

Visioning Rural Australia: Understanding the aspirations of people living in rural and regional Australia

Sustaining Rural Communities 2012

Narrabri

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The research aims and methods

1. To investigate the aspirations of people living in rural and regional Australia in terms of their future and how these can be envisaged
2. To show how improvements can be made to decision making processes that affect rural areas

Interviews with people in the Murrumbidgee
Irrigation Area and Australian Capital Region

Vision: multifaceted and interconnected

- Agriculture as a valued source of production and contribution
- Food security planning and a regional approach
- Family farms and strong communities
- Balancing community and farming interests
- Working more with nature and natural processes
- Sharing and passing on knowledge and experience
- Fixing problems such as the perceived rural-urban divide
- Better decision-making processes – transparency etc.
- Decision-makers who understand challenges in rural areas

Implications for decision-makers

- Develop a vision to include land stewardship; resilience of communities and ecosystems; and food production and food security
- Include in the vision how people are to be engaged in decision-making processes (opportunity to participate, receive information, have issues addressed, etc.)
- Include in the vision how knowledge and understanding are to be shared between government/agency and country people (requires investment in people who understand both areas and can talk the language of both policy and farming)

Sustaining rural communities

- Vision is both what should be done and how it should be done
- Vision starts with the here and now, fixing problems and developing plans
- Vision is about fairness and respect: the way people are treated influences their acceptance of policies and decisions
- Responsibility and information must go in both directions
 - stakeholder and decision-maker

Next steps

- Consultative process
- Rural Communities Conference
 - 18 April, 2012
 - Narrabri



Policy-makers currently have vision statements and strategy documents to guide them

e.g.

- DAFF: 'Strategic Statement'
- Department of Regional Australia: 'Strategic Statement'

Dept. Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries:

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Our Vision

For the Australian people

Safe and secure food choices

For our portfolio industries

Globally competitive and
sustainable industries

For our department

A smart place, with
smart people

Our Goals

Resources

Ensuring the sustainable
use of natural resources

Productivity

Improving the
competitiveness of
portfolio industries

Markets

Enabling trade in goods



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Source: http://www.daff.gov.au/about/publications/strategic_statement

Dept. of Regional Aust. RDLG



Our vision

- Empower each region and local community to be its best

Our mission

Improve the wellbeing of Australians by strengthening the sustainability of regions, territories and communities

We do this through:

- Strong local partnerships
- Influential policy leadership
- Effective service and program delivery
- Highly skilled, well supported professional people

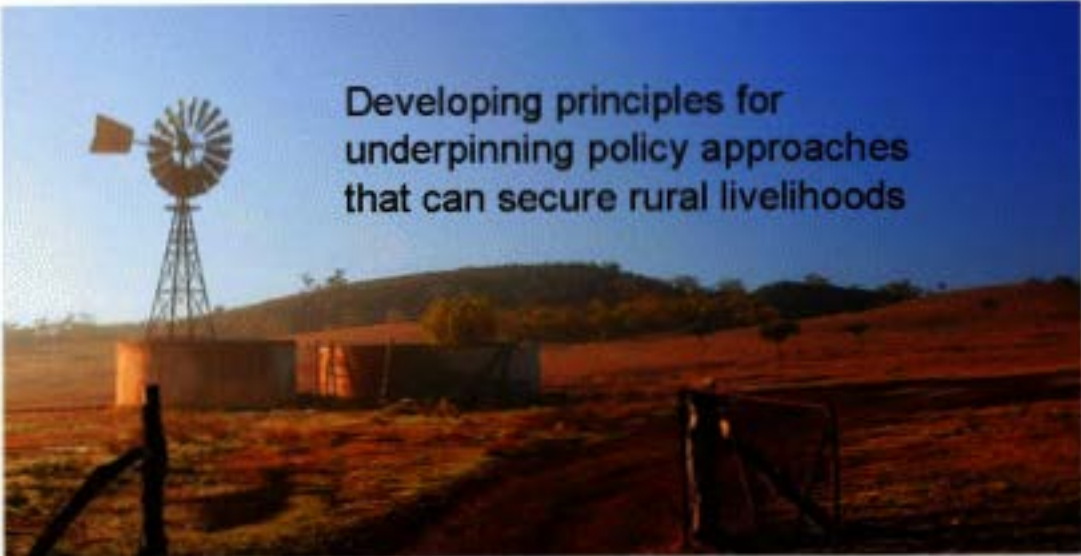
Our outcomes

As articulated in the 2011-12 Portfolio Budget Statements (PBS), the Department contributes to the wellbeing of all Australians by assisting the Government to achieve the following outcomes:

Outcome 1: Coordinated community infrastructure in rural, regional and local government areas through financial assistance.

Outcome 2: Good governance in the Australian Territories through the maintenance and improvement of the overarching legislative framework for self-governing territories, and laws and services for non-self-governing territories.

Sustaining rural communities



**Developing principles for
underpinning policy approaches
that can secure rural livelihoods**

Examples from Elsewhere?

The Cork Declaration – European Union 1996



Source: http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/en/cork_en.htm

A Narrabri Declaration ?



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