing interest in looking for an alternative. An appropriate community and regional telecommunications strategy can make a significant contribution to achieving this. This interest in finding an alternative to city life has already been seen in many parts of Australia, particularly through the 1970s. In the US this trend has experienced another wave and is growing steadily.

Why You Should Ignore The Online Revolution

1. It’s bloody complicated: you’ll (probably) need help from blow-ins. Information and Communications Technologies are complicated. It is unlikely your community will be able to put together a plan without the help of outside assistance. As well as the technology being user-unfriendly the regulations surrounding telecommunications are also complex. Added to this is that the investment community — bankers, accountants and investors themselves — know very little about the telecommunications business. Despite the fact that the industry is the fastest growing and one of the most profitable in the world purchasing shares in Telstra is about the only strategy most follow. For rural and regional areas the opportunity that deregulation offers in enabling locally-based niche telecommunications businesses overlooks an important investment opportunity and means to improve services.

2. No (important) body will believe you: some people just don’t get it. Being an advocate for the online community can be a tiresome and taxing business. This new world is very different from the one we have become accustomed to and it has suffered from zealots overselling it, leading to significant scepticism on the part of “non-believers”. It has also seen a wave of ill-informed “experts” proposing ridiculous strategies to communities. The differences include quite a radically different way of thinking about where businesses earn value and how groups interact online. The rules and patterns for all these are still being written but what is already very clear is that changes are happening. For many established community and business leaders it can all sound very far-fetched and so they are likely to respond by either ignoring the ideas or, sometimes, actively working against them.

3. Your chances of falling on your face are better than average: this is uncharted country, go slowly. See points 1. and 2.

4. Long distances and low populations won’t bring the telephone operators running with hope in their eyes, you’ll have some tough fights. The virtuous and viscous cycles described in Figure 2 spell this out.

5. This business is technologically and economically volatile...things change fast and it can be expensive to keep up. This point extends the first observation. For regional and rural areas having access to the information...
required to stay abreast of these changes is an additional challenge.

6. The online world is different, many people in your community will have trouble adjusting

7. Expect to see an anti-technology, Luddite response from some in your community. Both this point and point 6. are extensions of point 2.

**The Components of a Regional Information Economy - The AESIA Approach**

Deciding on the path to take in response to this new environment can be a challenge. The complexity of the technology, the regulations and the different economic and social frameworks they are creating all present difficulties as to where to begin. The AESIA Approach breaks down five important elements (Figure 3 below) which are vital to building a regional information economy. The AESIA Approach is based on the assumption that its five elements - Amenity, Enterprise, Skills, Infrastructure and Awareness - are all essential. By using these as starting points a region or a community can make some judgements as to where its strengths and weaknesses are and so, where it should direct its energies.

Figure 3: The AESIA Approach to Regional Information Economies

© Morris Moorhouse and Associates 1998

By using the checklist (Figure 4) as a guide it is possible for a community to identify those areas in which it has weaknesses and work to overcome them.

Figure 4: The AESIA Checklist

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AMENITY</th>
<th>Physical Attractiveness</th>
<th>Cultural Assets - Schools, entertainment, restaurants etc.</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ENTERPRISE</td>
<td>In existing “traditional” companies</td>
<td>Any global information industries</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SKILLS</td>
<td>The general skills level within existing industry</td>
<td>Online skills - technical skills</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INFRASTRUCTURE</td>
<td>Telecommunications infrastructure in place</td>
<td>How accessible the infrastructure is, particularly its cost.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AWARENESS</td>
<td>Awareness of online issues within the general community and…</td>
<td>amongst political and business leaders</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Conclusion**

The impact of telecommunications and other Information and Communication Technologies on rural and regional areas is likely to be greater than for cities. Unfortunately, these areas are also operating from the greatest level of disadvantage in terms of market appeal (from telecommunications companies), access to skills and negotiating power. The current approach by many people to telecommunications and regions seems to be based on two major assumptions, that:
The recent trend to turn to government for assistance to address the imbalance between city and regions in ICT-based services is not surprising but runs the risk of continuing to subjugate regions and further delay them understanding and capitalising on these opportunities in the way most suitable for them. As Figure 2. illustrates, there is clearly a strong case for government intervention to redress some of the most significant inequities in the new telecommunications environment, but this should approach should only be used where local initiatives won’t work. Facilitating and encouraging the establishment of small and medium-sized telecommunications carriers and service providers in regional areas not only keeps and/or attracts investment but also raises awareness and encourages the development of these services in a manner which is most suited to local conditions.

