

Integration in Community and Civil Society Contexts

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PROBLEM; WHAT IS BEING INTEGRATED, ISSUES, IMPERATIVES

Today I had an irrigation consultant look at the problems we encountered with the watering system he designed for our on farm nursery. The plan was technically brilliant. The plan took into account all aspects—pump size, pipe size, flow rate, nozzle heights, types and angles. The maths was done and drawn to scale. Every plant would receive the exact amount of water they required.

The plan was perfect in every detail and implemented to the letter. The result however was disappointing. Some plants didn't receive any water at all and died, some plants didn't receive enough water and died, some plants received too much water and died and some plants with just the right amount of water thrived. But on a windy day the whole plan blew right out of the nursery.

To me the watering system is like natural resource management. It looks good on paper but hard to get it just right. When we try and make Natural Resource Management Plans, with a one size fits all approach, it ends up like tofu—bland, white and dense.

Australia is a truly amazing country from tropics to deserts, from sand plains to ice caps and rivers to coastal zones. The colour and character of our landscape is described by our unique fauna and flora with its diverse palette, a palette even more colourful than the individuals and communities that make up this great land.

This is not a land of tofu. This is Australia.

For me Natural Resource Management should not be a plan but a vision. A vision so compelling and so inspiring that all Australians will carry the love of Australia out from their heads out of our government buildings and offices and into our gardens, workplaces and into our everyday lives.

As a landmanager I don't look at our property "Bonneys Plains" and see target areas for conservation and protection with criteria of eucalyptus pauciflora on sandstone or riparian zones or even grasslands with threatened lilies and orchids.



When I look at “Bonneys Plains” I don’t see scientific components, I see an entire landscape. One area cannot be assigned a greater value than another.

This is not about botany or criteria. This is about ecology and how our landscape fits with our neighbours landscape and their neighbours and so on as part of a whole.

What landmanagers need is a vision. A vision that is far greater and far more powerful than the present incentive to clear for higher value crops or push the landscape harder with grazing or logging, a vision that inspires landmanagers to revegetate and protect the landscape without subsidy, a vision that that will insure that our natural landscapes survive without compromise to the third millennium without containment in biological zoos, a vision that allows our native fauna to survive in its natural habitat without threat or boundaries, a vision that provides a regular and reasonable income for farmers that enables them to provide employment opportunities for rural communities so they too can thrive.

A vision that allows us to embrace our uniqueness, our character our Australianess

To allow Australians to embrace our uniqueness and character our Natural Resource Management goal should not be to fix up our rivers, bush and coastlines. Our goal should be to have a relationship with our landscape. When we have a relationship with our landscape we value it. We can’t have a relationship with something we don’t know. A lasting relationship is trusting, kind, gentle, nurturing, loving and giving. A lasting relationship is intimate.

The Natural Resource Management Plans I have seen are a map of what natural resources are in a region and a map to protect and enhance those valuable resources. These maps can mark landscapes by rivers, geological features, vegetation communities and threatened species but they can’t mark what’s special about a place. Sometimes we think special places are somewhere else, great cities, remote wilderness, places we long to visit.

But special places are more about the common place as the rare, about the everyday as much as the endangered, and about the ordinary as much as the spectacular. Special places are about the detail and accumulation held together by what places mean to us.

Special places are about the rich tapestry of our lives. A tapestry that maps our sense of history, our sense of pride and our sense of place, a journey of lives and loves. A journey of people.

Although these NRM plans are very detailed, they are flat. Flat because they don’t tell us of this journey. A journey of time. This time of human activity is hard to measure and yet this time has enriched the variety in our landscape and generation after generation have built meaning into their places of living, work, and play.

The meaning we have built into our places of living, work and play cannot be identified on a plan because this meaning is mapped in stories, stories handed down from one generation to another. These stories map a time of human activity by our forefathers that has given us a great sense of history and this sense of history has given our families shared memories, values and loyalties. A meaning to us, which we share with our

neighbours, and indignance and protectiveness, is easily aroused. This sense of history gives us a measure that has shaped our community and our community is different from the next because our stories differ.

These stories allow us to savour and care about our landscape. It allows us to be specific, to name in detail our surrounds. This is the hill where the bushrangers camped, this is where the river flowed before the 1929 floods, this is where the pink wildflowers grow, this is where the willy wagtails live, this is the tree bough that knocked my grandfather off his horse and why his shoulder hurt, this is the old football ground where we ate the best kangaroo patties and drank too much beer and this is where we skipped school and went fishing.

When we attach meaning or a name it brings us closer to the ground. It takes the grey/green out of our mind and lets the detail of our exquisite landscape reflect in our eyes. This connects us to the earth and what lives beneath our feet, what we can see, hear, feel, smell and touch. It makes us more awake. The closer we can get to what's in front of us, the more it can teach us everything.