- ready access to ICTs is, by definition, automatically positive for regional Australia; and
- the only way to redress infrastructure shortcomings is through government intervention.

As has been mentioned, ICTs carry significant dangers for regions. While their spread may be inevitable regional communities and businesses need to understand their implications even more urgently than city-dwellers do.

It is not only that ICTs carry dangers for regions, but also that they can be dangerous to regions. While their spread may be inevitable regional communities and businesses need to understand their implications even more urgently than city-dwellers do.

A BETTER FUTURE FOR RURAL WA......conference proceedings 1998
The traditional approach to economic development in the United States over the last 30 years has been based on industrial recruitment, targeting large businesses, primarily manufacturing, for expansion or location. Smokestack chasing has become increasingly expensive, requiring cash incentives, tax credits and job training efforts on the state and local level. Because of the size and labor requirements of these industries, most have located in larger communities which already have the required infrastructure including transportation. Smaller, rural communities have been left behind in this approach.

The number of these recruitment projects has begun to decline (with the exception of the information technology industry, computer hardware and software manufacturers) particularly in the late 1980s as the number of manufacturing jobs in the US declined.

To meet the needs of smaller, rural and more geographically remote communities, a more flexible innovative approach is needed:

- Tax incentives targeted to both large and small companies (LB775 for 30 employees and $3 million in investment and LB270 for 3 new employees and $75,000 in investment).

- Tax incentives targeted to distressed areas, hit by high unemployment, high poverty, high rates of out-migration (enterprise zones).

- Job training dollars targeted to both large and small employment enterprises and flexible enough to cover a wide range of training methods eg. community college, traditional classroom to individualised computer based, interactive CD-rom.

- Federal funds administered on the state level to aid communities in adding required infrastructure and companies in building construction and capital investments.

To better match the size of the community to the size of business it can support, new programs have been developed to support the establishment of micro-enterprises (5 employees or less) and businesses in communities of all sizes:

1. REAP (Rural Enterprise Assistance Program) which focuses on peer leading, training and support
2. Micro-enterprise Partnership Fund, which seeks federal, state and private sector charitable dollars for local and regional loan programs.
3. Home Based Business Association to provide training, support and networking opportunities to both service-based and product-based businesses.
4. Tourism Development Funds, both federal and state, leveraged by private dollars, to support construction and expansion of tourism attractions.
5. Locally funded LB840 programs, utilising local sales and property taxes, to support professional, local, economic development staff, industrial park development, infrastructure improvements and loans to individual businesses.
6. Local tax increment financing, allowing a community to forgive the increased tax revenues resulting from capital investment by businesses in "blighted and sub-standard" areas.
7. Non-profit organisations formed to support the development of targeted businesses through training and marketing (eg GROW Nebraska for artisans).

Several other new programs have been initiated to provide specific training and technical assistance to various business sectors.
Communications efforts continue to be a challenge, to ensure that all communities, whatever size, have access to the latest information on available resources:

1. Nebraska On-line
2. DED web pages and links
3. Rural News Bits

Economic growth across the state has resulted in new challenges, requiring new solutions: 1.6% unemployment rate and housing shortages. So the following have been implemented:

1. Nebraska Affordable Housing Trust Fund
2. Innovative financing programs and construction to lower the cost of housing
3. Employee recruitment efforts
4. Retention and training programs aimed at reversing the brain drain: School at the Center, School to Work, Youth entrepreneurship programs.

Efforts have also been especially targeted at building the capacity within small communities to support economic development projects.

Most of the larger communities in the state with populations of 20,000 or more, have the capacity to hire full-time professional economic developers. Smaller communities have had to rely on the volunteer work of Chamber of Commerce members, bankers, utility company employees, local government office holders etc. Volunteers often do not know how to access the resources available through the state and federal government’s educational institutions etc.

Efforts to encourage communities to work together on a multi-community, county-wide and regional basis are now beginning to show results:

1. Tri-State Initiative (McCook and Valmont)
2. Dawson County Economic Development Corporation (now also includes Gosper County – the two fastest growing, communities in the State on a percentage basis)
3. Southeast Nebraska Regional Cooperation (Tecumseh - prison recruitment and poultry processing)

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Additional programs and new approaches are needed with changing times:

1. "Continuum of Care" approach to entrepreneurship training and loans - from school students to adults.
2. Targeted support to women entrepreneurs.
3. Additional dollars to programs that have demonstrated their effectiveness: micro-enterprises, GROW, tourism development.
4. Training, technical assistance and grants to support the establishment and growth of farmer-owned cooperatives.
5. Expansion of efforts to support industries based on agriculture; dairy production, food processing, value added specialty crops, identity-preserved marketing efforts.
6. Evolving information technology programs to develop Internet and computer based businesses that can be located anywhere (Lone Eagles).
Creating a Community Foundation

Maxine Moul

A Community Foundation, under United States tax law, allows US citizens to receive tax deductions for charitable gifts to qualified programs. These charitable gifts allow citizens to give back to their communities and support much needed programs such as education, health care, recreation, economic development. Often, the private donations are matched with government funds, to support public-private partnerships.

Because of the Baby Boomer generation, and its age-ing, there will be a huge transfer of wealth in Nebraska and the United States. Estimates indicate that approximately $110 billion will transfer to the next generation during the next 30 plus years in Nebraska, averaging $32 billion annually. The peak year of wealth transfer in the US is estimated to be 2013, with $11 trillion transferred.

Nebraskans already have an excellent tradition of giving with an estimated $1.3 billion contributed annually through charitable giving. But the opportunity exists for more giving. Just giving one percent of the $28 billion in estate wealth in rural Nebraska would result in $280 million annually.

The Nebraska Community Foundation has a mission to help Nebraska mobilise charitable giving in support of community betterment through development. The goals of the foundation are to:

- Serve as an umbrella for Nebraska communities, various regional and state-wide programs and donor advised funds
- Raise funds for several statewide development and human services initiatives as approved by the Board of Directors of the Nebraska Community Foundation

It took nearly three years to establish the Nebraska Community Foundation (NCF).

1991 The concept began with the Governor and Lt Governor, who asked the Nebraska Rural Development Commission (RDC) to research the idea and serve as an advocate.
1992 A statewide feasibility study was conducted and the results encouraged the RDC to recommend its formation.
1993 Legal and accounting work was completed to develop articles of incorporation and prepare documents for submission to appropriate government utilities including the Internal Revenue Service.
1993 Governor Nelson announced the establishment of the Foundation and named the first nine board members.
1994 The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) approved the charitable status of the foundation and it became operational.
1995 More than $3.5 million had been raised for community betterment programs.
1998 The total raised now exceeds $17 million.

In addition to providing a tax deductible 501 (c) (3) status under the US Internal Revenue Service code as an “umbrella foundation”, NCF provides additional fund raising support to the 150 community and program funds, including fund raising, technical information; training opportunities and outreach support.

In the three years 1994-1997, the Foundation raised more than $15 million; it has worked with over 200 communities, projects and organizations and authorised 120 active community and program funds. That performance far surpassed the Foundation’s Cornerstone Campaign for its endowment and gifts to its program funds, set by the board of directors in 1994. Creation of a national advisory Council, made up of former Nebraskans, remains part of the Foundation’s goals to achieve by the year 2000.
The Foundation offers its supporters many ways of being involved, including donations to specific funds, or membership in the Foundation itself through unrestricted gifts ranging from less than $100 to more than $50,000.

Community funds under the Foundations umbrella are spread throughout rural Nebraska. The majority of the communities served have populations of less than 2500, with little previous capacity to form their own foundations or traditions of charitable giving.