And the closer we get to the ground, the more attentive we become, we notice, we embrace, our values change. Our values represent the very essence of what's most important to us in our life. Our values are expressed in our everyday life and these values influence our actions.

I see with great clarity the correlation between what individuals, communities and governments value and their Natural Resource Management Plans. Working with individuals at a property level, landowner's personal values are reflected in their day-to-day management. If values such as wealth, security, power and ego are driving forces in an individual, then the management of their landscape is driven by production, profit loss ratio's, dse per hectare, tonnes per hectare, number of center pivot's, status in the community etc and is less sensitive to the environment than an individual whose highest values are family, health, connection, recreation, compassion, etc.

If the values of a community are similar the community works well together but if they differ too much the community becomes divided. Communities reflect their values in the way they manage their natural resources, choosing to protect and enhance our country or choosing to manage our country as a resource to be exploited and controlled.

But when we clarify our values it allow us to establish a connection between our head and our heart, and we respond from this place. When we clarify our values we develop a deep sense of knowing and a clear sense of direction. We act with integrity and an energy and passion flows.

When individuals, communities and governments all act with integrity tofu becomes a gastronomical delight, spiced with distinct flavourings reflecting all our communities, a delightful blend, a gourmet treat.

PARTICIPANTS; NGOs, COMMUNITY SECTORS, KNOWLEDGE GROUPS ETC

Organisational and informational strategies used

With my husband Lindsay we managed the Bushweb Project in the Northern Midlands of Tasmania, a beautiful grassy / woodland landscape supporting continuous intact native vegetation that contains the greatest diversity of native plants in Tasmania, the highest number of threatened species and the most mammal species in Temperate Australia. This project aimed to implement the vegetation plan for the Macquarie / South Esk Catchment. The Bushweb project offered monetary incentives for protection of remnants and revegetation. At the end of our first year we achieved the entire four year projected target areas for conservation and protection with over 90 landholders involved.

The reason we were able to achieve this was because the process put in place by Bushweb for applications, assessment and implementation was easy, non bureaucratic and achievable. The process was designed to have an absolute minimum of paperwork for us as project managers and assessors (one full-time shared position) and to have no paperwork at all for landholders. Bushweb aimed to get work implemented and communication personable using telephone and farm visits.

But what we were actually managing was a very expensive education project. We realized we would be continually teaching adults about nature conservation if we didn't start teaching our children.

There have been many attempts over the past 15 years to introduce environmental education into Tasmanian schools. Schools have been reluctant to introduce environmental studies due to the overwhelming burden from various sections of society to take on more roles and responsibilities once taught at home or by religious institutions,.

The Northern Midlands Environmental Education Kits were designed to overcome all the obstacles that in the past have prevented environmental studies taught in Tasmanian schools. These obstacles include the need for

- teachers to have some knowledge of environmental science
- a patch of bush in order to teach children about fauna and flora
- transport on a regular basis to a patch of bush
- resources to pay for transport
- suitable and regular time allocation for these outings
- resource information. This has been difficult to obtain and often irrelevant as it is based on mainland fauna and flora or too technical
- concentrating on the core subject areas especially reading, writing and arithmetic. Environmental studies not perceived as important as other areas of the curriculum

The Education Kits were designed to overcome these obstacles and were designed for use by relief teachers who come into schools on a regular basis.

The solutions were

- complete lesson plans without research or effort by teachers
- lesson plans designed especially for fauna and flora of the Northern Midlands region
- the environment comes into the classroom—no need for a patch of bush, buses, parental consent forms or disruption to other classes
- cover all areas of the curriculum
- knowledge of environmental science isn't necessary—format allows teachers to start wherever they feel comfortable
- resources included in kit

The Objectives of the Education Kits were

- to make the environment interesting and relevant
- to start the long process of understanding the complexity of bush systems
- to develop a sense of what it must be like to be a small creature and to stand in their shoes
- to recognize the diversity and uniqueness of these systems
- to gain an understanding of the impacts of human use and management in their surrounds
- to develop a sense of stewardship and commitment toward the land
- to gain an understanding of the biology of many of the small animals and plants that occur in these systems

Bushweb employed a young science graduate who produced

- activities that are interesting for children. Lessons include activities that children want to learn about rather than what adults think children should learn
- language that children appreciate e.g Go Feral, Dinosaurs are not the only Cool Ones
- attractive format designed for young people and their world

Education Program Implementation Strategy

- a draft form of the education kits was taken to all schools within the Bushweb District December 2001. All schools were very supportive of the kit and all decided that it could be implemented straight away into core school activities rather than using relief teachers. Schools started the education program 2002
- workshops were held with all the schools during the week prior to start of school, to familiarize teachers with the concept and to address any queries.
- all schools contacted again and any resources needed obtained.