Many of the programs and initiatives of the Foundation have been established through the advocacy of the Nebraska Rural Development Commission and as part of Governor Nelson’s and Nebraska’s efforts to revitalise the rural areas of our state. Program funds and initiatives include:
- Education: School at the center, Rambo:
- Business Development:
- Capacity Building: Community Builders:
- Regional Cooperation: Nebraska Development Network:
- Community Infrastructure: Mandates Project, Mansion Restoration.

The training arm of the Foundation is the Nebraska Institute for Community Charitable Giving, organized on a regional basis, and providing workshops and individualized technical support to help community and program advocates learn how to raise dollars for their funds.

Recent successes in fund raising illustrate how charitable dollars can match government, tax-payer funds and then expand what both can accomplish:
1. Main Street Program: $125,000 state, $130,000 lied Trust
2. Micro-enterprise: $250,000 state, $350,000 federal, $250,000 private
3. School at the Centre: $3-5m Annenburg Foundations, matched 1-1 statewide, 1-1 local funds.

Leadership for the Foundation has expanded to 19 board members, balanced by gender, political party, geography, background, interest area, age and minority. Each community and program fund has at least a three member advisory committee, to give local input on how the funds should be raised, invested and spent. Final decisions are reserved for the NCF board, to insure that all IRS requirements are met. Staffing was initially supplied by the staff of the Rural Development Commission, but the Foundation has now grown to require three full-time staff members and part-time employees.

Metropolitan and large city foundations are increasingly common in the United States, with the number of statewide community foundations being formed mostly during the last five to ten years. Nebraska’s Foundation is patterned after the South Dakota Community Foundation and the Foundation for the Mid-South.

Investment decisions, to help grow individual funds and the NCF endowment, are made by the NCF board, from recommendations made by the investment committee and NCF advisers. There is a strong volunteer involvement provided by the NCF board serving on committees (executive, funds, investments, membership), in fund raising efforts and personal giving. A variety of skills are needed from the board. Illustrations of board giving include the Nelson Institute and the Wolf Foundation. Flexibility, responsiveness to changing needs, and strict adherence to IRS rules are essential to the long-term success of the Nebraska Community Foundation.

A strong stock market in the US has led to rapidly growing Foundation dollars and more charitable grants available from private foundations. For example the Kaufman Foundations: from $1.2 billion in 1994 to $2 billion today.
Diversification in the Southern Rangelands or: 1,000,000 km² and a change agent.

Kaz Price and Roger Jaensch
Agriculture WA, Carnarvon

Diversification is about risk management. In layman’s terms it is about “getting your eggs out of one basket”! Time-honoured pastoral diversification strategies, such as off-property investment in stocks and real estate, are today being joined by other more innovative, non-traditional approaches often requiring physical as well as financial input. Examples of diversification within the Southern Rangelands include: table grape growing tourism aquaculture floriculture goat domestication strategies earthmoving contracting. The terms ‘diversification’ and ‘value-adding’ are often used interchangeably. Within the Southern Rangelands context this can be seen as a problem. Risk management seeks to address the risks inherent in a production or marketing system in order to optimise returns. In the Southern Rangelands the risk factors to be managed include low commodity prices, drought and animal husbandry aspects of herds or flocks. We feel that a value-added approach does not address these risks as well as enterprise diversification.

**Value-adding**

* adding value (processing) to part or all of enterprise production, to supplement income;
* less risk in establishment;
* unchanged risk to usual industry vagaries (drought etc).

\[
\text{Enterprise} \quad  1 \rightarrow \rightarrow \$ \rightarrow \rightarrow \$\$$
\text{Process}
\]

**Diversification**

* maintenance of original enterprise;
* addition of new enterprise to supplement income;
* greater risk in establishment;
* less risk in future due to enterprise spread.

\[
\text{Enterprise} \quad  1 \rightarrow \rightarrow \$
\]

\[
2 \rightarrow \rightarrow \$
\]

**Scenarios:**

We have identified a number of scenarios which demonstrate diversification levels, and commitment:

1) The ‘hobby or interest’. This may include pastoralists interested in trialling a small enterprise for a possible, long term diversification.

2) The “Quick Fix”, often desperation driven. A direct spin-off of low commodity prices and is generally required to be a low input solution. May sometimes take advantage of an opportunity such as export of feral goats, often does not look long term. It is essentially crisis management.

3) The ‘obvious, unavoidable opportunity’ is characterised by diversification that is spurred by the abundance of a natural resource (scenery, wildflowers, feral goats) or proximity to markets. These can be highly successful ventures. Often long term and committed.
4) ‘Risk Management Strategies’ Often characterised by thorough investigations, early trialling (maybe a result of the hobby) and a well developed business plan. These are long term undertakings hinged on commitment.

**Steps in Diversification Evolution within Southern Rangelands**


2) Evangelism - appointment of first Diversification Officer. “Crusading” for change.

3) Response - first successful diversification enterprises operational.

4) Best Bets - Regionalisation of diversification strategy. Identification of most promising industries. Leverage through regional development strategies.

**Future Directions for Diversification in Southern Rangelands**

1) Engender a “can-do” attitude to new enterprise initiatives. Remove paradigms which limit what can be achieved in the region.

2) Diversification role must be a broker for an extensive network of technical and business know-how, which can be used for initial enterprise investigation and development.

3) Diversification role to coordinate with Agriculture Western Australia’s Better Business program to enhance business skills and optimise business prospects.

4) Emphasis must be placed upon those industries identified as “best bets”.

5) Role of diversification officer must be as a broker, linking businesses with technical advice and assisting with identification of potential investors.

6) Identify “champions” of new pastoral industry diversification that are prepared to adopt mentoring roles to assist other potential diversifiers to achieve sustainable regional development.

7) Gascoyne Murchison Strategy offers a one-off opportunity to
   - ratchet up existing small, successful projects into commercially sound enterprises;
   - attract venture finance to exciting new pastoral prospects;
   - develop infrastructure that will support the long-term growth of new industries and diversification alternatives.

Diversification is a tool for sustainability.
Community Profiling – How to Move Your Community Ahead

John Searle
Southern Queensland Regional Studies Centre

Background:
Farmer 30 years, married with 3 adult kids, none of whom are likely to work or live in rural Australia
Passions: rural communities, and my wife!

The Rural Community:
- Where on earth are they (we)?
- What in hell is happening?
- Heaven knows where we are going -
- BUT WE ARE GOING TO MAKE IT

This workshop is designed to fill a particular gap that may exist in the delivery of material by community development practitioners to target communities. Experience suggests that people in threatened rural communities readily become aware of symptoms of concern but usually do not have access to a framework or practical model to acquaint them with what is giving rise to those symptoms of concern. The framework that will be outlined in this workshop provides a possible explanation of what is happening in the bush. Hopefully it will assist community members to come to grips with daily experiences in their workplaces, at home and in their social relationships at a time of community stress. Although written with Queensland in mind it is likely that the material would apply elsewhere as well.

1. Fond recollections of our past community reveal it as geographically based, reflecting a high degree of intimacy, involving a common moral view and probably revolving around families interconnected by friendships, alliances and marriage. It is likely too that community members shared a common heritage, culture and ethnic background. Power relationships within these communities would necessarily have been based on historically established principles with little notice taken of the needs of the broader community or national context. The community entity would have been much greater than the sum of its constituent parts and may be described as having vertical attributes, linking the community with its geographical confines through members’ established property rights. Such communities continue to exist but their susceptibility to a multitude of pressures in a changing world continues to dilute their efficacy.

2. A community in the late 20th century appears to be more fluid and flexible than our recollections reveal of our former community (with its more vertical attributes). Present communities recognise the specific needs and individuality of the component members to a much greater extent, reflecting genuine communities of interest. The focus of our former community was the community itself, possibly represented by the recognised hierarchy. In contrast, the focus of the present day community is probably much less clear, being rather mobile throughout the membership and gravitating to individuals or groups of individuals according to current priorities (eg. special purpose committees are formed to address topical matters). The present community hierarchy is probably transitory and chosen in response to calls for leadership to address a range of current issues. The term ‘horizontal’ community adequately describes these communities of interest.