- assisted teaching staff with a starting point for schools to participate at a local level with local issues in their landscape eg Perth Primary School has the endangered Eastern Barred Bandicoot and the Southern Brown Bandicoot living in close proximity to the school. The bandicoot become the main focus for the students.. The Longford Primary School identified the main tree found in the Longford district, Black Peppermint *Eucalyptus amygdalina* as their theme and discovered what fauna depends on this tree as their home.
- local landholders contacted so students could visit a patch of bush if desired.
- located at least one person from each school community to “adopt” their local school to ensure education program continues each year and hence overcome the problem of staff changes.

At the end of the Bushweb project, 2002, we contacted the State Education Department to see if they would introduce the concept into all schools in Tasmania. The Curriculum Department was one step ahead of us. They had designed an education framework involving one quarter of the curriculum dedicated to the environment to be introduced into all primary and secondary schools in the State.

Their aim was to make children responsible for their environment, to observe, learn and empower them to take a leadership role on environmental issues. This involves developing a strong sense of place and an understanding of the particular and unique character of the local environment. It includes recognition of past knowledge and experience of and spiritual connection with a particular environment and understanding of indigenous management of natural ecosystems. The aim is engagement with local issues as a foundation for understanding, how creating products and services in one part of the world depends on and connects with flows of energy and materials in other parts of the world. Children come to understand how this creates both opportunities and losses socially, economically and environmentally at all points locally and globally.

I believe environmental education for schools was the most important project of Bushweb. The project that would’ve had the most impact, the project that would allow our children to embrace their Australianess, to name, claim, and be comfortable with their environment and what lives there and depends on it. A project that would allow our children to have an intimate relationship with their landscape.

All that was needed for this project to succeed was information and support from the Nature Conservation Branch of the DPIWE. It was for me a huge disappointment that support was not given, it became a question of who should pay, how much should they pay, who should attend a meeting, who should be in charge, who gets the credit. It had nothing to do with this amazing opportunity to educate our future custodians or even the environment.

If we value information as a commodity or a tool to use for power, control, money and manipulation we gain different outcomes than when we use information as a commodity or tool to use for empowering and inclusion. When we come from a place of integrity we don’t ask what’s in it for us, our decisions come from a more nurturing, caring and responsible place. We see ourselves as part of a bigger canvas where all the brushstrokes are important each uniting to form a masterpiece.

RESOURCES (HUMAN, FINANCIAL, INFORMATIONAL)

Tasmania, thanks to the Harradine factor has had an extraordinary amount of money through the Natural Heritage Trust. This has meant that as a State we have had enormous resources available—human, financial and informational.

This generated a great deal of interest in the environment and much good work has been accomplished. But despite pouring all these resources into Tasmania, I believe this is not what Tasmania needs. It's perhaps too easy to throw money at a problem, it allows us to discuss it, analyze it, write about it, map it and monitor it. We generate a lot of busyness but we don't generate responsibility.

Too much money makes communities believe that natural resource management is a government responsibility; we wait for handouts, assistance and we don't take responsibility for our landscape. We become dependent. We begin to see our environment as separate from us.

We look at our environment and natural resources as simply that, a resource for us to exploit, to develop and to provide services for us such as clean water, timber, crop pollination, pest control, tourism values etc. This implies no change in our ethics, morals and values.

As a community we put an enormous value on human life and ourselves. In fact we have a whole health industry, full of dedicated people, to do whatever it takes just to keep people alive.

Science gives us the information that enables us to help someone, to keep them alive and healthy, but science can't make us help someone. Caring for people, is something we want to do, and as a society we demand it, because it is morally responsible and ethically correct.

But science can't make us act in a morally responsible way, or in an ethically correct manner.

To me it seems immoral, that we force wildlife to extinction, or the brink of extinction, and then try and bring it back. We have an expectation that wildlife can live in narrow riparian strips, or detached islands of vegetation, and will survive out there somewhere on someone else's land or stream, without any understanding of the team work between fauna and flora, and our moral obligation to ensure their survival.

We could tell the community the true magnitude of their environmental obligations, but obligations have no meaning without conscience, and the problem we face is the extension of our social conscience from people, to our land, our water and our fauna and flora. We need that same will it takes to care for our people, to care for the character of our Australian environment, to do whatever it takes.

When we act with integrity and not from a sense of money, power, career or ego our decisions are different. It enables us to embrace our landscape, to take responsibility. It allows us to stand in the "shoes" of a bird, a bandicoot, a fish or a kangaroo, to see the

environment from their perspective, to make different decisions. When we come from a place of integrity we don't ask what's in it for us, our decisions come from a more nurturing, caring, and protective role.

RELATIONSHIP WITH POLICY SYSTEM AND RESEARCH COMMUNITY

Every place in Australia is important, special and worthy of attention, as is every community. This is the premise on which our policy efforts need to be based, rather than the “best bang for bucks” method or the “one size fits all”. Policy that determines what is best for a community feels top down and heavy, exclusive rather than inclusive.

It's important for us to develop ways to measure and remind us that every place is special, distinctive and worth appreciating because science can be such a dehumanizing experience.

Unfortunately the community too often sees research as “proving the bleeding obvious”. Landowners have a rich knowledge of their landscape and the detail held within it. The landscape expresses itself to landowners as a “knowing” and has more to do with sight, sound, touch and feeling of the place. It's intuitive. Most landowners have this “knowing” that cannot be verbalized.

The “knowing” and the science are talking about the same issues; we are just separated by a different language—a bridge we need to cross together. This will allow science to be relevant to our communities.

To make science relevant we need to sell science to the community. To do this we need to think of science as a business that we are marketing to our customers the community. To do this we need to determine the primary aim of the research project, that is, we need to determine what is the commodity we are actually selling to the community. This could be healthy rivers, river restoration, healthy bush, clean oceans etc We need to determine how our project is relevant to the community, what issues will it resolve?

However the product science is selling is different from the commodity. This is what the community feels about the business, that is science.

When we think of science as a business and the scientific research project as a commodity we can work out how to sell our product, to the customers, the community. We need to determine what it is we are actually selling? For example, the commodity the Revlon Company sells is cosmetics but the product they sell is hope. Hope that if we put all this gunk on our faces we will look better or younger! Disneyland's commodity is theme parks but its product is happiness. The commodity the Rivers company sells is clothing and footwear, but the product it sells is comfort.

So what is the product our scientists are selling? What feeling do we want our customers, the community walk away with at the end of the day? (Satisfaction, tranquility, connection, inspiration?) What are they really buying when they buy into a research project and its aims? Because the truth is people are more interested in the product than the science. People buy feelings.

And as the world becomes more and more complex and the commodities more varied, the feelings we want become more urgent, less rational, and more unconscious.

If we are trying to sell science we need to anticipate those feelings and satisfy them in the product

When we are marketing science what we are actually doing is delivering a promise, a promise that creates client fulfillment. To me this has to be real. And a research project really has to mean it.

This is the measure of the project and its worth. How successfully scientists satisfy the emotional or perceived needs of the community is the measure of the project's success.

STATUS, IMPACT, FUTURE PLANS

The Northern Midlands district is in a transition phase, with a shift in enterprise mix since the uncertainty of wool derived incomes, to cropping enterprises. The opium poppy and potato industries offer a good return, and farmers have invested heavily in pivot irrigation systems, on-farm water storage and lobbying government for a major water supply for irrigation of crops. The Midlands soils have a high salinity content and the water leaving the Northern Midlands has a salinity level higher than that at Murray Bridge in South Australia.

For those of you who have witnessed the devastation of salinity, and its cost to the Australian taxpayer, you may wonder why farmers in the Northern Midlands would choose to go down this well-worn path, and put at risk, one of the greatest nature conservation areas in the world.

Our farmers are going down this path, because they need to produce a commodity that is valued and desired.

The message farmers are receiving, is that the Australian community values French fries more than bandicoots and headache pills more than some of the rarest plants and animals on earth.

Conserving nature is not a valued commodity, in fact it is perceived as beyond the task of individual landowners or even individual countries. Destruction of these high conservation areas is not just confined to the Northern Midlands area, or even Australia, it is a common and recurring theme around the world.

And governments aren't wealthy anymore. When we consider the United States of America is the largest and wealthiest Government of all, and will spend approximately \$1.5 trillion dollars a year. This sounds a lot, and yet that same amount, that exact same amount is traded on the world capital markets each and every day.

Capital markets are the new areas of wealth. A fee on all transactions, and invested into the world's natural capital, has the power to shape our world with compassion and respect for all life. Landowners could be empowered to provide a nature conservation outcome, and in effect become Ecological Service Providers of a highly desired and valued global asset.

In Australia we already have this taxation system in place. This would enable short term commercial transactions returning a long term environmental benefit for Australia and we already have an accounting system in place that allows for nature conservation to be considered core business activity. What we don't have is the will, the will to make it happen.

Imagine an Australian community investing in Australia's priceless assets our wetlands, rivers, grasslands, tropics, deserts, alpine and coastal zones because nature conservation is valued and desired.

I believe we can achieve this vision, because

In the words of Karma County

There is always one more chance

There is always one more chance

To change the country of your head

To the country of your heart

When Australia becomes the country of our heart we will find the will, the will to do whatever it takes to care for our land, water, fauna and flora, the character of Australia.