3. Horizontal community bonds are restricted to the areas of interest overlap, not to the support of the whole person. Community responsibility for its membership is therefore limited to the extent of the commitment undertaken by the community’s members. It is unlikely, for example, that membership of a social or sporting club would entitle an individual to benefits outside those specifically identified as flowing from membership (eg. care and attention during periods of sickness or financial difficulty).
4. The first parts of the diagram reflect the progression of a vertical community from one of great strength through to one of profound weakness where dilution of the social critical mass is placing the community in jeopardy. Loss of social critical mass results both from population loss and the shift in interest away from the vertical community towards separate communities of interest (horizontal communities). I am sure we have all witnessed this occurring.

5. The last part of the diagram reflects the situation where, through the dilution process referred to, there is a fundamental change in the relationship between the ‘new’ community and the previously defined physical environment of the former vertical community - seen at the left. For ease of analysis it has been assumed that only the involvement of existing community members with the former community structure has changed but that the community has retained its earlier population size. That is, the loss in community social capital has been attributed solely to the shift towards community members putting more effort into their horizontal communities of interest. The possibility of population loss has been ignored although, in reality, this would be a very likely occurrence.

Possibility: there appears to be some evidence that vertical communities possess a social (capital) dividend while horizontal communities possess an economic (capital) dividend.

6. The point of this exercise is that no judgement need be made about the driveability of each kind of ‘community’ only that the ‘community’ members will benefit from developing an understanding of where they are at present with respect to where they will be in the future. Consequently this information should bear strongly on decisions as to where the most desirable future might lie.

7. Have we learned anything from this exercise? My guess is that this form of analysis might seem a little abstract at first sight and reading but that we might recall the discussion about different kinds of community at some time when we need to clarify our thoughts about the desirability of particular direction or project.

**Changing Community Profiles**

We know what this is. | But what is this? It is not a vertical community
---|---
![Diagram](image) | ![Diagram](image)
Community and environment are closely aligned. | Interest groups develop across geographic confines. New and expanded interest groups challenge the community and ‘place’ alignment Many horizontal communities overlap within a defined physical environment or
Developing Agricultural Tourism

Paul Tomlinson
Avon Arc Co-operative

Imagine ......

...... a mechanism to build the Region’s agricultural profile and economic base through targeted tourism promotion, owned by the community, for the community - one that gives a positive reason for people to work together for their improved future through community unity.

......a mechanism that does not rely on funding from within its own community but is primarily resourced from outside.

......a mechanism that targets the region to a captive market of 1.2 million people - just 90 minutes away.

......a mechanism to generate imported multiplier dollars into the region.

Ingredients: Passion, commitment, and an understanding of just what product exists in your region.

In the Avon Arc, the Wheatbelt Development Commission and Western Australian Tourism Commission have been invaluable partners with Agriculture Western Australia in this process.

A political system willingness and ability for participation by related agencies.

A totally unselfish approach - through community growth we all win.

Vision, Mission Statement, Challenge and Issues

The Vision:
To cultivate rural tourism for the promotion of agriculture to the metropolitan community and the enhancement of business and commercial growth and sustainability throughout the Avon Arc region.

The Mission Statement:
To provide a viable mechanism for a sustainable implementation of this initiative. This will be achieved through increasing local industry support and participation, local government and interest group sponsorship and promotional advertising revenue resourced predominantly from outside markets.

The Challenge:
- To provide a successful network model and workable concept for rural tourism programs throughout WA.
- To provide a strong community network with common direction and focus and to develop product through promotion and education.
- To gather a wide range of players into a cohesive unit while allowing each to maintain their independence and individuality.

The aim is for all people of the Avon Arc catchment, across all sectors of local government, commerce, industry and the community, to pull together for their collective advantage and individual benefit, to raise their level of awareness of the benefits of tourism and give back to the community enhanced profitability and profile through existing and future industry.

To link agricultural, rural, nature, Aboriginal and eco based tourism product into a structured network providing a cohesive blend of industry, commerce, local government, community and interest groups for purposes of:

giving proprietorship to a wide range of operators in this mechanism.
targeted promotion.
attracting sponsorship.
providing a mentor for industry assistance.
building a network providing education, networking, marketing, training, quality control, information and support service for operators, and,

to assist in the co-ordination of regional events to maximise benefits to each member of the network.

To provide a workable structure to promote agriculture through the Avon Arc catchment, assisting industry to grow by adding to its revenue base and promotion of employment opportunities. The multiplier factor stemming from this initiative will enhance all aspects of life within the Avon Arc region.

The Issues:
Tourism is the fastest growing, economically significant industry. As it spreads into rural Australia it is turning up some exciting opportunities.

It is an industry with a clean image. We can use it to educate, grow existing business, create new business opportunities and employ people, simply by packaging and effectively promoting the existing product. This initiative is a real investment in the future. Adding agricultural tourism to our existing industry provides greater sustainability. It provides the structure to balance profitability, growth and success with sustainability. Education within eco-tourism will assist us to preserve the environment. More visitors means longer stays and greater exposure to the existing attractions. One result of this direct marketing is more multiplier dollars left in the community.

More often, what sets rural tourism apart is the quality and intimacy of the contact experienced. The Avon Arc provides a microcosm of the real Australia with its incredible diversity of rural Australia, way of life, richness of cultures, landscape, climate and people - all within a catchment of 1.2 million people. As well as the metropolitan market, this mechanism will provide a greater opportunity to promote a cohesive message to interstate and overseas markets. Individual operators could still do their own thing with advertising and promotion within a structured framework to give them focus and market clout as well as credibility by being part of a professional body.

To be really good, service has to be consistent and reliable. The structure will provide education and set quality standards.

Project Overview
While visiting Sacramento, California several years ago, Max Trendorden, MLA for Avon, was impressed by a simple mechanism to grow local business and commerce by introducing outside revenue. Sacramento is very similar in size to Perth and is surrounded by rolling hills and valleys not unlike the Darling Range and the Avon Valley.

The way this was done was to entice a portion of the metropolitan population to spend time visiting the area. A publication was produced that was structured in an informative and comprehensive way. It highlighted all the available experiences offered in the region. People were able to plan a trip for anything from a day or more with ease and confidence and therefore gain the ultimate experience.

Max has worked with the community for several years to convert this concept into a local product and convince people the product was worth funding. The Minister for Primary Industry, Monty House, has adopted the project under the Doing More With Agriculture and New Industries Partnership Group programs with the view of lifting the profile of all aspects of rural WA and hence provide a spring board for increased economic activity. As a result, people will become more informed about the agricultural, landcare and historical issues of the Avon Arc and therefore break down the growing barriers between the city and the country.
The project is a private enterprise with a board of directors and run by the members. The benefits to the general community will be very substantial as a percentage of the 1.2 million residents of Perth venture into the Avon Arc, increasing revenue.

Benefits
The project will be a structure that will provide an organised and professional coordination of existing business and tourism ventures. It will have a capacity to dramatically improve youth employment and grow substantial industry in the Avon Arc adding to tourism, agriculture and general attractions. For members there will be quality assured sponsored network, training, information and general support to build a successful industry.

Method
In order to facilitate this a co-operative has been established, with membership offered on an unrestricted basis. A close working relationship with regional tourist bureaux and local government will be actively pursued.

Initially three feature publications will be produced each year. Distribution will be to the higher rated socio-economic suburbs of Perth to the west and south providing a readership of 200,000 people - with the capacity to expand this captive market as the concept matures.

Publications will be seasonally driven, promoting the attractions of the area. Each will contain a comprehensive “flow” description of many unique experiences which can be dovetailed to suit the reader.

Funding
Start up funding has been secured from Government. Other funding will be derived from corporate sponsorship, major advertisers and membership. The bulk of funding will flow from outside the region through corporate sponsorship and advertising allowing the scheme to expand the industry using external dollars.
This conference was organised for the 'Doing More with Agriculture' Project Team and the Central Agricultural Region Study Tour group. It is supported by a wide range of individuals, communities and agencies.